

Local News

Newspaper marks 100th year with name change

By Lee Strong

The board of directors of the Rochester Catholic Press Association, parent company of the *Courier-Journal*, voted at its December, 1988, meeting to change the newspaper's name to *Catholic Courier*. The name change was adopted legally on Jan. 10, 1989, and will take effect with the issue of Feb. 16.

According to Bishop Dennis Hickey, general manager of the 100-year-old diocesan newspaper, the board made the decision to reinforce the paper's Catholic identity. "A newspaper sponsored by the diocese should have something which identifies it as a Catholic publication reflecting Catholic news," he said.

The name change is the latest wrinkle in a long history that began one evening in 1889 when printer Edward J. Ryan, typesetter Thomas H. Donovan and Willard A. Marakle, a reporter with the *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, visited Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid, the first Catholic bishop of Rochester.

Out of that meeting came the *Catholic Journal*, the direct predecessor of this newspaper. The first edition of the new Catholic publication was published Oct. 5, 1889. Although the paper has undergone various name changes and reorganizations, it is the longest-lived continuous Catholic newspaper in the diocese.

Marakle was the first editor, but left after five years. He was succeeded by Donovan, who in turn left after a few years. Ryan then became the editor, a position he held until his death in 1928.

Ryan's daughter, Ruth Ryan, tried to keep the paper in operation after the death of her father, but was unable to do so. In March, 1929, a group of laymen and priests, with the encouragement of then-Bishop John F. O'Hern, bought the paper and renamed it the *Catholic Courier and Journal* to differentiate it from the *Catholic Journal*. Although still privately owned, the paper became the official diocesan newspaper. Maurice F. Sammons was named managing editor.

Financially unstable when the group bought it, the paper was hit hard by the Great Depression. On April 7, 1932, the diocese assumed control. Father Leo C. Mooney was made managing editor, and Thomas H. O'Connor, who had edited the Rochester edition of the *Catholic Echo* since 1924, became the news editor. Meanwhile, the paper was renamed the *Catholic Courier*.

Throughout most of the 1930s, Father Mooney struggled to keep the paper solvent. Edward Esse, associate editor from 1938 to 1942, described the priest as "a magician and a banker." Nevertheless, money remained short, and at times the staff went without pay for as many as five weeks. In 1939, Father William Hart, vicar general of the diocese and pastor of Corpus Christi Parish, became the editor-in-chief, and on several occasions he advanced money to help pay the bills.



Thomas O'Connor was a central figure at the paper during this period. Although officially designated as news editor, he was essentially the editor of the *Catholic Courier*. O'Connor remained with the newspaper from 1932 until he retired in 1968. In 1948, he was honored for 25 years in Catholic journalism, and in 1968, the 100th anniversary of the diocese, he was noted as one of the key laymen who "strengthened the faith of the diocese."

In 1942, Father Mooney left the *Catholic Courier* to devote himself more fully to his duties as pastor of St. Patrick's Church. He left behind a paper that was financially stable, if not profitable. Circulation, meanwhile, had increased to just over 14,000.

Father Mooney's replacement as managing editor was Monsignor John S. Randall. The new managing editor — variously described as a "fireball," a "dynamo" and "one of the best businessmen in the diocese" — brought with him a growing reputation as an organizer and a fund-raiser. Within five years, armed with Bishop James E. Kearney's call for 100 percent subscriptions in parishes, he managed to double the newspaper's circulation. By 1971, his last year as managing editor, the paper's circulation had risen to over 70,000 subscriptions.

Monsignor Randall became active in the Catholic Press Association, attending its national convention in 1943, hosting the convention in Rochester in 1947, and eventually becoming the association's secretary (1949-54), vice president (1954-56) and president (1956-58). In 1947, he represented the associa-

tion at a U.S. Senate subcommittee investigation of the nation's critical newsprint shortage.

Joining Monsignor Randall at the *Catholic Courier* was Monsignor Patrick Flynn, who served as the newspaper's editor from 1942 to 1958. Bishop Dennis Hickey described Monsignor Flynn as "a professional news person" who "was very much interested in the social teachings of the church, with an emphasis on labor and unions." His column, "On Guard," which regularly appeared on the front page of the paper, displayed an in-depth understanding of social issues and church teachings.

On April 7, 1985, the *Catholic Courier* became the *Catholic Courier-Journal*. Martin Moll, who has been involved with the news-

paper since 1946 and is currently a member of its board of directors, speculated that the change was made in part because the paper was changing its format and taking on a greater role in the life of the local church.

"I think as (the staff) sensed the importance of the newspaper, they began to reevaluate it," he said. "I think they thought the adding of 'Journal' was going to make it sound more like a contemporary paper."

The newspaper continued with pretty much the same senior staff until 1958. At that time, Monsignor Hart, who for 19 years contributed editorials and advice, stepped down as editor-in-chief due to ill health. Monsignor Flynn also departed, taking over as administrator of St. Agnes Parish, Avon.

Replacing Monsignor Flynn was Father Henry Atwell, who had joined the staff as associate editor in 1954. A liberal whom Bishop Hickey described as "way ahead of his time," the new editor became a leading advocate of ecumenism and of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

Father Robert Kanka, now pastor of St. James the Apostle Parish, Trumansburg, served as assistant editor under Father Atwell from 1965 to 1967. He said that Father Atwell's brilliance as an editor and a writer were enhanced by the times. The Second Vatican Council, the Rochester race riots of 1964, the formation of FIGHT (Freedom, Integration, God, Honor, Today) and the arrival in 1966 of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen all contributed to make "it an interesting time to write about the church," Father Kanka observed.

Throughout 1966 and '67, however, the liberal Father Atwell and the conservative Bishop Sheen disagreed about the paper's direction. At one point, the bishop suggested closing down the paper and purchasing an advertising supplement in the daily press. Finally, in November 1967, Father Atwell left the paper to become pastor of St. Agnes of Avon.

Father Kanka, who had studied journalism at Syracuse University, was appointed interim edi-

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Jesuit high school suffers costly loss to burglars

Burglars stole more than \$8,000 worth of computer and electronic equipment from McQuaid Jesuit High School early last week.

Teachers arriving for work on Tuesday morning, Jan. 31, discovered items missing from four classrooms and an assistant principal's office at the school, 1800 Clinton Ave. S., in Brighton. Included were electronic scales, a color television, a videocassette recorder, a computer system and portable copier and other science-related equipment and material.

Joseph Marchese, McQuaid's assistant principal for student affairs, reported the loss to police, whose investigation indicates that the burglary occurred sometime after Monday evening at 8:30 p.m.

Police investigators have found no signs of forced entry to the school, which school officials say is locked at night. "Because there was no sign of force, that would indicate that either someone left a door open, slipped a lock, or someone had a key," said Brighton Police Sgt. Bill Flood.

Although Father Paul Nochelski, SJ, the school's principal, believes the school's insurance will cover the loss, he added that computer disks which stored hours-worth of work by students and teachers were also taken. "We are discussing whether we need to make our security measures more stringent," he said.

— Teresa A. Parsons



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New logo to grace 'Courier' pages

Two overlapping C's — one positive (black) and one negative (white) — form the logotype for the newly renamed *Catholic Courier*.

Beginning with the edition of Feb. 16, the distinctive logo will appear in the nameplate of the *Catholic Courier*, and will later be used on corporate stationery for the newspaper's parent company, the Rochester Catholic Press Association.

The logo, designed by staff graphic artist Lorraine Hennessey, is being unveiled this month to mark the convergence of four events — the 100th anniversary of Catholic journalism in the Diocese of Rochester, the national celebration of Catholic Press Month, the full implementation of a new typesetting system and the official change in name from *Courier-Journal* to *Catholic Courier*.

The three-dimensional C design is the focal point of a major redesign of the newspaper. It and other changes — larger

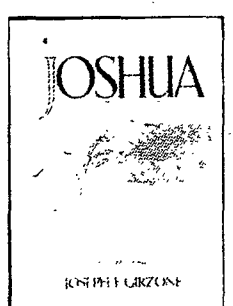


type for articles; a clean, modern typeface for use in headlines; new page and column logos; and a greater emphasis on photos and illustrations — will debut with the Feb. 16 issue.

The overall effect of the redesign will be a newspaper that is easier to read and more attractive. This — accompanied by greater emphasis on parish news and the allocation of greater space to local news articles — is part of the *Courier-Journal/Catholic Courier's* continuing effort to respond to readers' needs and produce an ever-improving publication.

— Karen M. Franz

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