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Seattle's Catholic newspaper to cease; new magazine to take its place

by Dan Morris-Young

The Catholic Northwest Progress newspaper of the Seattle archdiocese will publish the last edition of its century-plus history in late June and will be replaced with a monthly magazine scheduled to launch in August.

According to an archdiocesan website report, the yet-unnamed magazine will be mailed at no cost to all registered households in the archdiocese, approximately 150,000.

The newspaper's circulation has declined over the years, currently reaching less than 8 percent of households, the release said.

Seattle will become the 26th U.S. diocese to join Faith Catholic of Lansing, Mich., in a cooperative publishing venture, archdiocesan director of communications Greg J. Magnoni told *NCR*. The new full-color magazine will be produced 10 times per year.

Archdiocesan news coverage will be shifted to the archdiocese's website, Magnoni said.

According to the news release, the decision was made by Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain following consultation with the presbyteral council.

"The kind of magazine we will publish will seek to creatively teach the faith in ways that grab our attention with historical background, practical applications, the lives of the saints and other inspiring Catholic figures," Sartain said.

"Evangelization is an invitation to delve more deeply into the faith, and the magazine will seek to be that

kind of invitation," he said.

When Sartain arrived in the Joliet, Ill., diocese in 2006, his diocesan newspaper was confronting challenges similar to those at *The Progress* in Seattle, the release states, adding:

"The presbyteral council and diocesan pastoral council had already made a recommendation that the diocesan newspaper be transformed into a monthly magazine like the one we will soon publish here," the archbishop said. "We made the transition to the magazine with the decision that it would be one of the central evangelization efforts of the diocese and would be sent to every Catholic household on our parish rolls."

Sartain said the magazine received very positive reception in his former diocese.

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The new Seattle magazine will be one of Faith Catholic's largest publications. In addition to 26 dioceses, it also serves a number of religious communities and Catholic organizations.

No overall budget figures for the new magazine are available yet, Magnoni told *NCR*.

"We are still developing a business plan," he said, adding, "We've been operating for several years with very lean staffing, so no layoffs are anticipated" of current media personnel.

Control and development of the new publication's content is yet to be clarified, Magnoni said, "but we will have significant local content and maintain an online presence for local news."

In addition to being the archdiocese's communications director, Magnoni is *The Progress*' associate publisher and editor. Will he continue in similar roles with the new magazine? "That will be up to the archbishop," Magnoni said. "I will have to ask him."

The magazine will be printed and mailed from Lansing, he said.

Feedback on the newspaper-to-magazine transition has been favorable, Magnoni said.

"People are really excited about the new magazine, especially when they learn it will go to every Catholic household. Everyone seems to recognize the need to evangelize our church so we can evangelize the world."

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