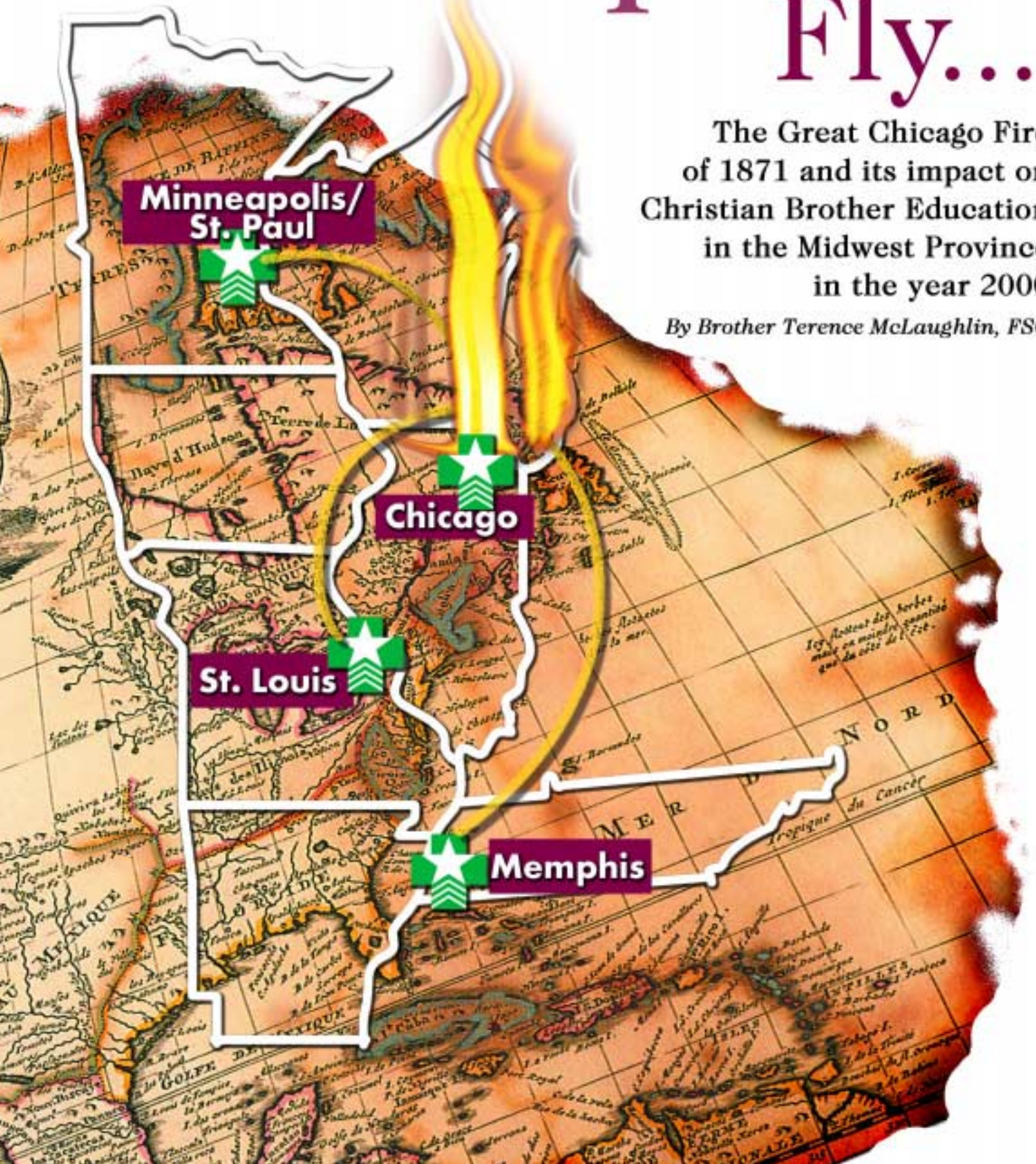


When Sparks Fly...

The Great Chicago Fire
of 1871 and its impact on
Christian Brother Education
in the Midwest Province
in the year 2000

By Brother Terence McLaughlin, FSC



Three Christian Brother 'downtown' schools go up in flames!

St. Mary's at Madison and Wabash
CB Academy at Van Buren and 4th
Cathedral School at Cass and Chicago



The Great Chicago

Fire of 1871 and its

impact on Christian

Brother Education in

our Midwest Province

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Brothers to continue in three schools; other Brothers leave for faraway places

St. Patrick Academy, Bridgeport Orphanage and St. John Grade School, all conducted by the Christian Brothers, to remain open.

Two Mississippi River towns – St. Paul, Minnesota, and Memphis, Tennessee – welcome displaced Brothers to begin new schools one month after Chicago tragedy.

October 8, 1871

"Last night, Saturday, October 7, there was a great fire.... The next day we little dreamed of the catastrophe that was hanging over us... and not thinking that by nightfall we would be obliged to abandon our house and run to the Lake shore."

These observations come from the diary of Brother Anthony, who was a young teacher at Christian Brothers Academy on Van Buren Street.

"At first we apprehended no danger," he continued, "but when we saw the Armory and later still the Pacific Hotel in flames, it was time to move."

October 9, 1871

"Day of conflagration, destruction, murder and robbery! Chicago has been ruined! From Harrison Street to Lincoln Park and from the Lake to the River is a desert."

October 10, 1871

"A cool but melancholy day for citizens of Chicago. The fire has pretty well stopped but still there is danger. Several incendiaries caught and put to death."

October 11, 1871

"Martial law. The city in command of General Sheridan and martial law proclaimed in the burned district."

Brother Anthony calls October 12 the "day of separation." The Director received thirteen passes to leave the city, and Brothers fanned out to such faraway places as Peoria, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri;

The Minnesota Story

St. Paul, Minnesota; and Memphis,

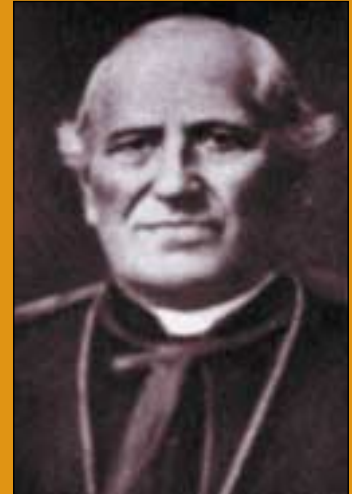
It was really a set of circumstances which brought the Christian Brothers to St. Paul. The new supply of Brothers available to meet the educational needs of the city; the misfortune in Chicago occurring at a time when church leaders had already placed their requests for Brothers; and outstanding and forceful leaders in St. Paul who were ready to seize the moment.

Ever since the Civil War, both the citizenry and the Church in St. Paul realized the contribution that Catholic schools could bring to learning, religion and discipline for the youth of the area. Attempts had been made to create such schools but either because of a splintered approach, the unruliness of the children, the weakness of the teachers, or a combination of all of these factors, Catholic education in St. Paul remained in a sorry state of confusion.

One of these early teachers wrote of how he practiced “patience with these wild little fellows—tried to teach them who God is and instruct them in their ABCs. I left New York to work with the Indians, to perhaps suffer hardships, and maybe even meet a martyr’s death. But the greatest trial was one that I never dreamed of—to take charge of these impudent and insulting children.” He then adds, “The only thing that can sustain a New Yorker in this wild country is a hope for a speedy release from this life and a great place in the next.” (This seminarian, later-to-be priest, returned to New York and became President of Seton Hall College.)

It was the young priest, Father John Ireland (later Archbishop), rector of

Tennessee.



**Father
John Ireland
(later
Archbishop),
rector of
St. Paul's
Cathedral**

MINNESOTA



Cretin-Derham
A Blue Ribbon School

St. Paul's Cathedral, who took matters in hand and vowed to bring a religious order of teachers to the city to solve its educational problems. Father Ireland was a forceful person, an ex-army chaplain from the Civil War. His letters of request to the

Brothers were quite demanding. He challenged the New York Provincial to broaden his perspective and to realize that St. Paul would soon become a great center of the Northwest and that the Brothers could become part of this great event. When Brother Edward was appointed Provincial of St. Louis, Missouri, Ireland wrote him that it was so nice to deal with someone who understood the needs of the West and ended his last letter, "Please answer my letter as soon as possible...and favorably!"

Two Brothers arrived in St. Paul and took charge of the Cathedral School on All Souls' Day, 1871, just weeks after the Chicago tragedy. The following year there were five Brothers in St. Paul and another school was opened. These schools were crude, makeshift rooms in buildings that were no longer in use. R o u g h wooden benches were the only furniture. The scene might be compared to the founding of old Al Azhar University in Cairo, which began on a mosque porch when a man spread out his carpet which became his classroom. A carpet and a teacher; a barren hovel and a Brother! It was from these humble surroundings that the prediction of Archbishop Ireland would come true. The Christian Brothers and Central Minnesota would become part of a "great cultural center in the Midwest."



De La Salle Celebrates 100 years in Minneapolis

In a sense, the story of Cretin-Derham Hall has come full circle. The Sisters of St. Joseph were co-faculty members with the Brothers at Cretin during its early days in the 1870s. Later, Cretin was to become the high school and the Sisters took charge of the grade school, a separate school. The Brothers and the Sisters each went their own independent ways in education for many years until once again, in 1987, they came together to merge their two fine high schools into the present Cretin-Derham Hall.

Today, Cretin-Derham Hall, a coed school of 1285 students, is the largest high school in the Brothers' Midwest Province. The name, Cretin, is in honor of the first Bishop of St. Paul, Bishop Joseph Cretin; Derham is



De La Salle - New Entrance

named for Hugh Derham whose gift in 1902 enabled the Sisters of St. Joseph to establish Derham Hall, a high school for girls, until the merger with Cretin High for boys.

Mr. Richard Engler, President of Cretin-Derham, attributes the success of this school to its strong community—parents, teachers, staff, students—which truly believes in its



De La Salle - Old Entrance



DE LA SALLE HIGH, MINNEAPOLIS
Minnesota

Minnesota

TOTINO-GRACE HIGH SCHOOL, FRIDLEY



Eucharistic Celebration...
An integral part of student life.

school. He feels that this support to the school's Mission and Value Statement brings new life to the school. The Vision, he mentions, was given to the school by the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of St. Joseph, and the faculty of 91 lay teachers and other Religious who now work each day to bring these ideals to fulfillment.

The demand for entrance into Cretin-Derham Hall is so great that 200 applicants each year are unable to attend because of space restrictions. Solid Catholic education is still a top priority of families in St. Paul.

The *North Western Chronicle*, in its September 29, 1900, edition stated: "October 1 promises to be an important day in the history of Minneapolis. On that day the new Brothers' school for boys is to open its doors and take up its great work of preparing youth for successful business careers."

And its doors have remained open for 100 years! This is De La Salle's Centennial Year! This school has an interesting story to tell. It is a school on an island in downtown Minneapolis. De La Salle, a high school of 575 students, remains today as the only Catholic high school in the city of Minneapolis.



De La Salle has the most diverse stu-



Aerial View of Totino - Grace

Winona Campus & Minneapolis Campus



Saint Mary's Clock Tower

The Christian Brothers assumed direction of Saint Mary's College in 1933 in a win-win agreement with the Diocese of Winona, Minnesota. The Diocese, which had directed the college for twenty years, found in those Depression years that the institution had become too great a drain on its financial resources. The Diocese also was unable to continue its commitment of priests to the faculty. The Brothers at that same time were seeking a college of their own, mainly as a place to educate their own student Brothers. The rest is history. The Brothers sent some of their best teachers to the college and they, joining with the excellent teachers already on the faculty, established the modern Saint Mary's College/University, which has developed into one of the finest medium-sized educational institutions in the country. The Great Lakes College Association in the late 1980s ranked Saint Mary's University as #1 in the Midwest for its ratio of graduates who go on to earn doctoral degrees.



Saint Mary's Campus from Winona Bluffs

Minnesota
SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY



SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY

Minnesota



Saint Mary's University - Minneapolis

Saint Mary's University - Winona, Minnesota

dent body of any private school in Minnesota. It is co-ed, with 30% students of color, and 25% representing religions other than Catholic. This present school year De La Salle is granting financial aid to 52% of its students, a total of \$700,000.

Brother Michael Collins, FSC, President, proudly states that De La Salle has remained where it was planted 100 years ago. In addition to ministering to the needs of this same geographical area for the past century, the services of this school of 30 lay teachers and four Brothers attracts students from St. Paul and suburban areas.

Saint Mary's University - Minneapolis, Minnesota

The school name, Totino-Grace, honors Jim and Rose Totino who were generous benefactors to the school, and Archbishop Thomas Grace, the second Bishop of St. Paul. This co-ed school of 1,080 students is located in Fridley, a suburb north of Minneapolis, on a beautiful 40-acre campus.

Totino-Grace offers programs and opportunities to its students that could be equaled in but a few high schools across the country today. The 100-student Choral Group, including Chamber Singers, Women's Chorus, and Show Choir, recently performed in six concerts in Poland. In one of the concerts these singers performed with the Polish National Philharmonic Ensemble in Warsaw.

The school's service outreach was demonstrated during Spring Break 2000. A group of 120 students raised the funds and supplied the work force to build a Habitat for Humanity home in West St. Paul. The school's Campus Ministry program is also a real tribute to the parents, faculty and students of Totino-Grace.

Brother Milton Barker, FSC, President, and his faculty of 70 lay teachers and two Brothers have truly moved this youngest of Lasallian schools in the Twin Cities area to a position of educational prominence that extends beyond its Minnesota borders.

Pictured Below on Right,
Ben Murray, Director of
Finance at San Miguel School
of Minneapolis



Christian Brothers Retreat Center on St. Croix River

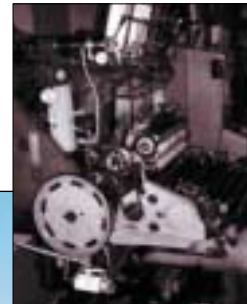
Other Lasallian Services in Minnesota

Saint Mary's University promotes itself as a four-year coeducational, residential, liberal arts university located on the scenic bluffs of the Mississippi River Valley. This statement, however, only hints at the richness of educational opportunities which are part of its offerings. The University offers its 1,500 students 53 majors to choose from at the undergraduate level, and an equal number of students have seven master degree programs available to them.

Saint Mary's gives new meaning to the "non-traditional" student and to "outreach programs." Brother Louis DeThomasis, President, has placed Saint Mary's University at the forefront of educational innovation. Saint Mary's offers degree programs to students in Christ the Teacher Institute of Education in Nairobi, Kenya, an outreach program for prospective teachers in Africa. Saint Mary's manages Winona Cotter High School, the Minnesota Academy of Math and Science, and the Performing Arts Academy in Winona. Saint Mary's has established the Metanoia Group, a subsidiary of the University, to aid colleges across the country with their financial and development efforts; it has created a Resource Studies Center, in collaboration with its biology and other departments, to offer training and consulting in spatial data analysis; and the University has developed the Institute for Corporate and Industrial Education offering customized training to business and industry.

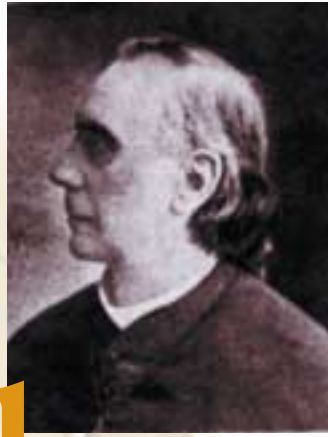


Christian Brothers Retreat Center



Saint Mary's Press - Winona

Bishop Patrick Feehan,
Bishop of Nashville,
Tennessee



The Brothers

in the Mid-South

Saint Mary's University extended its services to the Twin Cities area in the 1980s and established its present site in 1985. In 1998, Saint Mary's University designated its outreach program in Minneapolis as its Saint Mary's Twin Cities Campus.

Saint Mary's School of Graduate Studies and the School of Undergraduate and Special Programs are administered from this campus, with a satellite facility in Rochester, Minnesota. Programs are also offered on-site at businesses and schools. There are 3,300 degree-seeking students in these programs, most of whom are working adult professionals.

Saint Mary's University explains itself in the following manner: "By every facet of its network of educational endeavors, Saint Mary's University commits itself enthusiastically to the profession and vocation of teaching in order to awaken, nourish and empower its community of learners to live lives of service and leadership for God, society and self."

"At the graduate and special program centers and sites, the University creates relevant and rigorous academic experiences that serve directly the professional needs of the adult learner through the integration of practical, professional, and ethical components in an innovative and caring environment."

Christian Brothers Retreat

Center in the woodlands

along the St. Croix River ten miles

north of Stillwater, Minnesota, fur-

nishes retreat opportunities for stu-

dents, faculties and parents.

Christian Brothers Youth Home in St.

Paul gives temporary assistance to

students who are experiencing home

problems. Saint Mary's Press, located

on the campus of Saint Mary's

University in Winona, Minnesota, is a

leading publisher of school religion

texts and books for religious educa-

tion programs in parishes. San Miguel

Middle School, a school for at-risk

minority youngsters, is on the draw-

ing boards with plans to open in

September, 2000.

Top Left: Present Christian Brothers High School

Top Right: Christian Brothers High School on Adams...the First School

Bottom: Christian Brothers High School on the Parkway - 1940



Christian Brothers High School

The first effort to bring the Christian Brothers to Memphis, Tennessee, was made by Bishop Patrick Feehan of Nashville in 1864 as the Civil War was drawing to a close. The Brothers, in reply, promised to come to Memphis in 1867. However, the yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans that year took the lives of 11 Brothers, so the promise could not be honored at that time. Three years later, however, Brother Edward, the recently appointed Provincial in St. Louis, was able to reconsider the Brothers' commitment to Memphis. He asked Brother Maurelian, who was in New Orleans, to go to Memphis to begin the negotiations.

Brother Maurelian quickly found himself in the center of a no-win controversy. A committee of citizens had been appointed by the Bishop to select property for a proposed new school. This group had entered into an agreement to purchase a building and property from the owner. The terms, however, appeared too exacting to Brother Maurelian. He felt that a new school could not incur such a debt with its proposed payment schedule and still survive. The owner threatened to sue for damages as he felt that a contract had been made. This statement frightened the Provincial and the citizens committee. They now urged Brother Maurelian to accept the terms and to rely on the clergy and citizenry of Memphis to come to his aid. It was in such an atmosphere that the Christian Brothers began their apostolate in Memphis. Brother Maurelian's one bright moment amid these difficulties was the arrival of three Brothers from Chicago.

Brother Anthony, who kept a diary of the Chicago Fire and the weeks following the tragedy, was one of these newly arrived Brothers. This is the same Brother Anthony who would later succeed Brother Maurelian as President of Christian Brothers College in 1899.



Christian Brothers University

Christian Brothers Archives Memphis

He writes:

November 17, 1871

"Day of arrival in Memphis. Left St. Louis last night at 7:30 pm and arrived in Memphis at 6 pm today."

November 18, 1871

"Rainy day. Took our three meals at the Dominicans today."

November 19, 1871