

Father Henry Carr (1880–1963)

Born on January 8, 1880, in Oshawa(Ontario), Henry Carr was one of nine children of William Carr and Margaret Quigley. A pious and gifted student, he was encouraged to continue his schooling after graduating from the local high school. A former teacher arranged for him to attend St. Michael's College in Toronto in exchange for teaching introductory German.



After living with the Basilians, he felt called to enter St. Basil's Novitiate, and he was professed on September 8, 1901. He graduated from the University of Toronto in 1903 and was ordained a priest on September 3, 1905. He taught and was a superior at St. Michael's College, was superior general of the Congregation from 1930 to 1942, served as principal and superior of St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, and was the first principal of St. Mark's College, Vancouver, among other appointments.

Father Carr manifested the charism of his Congregation in his life and work, particularly by making three important contributions to Canadian Catholic education. First, he brought the high school curriculum at St. Michael's College in line with modern public school standards so that graduates would be qualified to enter university. Second, he pushed for St. Michael's to be a federated arts college within the University of Toronto, a model which was copied across Canada. Third, he promoted Catholic thought and academic excellence. He encouraged Basilian teachers to obtain advanced degrees, and attracted scholars such as Sir Bertram Windle, Etienne Gilson, and Jacques Maritain to St. Michael's College. With Gilson he was instrumental in founding the Institute of Mediaeval Studies in 1929 and in obtaining its pontifical charter in 1939. He went on to perfect the federation model as principal of St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan from 1942-1949 and to found St. Mark's College, Vancouver in 1958.

Father Carr's work helped to make Catholic higher education an option for all students, not just those interested in the priesthood. Father Carr was known as a faithful friend and spiritual father to many. He passionately supported the social justice initiatives of his confrères, and was the spiritual director of Catherine Doherty. Henry Carr died in Vancouver on November 28, 1963. In 2012 he was designated a person of national historic significance.

LINK: https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2017/06/henry_carr_c_s_b18801963.html



QUOTATIONS:

“The most important work we have to do is to talk to students. In practice it is impossible to do too much of it ... Here is where real education takes place.”

“One of the most important of our works is to win students who come sometimes, or even fairly often, but are not yet so attached that they look on the place as their own and find here the hearth of their university warmth and life. The best means to effect this is for the priests to come to know them and make them feel at home.”

“The university is primarily intellectual; its object is knowledge, and above all wisdom, the highest knowledge, that is, the knowledge of God, His existence and His nature, the knowledge of man’s nature and his relation to God, both in the order of nature and in the order of grace, in philosophy and in theology. Others in the university can take care of the lower forms of knowledge, mathematics and the natural sciences; it is the higher knowledge, wisdom, that is ours to teach the students, not, of course, merely in formal lectures or teaching. As far as occasion permits we will do that too, as well as we can. This is only a part, and only a small part, of our teaching of true doctrine. In every casual conversation, with every student, there may be a chance to throw in an illuminating word, to sow an inspirational thought. We ought to understand that this is the very reason of our existence as a Catholic College and so be ever alert to take advantage of every opportunity.”