News

A white man wearing a violet zucchetto, glasses, and a bishop's cassock smiles at the camera

Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria, Ill., is seen in an undated photo. Tylka has ended publication of The Catholic Post, the newspaper of the Diocese of Peoria founded nearly 90 years ago. He announced the decision in a letter mailed Jan. 11, 2024, to the biweekly newspaper's 10,000 subscribers. (CNS/Courtesy Diocese of Peoria)



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Bishop Louis Tylka of Peoria has ended publication of The Catholic Post, the newspaper of the Diocese of Peoria founded nearly 90 years ago, and announced that "as we look to the future, we will develop new strategies in a wider communications plan."

"While it is true that we will no longer have a diocesan newspaper, I am committed to exploring new opportunities to share the stories of our faith in the Diocese of Peoria," wrote Tylka in a letter mailed Jan. 11 to the biweekly newspaper's 10,000 subscribers.

The final regular edition was dated Dec. 24, 2023.

Established in 1934 as The Peoria Register and part of a pioneering chain of diocesan newspapers printed in Denver, its name was changed to The Catholic Post in 1969 when both production and printing were moved within the diocese.

The Catholic Post has a rich history in the Catholic press. Two of its former editors -- Msgr. Robert G. Peters, who was editor or publisher for 47 years, and Albina Aspell, a pioneer among women in Catholic journalism -- served as president of the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada, now the Catholic Media Association, or CMA. Both also were recipients of the association's highest honor, the St. Francis de Sales Award.

Peters' technical skills helped guide many Catholic publications into the computer age. In 1987, Aspell addressed St. John Paul II and a world Synod of Bishops on the need for the Catholic Church to be more open in providing information.

Fr. John Dietzen, former associate editor, began a question-and-answer column that was syndicated by Catholic News Service and was its most popular offering for many years.

The Catholic Post regularly received CMA recognition for journalistic excellence, including third place for Best Newspaper in its classification in 2022. Since 1963, the newspaper also published the annual directory of the Diocese of Peoria.

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Tom Dermody, who served as editor of The Catholic Post for 32 years until his retirement in 2022, called its closing "a difficult goodbye." He said the decision was "the latest evidence of a seismic shift that continues to rock journalism" as print publications in both the secular and religious press seek their place in an increasingly digital age.

Dermody lamented that dioceses are losing in the transition -- including a regular, tangible connection shared by Catholics, parishes, and schools in their regions -- but he focused on gratitude for all that The Catholic Post accomplished in serving the church for nine decades.

"It was born during the Great Depression," said Dermody of the diocesan newspaper, "and came of age during World War II. It guided Catholics through the changes of the Second Vatican Council and did not shirk from controversy."

"It shared the teachings of eight popes, seven bishops, and the faith witnesses of thousands," he continued in a column reflecting on the closing. "It bridged a new

millennium and embraced the digital age with an active website and a Facebook community that had grown to 8,500 followers. And when a pandemic shut down churches for weeks on end, The Catholic Post didn't miss a beat, eventually capturing the joy and reverence when Catholics were at last able to receive the Eucharist again."

Tylka cited the challenges of declining subscriptions, increasing costs, and a shrinking workforce as factors in his decision.

He expressed gratitude to "all those who have shared in the history of producing The Catholic Post." Among the newspaper's current staff members is Sonia Nelson, advertising manager for 36 years.

"Over the last 90 years, many have come to understand who we are as the Church and have learned more of our faith in Jesus Christ through their efforts," wrote Tylka. Through the decades, he added, The Catholic Post has been "a trusted source of information, inspiration, and formation in the Catholic faith for tens of thousands of Catholic families."