News
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This is a screen shot of the Franciscan Media website with a Dec. 5 message from the Franciscan Friars of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe announcing that "after much prayer and discernment," Franciscan Media will stop operations by the end of 2025. (OSV News/Screen shot of Franciscan Media website)

Gina Christian

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Franciscan Media, a long-running U.S.-based Catholic news and evangelization outlet, has announced it will shut down at the end of 2025, amid a broader contraction in Catholic news outlets and wider shifts in the journalism industry itself.

"After much prayer, discernment, and heartfelt conversation, the Franciscan Friars of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe have reached the difficult decision to conclude the operations of Franciscan Media as of the end of 2025," said the outlet in a message published on its website and emailed to supporters Dec. 5.

The organization — known until 2011 as St. Anthony Messenger and publishing a flagship magazine of the same name — offered a number of free subscriptions, along with extensive evangelization and inspirational content in print, digital and

multimedia formats.

Founded by Franciscan friars in 1893, the outlet and similar Franciscan initiatives strove to engage the laity with the faith and the example of St. Francis of Assisi, providing what Franciscan Media called "a trusted voice" that shared "the Gospel and the Franciscan spirit with people worldwide."

Franciscan Media's current website includes an array of commentary, profiles, news and vocations features, along with saint biographies, minute meditations and podcasts.

But, said the outlet in its message, "we now face a difficult reality."

"In recent years, despite strong leadership and ongoing investment, Franciscan Media has encountered the same challenges facing Catholic and Christian publishing ministries," the outlet said.

Among those are "profound financial, technological, and cultural shifts that have reshaped how people engage with faith-based content.

"Many publishers have restructured or closed as outreach moves from print to digital platforms," said Franciscan Media.

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A combination of multiyear religious disaffiliation, shifting media distribution technologies and dwindling revenue streams have seen Catholic media outlets large and small shutter in rapid succession.

In 2022, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the closure of the domestic office of its Catholic News Service in Washington, although the USCCB has retained its Rome bureau.

Our Sunday Visitor, which purchased the CNS media assets and launched OSV News in January 2023, recently discontinued its flagship magazine (and former newspaper) of the same name, while also sunsetting the periodicals OSV Kids, The Priest and The Deacon.

U.S. Catholic newspapers numbered 196 with 6.5 million in circulation in 2006, according to figures from the Catholic Media Association, which serves Catholic journalists in the U.S. and Canada. In 2020, the number of newspapers had dropped 40%, to 118 with 3.8 million in circulation.

Diocesan newspapers that have closed in recent years include the Archdiocese of New York's Catholic New York, and the Catholic Sentinel and its Spanish counterpart El Centinela, a joint effort of the Archdiocese of Portland and Oregon Catholic Press.

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St. Nicholas is the "Saint of the Day" on the website of Franciscan Media Dec. 6, his feast day. The long-running U.S.-based Catholic news and evangelization outlet Franciscan Media will shut down at the end of 2025. (OSV News/Lawrence OP, courtesy Franciscan Media)

The Archdiocese of New York later launched its digital-only news outlet, The Good Newsroom, while the Archdiocese of Portland opted to post diocesan news items, statements and announcements on a dedicated webpage, a strategy adopted by many dioceses. Some shuttered diocesan news outlets have reemerged in print and online magazine format — such as The Catholic Miscellany of the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina, and Pittsburgh Catholic of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Globally, traditional news media as a whole has been "struggling to connect with much of the public, with declining engagement, low trust, and stagnating digital subscriptions," said Nic Newman, senior research associate at Oxford University's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, in his executive summary of that organization's "Digital News Report 2025."

Newman also noted "an accelerating shift towards consumption via social media and video platforms is further diminishing the influence of 'institutional journalism' and supercharging a fragmented alternative media environment containing an array of podcasters, YouTubers, and TikTokers."

Raymond Haberski Jr., author of the 2018 book *Voice of Empathy: A History of Franciscan Media in the United States*, told OSV News that over the years Franciscan Media valiantly "tried really hard to fill in some sort of middle ground" in a market that "had become so chopped up" by hyper-targeted demographics.

In researching his book — which covered the soon-to-close outlet as well as a number of independent Franciscan media efforts — Haberski interviewed Brother Jeremy Harrington, whose tenure at the St. Anthony Messenger once saw circulation of some 300,000.

Brother Jeremy and his fellow Franciscans "knew they were going to have problems" as early as "1980, 1982," said Haberski, who is a professor of history and director of American studies at Indiana University in Indianapolis.

The friars were aware they would "have to keep pivoting" and "pushing out shorter, segmented pieces," Haberski said.

But even "the social media blasts they would put out each day — you do that, but it's like a drop of rain in a thunderstorm," he said. "There's just so much out there that people are getting. And if you can't attract attention in a very particular way, it's really hard to sustain your audience."

Haberski, who described Franciscan Media's origins as "kind of pro-labor and pro-family," with material that sought to reach the working class, said, "It's a shame we are losing that legacy — but it still exists for people to read and to look at."

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Franciscan Media said its decision to close "in no way lessens the profound gratitude to the many friars, authors, writers and creative staff who have served in this ministry.

Rather, said the outlet, "it reflects the province's commitment to explore and discover new ways of evangelizing as Franciscans and ensure that future evangelizing efforts remain sustainable, innovative, and mission driven."

The outlet pointed to its patron saint as a guide for navigating the closure of its operations.

"As St. Francis reminds us, 'Let us begin again,' " said the organization in its statement. "His words capture the spirit with which we approach this moment — not as an end, but as a new beginning rooted in faith, renewal, and trust in God’s unfolding work among us."

As "this chapter closes," said the outlet, "the friars remain committed to proclaiming the Good News and walking with people of faith in new ways."