

Twomey, Louis J.



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## TWOMEY, LOUIS J.

Pioneer in interracial and labor relations; b. Tampa, Fla., Oct. 5, 1905; d. [New Orleans \(/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/new-orleans\)](#), La., Oct. 8, 1969. He graduated from [Sacred Heart \(/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/christianity-general/sacred-heart\)](#) College (now known as Jesuit High School) in 1923, after which he attended Georgetown University, then entered the [Society of Jesus \(/philosophy-and-religion/christianity/roman-catholic-orders-and-missions/society-jesus\)](#) at Grand Coteau, La. in 1926. His father's health led him to return home the following year, but he reentered the novitiate in 1929 and took vows there Feb. 2, 1931. He spent the next two years studying philosophy at St. Louis University; from 1933 to 1936 he taught at Spring Hill College (Mobile, Ala.), resuming his seminary studies in theology at St. Mary's College (St. Marys, Kan.), where he was ordained to the priesthood on June 21, 1939.

While at St. Mary's College, Twomey became vitally interested in social problems and published his first articles on the subject, drawing heavily from *Quadragesimo anno* and *Rerum novarum*. In 1945 he started working under the labor relations expert, Leo C. Brown, SJ, at St. Louis University's Institute of Social Order in 1945.

He returned to [the South \(/places/united-states-and-canada/miscellaneous-us-geography/south\)](#) in 1947 to set up the Institute of Industrial Relations (later called Institute of [Human Relations \(/social-sciences-and-law/economics-business-and-labor/businesses-and-occupations/human-relations\)](#)) at Loyola University in [New Orleans \(/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/new-orleans\)](#). During the 1950s and 1960s, Twomey was in the vanguard of the movement toward interracial justice in [the South \(/places/united-states-and-canada/miscellaneous-us-geography/south\)](#). His Institute's direct focus was on social justice and much of its work dealt with trade unionism and management-labor relations. In the South, however, this meant the constant handling of racial issues.

Twomey was constantly at pains to demonstrate that Christian social justice was the most effective answer to Communism. He lectured on the subject continually, especially during the Summer School for Catholic Action sessions all over the U.S. and Canada, starting in 1947

and ending two decades later. In 1964 he established at Loyola University an Inter-American Center "to train younger leadership groups in ... building democratic, social institutions."

Much of Twomey's most effective work, however, was done in the press, in *Social Order* and other such journals. Perhaps most important, however, was *Christ's Blueprint of the South* (later titled *Blueprint for the Christian Reshaping of Society*), which he started in 1948 and wrote singlehandedly almost until his death. It started as a mimeographed letter to Southern Jesuits, but quickly became national and international. By 1958 it went out to 2,000 Jesuits in 44 countries and elicited a strong letter of approval from the Jesuit superior general, John Baptist Janssens, SJ. In 1967, Janssens' successor, Pedro Arrupe, SJ, summoned Twomey to Rome to help prepare an official letter to all Jesuits "On the Interracial Apostolate." It is generally acknowledged that this letter, coupled with the monthly *Blueprint*, had most to do with shaping Jesuit social attitudes for a generation.

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