



# COLUMBIA

## Online Edition

### Columbia's History



November 1893

*The Columbiad*, founded in 1893 as the unofficial communication organ of the Knights of Columbus, took as its mission the task of widening members' reception to news beyond local councils and, according to its inaugural issue, to "invite others to share in the glorious privileges of our most noble Order." Even as an unofficial publication in its initial form, *The Columbiad* often published the Order's news, financial statements, circulars and establishment of new councils.

Thomas H. Cummings served as the first editor of *The Columbiad* for the nearly 7,000 members who received the magazine in 1893. Prominently known in the Boston region as a Catholic lecturer, Cummings published *The Columbiad* with Christopher I. Fitzgerald from Boston's downtown center until 1898.

At this time, the publication's editorial leadership changed from Cummings to Daniel P. Toomey. A publisher of numerous monthly magazines, including one of Boston's Catholic monthlies, Toomey worked with the Order's Supreme Office in 1903 to establish *The Columbiad* as the official publication of the Knights of Columbus. In 1908, production moved from Boston to Hoboken, N.J., and the Order began mailing the magazine to each member, as opposed to the earlier subscription-based distribution.



October 1921

As membership continued to grow in number and expand geographically, *The Columbiad's* circulation grew from 6,775 to 214,000 between the years 1893 and 1908.



June 1942

1918.

After the war, the Knights of Columbus Board of Directors took renewed interest in the magazine and, noting how its news services were beginning to be replicated by local councils, decided that *The Columbiad* should be reincarnated as a general publication overseen by the Supreme Council. Renamed *Columbia* in August 1921, its newly appointed editor, John B. Kennedy, worked at the relocated editorial offices in New York City, while the general manager, Matthew T. Birmingham, worked at the Supreme Council Headquarters in New Haven, Conn. By 1923, the editorial and general management offices were both located in New Haven.

The newly branded magazine was given a new size, a new paper stock, a new layout and, most evidently, a new editorial policy. Distancing itself from being merely a news service for the Order, *Columbia* sought to be read by a much-wider audience of members, non-members, Catholics, non-Catholics, men, women and children. It began featuring cover art similar to the *Saturday Evening Post*, short fiction, recipes and more.



January 1961

In 1924, Kennedy's editorial desk was filled by Myles Connolly, the famed Catholic author and screenwriter who went on to write the novel *Mr. Blue* and who worked on the film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Connolly was succeeded by his assistant, John B. Donahue, in August 1928. And when General Manager Birmingham died in 1953, William H. Porter filled his post a year later.



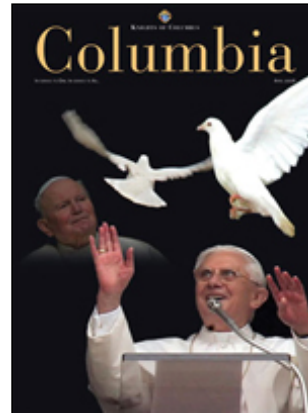
*Columbia* underwent another



January 2002

*Columbia* underwent another transformation in 1955 when Donahue and Porter changed the magazine's format from the large magazine size to the smaller news-magazine size. The main reason for the format change was the completion of the Order's printing plant, located near the New Haven headquarters. The magazine's new printing plant housed offices and two printing presses and was dedicated on January 29, 1955, the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of the Catholic press.

At this point, *Columbia's* circulation stood at more than 900,000, the largest circulation of any Catholic magazine. Donahue retired from his editorial role in 1965 and was replaced by Elmer Von Feldt, who in an editorial featured in the January 1966 issue noted Donahue's "rare passion and gift to spur people to excellence" and "foresight [which] led him to solicit articles on important issues long before they occupied the public mind." In 1988, Richard McMunn succeeded Von Feldt. And in due course, Timothy S. Hickey replaced McMunn in 1999. Alton J. Pelowski currently serves as *Columbia's* editor.



April 2006

Since 1995, the magazine's circulation has sharply increased to its current printing of more than 1.6 million copies. As the Order expanded into Canada and Central America, *Columbia* began printing both French and Spanish versions to meet the needs of non-English-speaking members. Currently, the publication also prepares an abridged Polish version for Knights in Poland.