The John A. O’Brien Library Collection in Theology and Philosophy

The late Rev. John A. O’Brien was a priest and an author; he spent 40 years teaching and writing at Notre Dame before his death in 1980. A popular Catholic apologist whose books, articles, and pamphlets have reached millions of readers, Father O’Brien was a leader of the Newman Club movement and an early advocate of Church renewal resulting from the Second Vatican Council.

In addition to this collection, Father O’Brien’s generosity has provided endowed professorships and one fellowship at Notre Dame. The overall purpose of his bequest was to contribute directly to Catholic intellectual life and to the Catholic character of the University.

The O’Brien Collection is the backbone of the Libraries’ ongoing effort to build an internationally-renowned collection in Catholic theology and philosophy in the Catholic tradition. For the theology department’s graduate programs in Christianity and Judaism, this collection is instrumental in providing resource support for programmatic emphases in antiquity, systematic theology, moral theology, liturgical studies, and Church history. In philosophy, earnings from the O’Brien Endowment have not only supported the acquisition of works by Catholic philosophers, but also by those who have significantly influenced Catholic thought. The endowment has also been indispensable in building the Libraries’ rare books collections in these areas.