

Popular Magazine Started in Parish Library

'Catholic Digest' Nears Million Circulation, Operation Housed In Converted Cow Barn

By FLOYD ANDERSON
(N. C. W. C. News Service)

St. Paul, Minn. — (NC) — A converted cow barn on the outskirts of St. Paul, proudly flying the United States and Papal flags, houses the headquarters of the vast operations of the Catholic Digest.

Started in a small store building in the St. Paul Loop during the depression days of 1930, and then only as an aid, something to boost a lending library — the Catholic Digest operations now include:

- The Digest itself, which is nudging the 1,000,000-mark in circulation.
 - Foreign editions in Ireland, Germany, Italy, Holland and Belgium.
 - The Catholic Digest Book Club, with over 30,000 members.
- The present status of the Catholic Digest operations is very impressive. Its beginnings were quite the reverse.

FATHER LOUIS A. Gales, a founder of the Catholic Digest with Father Paul Bussard, now publisher of the Digest, was an assistant in a parish near the Loop. He had a lending library in a one story building. Nobody wanted to borrow any books, and he wasn't getting enough money to pay the store rent.

He believed it would stimulate borrowing if he got out a little Catholic digest of the books and magazines. Father Bussard had just returned to St. Paul from the Catholic University of America, where he had received his doctorate in education, and Father Gales asked him to help with the digest of the books and magazines — and, as Father Bussard says, "we were in business."

Also associated with the beginnings of the Catholic Digest was Father Edward F. Hourings, also a priest of the St. Paul archdiocese, who now has withdrawn from the Digest operation but handles "The Leaflet Missal."

THE CATHOLIC Digest operation is a big one. At the peak of operations each year, it has about 170 employees. Most of these are at St. Paul, which is the main office. The Digest also has an office in New York, which is primarily for editorial work — the contact and development of writers; publicity and public relations; and headquarters for direct mail promotion. The New York headquarters also include the office of the director of the school subscriptions plan.

When the Catholic Digest first began, practically all of its articles came from Catholic magazines. The percentage is changing now. Father Bussard attributes it to the growing interest in religion.

"You can hardly pick up any general paper nowadays without an article on religion," he says.



Catholic Digest All America

Therefore, the percentage of these, for instance, involves getting the Catholic Digest into the supermarkets.

The Catholic Digest has made money on its operations — and put it right back into the business. One of its most laudable projects is its Braille edition. Each month — and this was started in 1940 — 1,000 Braille copies are distributed free to institutions for the blind and to many individuals. The cost is financed in small part by donations — but the Catholic Digest makes up the heavy deficits.

FATHER GALES is still associated with the Catholic Digest as president, but the main burden of its operation falls on Father Bussard, who is the editor and publisher. And to him must go the credit for the tremendous growth of the magazine through the past 21 years.

The Digest operation reflects the personality of Father Bussard — a calm, quiet feeling of everyone knowing what he is supposed to do and doing it as well as possible.



"GOD ANSWERED MY PRAYER FOR YOU" was the congratulatory message given Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Cramer on their golden wedding anniversary by Monsignor Thomas F. Connors, Blessed Sacrament Church pastor who officiated at the couple's wedding ceremony fifty years ago. Mrs. Bertha Bowen, bridesmaid for the Cramer's, took the same role at the couple's anniversary Mass celebrated Saturday by Monsignor Connors.

Msgr. Connors—Jubilee Couple

Just Like 50 Years Ago

Monsignor Thomas F. Connors, the priest who joined Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Cramer in marriage fifty years ago, celebrated the couple's anniversary Mass Saturday in Blessed Sacrament Church, Rochester.

"In the years that are left to us," said the celebrant in a brief message of congratulation following the Mass, "we want to draw every day closer to our dear Lord."

HE CITED the Cramer's gold anniversary as proof that his prayer for them fifty years ago had been answered "that your love for God and for each other would grow deeper and

stronger as the years go on." "Maybe we don't feel so young any more," the prelate admitted but he stressed the jubilant's duty to "continue the good example of kindness and helpfulness you have shown for fifty golden years."

Monsignor Connors is himself about to mark a significant anniversary, his sixtieth year as a Catholic priest. He was ordained June 11, 1898. He has been the only pastor of the fifty seven year old Blessed Sacrament parish which he founded in 1901. He is the oldest pastor in active service in the Rochester Diocese.

KNEELING NEXT to Mr.

and Mrs. Cramer during the jubilee Mass was Mrs. Bertha Bowen who served as maid of honor at the wedding rite in the old Blessed Sacrament Church, Jan. 13, 1908. Frank DeRoo, a life long friend of the Cramer's, took the place of the late John Fisher as best man.

A sk e d what were her thoughts during her anniversary Mass, Mrs. Cramer said, "I just thanked God for the wonderful husband He gave me and for our fifty years of happiness."

Mr. and Mrs. Cramer live at 42 Asbury St.

Student Reception Planned At Sacred Heart Academy

Prospective students and their parents are invited to a reception sponsored by the Alumnae at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, 8 Prince St. on Sunday, Jan. 26 from 2:30 to 5 p.m. according to the Religious of the Sacred Heart who conduct the school.

Visitors will be taken through the academy which is a day school for girls. Boarding school accommodations for girls in grades seven through 12 are available.

Buffalo, N. Y. — (NC) — "I don't seem to have enough time for everything. I wonder whether my work has increased or whether I might be slowing down a bit."

The comment was made by Mrs. Richard O'Brien, 95, pastor for nearly 30 years at Annunciation church here.

The Monsignor arises each morning at 3:45 a.m., and rarely retires before 11 p.m. He offers Mass daily, and twice on Sundays, and carries on the duties of pastor.

Mrs. O'Brien is the oldest priest in the Buffalo diocese.

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