

ON THE ARCHIVES SHELF

CHICAGO PROVINCE

ROBERT M. MYERS ARCHIVES &

SVD RESOURCE CENTER

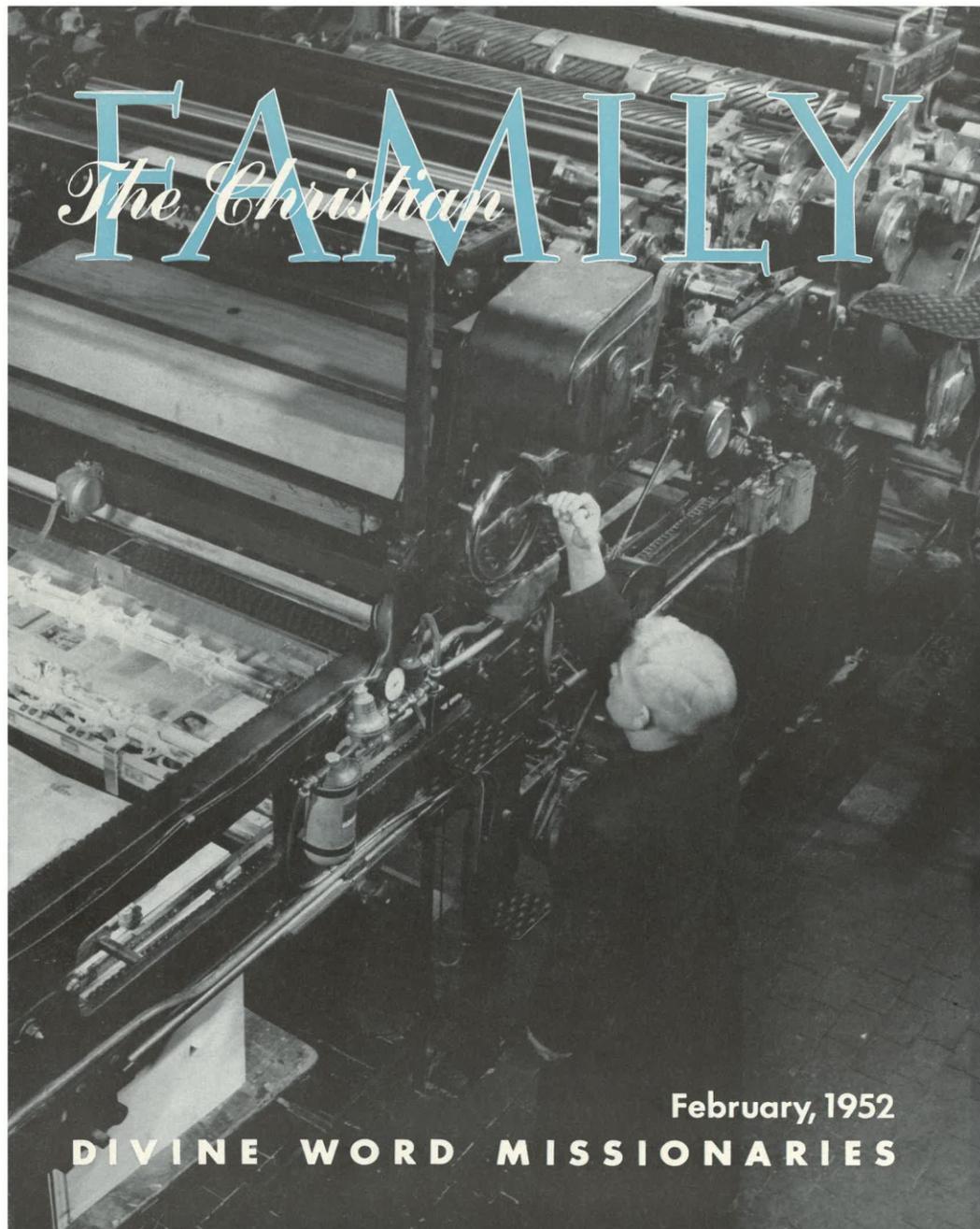


Table of Contents

Articles	Page
The Christian Family Magazine: An Enduring Legacy	1.
Turning the Page: My Retirement Message	2.
Mission Center/Archives Collaboration!	3.
New Titles and Archives Donations	3.

On the Cover:

“The Christian Family Divine Word Missionaries,” February, 1952 shows “Brother Stephen, S.V.D., at the Cottrell two-color rotary in the Mission press at St. Mary’s Mission Seminary, Techny, Illinois. The rotary prints THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY every month. Brother Stephen is one of 18 Divine word Missionary Brothers in the Mission Press.”

On the Archives Shelf the newsletter for the Robert M. Myers Archives of the Chicago Province is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December. It is distributed electronically, but a paper copy will be mailed to anyone who prefers this method of communication.

If you have questions or comments please contact either:

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The Christian Family Magazine: An Enduring Legacy

The Robert M. Myers Archives holds what is probably the only complete set of the SVD magazine, *The Christian Family*. This monthly publication served many purposes during its run from its preliminary issue in September of 1905 till the last in January 1960. The magazine was an outreach tool of the Society representing the North American Provinces. It kept donors, annuitants and subscribers updated on the work of the Society and its missions, as well as noting much Society news. *Christian Family* also contained entertaining and enlightening works of fiction, recipes and other household features, puzzles and jokes for young and old, news of the Catholic world in general along with reports on the efforts of individual SVD missionaries. It was sent gratis to Catholic institutions such as retirement homes and to schools to encourage vocations. For several decades beginning in 1930, it was merged with *Our Missions Magazine*, both publications printed here at Techny.

Because a publication of such duration contains so much rich history, the archives staff chose to manually index the magazine ourselves in the summer of 2007 with the help of Fr. Bernard Fisher. This painstaking process required paging through all 54 years of the magazine's run, one article at a time, and determining which features and names to record and what subject terms to choose. After the preliminaries of writing out our intended process, we proceeded to create our index.

The index of SVD subjects and authors for the *Christian Family* has proven invaluable to the archives staff and researchers alike. The indexed articles on the China mission before 1950 receive particularly heavy use by several of our outside academic researchers. We receive many reference requests every year from within the Society and from the public. They come by email, phone, walk-ins and via the web-form on an Archives page of the Chicago Province website. When it comes to answering questions about individual confreres and their mission activities, nothing can compare to this resource. The number of times this index lead to a successful completion of a request seems beyond measure.

Because of the scope of *Christian Family Magazine*, and its publication coinciding with the growth of Techny and the SVD in North America, the index serves as a road map for finding a way into myriad aspects of SVD history. It ranks as one of the most valuable finding aids in the Archives and it is always a pleasure to use, making it along with the *Christian Family Magazine* itself one of my favorite corners of our collection and I always look forward to using it. The index has elevated an already treasured publication to an historical resource crucial to carrying out our Archives mission.

By Peter Gunther

Turning the Page: My Retirement Message

In February 2002 the first issue of *On the Shelf*, newsletter of the Chicago Province archives, left the press. My plan was to reach out to the staff of the Chicago Province Center to inform them of the new titles recently acquired by the SVD Resource Center and the archives. At this time, Father John Donaghey was purchasing new titles about subjects he thought SVDs and the Province Center staff should know about. In addition I wanted to highlight the historical collections of the Societies' missionary work preserved in the archives. The newsletter was usually one page long unless a really interesting archival donation arrived or an event was worth noting. It was delivered to the Techny campus via interoffice mail.

Then in 2008 it was suggested that I should publish the newsletter digitally. This opened up new possibilities such as wider distribution and fewer issues, but with more content. I included archival principles and practices, more about the collection, and writings by SVDs. It allowed me to advocate for the archives.

One definition of advocacy is “activities consciously aimed to persuade individuals or organizations to act on behalf of a program or institution.”¹ How was this accomplished for the archives of the Chicago Province?

- Ongoing publication of the archives' newsletter, now named “On the Archives Shelf,” which is also posted on the Chicago Province website
- In 2008, naming the archives for the SVD priest, Robert M. Myers, who had the vision to establish an archives, and in 1987 to locate it in the Chicago Province Center headquarters
- Promoting the idea of individual community histories, which became with the encouragement and financial support of the province administration, *Communities of the Word: Stories of the Chicago Province 1895-2012*
- Willingly providing research service to the holdings of the archives to SVDs and outside researchers into the rich and varied records of the missionary work of the Society of the Divine Word.

With my retirement set for the end of March 2017, I hope and pray that the next archivist will build on the foundation of the current archives to reach new levels of access and productivity, and move the Robert M. Myers Archives into the future.

By Marcia Stein

¹*Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives* edited by Larry J. Hackman, Society of American Archivists, 2011, p. vii.

Mission Center/Archives Collaboration!

Siobhan O'Neill Meluso, Social Media Strategist for Divine Word Missionaries Mission Center, recently visited the archives to research photos and information about the Techny, IL Post Office. Development Director Carmie Linden needed Siobhan's assistance to complete a unique project for the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. The virtual exhibition-*America's Mailing Industry* highlights the partnership between the U.S. Postal Service and America's Mailing Industry. Divine Word Missionaries is one of many such industries that utilizes the Postal Service in a variety of ways from the post office opening on March 1, 1906 and continues to do so today.

After a few visits to the archives, Siobhan was successful in finding some rare photos of Brothers working in the post office as well as in the Mission Press. The dramatic images from the fire that destroyed the Press completely in 1960 were especially moving. Another important find was a 2009 issue of the "*Techny Times*" that included a brief history of the Techny Post Office as well as the list of the Post Masters from 1906 to present. Divine Word Missionaries held the Post Master position from 1906 until 1979.

This virtual exhibit on the Smithsonian website will highlight the history of Divine Word Missionaries, the use of direct mail and the distribution of Divine Word Missionaries Magazine that because of the U.S. Postal Service connected our benefactors with the missions. Because of the Robert Myers Archives, this virtual exhibit is not only complete it is even more impressive because of the use of these important photographs and historical context.

By Siobhan O'Neill Meluso
Social Media Strategist
Mission Center

New Titles and Archives Donations

Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) of the Catholic church, Ghana Province: 75 Years of SVD Evangelization in Ghana: Knowing, Living and Sharing the Word of God, 2013.
The Face of Hope: Disk 1 Awareness and Inspirational Tool; Disk 2 Educational and Engagement Tool by Finbarr Tracey SVD, Michael Duggan, 2016 [2 DVDs]
Happy New Year 2016 Techny Residence Divine Word Missionaries, 2016
His mission is Our Mission Is it Yours? by Divine Word Missionaries Vocation Office, undated.
Homegoing Service Fr. Tony Clark, SVD St. Augustine Catholic Church, May 23, 2016
Living in the Family of Jesus: Critical Contextualization in Melanesia and Beyond edited by William Kenny Longgar, Tim Meadowcroft, 2016. [Point Series No. 40]
Liturgy of the Profession of Perpetual Vows for the Society of the Divine Word, September 16-17, 2016 Techny, Illinois. [DVD]

Mangyan Treasures The Ambahan: a poetic expression of the Mangyans of southern Mindoro, Philippines collected, arranged, and explained by Antoon Postma, revised edition 2005

P. 16 – Syllabic Writing of Old-Indian Origin used among the Mangyans of Southern Mindoro.

This book was sent to the Mission Office of the Chicago Province, Techny, IL. It was kept in Fr. Mehler's file until Marcia Stein archivist removed the book to make it apart of the collection of books about the missionary people and cultures of the missions served by the Society of the Divine Word. The books are housed in the SVD Resource Center in the Chicago Province Center.

Respect for People and their Cultures in our Modern World by VIVAT International Ireland, undated

Father Vincent Burke SVD donated the award that he recently received to the archives. Father Burke received the award of Officer of the Order of the Volta. The award consists of a silver seven point star with gold center medallion that hangs from a sash and a certificate. It was awarded by the Republic of Ghana. The award is on display in the archives' exhibit table in the Chicago Province Center reception area.

Upon his passing, June 11, 2016 the personal papers of **Father Charles Schneider SVD** were donated to the archives. These consisted of many articles by Father Schneider and other SVDs, photos, CDs and DVDs produced in Ghana. If you are interested in his papers, please come to the archives to review the inventory.