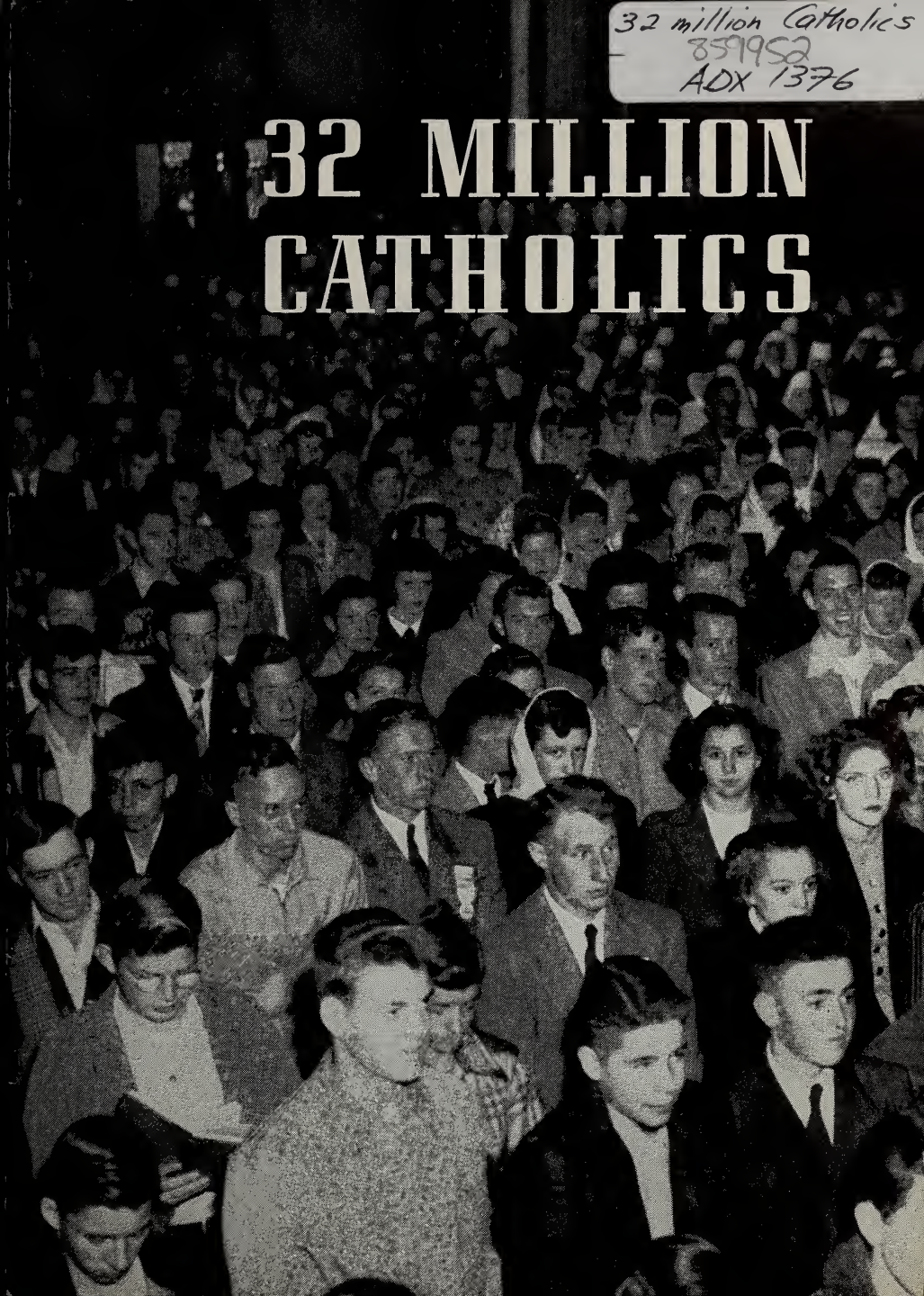


32 million Catholics  
859952  
ADX 1376

# 32 MILLION CATHOLICS



# 32 MILLION CATHOLICS

. . . the Church in the United States

A Study Compiled for the  
National Catholic Rural Life Conference  
Des Moines 12, Iowa, U. S. A., 1955.

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of Ecclesiastical  
Authority

## DIRECTORY OF INFORMATION

- National Catholic Welfare Conference  
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington 5, D. C.
- National Catholic Rural Life Conference  
3801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 12, Iowa
- War Relief Services, National Catholic Welfare Conference  
350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, New York
- National Conference of Catholic Charities  
1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
- National Catholic Educational Association  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
- Catholic Press Association,  
150 East 39th Street, New York 16, New York
- Mission Secretariat  
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington 5, D. C.
- Superior Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
122 East 22nd Street, New York 10, New York
- Association of Catholic Trade Unionists  
327 Lexington Avenue, New York 16, New York
- Liturgical Conference  
Elsberry, Missouri
- Catholic Daughters of America  
10 West 71st Street, New York 23, New York
- Knights of Columbus  
New Haven, Connecticut
- Society for the Propagation of the Faith  
366 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York

For complete and detailed information,

THE CATHOLIC DIRECTORY, P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 12 Barclay Street, New York,  
New York, 1108 pages, \$9.00.

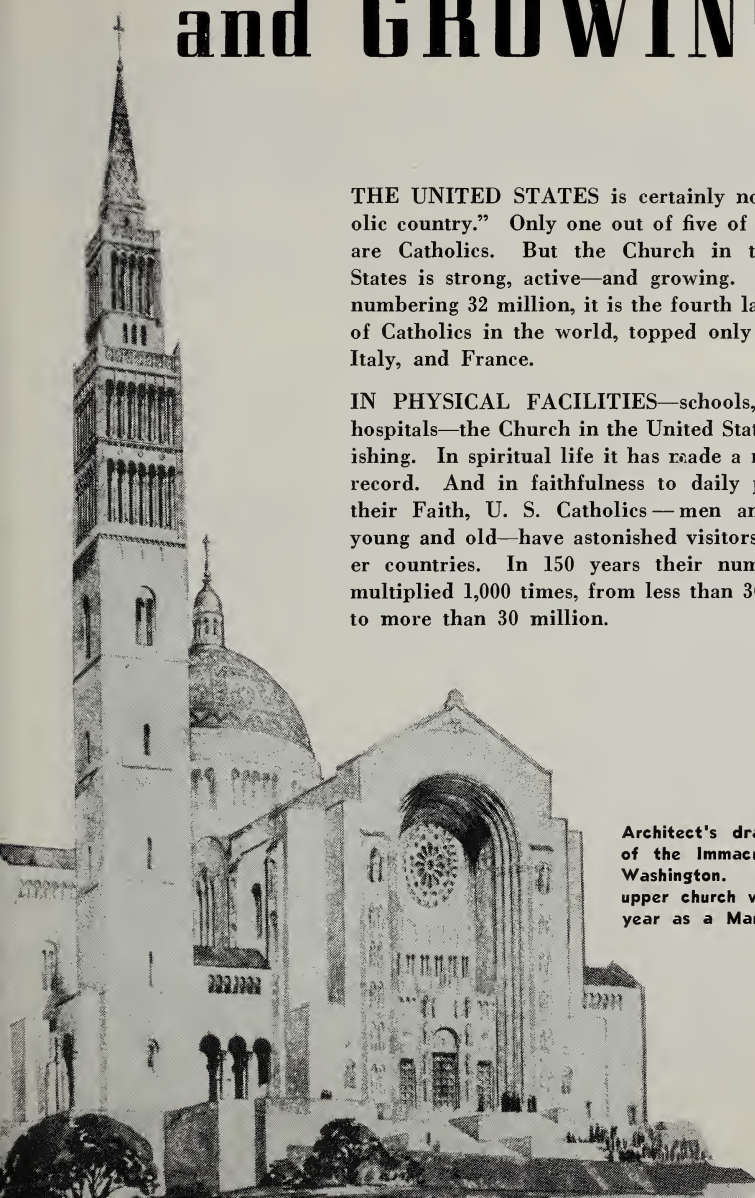
**FRONT COVER:** Youth Rally at Catholic Rural  
Life Convention at LaCrosse, Wisconsin

Deacidified

# ACTIVE— and GROWING...

THE UNITED STATES is certainly not a "Catholic country." Only one out of five of its citizens are Catholics. But the Church in the United States is strong, active—and growing. Even now, numbering 32 million, it is the fourth largest body of Catholics in the world, topped only by Brazil, Italy, and France.

IN PHYSICAL FACILITIES—schools, churches, hospitals—the Church in the United States is flourishing. In spiritual life it has made a remarkable record. And in faithfulness to daily practice of their Faith, U. S. Catholics—men and women, young and old—have astonished visitors from other countries. In 150 years their numbers have multiplied 1,000 times, from less than 30 thousand to more than 30 million.



Architect's drawing for Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington. Construction of upper church was launched last year as a Marian Year project

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

*When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a solemn appeal is made to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.— That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly we have suffered the longest continuance of a Government under a King, whose character in our view of this Constitution, is one of the most perfect in the world.*

*It has been frequently observed, that the Declaration of Independence is a declaration of the rights of man, and not of the rights of a particular people. It is a declaration of the rights of all men, and not of the rights of any particular people. It is a declaration of the rights of the people, and not of the rights of the King. It is a declaration of the rights of the people, and not of the rights of the Government. It is a declaration of the rights of the people, and not of the rights of the State. It is a declaration of the rights of the people, and not of the rights of the Nation. It is a declaration of the rights of the people, and not of the rights of the World.*

. . . We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . .

MORE THAN 400 years ago, about 1521, Mass was offered for the first time on the North American continent, by priests of the Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon's expedition. Within a century, French and Spanish missionaries were bringing Christendom from its European strongholds to broad areas of what is now the United States. Spanish Franciscan Father Juan de Padilla, who shed his blood in what is now the state of Kansas in 1542, was the first of many missionaries who gave their lives to spread the Faith across the continent.

WHEN THE United States was born as a nation with the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Catholics in the 13 colonies numbered only 25,000, out of 3 million people. And they were penalized and proscribed in most places. But the new nation was far from Godless. The Declaration itself acknowledged the Creator as the source of the freedoms it proclaimed. And in fact modern studies have

traced the phrasing and the philosophy of the Declaration and the U. S. Constitution back to such Catholic political thinkers as Suarez, Vitoria, St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH in the U. S., independent, free and self supporting, has flourished. United States Catholics now number over 32 million. In the past their numbers have been swelled by waves of immigration that brought millions of European Catholics across the Atlantic. They came from almost every country of the world. Largest numbers came from Italy, Germany, Austria, Ireland, Poland and Mexico. They settled all across the country, strengthening the Faith in the older settled areas and bringing it to the new.

IN RECENT YEARS much of the growth of the Church has come from among the non-Catholics of the United States itself. Figures don't tell the

whole story, but they can give some idea:

In the last decade, records of adult Baptisms show well over a million converts have been received into the Church. The number of converts received each year has increased from 90,000 in 1943 to 117,000 in 1953. During the same period, the number of children born to Catholic families has increased even more strikingly—from 772,434 in 1943 to 1,094,872 in 1953. This represented [28 per cent] 3 out of every 10 births recorded in 1953, although the recorded number of Catholics is only 2 in 10. In 11 of the 48 states more than one-third of the children born in 1953 received Catholic Baptism. Or look at it from another side: from 1944 to 1954, the whole population of the country in-

creased by about one-fifth. The Catholic population increased by one-third and accounted for half of the total growth. Today it looks as though the Church in the United States will number from 40 to 45 million souls a decade hence, and numbers of churches, schools and institutions will rise even more sharply.

**SHEPHERDING** this vast, growing Catholic population are four Cardinals, 35 Archbishops and 169 Bishops. They govern 26 archdioceses and 102 dioceses, with 15,914 parishes, 28,611 diocesan and 16,840 Religious priests (in 90 communities), 8,691 Brothers (in 17 communities) and 154,055 Sisters (in over 300 communities).

**ALONGSIDE THESE** impressive figures, if we are to understand Cath-



**Cardinal Spellman, Secretary of State Dulles, President Eisenhower, Postmaster General Summerfield at initial sale of first "In God We Trust" stamp series**

# CATHOLIC PERSONALITIES

olic life in the U. S., we must see the human side, the Church in terms of people. As anywhere else, the Church in the U. S. is a fair cross-section of the whole population. It is made up of laborers, teachers, farmers, engineers, fishermen, students, housewives—all the trades and ways of earning a living that make up U. S. life.

No spirit of enmity is evidenced between Catholics, Protestants and Jews. They live and work side by side; they join in civic activities. Persecution or ill feelings simply do not exist except among the bigoted and narrow who, thank God, are very few.

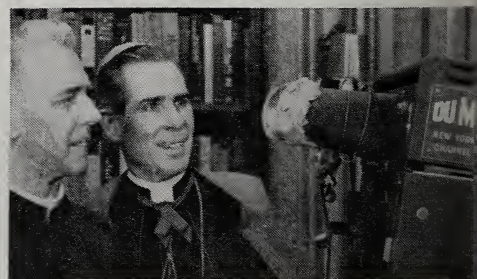
**MINORITY THOUGH** they are, Catholics in the U. S. hold many positions of high prestige as national figures. Names known to millions of American non-Catholics, of course, are those of the four Cardinals—Mooney of Detroit, Strich of Chicago, Spellman of New York, and McIntyre of Los Angeles. The Church's most distinguished English language preacher and one of the best known figures of the television screen in Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. A world figure as commander in chief of the North Atlantic Treaty forces is Catholic General Alfred M. Gruenther. A few of the scores of other leading figures in U. S. life who are Catholics include George Meany, president of the American Federation of Labor; Frances Parkinson Keyes, best-selling novelist; Atomic Energy Commissioner Thomas E. Murray; tennis champion Maureen Connolly; world champion boxer Rocky Marciano; Labor Secretary James P. Mitchell; New York's Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr.; screen actress Irene Dunne, and Dr. Edward J. Mc-



NATO Commander General Gruenther greets former Navy Secretary John Sullivan at a Communion Breakfast



Playwright, Legislator, Ambassador, Convert Clare Booth Luce



Bishop Sheen (right) shows visiting Archbishop from Rome operator's end of television camera

Cormick, 1953-54 president of the American Medical Association.

**JUDGED BY THEIR** actions, the Catholic lay people of the U. S. are an unusually alert, vigorous body, whose daily lives reflect their Catholic convictions. The very fact that they are surrounded by a non-Catholic and partly secularist majority, day in and day out, compels them to understand and equips them to defend their Catholic heritage. Wavering souls would drift away altogether. Channeling their activities into fruitful paths are a wide variety of organizations, all coordinated under three national units: The National Councils of Catholic Men, of Catholic Women, and of Catholic Youth. These three councils, along with other activities for the benefit of the Church throughout the country, are under the direction of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

**SPECIALIZED** organizations with large memberships among U. S. Catholics include the world-wide Holy Name Society, with 3,500,000 U. S. members, the Society of St. Vincent

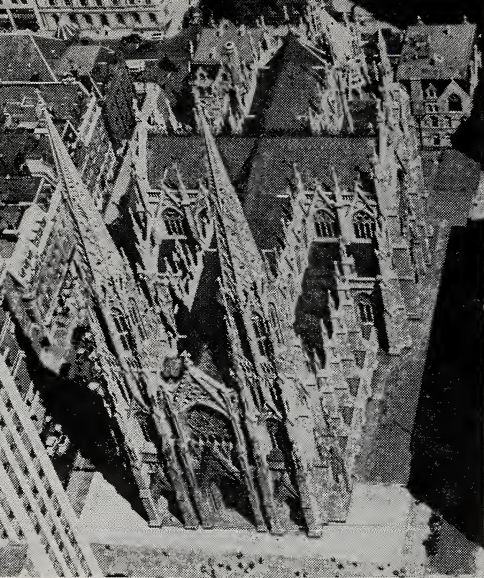


**Headquarters of National Catholic Rural Life Conference, in Central Iowa**

de Paul, The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Liturgical Conference, retreat groups, Catholic War Veterans, fraternal societies, like the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters of America, and scores of others. Catholic action is not confined to these specifically Catholic groups, but carries its influence into general organizations as well.

**Marian Year rally brought 260,000 people to Chicago's Soldier Field**





*New York Convention and Visitors Bureau*

**Towering skyscrapers and delicate Gothic of St. Patrick's Cathedral face each other across Fifth Avenue in heart of New York**

A FACT TO remember about the Catholic lay people of the United States is that whatever support the Church in the U. S. receives must come entirely from them. There is no state support for the Church. Its thousands of parishes and institutions and its extensive activities are kept going only by the regular contributions of millions of ordinary people, usually through the weekly envelope collection, a practical and an effective method of making believers realize that they have a duty to return to God a share of what God gives to them, so that the works of God in this world may develop and prosper.

OF ALL THE outward organizations of the Church in the United States, none has had a greater or more salutary influence than the National Cath-

olic Welfare Conference. This organization, uniquely American in its origin, has in recent years become the model for similar units in a dozen other countries. It is housed in a strikingly modern building on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington—the facade a national monument in honor of Christ the Light of the World. The N.C.W.C. is essentially a system of aid, coordination and information for Catholic activities. It is a sort of “clearing house” through which each of the country’s Bishops and dioceses and Catholic organizations has the benefit of the experiences of all the others in meeting common problems.

SMALL administrative staffs, each headed by experts in its own field, carry out the functions of departments devoted to: Lay Organizations; Youth; Education; Social Action; Press; Immigration; Legislation and Legal Problems. An Executive Department oversees all the conference’s activities and serves as constant liaison with the Administrative Board that governs the organization. The Administrative Board is made up of all the country’s Cardinals and ten Archbishops and Bishops chosen annually at the general meeting of the nation’s Hierarchy.

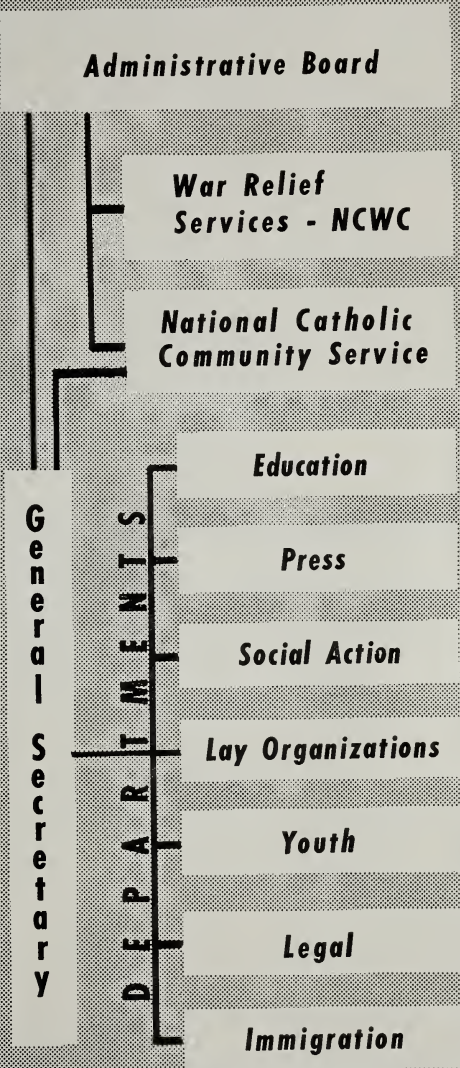
BESIDES THE N.C.W.C.’s regular departments, there are a number of dependent activities under the Executive and other departments, including the national center of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, a Bureau of Information, Publications Office, Inter-American Affairs Bureau, Office of United Nations Affairs, Family Life Bureau, Bureau of Health and Hospitals, and Catholic Association for International Peace. And supervised by



the same Administrative Board of Bishops are such entities as the National Catholic Community Service, devoted to welfare, religious and recreational work on behalf of members of the armed forces, and War Relief Services, N.C.W.C., which since World War II has done one of the most monumental jobs of charity and relief work for war victims that the world has ever seen.

NONE OF THE varied activities of the Church in the United States is more remarkable than what it does in the field of education. U. S. Catholics send 4 million children and youth to Catholic schools and universities every fall. They go to 9,034 grade schools, 2,366 high schools and 250 colleges and universities. These impressive figures represent only Catholic schools, supported entirely by the contributions of millions of Catholics — mostly simple working people and young parents. These people, it must be remembered, are also busy supporting churches, hospitals, charities, and all the other works of the Church. One estimate is that the Catholic educational system saves the 48 states some \$750 million a year in their education budgets.

BESIDES THE general schools, U. S. Catholics maintain the 455 seminaries and religious scholasticates that have provided the country's 45,451 priests. This means one priest to every 696 Catholics. In training in seminaries and scholasticates are 33,448 young men who will devote their lives to the service of the Church. Equally impressive is the vast sacrifice of the 154,055 Religious Sisters, whose biggest work is staffing the great network





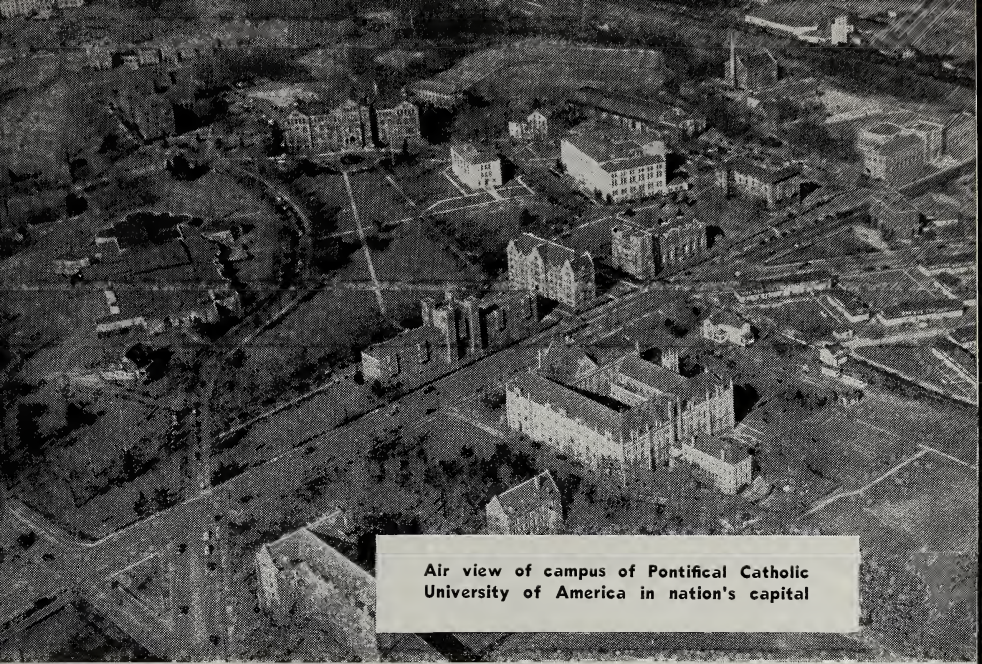
Half the country's 150,000 nuns give their lives to teaching (left), studying (above)



Slide to Third! No big-league coach lives game harder than nun who manages New York's Madonna House baseball team

of grade schools and many of the high schools and colleges.

VAST AS IT IS, the Catholic school system still cannot take care of all the growing numbers of Catholic school-age youth. Due to the great area of the country, the uneven spread of the Catholic population, and the financial problems involved, only about half the Catholic youngsters between six and 14 are in Catholic schools. And because of the high birth rate since World War II, the number of children to be taken care of increases each year. U. S. Catholics recognize there is still much progress to be made and they are working constantly toward meeting the need. Ten years ago, for instance, there were 7,963 Catholic grade schools with 2,052,882 pupils; today there are 9,034, training 3,083,561 youngsters.



Air view of campus of Pontifical Catholic University of America in nation's capital

**TWO THINGS** should be noted in this connection. First of all, the public schools in the U. S. are not Protestant schools, as in some other countries. The public schools are maintained by the public power, and supported out of taxes paid by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Secondly, many of the nation's public school systems have an arrangement under which children are released for certain periods during school hours each week to attend religious instruction in their own faith, and where this system does not exist, the parishes supply religious instruction outside of school hours through the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

**THE COUNTRY'S** extensive Catholic educational system maintains academic standards that match and in many cases far excel those of the public school systems. Though Sisters often

enter religious life after finishing high school, they continue intensive training for their educational work. Nuns' black veils are a familiar sight in the lecture halls and laboratories of most colleges. For their high standards, Catholic schools enjoy great prestige, and often attract many non-Catholic students.

**AT THE HEART OF** the Catholic school system is a Pontifical University in the nation's capital, the Catholic University of America. With departments ranging from theology to engineering, this institution acts as a leaven for the entire educational system. The complex of buildings that cover the university's extensive campus tells only a small part of the story. For many blocks around, dotting the landscape of northeast Washington, are scores of religious houses where seminarians and faculty reside.



The Catholics of the United States, through their Bishops, also maintain the North American College in Rome, training priests at the very heart of Christendom.

THROUGH THE National Catholic Educational Association, founded fifty years ago and with a membership of 6,500 today, the Catholic educators of the nation are banded together to safeguard and promote Catholic educational interests. At the same time, the N.C.W.C. Education Department provides information, teacher registration, liaison, and other services that help the entire educational system.

PART OF THE national life in general, Catholics also have an important place in its general educational leadership. There are thousands of Catholics among the more than a million teachers in public grade and high schools. Educators of high repute in the non-Catholic universities include such Catholic leaders as Dr. George N. Schuster, president of Hunter College, New York, and Dean Hugh Scott Taylor of the Princeton University Graduate School.

SECOND ONLY to the education program is the Church's great network of institutions and activities in the field of social welfare. There are 922 Catholic hospitals and sanatoria throughout the country, with beds for 134,302 patients. Most of them are administered by nursing Sisters. Specialized homes and hospitals take care of the aging, incurables and contagious patients. Scarcely any medium or large city in the country is without a Catholic orphanage — again staffed by Sisters. The St. Vincent de Paul Society has 3,200 conferences and particular coun-



Pastor of Church overlooking Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, chats with 'seaborne' parishioner (above) and with tobacco farmer during break in plowing (below)





St. Pius X Brothers return home from day's work on grounds of monastery at DeSoto, Wisconsin

Catholic Labor Secretary Mitchell lays wreath at Washington's Cardinal Gibbons statue

cils among the nation's 16,000 parishes. Coordinating and assisting charitable works of the separate dioceses and Religious Orders is the National Conference of Catholic Charities.

THE CHURCH IN the U. S. for various reasons has always been stronger in larger cities than in the countryside. Rural Life leaders would like to see a much bigger proportion of U. S. Catholics on farms. At present only 5 or 6 per cent of the nation's Catholics, or an estimated 400,000 Catholic families, are on farms. Larger concentrations of farm Catholics are in Wisconsin, Illinois, and other mid-western states, while in the southeastern part of the country there are practically no Catholics on the farms. One of the Church's big problems in a country so spread out has been how to provide spiritual care—and apostolic work—in rural areas. Two organizations have devoted their main attention toward this problem. The Catholic Church Extension Society, supported by all U. S. Catholics, has financed extensive home mission work. In recent years it has expended some



two million dollars annually toward building and maintaining churches and schools where Catholics are few. The National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC), meanwhile, addresses itself to another side of the problem. With Diocesan Directors and actively interested rural pastors, teachers, sociologists, agricultural officials, economists, and farmers, it seeks to "bring Christ to the country and the country to Christ," with this four-way social and spiritual program: (1) to care for underprivileged Cath-

olics living on the land; (2) to keep on the land the Catholics who are there; (3) to settle more Catholics on the land, and (4) to convert the non-Catholics there. Catholic farmers are urged to join general non-sectarian farm organizations and thus spread Christian principles in a wider field.

AS NCRLC tackles social problems in rural areas, other groups address themselves to finding the Catholic solution to social problems in industrial areas. The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) is a group of laymen aiming to spread knowledge and practice of Christian principles in industrial and business life. Catholics and the Catholic Church are recognized by organized labor for their leadership on behalf of working men. Many dioceses have Labor Schools, in which labor and management leaders are trained in the social teaching of the Church. Of the country's two big labor organizations, the

American Federation of Labor (AFL) is now headed by a Catholic, George Meany, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was headed by a Catholic president, Philip Murray, for many years until his recent death. The N.C.W.C. Social Action Department acts as a service agency in the entire field of Catholic social principles, and their application to the complex social problems of the country. It concerns itself with international peace, industrial relations, family life, race relations, and social welfare.

FOR ALL THESE activities and for all U. S. Catholics an important source of information, inspiration and assistance is the Catholic press. Main sections of it are more than 100 diocesan weekly newspapers with 3.5 million circulation and 382 magazines, large and small, with circulation totaling more than 14 million. This press is served by a world-wide Catholic news agency, the N.C.W.C. News Service, which has "Noticias Catolicas" as its

**Trailer chapels bring Gospel to remote rural areas where priests are scarce**



Latin-American section. This news network provides rapid service on events of interest to Catholics from all parts of the world. Its sources include some 75 correspondents in 51 countries. Through some 450 subscribing publications in 47 countries, its ultimate readers may total as high as 50 or 55 million.

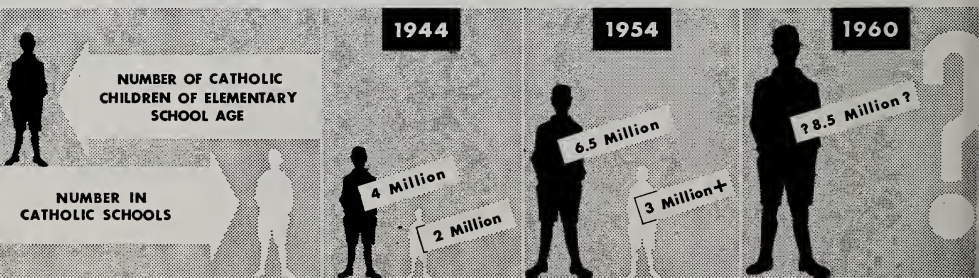
**OTHER MEDIA OF information** are also well provided for. There are more than 20 Catholic publishing houses in the book field, and all the biggest general book publishers, such as the Macmillan Company, have large Catholic book departments. Most famous Catholic production in radio is the "Catholic Hour," which is produced by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company. It is now in its second quarter-century, and is carried on 143 stations. The "Catholic Hour" is now on television on the NBC-TV network and is carried by 65 stations. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen is on the Dumont TV network from November to May each year with his "Life Is Worth Living" program, heard last season on 179 stations. There is a great variety of other national radio and television programs, and countless programs originating locally on the country's many hundreds of radio and

TV stations. In addition, networks and local stations frequently carry "special events" broadcasts of Catholic functions of wide general interest, such as Midnight Mass at Christmas in some of the nation's great cathedrals. It should be noted that the thousands of hours a month of air time that all this adds up to are donated free of charge as a public service by the stations and the big networks. And besides the Catholic programs on the general stations there are a number of Catholic radio stations in the U. S., most of them operated by Catholic universities.

#### FOR OTHERS . . .

ALL THESE efforts toward bringing the Gospel more fully to the United States itself do not mean that American Catholics are unaware of the Church's world-wide responsibilities. The United States was officially taken from the list of the Church's mission territories only in 1908. At that time there were already American missionaries abroad in West Africa, Alaska, the Bahamas, Honduras, and China. But they were only a very few. As the work expanded, between the two world wars more than 30 more mission territories were entrusted to American communities. Since World War II more and more of the world mission burden has been shifted to the

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION A GROWING PROBLEM





## The Church in the U. S. is growing rapidly

	1944	1954	% increase
<b>Cardinals, Arch-Bishops, Bishops</b>	133	166	25%
<b>Priests</b>	37,749	45,451	20%
<b>Sisters</b>	133,985	154,055	15%
<b>Brothers</b>	6,162	8,691	41%
<b>Parishes</b>	14,791	15,914	8%
<b>Schools, colleges, and universities</b>	10,383	11,650	13%
<b>Total Youth under Catholic instruction</b>	3,037,856	5,900,569	94%
<b>Hospitals and sanatoria</b>	770	922	20%
<b>Baptisms</b>			
<b>Infant</b>	722,434	1,094,872	51%
<b>Adult (converts)</b>	90,822	116,696	29%
<b>Total Catholic</b>			
<b>Population</b>	23,419,701	31,648,424	14%

United States, as other countries, severely stricken by the war, became less able to meet the growing need. In 1940 there were 2,227 Americans in overseas mission work. By 1953, the number had grown to 4,755, according to figures of the Mission Secretariat in Washington. This is still nowhere near the record made by such mission-minded countries as Ireland or France. But the rapid growth of U. S. mission activity in recent years gives promise of great advances to come in the next few decades. Of the present 4,755 foreign missionaries, almost 2,000 are in Latin America and about 1,500 are in the Far East.

BESIDES ITS dedicated men and women, there is a second way in which any country can help the Church's work of "preaching the Gos-

pel in every country"—with financial aid. And in this, United States Catholics have excelled. In 1953, 71 per cent of all the money spent on mission work by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome came from Catholics in the United States. Besides this, equally large sums of money go direct from the U. S., of course, toward the support of missions staffed by U. S. personnel. One typical mission—neither large nor small in its permanent properties—is the Pacific Island mission of the Marshalls and the Carolines, where American Jesuit Bishop Thomas Feeney estimates the total permanent investment in mission facilities at just under \$4 million. The Society for the Propagation of the Faith has branches in every U. S.

Three U. S. boys relax a moment while training in Algeria for White Fathers' African missions



diocese, and has its U. S. national headquarters in New York City, under the direction of Bishop Sheen. Under it, the Mission Secretariat, a cooperative agency of all the country's mission sending societies, has offices in the N.C.W.C. building in Washington.

SINCE WORLD WAR II another activity of U. S. Catholics outside their own borders—sharing in another way what they are blessed with — has played a major role in world recovery. Through War Relief Services, N.C.W.C., they have contributed more than \$250 million worth of food, clothing and other aid to help those stricken by war. Launched in 1943, this activity has continued to help

in successive post-war crises and made a major contribution to relief of the Korean war sufferers as well. America's national Thanksgiving Day and the Christmas season have been chosen as the occasions for nation-wide collections of clothing and canned food. On Laetare Sunday each year every U. S. Catholic is given an opportunity to contribute to the Bishop's Fund for Victims of War, which supports this relief work and also provides a large contribution each year to Papal relief funds. In recent years a very important work of WRS-NCWC has been sponsoring refugees coming to the U. S. under the Displaced Persons and Refugee Relief laws. Many thousands of Catholics have been among the hundreds of thousands set-

At St. Joseph's Hospital, in Pittsburgh, a 5-year-old tells Sister how she broke her arm



bled in new homes in the U. S. under this program.

**LOOKING BACK** over the record, the United States might well be summed up as the "land of great promise" for the Catholic Church. Most notable feature about Catholicism in the U. S. in recent years is rapid growth. From an almost negligible minority, the Church has

grown to a position of importance and respect in the national life. Still a youthful Catholic community, it finds itself here in a youthful civil society, that provides freedom and a favorable climate for development. Yet the Church in the United States is also aware that growth and opportunity mean a great challenge in the years ahead, and is ready to meet that challenge.



**Relief food from U. S. distributed to war victims at Pusan, Korea (left). In war as in peace, even at battle front (right) prayer is vital part of Catholic men's lives**

**BACK COVER:** National Catholic Welfare Conference Headquarters in Washington. Facade is monument to Christ, Light of the World.



I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD