

Fully Searchable, Open Digital Repository at Your Fingertips

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In recent focus groups conducted by the Catholic Research Resources Alliance (CRRA), several librarians and archivists shared a common perception: that the Catholic News Archive is useful only to researchers who are interested in Catholic-related topics. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth.

The Catholic News Archive is a mobile-friendly, freely available digital repository of Catholic newspapers built with the researcher in mind. With nearly fifteen thousand issues and growing, the thirteen publications currently in the archive provide researchers with a unique perspective on social, cultural, political, and historical events from the United States and around the world. Take the 1960s. Beyond the shockwave of Vatican II, the 1960s is a decade of American history that has perennial interest to students and scholars alike. Whether learning about the Civil Rights Movement; the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy [image 1], and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; controversies at the Democratic National Conventions of 1964 and 1968; anti-war and anti-draft protests; the Cold War; Vietnam; Cuba; Woodstock; or the moon landing, the Catholic News Archive offers primary sources with alternative and often opposing views that can enrich research into issues and events reported—and sometimes unreported—in United States mass media.



Image 3

And it isn't only the 1960s or United States history. A recent survey of the archive looked at forty different search terms, from famous individuals (Abraham Lincoln, William Shakespeare), to historical events (World War II, the French Revolution), other religions (Islam, Judaism), and a host of other terms that could be scholarly research topics (cancer, immigration, terrorism, climate change) or topics of interest to the general public (cooking, gardening, gambling, fashion, the Super Bowl [image 2]). Of these forty search terms, more than half of them (twenty-four) returned results in at least twelve of the thirteen publications currently housed in the archive, while thirty-seven of the forty terms appeared in at least ten of the thirteen publications.

The most popular of these terms was "fashion," which returned almost 15,000 search results, including nearly 2,500 advertisements [image 3], more than 2,000 illustrations, and 5,500 articles in twelve separate publications. Other terms that returned more than five thousand search results included baseball, civil rights, the Civil War, cooking, Hollywood, immigration, technology, voting, and World War II.

The digitized news sources at the Catholic News Archive are undoubtedly a rich source of information for religious scholars; however, these resources also provide a Catholic perspective on everyday historical and cultural events and the people who shaped them that is not often found in traditional city or national newspapers. Just like African American newspapers, workers' newspapers, or foreign-language newspapers, the Catholic newspapers found in the Catholic News Archive are an invaluable tool for researchers interested in corroboration and/or alternative perspectives to their scholarly inquiries. ■

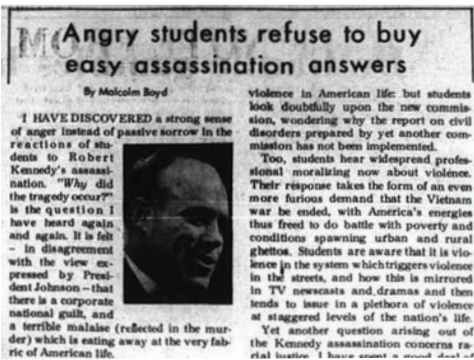


Image 1

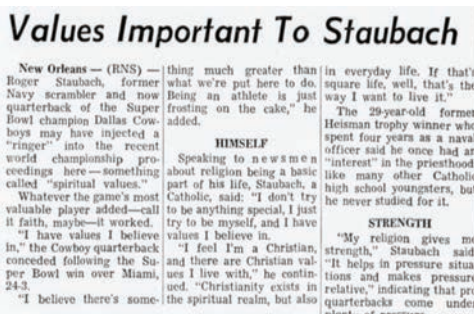


Image 2

Explore more at:

- Catholic Research Resources Alliance | catholicresearch.org
- The Catholic Portal | catholicresearch.org/catholic-portal
- Catholic News Archive | thecatholicnewsarchive.org