



INTRODUCTION

TO THE CONTINUING
RETROSPECTIVE
OF THIS
DIOCESAN NEWSPAPER

1940-1949

By MICHELE LEVANDOSKI
Archivist

The decade of the 1940s was a period of change for *The Western Catholic*. In February of 1943, Msgr. Martin J. Foley, the editor of the paper for over 30 years, died. The newspaper was considered the official to the diocese, but because Msgr. Foley owned 90 percent of the newspaper's stock, technically it belonged to him. However, in his will he left the paper to Bishop James A. Griffin and his successors, thus turning it into a diocesan-owned newspaper.

On Feb. 7, 1943 the paper's banner was changed to say that *The Western Catholic* was the "Official Newspaper of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois."

That same day launched a new look for the paper. In the previous three decades, the look of the paper changed, but never drastically. Msgr. Foley played with different fonts and title styles, but he never strayed far from the same basic design used when he purchased the paper in 1909. Bishop Griffin and the new editor, Father John Brockmeier, however, were forced to make drastic changes to the look and content of the paper, due in part, to World War II.

On Jan. 29, 1943, Bishop Griffin announced that *The Western Catholic* was going to consolidate with *Our Sunday Visitor*, a national Catholic newspaper. He based his decision on three factors: the limited circulation of the paper; the increased cost of paper and press repairs due to the war; and the lack of office personnel — many left to serve in the military or work for the war effort. The "new" paper was divided into three sections: the first section was *The Western Catholic*, the second was the regular edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* and the third was the youth magazine from *Our Sunday Visitor*. Despite these changes, the paper continued to report on world and local events, especially those that affected the Catholic Church.

NEW WESTERN CATHOLIC

BISHOP GRIFFIN OPENS
CATHOLIC PRESS MONTH
WITH CONSOLIDATION OF
WESTERN CATHOLIC AND
OUR SUNDAY VISITOR

Coincident with the month of February — Catholic Press Month — the Springfield Diocese, under the leadership of Bishop James A. Griffin, launches a new diocesan newspaper with an old name.

Beginning today the *Western Catholic* will be published in consolidation with *Our Sunday Visitor*. The pastoral letter of Bishop Griffin published last week and read in all churches of the diocese last Sunday, explained the reasons for consolidating and urged the support of all priests and people of the diocese for the success of the new venture.

The *Western Catholic* now is the official newspaper of the diocese. The pastors have been requested by the Bishop to ask their parishioners to subscribe for this paper during Catholic Press Month.

Free copies of the new *Western Catholic* are to be distributed today in all the churches of the diocese in order to acquaint the people with their new diocesan newspaper, and it is the Bishop's wish that every parish will report 100 per cent subscriptions by the end of February. To further encourage this objective the pastors have been instructed by Bishop Griffin to preach on the subject of the "Catholic Press" every Sunday this month.

Persons accustomed to reading the national edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* and the popular magazine for Youth now will receive both publications along with their *Western Catholic*. The combined papers cost only \$2 per year by mail. Subscriptions are to be given to the pastors of the various parishes. They will send them to the *Western Catholic* office and report the results of their subscription campaign to Bishop Griffin.

The Western Catholic — Feb. 7, 1943

Father Brady reported killed in action

By MICHELE LEVANDOSKI
Archivist

On Aug. 10, 1943, Bishop James A. Griffin, received a telegram that Rev. Thomas Terence Brady, former assistant pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church in Jerseyville, was killed in action during the third week of July in the Solomon Islands while serving as a chaplain in the United States Army.

Father Brady was born in Mt. Sterling on Oct. 26, 1912 and was educated at Quincy College and Kenrick Seminary. He was ordained by Bishop Griffin at the Cathedral on April 24, 1938 and his first appointment was as assistant pastor of St. Francis Xavier. He enlisted in the army as a first lieutenant on Sept. 21, 1941, but continued to serve at Jerseyville until Jan. 6, 1942 when he reported to Camp Shelby, Miss., for training.

Initially the details of Father Brady's death were sketchy. However, a letter written by a fellow chaplain, Rev. Ferdinand Evans, provided detailed information about Father Brady's heroic death.

Late in the afternoon on July 22, 1943 the Japanese started bombarding the forward area of

Horseshoe Hill on the island of New Georgia. During the bombardment a soldier was wounded. According to the letter, "Father Tom and Dr. Carter ran out to care for him thinking nothing of their own safety." Father Brady provided spiritual ministrations and assisted the medic in providing first aid. The two men were carrying the wounded soldier on a stretcher when a shell exploded, killing Dr. Carter instantly and wounding Father Brady.

Father Brady was taken to a foxhole to receive medical attention. While there, Father Brady kept cautioning the men to be careful and keep down and to look after the other wounded. According to the letter, he was calm throughout the episode, despite his injuries. During the last and most severe bombardment, the foxhole took a direct hit. When order was restored it was found that Father Brady and another soldier were dead. Two others in the foxhole died later at the hospital and others suffered minor wounds. It was reported that Father Brady's last words were of general absolution and a prayer that God spare the

medics so that the wounded would receive aid.

According to Rev. Evans, Father Brady had a premonition of his death. Father Brady told Rev. Evans that he would never return to the United States; he later told another soldier, "This is where I stay."

Father Brady was laid to rest on July 23 in a small clearing behind the front lines, "amidst shattered trees and twisted vines. A cross made of two sticks marked the hallowed spot." His remains were later transferred to the island cemetery and in 1948 he was brought home to the United States and was laid to rest at the cemetery in Mt. Sterling.

Father Brady was only chaplain from the Springfield diocese to die in action during World War II. His name is inscribed on the Chaplains' Hill Monument at Arlington National Cemetery, which honors Catholic military chaplains who died during WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Father Brady attended to the wounded with no regard for his own safety and he paid the ultimate price. His sacrifice should never be forgotten.

Three Thousand Attend V-E Day Service Held Here In Cathedral of Immaculate Conception

Bishop Griffin Preaches And Pontificates at Benediction

Only a third of the more than 3,000 persons who gathered for the V-E Day thanksgiving service at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception found sitting or standing room inside the church Tuesday night, May 8. Throngs crowded Cathedral square and jammed the sidewalks and streets. Traffic was detoured. People began to gather at the church at 6:30 p.m. for services scheduled to start at 7:45.

It was the Catholic thanksgiving — Te Deum — service for the city of Springfield. Bishop James A. Griffin pontificated at solemn Benediction and preached the sermon for the occasion. The Franciscan Brothers choir, joined by thousands of voices of the laity and clergy, sang a solemn Te Deum followed by the National anthem.

PARADE TO CHURCH

The band of the Cathedral Boys' high school led uniformed details of Boy and Girl scouts, cadet nurses, Junior Catholic Daughters of America, the American Legion, detachments of police, and the graduating classes of the three Catholic high schools in a parade from the Knights of Columbus

building to the Cathedral.

The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus formed a guard of honor for Bishop Griffin.

A display of united nations flags was spotlighted in the cathedral lawn during the ceremonies...

BISHOP GRIFFIN SPEAKS

Speaking from the throne, Bishop Griffin pointed out the significance of V-E Day from the viewpoint of religion and the future peace of the world. Taking as his text one of the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the peacemakers," the Bishop prayed, in the name of the people, for the leaders of the Allied armies, whose generalship and perseverance brought a quick peace to the downtrodden nations of Europe. "America's contributions of war materials and military leadership of the Allied cause were our joint contributions to the peace," the Bishop declared.

Looking to the future, Bishop Griffin asked for prayers for the world statesmen gathered at the security conference of the United Nations in San Francisco. "This conference must concern itself with the just and equitable reconstruction of the world. Right think-

ing men desire a peace founded on justice, a peace recognizing the just demands of all nations, large and small. And that includes tragic Poland and all small countries."

With striking emphasis, Bishop Griffin detailed the contributions made by the American people, and particularly the Catholics of the nation, to the war effort. "There has been no interference, thank God, on the part of our government with the free exercise of religion. This is as it should be a land which recognizes the inalienable rights of men. I feel that we Americans have an obligation to our fellowmen throughout the world to endow them with a like charter of Christian statehood in the re-formation of the war torn world."

Bishop Griffin lauded the participation of the last two Popes in the cause of universal peace, showing how both Pontiffs exemplified in their lives and actions their sovereign mottoes "The Peace of Christian the Kingdom of Christ," and "Peace is the Fruit of Justice."

The Western Catholic — May 20, 1943

57 Died In Fire In Hospital At Effingham

Worst Hospital Tragedy In History Strikes At St. Anthony's

As we go to press early Tuesday word reaches us of the fire which flashed through the 80-year-old St. Anthony's hospital, Effingham, trapping scores of helpless patients. Authorities fear that at least 57 persons perished, including the Rev. C.C. Sandon, chaplain and at least two nuns.

Ten newborn babies died in the disaster, one of the worst hospital fires in the nation's history. Another baby was born dead after its mother was injured critically in jumping out of a window.

Shortly before 1 p.m., C.S.T., April 5, 34 bodies had been counted, 31 of them in the temporary morgue and three at other points. Of these 26 were identified.

The fire started shortly before midnight in the basement of the three-story, brick building, which supposedly was fireproof and had its own fire extinguishing system. The cause of the fire was not known. The flames shot up a laundry chute and swept through all floors.

Patients died in attempts to crawl through thick smoke and flames that filled the corridors. Others died in their beds, some with their legs in casts or suspension slings. Fireman Charles Jaycox said about 12 patients jumped from windows, killing at least one and injuring several. Others were helped from first floor windows.

Much of the interior of the building collapsed. Floors and ceilings were piled on the bodies and authorities said that the exact death toll might never be known. The hospital records were destroyed. Hours after the flames were put out firemen were digging through the debris and carrying bodies to an improvised morgue.

At noon Tuesday 22 bodies had been recovered and 13 identified.

Bishop O'Connor Asks Families In Diocese To Give Homes And Jobs To Displaced Persons Says One Application From Each Parish Will Fill Diocese Quota To Sponsor 100 Persons

Dearly Beloved of the Faithful,

With utmost confidence in your spirit of Charity and Christian brotherhood I place before you the needs of one hundred Displaced Persons in Europe who must have the assurance of a home and a job to be able to enter our country.

In the past year over twelve thousand Displaced Persons have been assisted and resettled by the Catholic Church in the United States. Of this number our diocese has received only forty-three persons. We have found them grateful to God for their welcome among us and willing to put up with many

The Rev. John J. Goff, pastor of St. Anthony's church, connected with the hospital, said the last estimate of the number of persons in the building at the time of the fire started was 134.

These included, he said, 108 patients, five non-patients, a Miss Mary Kessler, and 22 nuns. Rescuers' check lists showed that 57 patients and 20 nuns escaped. Miss Kessler died in the flames.

The dead included Miss Fern Riley, 21, a nurse who refused to leave the babies and died a heroine apparently trying to save them, firemen said.

Others reported dead besides Father Sandon include two nuns, Sisters Bertina and Eustachia, and Frank Reis, hospital superintendent, who dashed into the flame-swept building in an effort to help patients.

Possibility that the death toll might be higher was expressed by Dr. Glen R. Marshall, a staff physician, who said he believed there were 112 patients in the building, rather than 108.

National guardsmen with rifles and state police patrolled the area and hundreds of relatives and townspeople flocked to the hospital and morgue seeking loved ones.

Attendants at the temporary morgue said it would be impossible to identify all of the babies, although they had the names of all parents.

The American Red Cross disaster headquarters at St. Louis, sent workers with 50 cots, 100 blankets and 200 units of blood plasma, to set up a shelter and aid in the search for bodies. Additional plasma was rushed from Mattoon, Ill.

The Western Catholic — April 10, 1949

Decatur Parish Invests \$2,000 In War Bonds

The Very Rev. Jeremiah Murphy, Decatur and Macon County's dean of Catholicism, denounced the Hitler brand of Germans and urged all Christians to back our home servicemen by buying war bonds as he turned over a \$2,000 check for bonds for St. Patrick's Catholic church.

Father Murphy, who has served Decatur as a priest since 1898, said that it is fitting that St. Patrick's church should invest its money in bonds since its honor roll now lists the names of more than 200 young men who are serving their church and country.

"I was not born in this country; I was born in Ireland. But when I came over here the first thing I did was make application for citizenship papers. I'm an American citizen as well as a priest and either capacity I don't want any Germans of the Hitler-brand near the Vatican!"

The priest's comment on the Berlin reports that the Germans have occupied Rome and would protect the Vatican was a disgusted snort.

Then he remarked again about the precision used by the Allies in bombing only military targets when they were over Rome and the great care exercised to preserve the historic buildings. He expressed little hope that the Nazi would be as considerate.

When Lynn Clark, county board chairman, thanked Father Murphy, the priest waved his hand impatiently and said, "Don't thank me; I wanted my church to do it — it's their duty."

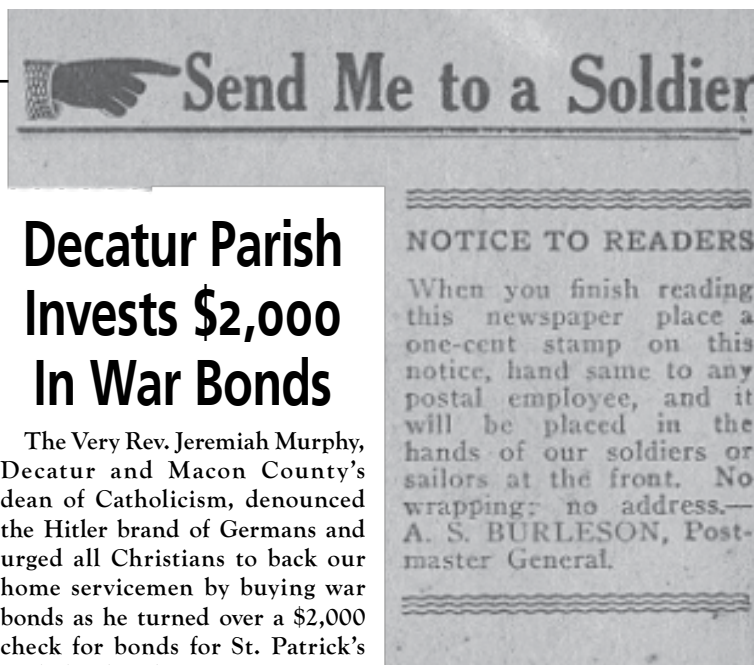
The Western Catholic — Sept. 26, 1943

will answer, "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me."

Your pastor will give you every assistance in securing the application forms for sponsoring a Displaced Person. They can be secured at the offices of our Catholic Charities in Springfield, Decatur, Alton or Quincy.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
William A. O'Connor,
Bishop of Springfield-in-Illinois

The Western Catholic — Sept. 4, 1949



Decorated Bicycles Will Be Opening Event of The K. of C. Barbecue

The Knights of Columbus Annual Barbecue will be held in Baldwin Park on Sunday, August 25th.

The decorated bicycle parade, which will be the opening event of the Barbecue, will move through the business district on Saturday night, August 24th.

Every boy and girl is eligible to enter a decorated bicycle. There will be 18 prizes — the first an American Flyer bike.

The parade will form at Twelfth and Maine streets — from Maine to Fourth — Fourth to Hampshire — Hampshire to Seventh to St. Boniface School yard where the judging will be done under floodlights. The judges will be Kenneth Elmore, Clare Heald and Miss Jane Fifer.

Those wishing to enter decorated bicycles should telephone Earl Keck, 2761-W, or Charles Fitch, 1402 for further information.

The K. of C. Barbecue will be the big event of the year in Quincy.

Arrangements are being made to accommodate 30,000 persons.

Daredevil Jimmie Lynch and his death dodgers will thrill the assembled thousands.

You must not miss the Barbecue in Baldwin Park on Sunday, August 25th. Have you secured your tickets? Please attend to the tickets.

The Western Catholic — Aug. 16, 1940

QUIZ

In 1940, the following quiz questions were asked of *Western Catholic* readers as part of "the greatest educational campaign in the history of Catholic journalism." Readers were encouraged to submit their answers to win a portion of \$15,000 in prize money. The contest consisted of 50 questions over 11 weeks. This was "a method of education so interesting, so entertaining, so profitable that it is certain to appeal to every reader."

How well would today's Catholics do? Here are a few questions, but fair warning: there are no prizes for 2009 quiz-takers.

Who is the Patron Saint of the Catholic Press?

1. St. Thomas Aquinas
2. St. Francis de Sales
3. St. Francis Assisi
4. St. Paul Apostle
5. The Blessed Virgin
6. St. John Bosco
7. St. Joseph
8. St. Leo

Who was the first Christian martyr?

1. St. John the Baptist
2. St. Peter
3. St. Paul
4. St. Stephen
5. St. Linus
6. St. Clement
7. St. Jude
8. St. Thomas

Which is the most excellent of the Sacraments?

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Holy Eucharist
4. Penance
5. Holy Orders
6. Extreme Unction
7. Matrimony

Who was the celebrant of the first Mass?

1. God the Father
2. God the Son
3. God the Holy Ghost
4. St. Peter
5. St. Paul
6. St. John
7. St. Matthew
8. St. Luke

Which of these is absolutely necessary for salvation?

1. A thorough knowledge of the Church's teachings.
2. The theological virtues.
3. Baptism by water.
4. Confirmation.
5. The Holy Eucharist.
6. Sacrament of Penance.
7. Membership in the Catholic Church.
8. Charity.