



# 176 years of Catholic newspapers in New Orleans

By Peter Finney Jr.  
Clarion Herald

Since 1842, the Catholic Church in New Orleans has been chronicled by an interesting mix of Catholic newspapers, reporting on the faith life of the local church.

Here is an overview of Catholic press history in the Archdiocese of New Orleans:

## Le Propagateur Catholique (1842-1864):

The weekly, French-language *Le Propagateur Catholique* was the first Catholic newspaper in Louisiana. It has ties to the era of anti-clericalism in France, which began with the French Revolution in 1830. Many French clergy decided to leave their homeland for French colonies in the New World. Among those who arrived in New Orleans was Father Napoleon Perché, a future archbishop of New Orleans. When he arrived in 1837, he befriended the



Ursuline Sisters and became close to Bishop Antoine Blanc.

In 1842, Father Perché established *Le Propagateur Catholique*, which he described as a "family newspaper edited by a Society of Men of Letters." It was written in elegant French and supported the bishop in his battles with the lay trustees of St. Louis Cathedral, who

had claimed the right to appoint clergy. The three-year controversy was eventually settled in civil court in favor of the bishop.

One of the interesting footnotes of *Le Propagateur Catholique* was its subscription price: four escalins per month (the equivalent of 50 cents per month).

The ultimate decline of *Le Propagateur Catholique* occurred for the same reason many French-language periodicals disappeared – fewer New Orleans citizens spoke French as their primary language.

## The Catholic Standard (1855-62)

The *Catholic Standard* capitalized on the growing Irish Catholic presence in New Orleans, most of whom worshiped at St. Patrick Church on Camp Street. The newspaper was started by a group from St. Patrick with the approval of Archbishop Blanc. The



subscription price was \$3 a year. The newspaper's main focus appeared to be attacking the Know-Nothing Movement, but it did not survive the Civil War. By 1867, it had either expired or was in financial difficulties, and Archbishop Jean Marie Odin called a meeting of Catholic leaders to found a new paper.

longest-running Catholic newspaper in New Orleans history. When *The Morning Star* began, the social fabric of New Orleans was in an uproar. Federal troops controlled the city, and racial tensions ran high.

At the time, *The Morning Star* was the only Catholic newspaper written in English in the South. An interesting footnote is that while the *Morning Star* received the approval of several archbishops, it was never published by the archdiocese.

Financial problems eventually forced *The Morning Star* out of business in 1930. It was two years later that one of the most remarkable figures in archdiocesan history – Msgr. Peter M.H. Wynhoven – exerted his considerable influence to create a new communications vehicle for the archdiocese.

## Catholic Action of the South (1932-1963)

The *Catholic Action of the South*, started by Msgr. Wynhoven in 1932, was the direct predecessor of the *Clarion Herald*. Msgr. Wynhoven was the former manager and columnist for *The Morning Star*, and he became editor of *Catholic Action of the South*. His staff also included Roger Baudier, author of the comprehensive history of the Catholic Church in Louisiana.

*Catholic Action* was designed originally to be a monthly newspaper, but

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## The Morning Star (1868-1930)

The *Morning Star* was the

1997

1997

2000

2001

2001

2003

2003

2003

Msgr. Gregory Aymond, rector-president of Notre Dame Seminary, ordained auxiliary bishop of New Orleans, Jan. 10; he would be appointed coadjutor bishop of Austin on June 2, 2000.

Father Francis Xavier Seelos is beatified in Rome, April 9.

Msgr. Thomas J. Rodi, vicar general, consecrated as Bishop of Biloxi, Mississippi, July 2.

Msgr. Dominic Luong installed as auxiliary bishop of Orange, California, June 11; he is the first Vietnamese priest to be ordained a U.S. bishop. He died Dec. 6, 2017.

Former Louisiana Congresswoman Lindy Boggs named by President Bill Clinton to become U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, Dec. 16; she would serve 3 1/2 years.

Baton Rouge Bishop Alfred Clifton Hughes named coadjutor archbishop of New Orleans, Feb. 16; installed as 13th archbishop of New Orleans, Jan. 3, 2002.

Msgr. Roger P. Morin ordained auxiliary bishop of New Orleans, April 22; becomes bishop of Biloxi, March 2, 2009.