



The following is the finding aid for the Papal Volunteers for Latin America collection located at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Archives. A finding aid is a catalog tool used in archives that briefly describes the material found in a collection.

A small portion of these records [have been made available digitally](#) thanks to generous financial support. [Researchers must make an appointment with an archivist to view the material in person.](#)

**Papal Volunteers for Latin America
Records, 1960 – 1986 [bulk 1960-1971]
MC 71**

Access

Open/unrestricted except for certain correspondence files. Consult the archivist for details.

Historical Note

Papal Volunteers for Latin America (PAVLA) was a social ministry organization formed in 1960 under the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. By the time the organization closed in 1971, Papal volunteers had been sent to Peru, the British Honduras, Brazil, Paraguay, Costa Rica, and Jamaica. The branch of the organization from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee sent out its first missionaries to Brazil in 1963. Because PAVLA sought to encourage development in Latin American countries, volunteers needed to know some practical skill, like education, health care, or construction, in addition to theology. After being sponsored by their local parishes, volunteers committed to a three year stay in their chosen country as well as an additional training period prior to leaving. Once they arrived, the volunteers built stoves, latrines, and general purpose buildings or provided health care and education. Rather than direct mission work, the volunteers were to exert Christian influence as they worked. By 1966, the Archdiocese had enough parishioners to build a church in Asuncion, Paraguay and send a second priest to assist the lay volunteers.

Scope and Content Note *a brief description of the types of materials in the collection.*

While this was a national organization, the records of this collection primarily reflect the involvement of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. This collection contains correspondence between Fr. Leo Seramur, Fr. Russell Tikalsky, and the Archdiocesan parishes regarding the formation of PAVLA and the donations that supported the volunteers as well as training material and information about the volunteers. It includes many photographs of Paraguay, Costa Rica, and Jamaica, as well as newspaper clippings about PAVLA. Much of the information centers on the SS. Peter and Paul parish in Asuncion, Paraguay, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's foreign mission parish. This collection also includes a short film made by Marquette University in the 1966 using footage from Asuncion Paraguay. The film was made to educate the greater Milwaukee area about the people of Paraguay and the work of the Archdiocese priest who served there.

Box and Folder List *This is a list of folders names within the collection. The folders are listed alphabetically. "B" is an abbreviation for box and "F" is an abbreviation for folder. This list will help the researcher narrow down exactly what folder they want to look at.*

Box	Folder	Folder Title
B 1	F 1	American Redemptorist Correspondence 1965-1966
B 1	F 2	Biennial Report of Church Personnel in Latin America 1970
B 3	F 1	Building Plans, n.d.
B 1	F 3	Departure Ceremony 1964-1966

Box	Folder	Folder Title
B 1	F 4	Donation Correspondence 1966-1977 (restricted)
B 1	F 5	Donations, Parish July 31, 1967
		Film, "Paraguay – The Land Between" Marquette University Part One
		Film, "Paraguay – The Land Between" Marquette University Part Two
		Film, "Paraguay – The Land Between" Marquette University Part Three
B 1	F 6	Ham Radio Operators 1966
B 1	F 7	History of PAVLA binder, National Program 1964-[1971] link to scanned materials
B 1	F 8	History of PAVLA binder, Milwaukee Program 1964-[1971] link to scanned materials
B 1	F 9	History of PAVLA binder, PAVLA quotations 1961-1966 link to scanned materials
B 1	F 10	Lectures and Conferences 1963-1970
B 1	F 11	National Training Center 1965-1967
B 1	F 12	Newsletter from Paraguay Parish 1965-1966
B 1	F 13	Paraguay Correspondence, Fr. Robert Rodriguez 1970 (restricted)
B 1	F 14	Paraguay Correspondence, Ray Otto 1967 (restricted)
B 1	F 15	Paraguay Correspondence, Rev. Paul Wittemann 1969 (restricted)
B 1	F 16	Paraguay Film Project, Marquette 1966-1967
B 1	F 17	Paraguay Information, general 1963-1967
B 1	F 18	Paraguay Initial Correspondence 1964-1966
B 1	F 19	Paraguay Parish Mission 1964-1984
B 1	F 20	Parish Sponsorships 1963-1966
B 2	F 1	PAVLA Training Binder, Overview [1961-1971]
B 2	F 2	PAVLA Training Binder, Brazil Mission Background [1961-1971] link to scanned materials
B 2	F 3	PAVLA Training Binder, Lay Theology [1961-1971] link to scanned materials
F 2	F 4	PAVLA Training Binder, Volunteers [1961-1971] link to scanned materials
B 2	F 5	PAVLA Training Binder, Volunteer Assignments [1961-1971] link to scanned materials
B 2	F 6	PAVLA Training Binder, Checklist and Service Opportunities [1961-1971]
B 2	F 7	Photos, Fr. Leo Seramur [1965] - 1966
B 2	F 8	Photos, Miscellaneous 1962-1969
B 2	F 9	Photos, Miscellaneous 1962-1969
B 2	F 10	Photos, Miscellaneous 1962-1969
B 2	F 11	Photos, Nelson Family 1963-1968 link to scanned materials
B 2	F 12	Photos, Notre Dame Sisters 1986
B 2	F 13	Photos, Paraguay 1966-1986
B 2	F 14	Purchase, Convent and Monthly Reports 1967-1968
B 2	F 15	Purchase, Land-Rover 1965-1966
B 2	F 16	Purchase, Truck April 1966- November 1966
B 3	F 2	Scrapbook, Jamaica 1963-1964
B 2	F 17	Scrapbook, Miscellaneous 1964-[1969]
B 3	F 3	Scrapbook, PAVLA 1963-1964 link to scanned materials
B 2	F 18	Survey of Barrio Luis Alberto de Herrera May 12, 1970
B 2	F 19	Volunteer Information Forms and Costs 1963-1970
B 2	F 20	Volunteer Service Record 1964-1966 link to scanned materials