



INTRODUCTION

TO THE CONTINUING
RETROSPECTIVE
OF THIS
DIOCESAN NEWSPAPER

1950-1959

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The 1950s was a period of explosive growth in both the United States and the Catholic Church in central Illinois. During the Great Depression and World War II, Americans had learned to do without and to economize. During the 1950s, however, the American economy benefited from the growth of industry and the availability of goods that were not accessible during the war.

The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois also benefited from this economic growth and prosperity. The Depression and World War II meant that few parishes had the money or supplies needed for construction and renovations. In 1952, the diocese created the Diocesan Development Fund, which allowed parishes and the diocese to engage in numerous expansion and construction projects.

For example, the Dec. 29, 1957 edition of *The Western Catholic*

includes articles about the numerous building projects occurring throughout the diocese such as: additions to St. John's Hospital in Springfield and St. Vincent's Hospital in Taylorville; new schools at Hardin, Springfield, Quincy, Venice and Highland; new churches in Montrose and Granite City and a new rectory in Madison.

The diocese also expanded in other ways. Bishop William O'Connor established seven new parishes during the 1950s and in 1953, he held the Second Diocesan Synod. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine programs were established throughout the diocese to provide religious education for Catholic children attending public schools. Rural life programs and other types of organizations were also established, making the 1950s, not only a period of physical growth for the church in central Illinois, but also a time of spiritual growth.

Although the 1950s was a period of progress for the United States, it was also an intense period in international relations. The growth of Communism after World War II led to the Cold War and the Korean War (1950-53). *The Western Catholic* reported on the spread of Communism and how it affected Catholics living behind the Iron Curtain.

1953 Clothes Drive For Korea Set

Bishop Appeals For Refugees And Victims Of War In Korea, Europe, The Near And Far East

His Excellency the Most Rev. Bishop William A. O'Connor has issued the following letter to be read today in all churches of the diocese:

Dearly Beloved in Christ,
During Thanksgiving Week, beginning Sunday, November 22 and ending Sunday, November 29, a Clothing Collection will be taken up in all the churches of our diocese for the relief of the destitute people of Korea and for the impoverished refugees in Europe, the Near East and the Far East. The Catholics of the United States are again uniting in a mighty charitable effort which will save many lives. Our people have never failed to respond generously to the appeal of the Bishops of our country for Thanksgiving contributions of used but still usable clothing, shoes and blankets. The prompt and economical shipment to distant lands of many thousands of tons of this donated clothing and its free distribution to all in need is a noble record of Christian charity in our times.

In our own parishes in the past four years 150 tons of good used clothing have been gathered, sorted, packed and shipped to the Bishops' War Relief Services for quick delivery abroad. The value of the clothing contributed by our own diocese alone is more than \$42,000, yet the personal charity of giving one's own belongings gives it a far greater value, something beyond price.

Thanksgiving Day brings home to us how good God has been to all of us in our country. What better way is there to thank Him than by giving to others less favored,

something of our own comfort, some small share of our plenty? There is little sacrifice in donating ones used and discarded clothing. Yet there is measurable sacrifice in the personal effort of collecting and packing it. There is work for all the parish to do as its united Thanksgiving effort. The children can go about the parish reminding all of this appeal and helping to bring the clothing to the church; the women can sort the clothing and prepare it for packing; the men can do the heavy work of packing the clothing securely and delivering it for shipment. The better the work of sorting and packing is done in the parishes, the faster the clothing can be shipped overseas to those in need. I ask all our people to join together in what is truly an act of religion. Please give something of your time as well as your clothing.

The arrangements for the Thanksgiving Clothing Collection in each parish will be explained to



ANNUAL CLOTHING APPEAL—This striking poster will be displayed in parish halls and schools throughout the United States calling attention to the 1953 Catholic Bishops' Thanksgiving Clothing Collection for Korea, Europe, the Near and Far East, the week, November 22-29. Clothing, shoes and blankets will be collected at parish depots throughout the country and from there sent to the warehouses of War Relief Services-National Catholic Welfare Conference in New York, to be baled and shipped overseas. (NC Photos)

you in church after this letter is read. I ask all the priests to make an additional special announcement of the Thanksgiving Clothing Collection as a reminder on Sunday, November 22.

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

THE WESTERN CATHOLIC -
Nov. 15, 1953

Catholic Rural Life Day Noted At Newton

Over 1,000 farmers participated in the first Day of Christian Rural Living to be held in the Springfield Diocese, on Sunday, March 21, at St. Thomas Church, Newton.

His Excellency The Most Rev. Bishop William A. O'Connor presided at this rural observance. Approximately 30 priests were also present.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies, Bishop O'Connor observed that ... modern techniques and improvements are not the heart of farm life. The heart of farm life remains the same ... a dependence on God.

Without the sun, rain and soil we would be lost. But with the sun, rain and soil, without the life in the seed, one of the mysteries of life, we could not begin to live. And over this all God with His good Providence, so the piece of machinery can never substitute for sun, rain, soil and seed. The cleverness of man can never come near to substituting for God. We are His, and we depend on Him utterly ... , according to Bishop O'Connor.

The observance was marked by a series of colorful processions. In the first procession "The Wonder

of the New Life of Nature," soil and seeds of various types were carried into the church by men of the parish. ...

The part family life plays in farm communities was shown in the second procession "The Joy and Love of Family and Home." This procession included four children, Janet Emmerich, John Menke, Larry Jansen and Andy Dhom, bearing wedding ring, marriage ritual and holy water.

That a Christian farmer is working toward saving his soul was brought out in the third procession "Gifts of Redemption,"

which included a statue of the Infant of Prague borne by Leo Schuetter, Paul Weber, Emmanuel Kerner and Vincent Dhom; a crucifix carried by Joseph Hipp; a Bible carried by Leo Dhom.

Rev. Edward W. O'Rourke of Champaign, rural life Director of the Peoria Diocese delivered the sermon. He brought out the advantages of Christian family life, and warned of dangers of emphasizing material things on the farm.

Bishop O'Connor was celebrant at Solemn Benediction assisted by Rev. John Colavecchio and Rev.

Walter Deppisch.

Following Benediction, Bishop O'Connor blessed the packets of soil, and packets of seeds, brought by the farmers from their homes. These were taken back to the farms and broadcast over the fields or mixed with the seeds to be sown.

Immediately following the church services, Bishop O'Connor gave the blessing of the farm animals and the farm implements which were arranged in the churchyard.

THE WESTERN CATHOLIC -
April 4, 1954

Today Is Diocesan Development Sunday

Leaflet Reports Many Noteworthy Accomplishments



Contributions to the Diocesan Development Fund will be received today in all churches and missions of the Springfield Diocese. Special envelopes for the offerings were distributed at all Masses last Sunday. At the same time a letter issued on the subject by His Excellency, the Most Rev. Bishop William A. O'Connor was read from the pulpit. Likewise, leaflets, explaining the purpose of the fund, were given to the faithful.

The leaflet points out that the Diocesan Development Fund is "our united effort to spread the faith and to strengthen the church in our diocese."

In order to give wider circulation to the contents of the leaflet, and that all may know full particulars concerning this most worthy project, the full text follows:

The Diocesan Development Fund was begun in 1952 to unite our Catholic people in an annual major missionary effort for our own diocese. Their generous response and cooperation have already made notable results possible. In addition to its material accomplishments the Diocesan Development Fund brings home to all a better understanding of what it means to belong to a diocese and what can be done for

the cause of Christ by working together. The building of small churches to spread the faith where no Catholic Church exists, and the training of our own boys to serve someday as priests in this mission territory, as well as in our parishes, are examples of diocesan needs that extend beyond the responsibility and exceed the capacity of single parishes. The Diocesan Development Fund provides method and means to strengthen the Church in our own diocese by uniting all our people once a year in a strong common effort to extend the Kingdom of Christ here at home.

Accomplishments to 1955

In its first three years, \$352,827.12 was contributed to the Diocesan Development Fund. These total contributions as well as the anticipated contributions for at least three more years have already been expended or committed in advance. Three new churches have been built in mission areas and a fourth church is now under construction. Our permanent Diocesan Latin School is nearing completion. A convent for Confraternity School Sisters has been purchased and a second house rented to serve as a convent in another locality until an adequate convent can be built there. Mission surveys have been made in four counties in the past three summers. These accomplishments are pos-

sible only because the diocesan Development Fund provides the funds necessary for their realization and completion.

Four New Churches

The Catholic people of our diocese have made a worthy gift to God of three new mission churches through their contributions to the Diocesan Development Fund. These churches stand as a tribute to the faith and generosity of our people. At Barry (Pike County), Oblong (Crawford County) and Palmyra (Macoupin County), Mass is now said on Sundays and holy-days for small but fervent congregations that number from 50 to 100 Catholics. They know their new churches are the gift of all the Catholics of the diocese and they are grateful to God and to the Diocesan Development Fund for giving them this indispensable start for their new parishes.

In Griggsville (Pike County) a new church is now being built through the Diocesan Development Fund. For two years Mass has been said in Griggsville every Sunday in a rented Hall for 50 Catholics who have waited in hope and patience for help from the Diocesan Development Fund for a new mission church.

Diocesan Latin School

At Lake Springfield close to our See City a permanent and adequate Diocesan Latin School is under construction to prepare

boys of our own diocese to enter the seminary for their final priestly training. The contributions to the Diocesan Development Fund will be needed for some years to come to meet the cost of this important diocesan undertaking. Without the Diocesan Development Fund a special drive for funds would be required. The greatest achievement of the Diocesan Development Fund will be the building and equipping of this house of studies for the priesthood. No other work is more important for the life of the Church than the preparation of her future priests. The work of the Church, in established parishes and in mission areas, depends upon the perpetuation of the priesthood.

Our Diocesan Latin School was started in 1949 in a simple farm house generously loaned for the period of a hopeful experiment. A new program for boys of our diocese who have finished high school to prepare them to enter the seminary needed to be tested by experience. God has manifestly blessed and prospered our Diocesan Latin School. Its program and the experiment have been judged successful by the seminaries which found our Diocesan Latin School graduates to be well prepared for their higher studies and training. Now, therefore, is the time to make permanent provision for the future of the Diocesan Latin School. A more adequate building of lasting character is being constructed which will be worthy of the high purpose to which it is dedicated.

Confraternity Schools Increase

Our Confraternity School program continues to enjoy remarkable success. From their convent at Arcola four Dominican Sisters visit fifteen churches once each week to teach religion to 730 grade and high school children. In none of these parishes is the number of children large enough for a parish school. The Confraternity School program brings the beneficent influence and training of our

Sisters to help pastors, parents and children at Arcola, Tuscola, Villa Grove, Hume, Brocton, Charleston, Sullivan, Shelbyville, Dalton City, Bethany, Lovington, Macon, Moweaqua, Neoga and Trowbridge.

This year a new center for Confraternity Schools has been opened in Carlinville and a house rented to serve as a temporary convent for two Dominican Sisters. The first Confraternity Schools have started in Macoupin County and it is planned to expand the program in the next two years to reach the children in approximately twenty parishes in the area which do not have parish schools.

It will be necessary for the Diocesan Development Fund to provide and maintain a suitable convent in Carlinville as in Arcola, for the sisters as well as the automobiles for their travel. The parishes themselves meet all other operating costs of this fruitful and important program of religious training.

Your Help Is Needed

The Third Sunday of September is dedicated to the Diocesan Development Fund. You are asked to make a substantial contribution on September 18 in the special envelope (which will be given to you in church on the previous Sunday, Sept. 11).

Make your contribution as generous as your means will allow. Some by God's favor, are able to give larger contributions - \$500, \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25. Others must give less. The contribution of each member of the diocese should represent a real sacrifice that will express both gratitude to God for the gift of faith and also a strong desire to share it with other.

The diocese unites many faithful into one family of the faith. Our united efforts here at home will fulfill Our Lord's command to preach the Gospel to all men, not only in foreign lands and distant regions of our own country but in Central Illinois as well.

THE WESTERN CATHOLIC - Sept. 18, 1955

Synod Held Here Tuesday

Clergy Adopt Measures For Welfare Of Diocese

The Second Diocesan Synod was celebrated Tuesday, March 10 in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Most Reverend William A. O'Connor, D.D., fifth bishop of the diocese, who convoked the Synod on February 2, 1953, presided at the ceremonies which were attended by more than 200 diocesan priests together with invited representatives of those religious orders serving in the diocese.

The last Synod was held in the old Cathedral at Alton on February 27, 1889 during the episcopacy of Bishop James A. Ryan.

A diocesan "synod" is a meeting of the clergy of a particular diocese with their bishop for the purpose of discussing and adopting measures necessary and useful

for the welfare of the Church in that diocese. It derives its name from a Greek word signifying "assembly." Canon Law prescribes the attendance at a Synod of certain ecclesiastical persons all of whom are expressly invited by the bishop. Last Spring preliminary work was begun in preparing the first draft of synodal legislation which was sent to the clergy in the Fall. The recommendations of the clergy were then studied and the final revised draft of proposed synodal measures was sent to the clergy at the beginning of this month. During the past month the oration in honor of the Holy Spirit was incorporated, by order of the bishop, in all the Masses offered in the diocese (when permitted by liturgical law), asking Divine guidance on the proceed-

ings of the Synod ...

Clergy Approve Legislation

The Bishop then directed that the acts or official legislation of the Synod be published. The Secretary received the Synodal statutes from the hand of the bishop and the assembled priests approved them by rising and saying "placent." A special decree of the Bishop official promulgated this legislation, after which the Bishop addressed the priests present. The clergy then rose and changed the traditional *Te Deum*, intoned by the Bishop. The ceremonies concluded with the Bishop's blessing.

THE WESTERN CATHOLIC - March 15, 1953

Reds Have Enslaved 63 Million Catholics

With the ceding of north Vietnam to the Reds now in progress, the communist colossus will have under its domination well over three-quarters of a billion people, 63,503,000 of them Catholics.

From its Russian base this communist giant has placed the imprint of its merciless dictatorship

on almost 600,000,000 additional people in the past 15 years. About 55,500,000 of these are Catholics. More than 100,000,000 other Christians - mainly Orthodox - are among the Iron Curtain captives.

THE WESTERN CATHOLIC - August 15, 1954