An Interview with Dr. Geoffrey Kelly, S.T.D.
Interviewer: Molly Murphy
March 24, 2006
McShain Hall
LaSalle University
MURPHY: Okay, first thing. We did a little research on your life and you wouldn't believe the documents this -- this man conveyed.

DR. KELLY: You got ahold of my C. V. then.

MURPHY: You were born to Joseph and Hannah.

DR. KELLY: That's right.

MURPHY: Joseph Harold Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Although he went to -- he always was called Harold.

MURPHY: By his middle name?

DR. KELLY: Yeah. He was Joseph Harold Kelly, but it wasn't until he became very ill and was put into a -- we put him into a retirement home that the nuns began calling him Joe. No one ever called him Joe. And so I guess for the last several years of his life, the nuns at the home would call him Joe. And if my mother were alive, she would always call him Harold and -- cause we knew him as Dad.

MURPHY: Now were they both from Ireland?

DR. KELLY: They were both born in Ireland, but they were brought over as babies so they have no recollection of Ireland.
MURPHY: Okay.

DR. KELLY: So they -- I mean you could tell that they had Irish background and that they're first generation but their thoroughly Americanized to a point except for my mom's brogue, which she never lost because she was brought up by --

MURPHY: Right.

DR. KELLY: -- her aunt and uncle.

MURPHY: And you have three brothers.

DR. KELLY: I have three brothers and one sister. My sister ruled the roof.

MURPHY: Was she the baby?

DR. KELLY: No. She was the second born. She was -- if I ever write my autobiography, I would say I had two mothers; my mom and then my sister. My sister -- I was her baby. She would tote me around. I wouldn't go to school.

MURPHY: Were you the youngest of --

DR. KELLY: No, no. I'm the middle child. I was the third and Theresa and I were -- like she was second born; I'm third, and instead of a baby doll, she had me. So --

MURPHY: She had a real baby doll.

DR. KELLY: Yeah. She had a real one. I
just love her and we're very close even to this
day.

MURPHY: Now, Brother Joe mentioned that
one of your brothers was also --

DR. KELLY: He was in the Christian
Brothers, right. He was Brother David Hillary.

MURPHY: Okay.

DR. KELLY: And he taught at several high
schools but he got his final teaching
assignment as a Brother here at La Salle, what
was then La Salle College. And he won a
Lindback Award for outstanding teacher. And as
his last year here, he was also named Dean.
But he left the Brothers right after that year.
So, got married and now is living in
retirement. He taught at Mt. Clare's -- Mt.
Clare University.

MURPHY: That's great.

DR. KELLY: Very bright young man. He was
very skilled in languages. It seems to be a
trait in the family of --

MURPHY: I noticed.

DR. KELLY: -- my brother and me.

MURPHY: Growing up, you were born in --

was it Elacin Park?
DR. KELLY: No. I was born in Southwest Philadelphia.

MURPHY: Southwest Philly. Okay, because you mentioned West Catholic.

DR. KELLY: I went to Most Blessed Sacrament Elementary School.

MURPHY: Right. That's when you went to West Catholic.

DR. KELLY: And then West Catholic for two years, and then I left West Catholic in order to become a junior novice to enter the Brothers at age 15.

MURPHY: I was going to ask you -- it said 1948. And is it pronounced Juniorate?

DR. KELLY: Juniorate.

MURPHY: Juniorate.

DR. KELLY: It's called the -- it's called the Juniate. But I try to explain that to my children. It doesn't evoke any kind of understanding on their part, so I call it my boarding school.

MURPHY: Boarding school.

DR. KELLY: I went to boarding school for two years.

MURPHY: Now, you were -- you were sure at
DR. KELLY: Well, as sure as --

MURPHY: -- that's what you wanted to do?

DR. KELLY: Well, as sure as any

15-year-old ever could be. There's a lot of romanticism and idealism and the Brothers were like -- like big brothers, you would admire them. They were athletic, pleasant, so it seemed like a good way to invest your life. And to me, I originally wanted to be a priest because I was an altar boy and the vocation looked very attractive. Something about the mysteries of the altar and being on the inside of that as an altar boy. But once I met the Brothers -- of course, it was the influence of my older brother joining the Brothers. But once I met the Brothers, that was it, I wanted to be a Brother. They were very attractive and very young and very --

MURPHY: I don't know if you remember my telling you this in class, but my father was a Brother. He was a Brother of Christian Charity.

DR. KELLY: Oh, that's --

MURPHY: And one of the reasons --
DR. KELLY: Oh, Brothers of Charity.

MURPHY: U-huh. Out in Gwyneth. One of the reasons was he joined at the time he was a child of a single mother.

DR. KELLY: Oh.

MURPHY: And there were some financial reasons involved, did that have any impact on you at all?

DR. KELLY: No, it didn't. I don't think the financial -- we were not wealthy. My mom lost all her money in the depression with the Stock Market Crash of 1929. She had inherited quite a lot of money and also four properties and all that -- the money was all invested in the Philadelphia Building and Loan Society, which went belly up. She bet one penny on the dollar and as a result, we didn't -- we didn't exactly live in any comfort. We always felt that we had enough - enough food, enough companionship.

MURPHY: Never wanted for anything?

DR. KELLY: I was in -- we grew up in what was then known as the Irish ghettos, but Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, Southwest Philadelphia where, I guess, about 80% of the people were Irish and Catholic.
MURPHY: Well, I live in Port Richmond, so
--

DR. KELLY: It was very pleasant growing
up in Southwest Philadelphia and there was an
attractiveness. about that neighborhood.

MURPHY: Now, when you went to -- to
Maryland at 15?

DR. KELLY: I went to Ammendale age 15
going on 16.

MURPHY: And that was La Salle Hall?

DR. KELLY: La Salle Hall. That's right.

MURPHY: And did you board there?

DR. KELLY: Yes.

MURPHY: Or your family didn't have to
follow you?

DR. KELLY: No, no. We boarded there.

MURPHY: You boarded there. And was it --
is it a typical high school? You --

DR. KELLY: We had a very good high-school
education. Once upon a time, that was listed
as one of the two top boarding schools,
Catholic boarding schools, in the country. I
don't know if it was even Catholic but it was
two of the top boarding schools. And the
reason given was that the number of people that
went on from that school to get Master's Degrees and Doctorates, but, of course we were in the Christian Brothers. You were trained of that and a person was supposed to persevere from the school -- many that do become Brothers they normally get higher degrees.

MURPHY: So it was almost expected of you.

DR. KELLY: It was expected.

MURPHY: As a Christian Brother, that you were going to continue your education.

DR. KELLY: That's right. Part of it was to really give you a headstart on becoming a Christian Brother so that when you entered the novitiate, you would already have had some experience of religious life - all be it, you know, in serving than simply staying in a regular high school.

MURPHY: Now, were there tuition that had to be paid?

DR. KELLY: $15.00 a month. It was ridiculous.

MURPHY: Astounding.

DR. KELLY: $15.00 a month. Then they raised it to $25.00 a month.

MURPHY: Did you miss Philadelphia?
MURPHY: Can you talk about how --

DR. KELLY: -- not in the beginning. Not so much. There were moments when homesickness would come over me, but they were very rare moments.

MURPHY: You were probably so busy.

DR. KELLY: We were kept active, see. And you had a regular sports program. You were so busy with studies. You went to bed at an early hour. Night prayer was 8:30; you were in bed by 9:00; you were up at 5:30. Later in the novitiate, you'd be up at 5:00, so I mean it was -- you were really kept moving all day. Everything was structured. Play came at a certain time. We had manual labor. So your day was so well set out you didn't have much time to have any temptations or leisure or homesickness.

MURPHY: Or even to feel homesick.

DR. KELLY: Feel homesick.

MURPHY: And then you went on to Saint Joseph's.

DR. KELLY: Saint Joseph's. What happened was that the number of young Brothers were so
great that they -- and the Brothers were studying at Catholic University.

MURPHY: In Washington.

DR. KELLY: And they had their house in Hyattsville, which is about maybe 15, 20 minutes from Catholic University. They had so many from the New York Province and the Baltimore Province that they had to use our juniorate building. So they sent us up to the juniorate in Barrytown, New York, and I spent the last year, a very pleasant year, up in Barrytown, Saint Joseph's Institute. It was then called Saint Joseph's Normal Institute and we'd make a lot of jokes about the word normal. That's from the French, le corm normale, which means a teacher training school. So they thought -- well, in a certain sense, we were to be future teachers.

MURPHY: Right. So you better be normal.

DR. KELLY: Saint Joseph's Normal Institute. I dropped the word normal. I'd rather not talk about that.

MURPHY: Yeah. But it's still on your resume.

DR. KELLY: I graduated from Saint
MURPHY: Saint Joseph's Institute.

DR. KELLY: I have to give you a longer resume.

MURPHY: No. I got one in here, don't worry. And then you entered into your novitiate.

DR. KELLY: That's right.

MURPHY: And that was in --

DR. KELLY: June. It was June. We were very late entering the novitiate because the New York Regis Exams and the school year in New York ended much later than the school year ended in Maryland or in Pennsylvania. So, we entered, as I recall, we entered on June 29, very late. The 25th was our graduation day and all we got as a vacation was a stop-over in Philadelphia on the way to Ammendale to Belts -- now known as Beltsville and then it was Ammendale.

MURPHY: Okay. Yes, it said Ammendale, Maryland. And then that's also -- in September, did you receive your habit?

DR. KELLY: I received -- September 7th.

MURPHY: What does that mean to receive
DR. KELLY: It means that the long robe that the Brothers used to wear regularly, Some wear it on occasions today, but it's a long black robe with a white what is called a verball, And then we had a hat, a small - it looked like a beanie hat but that without saying was something that you wear on your head. And I -- really a lot of Brothers by the time they were in the next phase of their formation stopped wearing the little hat, and I'm trying to think of the name - it escapes me right now. I have a picture of me in my habit in there. I put it out one night --

MURPHY: I'll have to look at it.

DR. KELLY: -- to the office as a reminder to say my morning prayers. So I don't forget.

MURPHY: How long was your new novitiary?

DR. KELLY: One full year.

MURPHY: One full year.

DR. KELLY: So that's September the 7th it officially begins. Prior to that you have a postulancy.

MURPHY: Okay.

DR. KELLY: So from the time we entered --
the usual entry date was June 15th. We didn't get there because of the arrangements in Barrytown. We didn't get there until June 29th. Some young men have already come in and left when we got there. So that's the preparation - comes from the Latin Postulo meaning, I ask — so postulancy — and then September 7th you receive the religious habit and I took my religious name. Surprisingly in which I still retain.

MURPHY: Right.

DR. KELLY: Geoffrey Benilde —

MURPHY: Right.

DR. KELLY: -- and so now I shorten that to Geoffrey B. Kelly. But if anybody asks me what the "B" stands for, I say Benilde.

MURPHY: Benilde.

DR. KELLY: And then on September the 8th after this one year you pronounce your first vows. The vows -- then you would take annual vows for one, two or three years, then you would take vows for three years and then you would take final vows. So you had triannuals and then the final profession. Usually by 25 or 26 that was the time for final profession
and I was finally professed in what year?

MURPHY: In 1957.

DR. KELLY: Was it '57? Right.

MURPHY: Ocean City?

DR. KELLY: Ocean City, New Jersey.

MURPHY: I did my homework.

DR. KELLY: After an eight-days retreat.

MURPHY: Very nice. And then you were

assigned right to --

DR. KELLY: My first assignment was West Catholic.

MURPHY: -- West Catholic.

DR. KELLY: One of the reasons for that is I had won a doctoral fellowship to the University of Pennsylvania. I was not given permission to follow it because I had graduated from La Salle College the next phase. The next phase after the novitiary was four years of what is called the Scholastics and that was spent at Elkins Park.

MURPHY: You said that, Anselm Hall.

DR. KELLY: Anselm Hall, Elkins Park. I never realized I would become the last director of that place. You know, when I was appointed Director of Scholastics. So that's a later
MURPHY: One thing I wanted to ask you about going to La Salle here.

DR. KELLY: Yes.

MURPHY: You were the first student to ever graduate with a perfect 4.00 G.P.A.

DR. KELLY: That's right. That's true.

MURPHY: That is something to be proud of. That's -- that's something to be proud of. How did that feel?

DR. KELLY: Oh, it felt good. There was a monetary prize with it --

MURPHY: Yeah, it says --

DR. KELLY: -- so I felt good about winning that. The Philosophy Award, the Language and Literature Award.

MURPHY: The Mooney Award, The Carroll Award -- and that all from the French government.

DR. KELLY: Right. And, of course, the top average award was called the Ryan Award.

MURPHY: Right.

DR. KELLY: I don't know -- I don't know -- I know who the Carroll Award was. It was Vincent Carroll, the judge. I don't know
who is responsible for the other awards, but each had a cash award which I turned over to the Brother Director since I had a valid --

MURPHY: And you weren't able to keep it.

DR. KELLY: No. I asked if I could use it for a picnic for my class and they said, I'll take care of that, and I never saw that.

MURPHY: You never got to pick again.

DR. KELLY: Never saw that -- never got to pick and I never saw the money again.

MURPHY: You took an extensive number of undergraduate courses.

DR. KELLY: I did, yeah.

MURPHY: In Languages.

DR. KELLY: Right.

MURPHY: French, German, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew.

DR. KELLY: All so I could win that doctoral fellowship to Penn, so it was really -- I hate to say it but a part of it was to impress the professors at Penn when I went for the interviews.

MURPHY: Was the fellowship doctoral in --

DR. KELLY: Languages, Modern Languages.

MURPHY: So you weren't originally going
towards the Religion. You were going towards

--

DR. KELLY: No. We had a -- I did get a
Master's in Religion. We were all required to
spend our last year studying for a Master's
Degree in Religious Studies, what I guess it
was called Theology then and --

MURPHY: Was that Villanova?

DR. KELLY: No, no. That's later.

Villanova was an M.A. in Modern Languages, so
that's another story.

MURPHY: Johns Hopkins.

DR. KELLY: I went to Johns Hopkins
University. See, I was at West Catholic for
one year, then I was assigned to Canton, Ohio,
Central Catholic in Canton, Ohio. I never got
there and the reason was -- I don't know if
this should be on tape, but the reason was I
taught Spanish at West Catholic, Religion to
the freshman and Spanish to the upper classes.
Two years of Spanish and I really enjoyed -- I
enjoyed West Catholic but there was a Brother
in Canton, Ohio who was having troubles. You
would speak of it then as women's troubles. He
was in a shakey state of his vocation. It was
a part — it was a coed school.

MURPHY: Okay.

DR. KELLY: And so there were young ladies there and so the -- at the same time, there was a young Brother in Calvert Hall in Baltimore who was having similar problems so the solution that the Brother visitor concocted was that he would send the Brother from Calvert Hall to Canton, cancel my appointment to Canton, send me to Calvert Hall and then his other Brother in Canton to West Catholic to replace me. However, the Brother sent to West Catholic left the order. And, of course, the principal of West Catholic was very angry; who's going to replace Kelly?

MURPHY: He wanted to keep you.

DR. KELLY: Well, he didn't have a choice. He wanted a replacement. I was sent to Canton.

MURPHY: But you wound up at Calvert Hall.

DR. KELLY: I wound up at -- for very six happy years of my life, Calvert Hall.

MURPHY: And you taught Religion, Latin.

DR. KELLY: I taught Religion and Latin and then began my work for my doctorate at Johns Hopkins University.
MURPHY: Okay.

DR. KELLY: And then I -- 1962 while I was getting my doctoral studies in -- I also needed to get a Master's Degree in Languages, so I started working Villanova. The choice of Villanova was clearly because my mom was sick and Villanova had the summer program. Villanova was very good to religion. I think it was a hub for all the religious to spend their summers getting degrees at Villanova. They made it so pleasant, so nice and so reasonable in terms of the money, so I spent my summers at Villanova. And I took my comps there. Comps were one summer. I just did my comps. It was an easy -- for me it was easy. But the people at Johns Hopkins said I'd like you to spend your last credits -- what is -- there were nine credits -- there were nine more credits I needed at a place where it's French-speaking. So the solution to that was to go up to Quebec and study at Laval University in Quebec. So I actually finished my M.A. studies at Villanova but the last nine credits were done at Laval University in Quebec.

MURPHY: How is Laval spelled?
University. Now Villanova was very generous indeed. Usually, they don't allow that. Usually, they make you take your transfer credits at the beginning. But evidently the teacher -- the professor there in charge of the department was so congenial, Wilson Preston. I always remembered him. He was a Quaker, a brilliant man and --

MURPHY: A lay person?
DR. KELLY: A lay person, but later I found out -- I think he's dead now but -- he became a Roman Catholic under the influence of all the Brothers and priests and nuns that studied under him. He was so impressed by it.

MURPHY: Now, you never said why you weren't allowed to go to U Penn?

DR. KELLY: Because it was a policy of the Christian Brothers that your first year out teaching you were not allowed to engage in graduate studies. They said you -- they provided your education for four solid years and now was the time to give a return. I mean it made a lot of sense, but --

MURPHY: And Penn wasn't willing to wait a
1 year for you?

2 DR. KELLY: No, no. It was why I was sent
to Canton. See, obviously that didn't work.
Also, there was a certain arrogance on my part.
I'd thought I test -- I thought I'd test that
rule since I was the, you know, the top
student.

3 MURPHY: The only person to get a 4.00
from La Salle. You deserve it.

4 DR. KELLY: Right. I'd thought I -- I
thought -- you know, it's -- it's pride you
know and it's also sinful. You know, I have to
say that. And maybe arrogance on my part that
I wanted to test that regulation by winning the
fellowship and putting the Brothers on the spot
that they'd have to rescind the rule. And, of
course, they didn't, so. And I'm proud of the
fact that the Brothers did not. And in the
designs of God, I can see all these things
happening. You know, if I had gotten that
fellowship and if I had gotten my doctorate, I
would be a teacher of Modern Languages. I
would never have gotten into religion. I would
never have majored in Bonhoeffer studies at
Louvain. I would never have written my books.
I would never have met my wife. I mean, do you see it all?

MURPHY: It's all part of the plan.

DR. KELLY: I believe it's all -- you know the marriages they say are made in Heaven and your future is determined by the Holy Spirit. But there are a lot of little -- it's almost like those doors there. If you pick this door then you have two other choices and you pick that door and there are more choices. I think that's the way the Holy Spirit operates. So taken my own, if you will, my own willfulness and confronting it, I gotta know, and then obeying, like a good -- I loved the Brothers and I was happy teaching whether it was Catholic or Canton, I was a Christian Brother. Wherever -- a part of the vow form was to go wherever I am sent, to do whatever is asked of me. See, that's all -- you promise that. You vow -- you take a vow of obedience so I had -- so I wasn't going to fight this at all. I was disappointed. But the bigger disappointment came after six years at Calvert Hall when I went to Laval University for that final summer and I got my M.A. in 1963, and I got off the
train - I was met by a Brother at Calvert Hall
who said Congratulations. And, well I had been
charged with the school newspaper; also the
Mission Club; also intramurals and the Parents'
Club, the Ammendale Parents' Club.

MURPHY: I see all of that.

DR. KELLY: So, I was going in all those
directions and I wanted to finish my doctorate
at Johns Hopkins, so I got permission to drop
the newspaper and to drop one course. I would
only have four courses; one Religion and four
Latin. So he said -- I said, you mean I'm
getting out of the newspaper. He says, no.
You've been named the new Director -- the New
Director of Postulants and Sub-Director of
Novices. I says, get out of here. I just got
permission to go for my -- to finish my
doctoral studies at Johns Hopkins. He said,
no. There's a letter waiting for you at the
house and the novitiate been trying to get you
on the phone. And there's a letter trailing
you. It was sent to Quebec. He said, there's
a letter trailing you and a letter waiting for
you.

MURPHY: It was behind you.
MURPHY: And that was in 1962?

DR. KELLY: '62. So, I got out of the car in Calvert Hall and Brother Edward was just a jokester. He knelt down and kissed my hand. I said, oh, no.

MURPHY: Now, what did that — now this is where you ran into Brother Joe, correct? When you were Director of —

DR. KELLY: No. I actually met — ran into Brother Joe — Brother Joe, I think, signed up when I was Director of Scholastics.

MURPHY: Oh, okay.

DR. KELLY: He was a scholastic and I got — he was so, so special, so nice. So much of whatever you would admire in a Christian Brother that was Brother Joe. So I really was very fond of him. Probably fonder than he actually knows. I just -- he had a certain spiritual innocence about him that was I thought very special and very ded - and a dedicated person and a gracious, affirming person. You don't get -- you don't often see that where you see a lot of people that in the course of being a Spiritual Director. A lot of
people that are — that were Brothers and good, you know, good Brothers, but he was always very special.

MURPHY: You seem to be greatly influenced by Christian Brothers.

DR. KELLY: Oh, yes.

MURPHY: Do you have any specific names —

DR. KELLY: Oh, well; yes, I do.

MURPHY: — that you would cite as really being —

DR. KELLY: Very special, yeah. I would say Brother Augustine Lowes who was my director in the last year in the junior novitiate. He was very, very inspiring to me and that was a hell for me to choose to go onto the novitiate, that someone like that who was just a good-hearted person who knew young people and knew the problems that we would be facing. The Director of Novices, Brother Joseph, who died at the age of 99, I think he was the oldest Brother in the world. He always was powerful in my life, and of course my older brother, naturally. But I would list those two in the scholastical — a lot of friendships that were formed. To single out any one person is difficult. Brother Edwin
Baldwin when I was made the Director of Postulants --

MURPHY: Okay.

DR. KELLY: -- he's a very -- he's dead now also but a very saintly person, and you know, I always looked to him as somebody that -- gee, I'd like to be as holy as he was. I just didn't -- I didn't feel the depth of holiness that I probably should have and having a position or responsibility of that weighed heavily on me. One of the reasons I got more intense about theology was to get two nights off so I could get away, and it's like you're in a fish-bowl existence as the Director of Postulants and Sub-Director of Novices and that restored an earlier interest in theology. And now, I can mention two more great influences. They're not Brothers. One was Dr. Russell Norton in Philosophy, tremendous influence. And the other, I guess, there's another one coming up, John Geishard, who's now a priest up in his 80's who was my language mentor here at La Salle College and Joe Moran, the Spanish teacher. They were people that I really admired and we -- I guess, I haunted their
offices for a long time picking their brains as
I'm sure they were happy -- I mean happy to
deal with me too. Russ became Godfather to my
son, Brendon. So it began a life-long
relationship. And my first encounter with
Russ, he taught me Philosophy my first year and
then he taught me my last year in Physics. He
also taught me Ethics. I took as many courses
as I could with him but after I -- his first
exam was on the Introductions of Philosophy and
we were doing logic and psychology, which
today is called Critical Thinking. And I had
pretty well memorized Jack Maritime's,
Introduction to Philosophy, so in the exam I
was -- because I could remember everything, I
was just quoting right and left and after I got
an A in the thing and I was proud of myself.
After that, he pulled me out and said, don't
you ever do that again. And I said, what? He
said, this is -- you're giving me all Maritime. (?)
I want to see what Kelly thinks.

MURPHY: Right.

DR. KELLY: I never had anybody question
my ability to remember -- in memorizing and --
but it really -- it sunk in that I'm here at La
Salle not to just fill my mind with everything I can remember - all the languages which comes so easily but really to be creative. So that's when I began to talk philosophy with him so we would have exchanges that were -- and he was trying to stretch my brain and I really appreciated that. He set me straight on what later became my ability to write. And then Mark Case is another --

MURPHY: Very important for you.

DR. KELLY: Yeah. I became a writer and I would still run -- even as I was here, run stuff by Russ. If Russ liked it, it had to be good. You know, it was like that. And he's the one that sheparded me through to the Philosophy Award too. In a sense, the Philosophy Award -- it's not like today, you just go by average or the teachers meet. You had to go before all the faculty. And -- the philosophy faculty is split in two. It was the biggest subject. You had to take 18 credits in it. Half the faculty would go in one room, half in the other, and they would narrow it down to the two top students and I was one and Francis O'Hara, who became a lawyer for Gulf
Oil and also an all-star basketball player, but brilliant. And then we would fill in like a comprehensive exam, then we would switch rooms and then they would coppice and then determine which of the two of us would get the award. You had to compete for it. Today it's --

MURPHY: That's fierce.

DR. KELLY: But, I enjoyed that and so did -- I'm sure so did Francis O'Hara, and he's dead now. I hate to be saying all these guys are dead, but also the seed was planted by Mark Keith, a Dominican Priest, who taught me Dogmatic Theology in my M.A. work here and he's the one who suggested reading -- he read a couple of my papers -- but he wrote in one of them, you should think seriously about becoming a theologian. Well, I wasn't thinking seriously. I got my Master's in Theology from La Salle. I was thinking about languages. I was just thrilled with the sense -- the ability to speak languages. You know, it thrilled me. And it was a skill that I had so that's really -- and then learning the literature. So that was really -- so when I was pulled out of my teaching Latin at high school where I was
very comfortable — pulled out of studies at Johns Hopkins and sent to the novitiate that was a -- pretty tough to take.

MURPHY: Big change for you.

DR. KELLY: Big change and I was a bit angry about that.

MURPHY: Did you miss the classroom?

DR. KELLY: Oh, I did. But then we had a classroom -- I had a classroom of young postulants, young novices so these are the people that are entering religious life and therefore the next four years that was my focus. I was in charge of teaching Scripture, Literature, History of the Institute, Philosophy -- I had all these courses to teach, especially the spiritual courses which was very extensive. And -- but I -- but I wanted that time to get by myself with a couple of buddies because these are young people. Now at this stage, I'm right around 30 years old, and you know, 30 years old, you like to be with your buddies and go and drink and dinner.

MURPHY: Right.

DR. KELLY: Now, these are people that see you as a model. You know, it's not exactly --
MURPHY: It's 24 hours a day.

DR. KELLY: Twenty-four hours a day and they -- they get to depend on you.

MURPHY: Right.

DR. KELLY: So I -- then I took these courses at Catholic University, you know, just to get out and also building on my Master's work, I could have -- they all count towards what could have become another doctorate. I really wasn't that gung ho about the program at Catholic University, Religious Education. And I didn't, you know, it wasn't -- I didn't find it challenging and I couldn't really get excited about it. But, when a letter came from the Brother visitor who had been meeting with people from La Salle and they thought they needed to bring some young Brothers into the faculty here at La Salle and there were two Brothers that they had in mind. One was Antonio Battaglia and I was the other and so we were approached to see -- are you close to a doctorate? Now, Tony had gotten -- in fact, he was the first one actually to get permission to do his studies when he won a fellowship to Harvard. So, Harvard evidently --
MURPHY: Harvard is --

DR. KELLY: Any Tony was -- Tony was brilliant. Tony went to Princeton. We both were talking about -- we both met. Tony was top graduate as a Christian Brother and he was really bright, brilliant guy, so we were thinking of where should we go and I said, I want to go to Chicago to study under Tilley, Paul Tilley, a great, marvelous theologian and Tony said, you know, I was thinking of Chicago too. Tilley then said he would not take anymore -- we couldn't go to the same place and get away with it, so Tilley was up in years a great world-class theologian, and then he went on and said he would not take any doctoral candidates then he died, '65, he died.

So, then I wrote back to the Brother of Provential. I'm not that far away. Actually, I had a couple of courses at Catholic U plus my Master's Degree and then maybe I can finish my doctorate at Catholic University, okay. And now that was just -- I really -- I hate to say it, but I wanted to go in another direction and I was getting more enamored, maybe theology is the way to go and maybe I'll go back and finish
at Hopkins. So, I rather had a source of conflicting ideas. Tony went to Princeton, by the way, and got his doctorate. He studied under -- the guy from Natural Law and Ethic -- Ramsey, he studied under Ramsey. He's teaching out in the West Coast. He left the Brothers.

MURPHY: Oh.

DR. KELLY: He's married - he's married to a Norwegian girl. Anyhow, so am I. You know, my wife -- alright now, I'm jumping ahead. But then I met a nun who was also in the studies at Catholic University. She had just come back from Belgium, Lumen Vitae Catechetical Institute, and she knew my French was just zip-pee-de-doo. And we got to be very friendly. Sister Michaels. She was not a young nun. She was a bit older.

MURPHY: What was her name?

DR. KELLY: Sister Florence Michaels. But then she changed her name to the familial and she became Michael Michaels and it was -- no, no, not Michael Michaels, no. Florence Michaels. What was her -- gee, you know, I forget. Sister Florence Michaels.

MURPHY: And what was her order, if you
remember?

DR. KELLY: I think it's Lady of Victory, Nuns of Our Lady of Victory but I'm not positive. I'd have to look it up. You know, we've been out of touch with each other for about 40 years now. I don't even know if she's alive.

MURPHY: But she's the one who sent you to Brussels.

DR. KELLY: But she's the one that said, Oh, you should do the Louvata. So, I thought, gee, to speak French and to be over in Europe. So I wrote -- first, I went to Gerald Stein, who was the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at Catholic University. I think, it was called Religious Education then, and mind you, I really wasn't interested in that. I've taken a few courses and I treated them very flimsily.

MURPHY: So, the appeal of being in a French-speaking --

DR. KELLY: Oh, yeah.

MURPHY: -- country was really something.

DR. KELLY: Well, see, that's one thing, one of my skills and then I knew they also spoke Dutch so I could learn Dutch. I already
knew German. See, I picked up German at Johns Hopkins just like that, you know, I mean, I've gotten better at it. So I went to Jerry. Jerry said, oh, he says, Jeff -- he says, you know, you don't need that, he says, stay here. I said well, you know, I want to go -- he said, alright, I'll write a letter. They only take -- was it 10 or 12 Americans each year because it's an international Institute so there are quotas. So many from Latin America, so many from Italy, so many Germany, very few from Germany and very few from Belgium and a lot from Africa but no more than 10 or 12 Americans so we don't overwhelm it and 120 is the cap. So 120 international students and run by the Jesuits in Brussels. A place called Lumen Vitae, which means light of life. So then I wrote to the visitor and said, look, I'm still interested in pursuing my doctorate but I have an opportunity to study at Lumen Vitae, and I'm pretty sure I won't be accepted. They only take a few and it would be an honor -- with my usual pizzazz -- it would be an honor to be accepted and so he wrote back and said, okay. And Jerry wrote the letter and I got the
acceptance and then I decided that I'm going to
go to Brussels. Now Brussels is bilingual. I
already know French and I can speak it fluently
so nows the chance to learn Dutch. So they
said -- they had us -- so I looked it up and
found out they had a Flemish community,
actually, the Flemish Scholastical and never
realized I would be made a Director of
Scholastics back here in Philly. So, I went
to -- I wrote to the Brother of Provincial in
the Flemish-speaking district and asked if I
could be accepted to live with the Flemish
Brothers. Well, they were delighted because
they were always considered inferior to the
French and they had an expression, you know, it
translates -- it's what the French-speaking
Brothers would say, Le Francais sele lingua de
li coutre, French is the language of culture --
Tant deque La Flamand lingua de nebiti couture, While Flemish is the language of agriculture,
so it was a put-down but I picked up Dutch.

MURPHY: And then that was in Brussels?

DR. KELLY: That was in Brussels.

MURPHY: And then from '67 to '68 you were

at Louvain?
DR. KELLY: Well, what happened there was remember, I had already kind of indicated that I would go back to Catholic University but in the meantime, I was very friendly with a Brother who was getting his Doctoral in Philosophy, American Brother named William Beatty, getting his Doctorate in Philosophy at Louvain, The Cardinal Mercy School of Philosophy. It's rather world famous. We got to be very friendly. And he lived with the Louvain Brothers and they spoke French, and, of course, he used to tease them about there's a young Brother who speaks Dutch and you guys you can't speak Dutch even though you had it in school. So there's a young Brother, you got to meet him, so he speaks Dutch and so on. I wasn't thrilled to find that out.

MURPHY: Now, I studied -- I studied for a month in Ireland for six grad credits.

DR. KELLY: Oh, where did you go, Galway?

MURPHY: Yeah. The University -- The National University of Ireland in Galway.

DR. KELLY: In Galway, yeah, where my son wants to go.

MURPHY: Oh, it's wonderful.
DR. KELLY: Yeah, I know.

MURPHY: I recommend it any --

DR. KELLY: He couldn't get in last year.

MURPHY: Oh.

DR. KELLY: His G.P.A. was 2.92, just missed.

MURPHY: It was a grad program. It was six grad credits, a month in July.

DR. KELLY: And this was in English?

MURPHY: No. This is in Education. I compared their schools to ours.

DR. KELLY: That's great.

MURPHY: Oh, it was wonderful. But my question leading up is, I noticed differences in the views of education and how the Europeans treat education as compared to Americans. Did you find that as well --

DR. KELLY: Oh, very much so.

MURPHY: -- in Europe.

DR. KELLY: I thought myself that they did a superb job of education at every level. I mean all the way from the first years, the preschool, all the way up until the university level. I used to make it a point in order to perfect my Dutch -- when I finally got
permission to study at Louvain, I also lived
with the Flemish Brothers and they had a
school, Sayung School. Sayung School is right
at the heart of the border in Meclosaves.
Meclo's the road to -- ves is the -- ves is the
what you would call the border, the ves, the
perimeter of the roadway to Mecolum. See, now
the primate of Belgium is Leo Cardincuins. He
was fluid in all those languages plus English
spoken like a native. So, I learned there but
in order to perfect my Dutch. I always ate
lunch with the students and I'm very friendly
with a couple of them. They're now 40 years
old raising families.

MURPHY: So not only you got the slang
too.

DR. KELLY: I got the slang. I can cuss
and I can say all the vulgarities --

MURPHY: So you did find the differences
like I found.

DR. KELLY: Well, sure. I lived with the
Brothers. I taught in the elementary school.

MURPHY: And they take -- they take
education so seriously.

DR. KELLY: Very seriously. And they have
longer school year, they go much longer. They
have different levels and it's all free.

MURPHY: It's all free. I know the
University's free.

DR. KELLY: Everything is free. Catholic
schools are subsidized. The Brothers, the
priests or the nuns; especially, hardly any
left but they got the same salary as the lay
people. There's no discrimination. You can go
to the state school, go to the religious
school, your choice. You know, and it's all
paid for.

MURPHY: -- your education --

DR. KELLY: Well, I don't know. I got my
doctorate, but now I began my theological --

MURPHY: Now, you're a doctor.

DR. KELLY: -- theological education. I
did get permission -- oh, yeah, that was the
other thing. See, I'm planning to write a
letter -- talk about interventions from above,
I'm trying to write a letter to the Brother
Provential in charge of education. It was
\( \text{ Brothers, so I'm saying now, how am I going to do this? I want to go to Louvain. I don't} \)
want to go back to Catholic U. Catholic U to me was Mickey Mouse. God, you wouldn't put that in there. So that Louvain is prestigious and there's no -- they never even had anything but a priest graduating cause to get into it you have to have the seminary education like or some degree, pontifical degree to start with and I had my Master's from La Salle. I had my work at Catholic University, a few courses and my Lumen Vitae. See some of the teachers at Louvain also taught me at Lumen Vitae and I could see that these guys were really bright, brilliant and they have written all sorts of books. So I was really enticed by it. So here I am, I'm planning now how am I going to get this. I really have a great opportunity. This is really wonderful. I think it's far superior. It will give La Salle -- and I'm thinking -- I get a letter saying that La Salle would like to have someone with a European Degree in Theology on the faculty. Would you visit some of the universities and let us know which one you think would be best. And you know I'm thinking, gees, I already decided on Louvain so I wrote back and said thank you very
much. Here I am trying to persuade --

MURPHY: Couldn't of worked out better.

DR. KELLY: Oh, yes.

MURPHY: Couldn't of worked out better.

DR. KELLY: So, I went to Strasbourg, Rome, Paris and then I said I been to all of them and I had a great time at their expense, you know.

MURPHY: But I'm going to go to Louvain.

DR. KELLY: But I'm going -- I picked Louvain.

MURPHY: That's great.

DR. KELLY: And so I got it and that's how I started.

MURPHY: How did you notice the Brothers starting to change as the years went from 50 -- in the 50's through the 60's, up into the 70's when you started contemplating leaving?

DR. KELLY: Well, that's -- I just put that in my book there actually. I'll give you a copy of it. But it's very schematic. What I noticed was --

MURPHY: See, my father doesn't like to talk at all about his --

DR. KELLY: -- well, and I wasn't going to
do this either but the publishers of this book that's coming out, they insisted that I put a section in that would explain why I left the brothers because they -- it's a section on prayer. And I talk about what wonderful things that I learned from the Brothers and of course the question would come; well, why did you leave and so the publishers demanded that I put this -- it's more like a page in there. What I found was that -- first of all, when you're in Europe, the whole atmosphere changes. See, it's a much -- we lost a lot of people even though it hadn't hit America yet, this number leaving and very few entering.

MURPHY: Because you mentioned earlier that there were so many young coming in when you were --

DR. KELLY: Yeah. You'd have 40 -- 40 postulants.

MURPHY: You wouldn't have room for us all.

DR. KELLY: And when I was in the scholastical, when I was going through it, over a hundred Brothers were there.

MURPHY: And now over a matter of --
DR. KELLY: If you had one or two, you're happy, but now. But in Belgium they'd already started this decline in number of people entering religious life. The rest of the conservative people, if I could put the blame on Vatican II, I think Vatican II helped to purify the intentions of people were serious about their calling for the priesthood or for religious life. Also, Vatican II engendered a spirit of freedom and opened the way to what I think the Holy Spirit's been trying to get through to the church; namely, that the lay people have been long, long neglected and that this is the age of the Holy Spirit energizing lay people to be partners in the church with the clergy. It's no longer -- it's collegiality at every level and not just a dictate from one high to those below style of church. People began to think more freely and more critically about what their calling in life was. And so you -- what you have is a much more serious attitude towards vocation and a much more, I think, honest way of accessing where God really wants you in life and that's not an easy thing. So, but that came later,
see, for me. My brother left in 1970. That
was kind of a surprise. I'd have to say a bit
of a shock.

MURPHY: How did you feel about that? Did
you feel, I don't want to say betrayed but
almost -- No

DR. KELLY: Well, I didn't feel betrayed.
I felt -- I felt the -- I felt he might have
been making a mistake. I felt in the beginning
disappointed would be the word and then more as
I met his wife then I realized that he's happy,
began to accept that as his decision. When I
came back to this country -- I don't want to
jump too far ahead but I became Director of
Scholastics and we had 15 scholastics that were
in my charge and if they decided to leave, I
thought, well, I'll throw them a party, you
know, and thank them for what they have done.
So my attitude had changed by then. It was
1972 when I came back.

MURPHY: '72 to '74?

DR. KELLY: '72 to '74. I was Director of
Scholastics. What was -- what may be
unfortunate about that and here I'm about to
mention what the other great influence in my
life was Brother Luke Salm.

MURPHY: Can you spell that last name?

DR. KELLY: S-A-L-M, which means Salmon in German. Brother Luke Salm and he lived with me for my final year at Louvain and we became the closest of friends. He was like a father figure because he was a recognized theologian. He was the first Christian Brother to get a degree in theology in all the world. S.T. -- don't forget the S.T.D.

MURPHY: S.T.D., yeah.

DR. KELLY: -- yeah, which is a pontifical degree. I was the first to get, a non-priest, to get a doctorate from Louvain, the S.T.D., so that I can show you my bachelarian, which is hanging somewhere in there. They cross out the word presbuto, which means priest, and wrote in prontare, so I'm really proud of that, that I kind of broke a -- what is it -- broke a glass ceiling.

MURPHY: You tend to do that a lot in your life.

DR. KELLY: Well, it was -- it was quite a petty distinction and then I graduated Summa cum Laude.
MURPHY: Yeah.

DR. KELLY: I graduated first of my studies even though we were told that half the class would flunk out. He was a real snobbish -- they can be snobbish, some of the courses. And it's true, half the class dropped out.

MURPHY: They weren't lying.

DR. KELLY: It was -- it was -- it was a tough regimen. You had -- your first year you had 18 courses to take. Second year, 17 courses, the third year -- I have to look at my transcript. I forget now but you're overwhelmed with the number of courses and all the different branches of theology so it really was a tough course to take. And you had to know -- you had to know Greek and Latin and Hebrew, you had to know it really well. It wasn't just a flimsy knowledge. You really had to be able to do scientific -- so you had to know the languages and the courses were taught in French, Dutch and German so if you signed up for the -- the teachers are talking like I talk to you but in that language so you really had to be pretty good in the languages and that was
-- you didn't have to -- some of these universities in the United States, you have to pass a French test and a German test. In there, if you didn't know German, you just couldn't study there. So it was -- it was great. But in 1972, I got my doctorate. And I got at the same time an appointment to be the Director of Scholastics. Now, Brother Luke Salm, my great influence, said, don't do it. He said because officially, you're a theologian now and you're gonna -- you're going to start your teaching career and at the same time you're going to have this extra burden and it's not healthy. And it really was -- I had a full schedule here at La Salle.

MURPHY: Right. You started back here as an assistant professor.

DR. KELLY: Right. And I had a full schedule, which is four courses each semester, plus, I had 15 young scholastics that I was the director of that. I had to run the Scholastical.

MURPHY: And where was the scholastical?

DR. KELLY: Elkins Park.

MURPHY: Elkins Park.
DR. KELLY: And I didn't know --

MURPHY: That's where I got the Elkins Park.

DR. KELLY: -- they had sold it -- they sold the place out from under me and I had to dismantle it and take care of moving, finding a new scholastical -- so all that was an extra burden even though I was a workaholic.

MURPHY: And teaching the --

DR. KELLY: Teaching and writing my articles, publishing. They don't release that doctoral diploma until you actually publish.

MURPHY: U-huh.

DR. KELLY: And it has to be a reputable publication so they have to approve -- it's got to be either a book or a chapter of your dissertation or an article and they have to approve that it's from a reputable journal and I -- they said you should publish -- I have a two-bound-in dissertation -- I said I'm not going to publish this because it's unreadable. It's all Germanic with all heavy footnotes and I said, if I write something, I want people to read it. So what I did, I picked their own journal. I figured if they have to approve the
journal, why don't I start with their own journal and if they reject it, I'll work my way down. But I got it published in the -- what's called the Afe meridoez deologe conveance (phonetic) which is in Latin, which means, the Journal -- the -- let's see, what the word is -- the -- the Journal of the University of Louvain -- the Journal of the Theological School of Louvain, so --

MURPHY: I guess that was reputable.

DR. KELLY: It's blackmail, it's blackmail. I mean you got to produce and that's really pride. Louvain is very prideful of that. When you graduate from Louvain, you now are expected to be publishing your work. That's drummed into you which accounts for what I began to do here. I began publishing all sorts of articles. I became a specialist in the Theology of Bonhoeffer. That was my dissertation. And out of that came the Organization of the Bonhoeffer Society which took place in 1972, and we first called the Archive and Research Center where we were promoting accurate scholarship in the theology of Bonhoeffer. There's a lot of crap out there
that people were misinterpreting, things such as the death of God, theology and things like that. I had already published something from Louvain. I published my first book while I was at Louvain. At Lumen Vitae was when I did the first book. When it came out, I was first — first year student at Louvain at the Bachelarian Disciple —

MURPHY: How was that feeling, seeing your book?

DR. KELLY: It's a very good feeling.

MURPHY: First time.

DR. KELLY: The first book that comes out, very -- I kept giving it --

MURPHY: Did mom go out and buy it?

DR. KELLY: My dad couldn't care. My mom was dead and my dad couldn't care. My family ate it up. They liked it but I gave so many away I don't have any left. To this day, I don't have any copies. It's out of print.

MURPHY: You can't find it anywhere.

DR. KELLY: And it's not a good book. You know, it's one of those things that --

MURPHY: It's your first book.

DR. KELLY: Yeah. I thought I knew
something. It was on teenagers and --

MURPHY: Spirituality?

DR. KELLY: No. It was on catechesis -- what is it -- what is the title of -- Teenagers and --

MURPHY: I know I have it here.

DR. KELLY: Let me see --

MURPHY: A little patience. I'll find it, keep talking.

DR. KELLY: -- it's. I have it written out someplace -- cate -- Teenagers and Catechetics -- see you got the old ones. I have a new one out --

MURPHY: Let's see.

DR. KELLY: Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame.

MURPHY: Remember that.

DR. KELLY: Yeah.

MURPHY: Teenagers and Grace.

DR. KELLY: That's it. Teenagers and Grace.


DR. KELLY: Terrible book, I mean it really is.

MURPHY: So don't buy it if you can find
DR. KELLY: Well, I mean, you won't be able to find it. It's a very small -- the way they printed it up, it's almost like an expanded article.

"as long as it's not going to be published"