



CATHOLIC COURIER

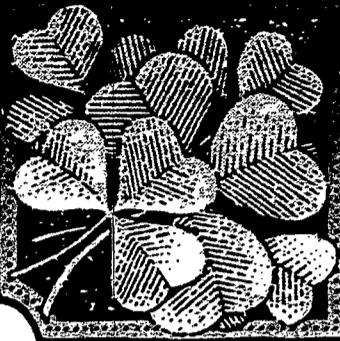
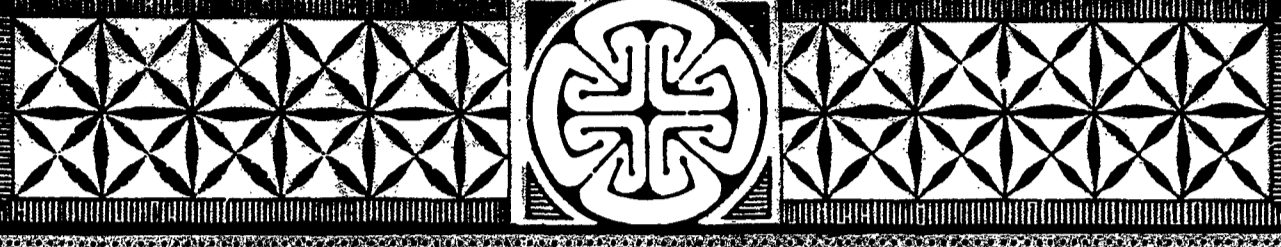
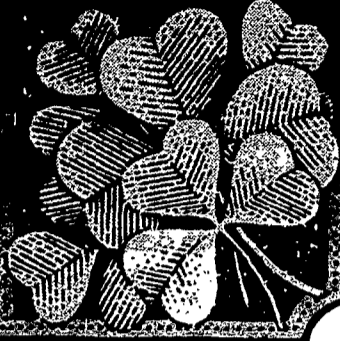
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This St. Patrick's Day — that's March 17 — as if you didn't know — DeSales High School Principal Ed Tracey will host his 15th annual Irish radio broadcast to raise money for the Geneva school. Page 7.



Irish influence lingers in U.S. Catholic Church

Archbishop John Carroll was the first bishop of the United States.

Cardinal John McClosky of New York City was the first U.S. cardinal.

Bishop Bernard McQuaid was the first bishop of the Rochester diocese.

In addition to being "firsts" in the U.S. Catholic hierarchy, these men shared a common heritage.

All three were Irish by birth or descent.

And they were far from a minority among church leaders of their days — or of those that followed.

According to Jay Dolan's book, *The American Catholic Experience*, in fact, the Irish accounted for 62 percent of U.S. bishops by 1900, even though the Irish at that time represented only

50 percent of the Catholic population.

Such Irish dominance in the hierarchy led to the term, the "hibernarchy." It also led to tensions with other Catholic ethnic groups — especially the Germans, Poles and Italians.

This dominance extended beyond the hierarchy, however, to the ranks of the clergy and the congregations of women religious.

Theologians and historians studying the U.S. Catholic Church note that this disproportion among clerics and religious — coupled with the sheer volume of Irish immigrants to the United States during the 19th century — has left a distinctly Celtic mark.

As Thomas Day observed in his book *Why Catholic Can't Sing*, "American Catholicism de-

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By Lee Francis Strong

