

The Christian Herald (1979)- Catholic Newspaper of Belize

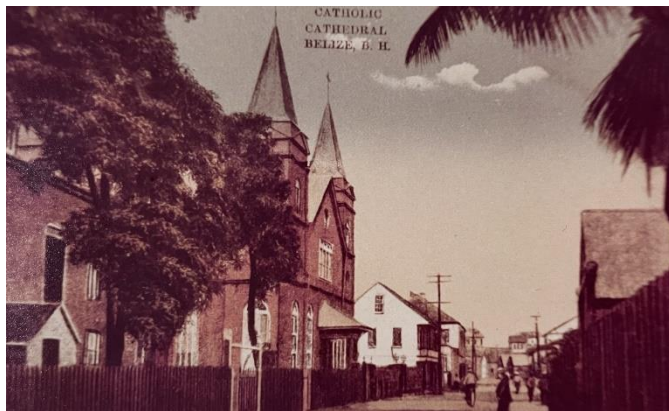
A Brief History - In Celebration of the 57th World Day of Social Communication



The Christian Herald was not the first Catholic Newspaper in Belize.

In June 1885 Jesuit Henry Gillett began publication of *The Angelus*, “a Catholic monthly periodical ... written partly in English and partly in Spanish. The objective of the paper was to “refute error and to give people correct information about Catholic affairs.” (Wikipedia)

The Catholic Diocese founded the Angelus Press to publish the newspaper. It was located near the Holy Redeemer Cathedral on North Front Street.



1Holy Redeemer Cathedral, Left-the original Cathedral 1958 (British Honduras) , Right-the Current Cathedral (Belize)

The equipment was later purchased by an employee who continued to operate at the church building but eventually moved to Queen Street where Angelus Press is still located.

The Angelus was short-lived and in 1905 publication was ceased.

It would be 74 years before another Catholic Newspaper, the Christian Herald would be launched by the diocese.



First Edition of the Christian Herald published September 2, 1979.

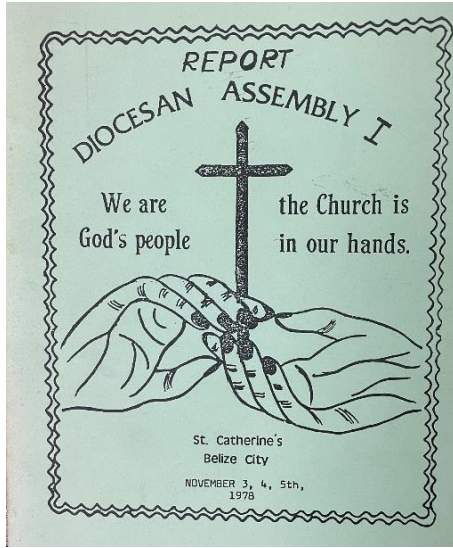
Its inspiration came from a 1978 gathering known as Diocesan Assembly One along with recommendations from all over the country of former British Honduras for regular communication of church events, teachings and inspirational matter. In September 1979, the first monthly edition of the Christian Herald was published by the Bennex Press under its first editor, Fr. John Maher, a Jesuit priest.

The feature story was entitled, "Thousands March in Guadalupe Procession" which took place on August 16, 1979. The picture at the bottom of the cover shows the procession at the corner of North Front and Queen Streets. The Corner now occupies the Msgr. Facundo Castillo Diocesan Center seen below right.



Corner North Front Street and Queen St-43 years apart

The Feature image was Pope John Paul II and Bishop Robert L. Hodapp.



Diocesan Assembly I Report, Right- Pope John Paul II and Bishop Robert Hodapp

Other gems from the First Edition:

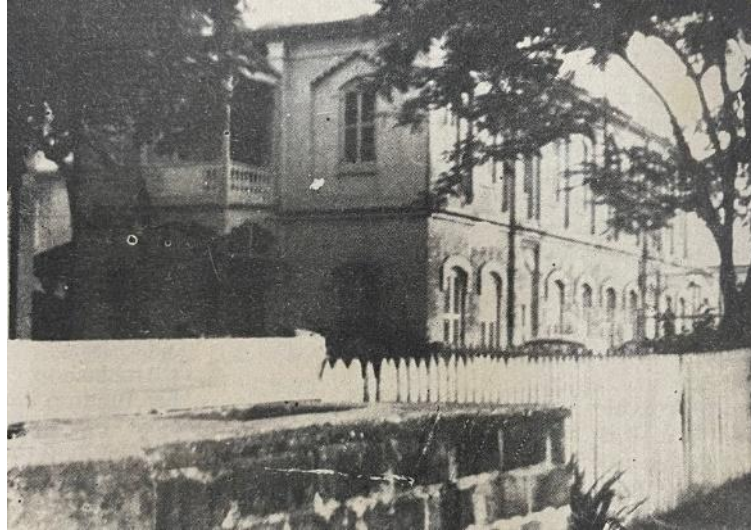


The 'Boom Box' was popular in the 80's. The Vogue was located at the corner of North Front Street and Queen Street right where the Fr. Facundo Castillo Diocesan center is currently located. The Picture on the left shows the airlines transiting Belize in the early 80's.



Since then, the newspaper has been continuously published except for the months of July and August of each year.

Production of the paper took place on the ground floor of the old Presbytery. (presbytery)



Fr. John Maher S.J., was editor of the Christian from 1979 to 1981. In 1981 Severo Pinto became editor of the Christian Herald when Fr. Maher left the country to pursue further training. Mr. Severo Pinto edited the paper until 1982. In 1982, he was succeeded by Mr. Leo Bradley Sr., retired Chief Librarian of the National Library and Government Archivist.

In 1988 Fr. Maher returned to the country and was editor again with Ruben Wong serving as assistant editor. Ruben became the editor in 1988 and continues to serve in this role doing almost all the work of producing and editing.



Fr. John Maher S.J

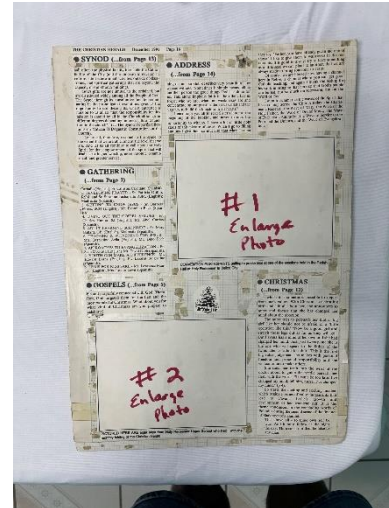


Leo Bradley Sr.

The Christian Herald consists of 12 pages with a Children’s Feature page, news, gospel reflections and special announcements from the wider church. There have never been roving reporters and therefore the newspaper relies heavily on parishes and other contributors for content. In September 2023, the Christian Herald will enter its 44th year of publication.

In its formative years most article submissions were handwritten. They were first type-written with the old manual typewriters. In order to make the text fully justified, which was the format of the newspaper, space had to be added in and then it was retyped.

Printing the handwritten articles was only one aspect of putting the newspaper together. After printing each article, it had to be cut and pasted onto a Bristol Pasteup Board. Blue grid lines on the board were used to align text and photos. A square or rectangular piece of black Bristol board or paper, cut to the specific size, was used to represent where a photo was to be placed on the page.



After preparing all 12 “paste up” pages they were sent to the printing press. The paper was first printed by the Bennex Press, which has since ceased operation. Throughout the years printing was also done by the Belize Times Press, National Printers and Print Belize. It is now being printed by the Reporter Press

In order to get the completed papers out to the parishes it first had to be manually compiled and sorted. In those days volunteer students from St. John’s College spent 4-6 hours per issue creasing each printed sheet and then putting them together in proper order for the finished product of 12 pages. Primary school boys from Holy Redeemer School also later assisted with this process which sometimes took up to a week.

Today all production stages are computerized and software such as Adobe In-Design makes short work of laying out the document before it is emailed in PDF form to the press. Technological innovations at the press now handles the folding after printing.



The students in the image are Ramon Cervantes, Claude Haylock, Michael Singh, Paul Edwards and Urban Martinez. Other regular ‘folders’ not shown are Andrae Johnson, Sephen Dillinger and Alvaro Pinto.

The Christian Herald Newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Belize City and Belmopan, has withstood the test of time. But like most printed media, it is threatened by advances in communication technology. A staff of one has managed the paper for many years. Volunteers are welcome to assist with content production and sourcing of fresh and relevant topics.

The newspaper has always shared our catholic faith encouraging the love of God. This is pure evangelization that will never cease.

As the church celebrates the 57th World Day of Social Communication, Pope Francis in his message, encourages us as communicators to promote a form of communication that helps “create the conditions to resolve controversies between people.”

He prays for us and all who communicate:

May people who work in communications feel inspired by this saint of tenderness, seeking and telling the truth with courage and freedom and rejecting the temptation to use sensational and combative expressions.

May the Lord Jesus, the pure Word poured out from the heart of the Father, help us to make our communication clear, open and heartfelt.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh, help us listen to the beating of hearts, to rediscover ourselves as brothers and sisters, and to disarm the hostility that divides.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word of truth and love, help us speak the truth in charity, so that we may feel like protectors of one another.

And may the Christian Herald continue providing Catholic truth to the Diocese of Belize City and Belmopan for many more years.

We thank all those who helped in any way to produce this historical overview. It was exciting to pore through images and documents of our past, trying to glean just enough to satisfy our readers. We still have some research pending and one day we hope to provide a fuller picture of the history of the Christian Herald.

Pete Castillo