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New Station WTAQ fittingly Opened by Institution Officials

De Pere Journal

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New Station WTAQ Fittingly Opened by Institution Officials

Blessing and Dedication by Abbot Pennings; Dr. Keefe Sermon- izes on Progress of Radio.

The new radio station of St. Norbert college, WTAQ, was opened Sunday morning. While the chimes of St. Joseph's church were being rung the Rev. James Wagner, O. Praem., transferred the power from WHBY to WTAQ and made the first announcement over the new station. The Right Rev. B. H. Pennings, abbot, blessed the transmitter, after which he delivered the following dedicatory address:

Dedication

"With these Liturgical prayers we dedicate this new Radio Broadcasting Instrument to public service, to foster the best interests of all.

"Let it be first and above all to the service of God, the Almighty Creator, who in His infinite Wisdom has furnished the elements, which make it possible to send the sounds through the air; to God above all be the praise and the honor and the glory.

"This instrument be to the service of our Country, to assist our rulers in their difficult task of the government of a great people, in the Federal, State and Municipal affairs.

"Be it to the service of the public in the religious and educational field to instruct and enlighten the people in moral and civic problems of such vital importance to them.

"We would rather see this beautiful new instrument with all its costly equipment be destroyed, than ever to have it offend the Majesty of God, or injure the welfare of the Country or the interests of the people.

"And now let it go forth on the air; and let the heavens proclaim the glory of God, and the firmament announce the works of His hands."

Then followed high mass at St. Joseph's church by the Very Rev. Dr. A. M. Keefe, rector, who in his sermon very appropriately referred to the event, using for his text "What God Had Wrought." Father Keefe said in part:

Sermon by Dr. A. M. Keefe

"Dearly beloved—It is not quite a century ago, (ninety-two years to be exact) when our grandparents were young that between Baltimore and Washington, for the first time in the history of mankind, Samuel Morse sent, over a frail line of wire, the first message, the quotation from Scripture which we have taken for our text.

"Seventy-eight years ago Cyrus Field promoted the first submarine transatlantic cable.

"It is sixty-two years since, between Massachusetts and Boston, the human voice was first heard over the wire, making first use of that invention which Alexander Graham Bell gave to making, the telephone.

"Near the middle of April, 1912, when the "Titanic" was sinking it was the wireless which called the "Carpathia" for help. It was the first great work of the wireless saving the

lives of many who escaped from the stricken steamer.

"Sixteen years ago, the first home-made radio sets were able to hear the regular broadcasts from 'Westinghouse Station, KDKA' of Pittsburgh. Therefore, is it not fitting to choose for this morning's text, the message of the cable, "What Hath God Wrought."

"Coming closer to our own time and interest, eleven years ago, a group of students, here at the College, began a radio class. Out of it developed the first WHBY, which went on the air in 1926, and was officially recognized by the government on March 25th.

"In the Fall of the following year (1927) from this church, station WHBY began an uninterrupted Sunday broadcast of sermons.

"That this station was ambitious for greater things was shown when it opened a studio in Green Bay at the Columbus Club in 1928. Two years later the station was granted full time on the air. Additional improvements were made and in October of 1930 an entirely new transmitter was built on the outskirts of De Pere.

"Exactly five years ago next Wednesday (Feb. 12) the voice of our Holy Father, the Pope, was heard in your homes over WHBY.

"When one realizes the numerous people who have been associated with this station guided by a Catholic institution, then one begins to appreciate the value the service it aimed to give. There has been a number of fathers both in this diocese and in the order who have helped to establish and assisted in the growth of this station. First, Father Millay, my predecessor, who took a constant interest in every detail of the new establishment. His most able assistant, the good Father Van Dyck, who encouraged the station through many a difficulty. Then, too, we shall not leave unmentioned, the man, who from this pulpit, preached the word of God for the past several years, Father Traeger. Then, there is that loyal group of young men who were then students of this college and are now priests of this diocese. Fathers George Beth, Henry Schmidt, Henry Hubert, Al. Schmitz and Gerald Ilk, were all actually associated with this radio station in its infancy. One other alumnus will be remembered in our prayers for his golden voice that we shall not hear again, Father Londo. Fathers Short and Zey, members of the diocesan clergy, are well remembered for their lenten sermons. Lastly, there is the man who directs the activities of this station, and whose work needs no mention, Father James Wagner. But, behind all of these was the encouragement, and the praise, the guidance and the inspiration of our beloved Pastor and President, Abbot B. H. Pennings.

"So station WHBY continues its work on this community and now follows in the field of radio with station WTAQ which goes on the air today with little of the solemnity and ceremony which was originally planned. This very storm exhibits its value to the isolated who otherwise would not have heard this divine worship.

De Pere Journal - Democrat
Feb. 13, 1936.

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WTAQ

"Why are we thus interested in radio? All radio stations come under the Federal Communication Division and the Department of Commerce. This division has emphasized the statement that a radio station exists in the public convenience, interest and necessity. The radio today is not merely a convenience, not in the public interest alone, it is a necessity. Imagine listening to Christmas services from a German abbey,—the tramp of feet at the funeral of an English King,—or to the voice of the Holy Father coming from one of the finest stations in the world, his own Vatican Station in Rome, Italy.

"Thus radio, the Apostolate of the Air, is a comfort to the isolated, the aged, and the invalids who are listening to this broadcast. To them and to many another new courage and new reconciliation to their lot shall come from the spiritual counsel that somewhere will come to them from some station today.

"We can do no better than close with a thought contained in Pope Pius' sermon at the opening of the Vatican station five years ago:

"This station will give glory to God, and will help to bring peace on earth to those men of good will who will follow the leadership of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who as St. Paul said in his letter to the Ephesians,—'Coming, he preached peace to you that were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh. Now, therefore, you are no more strangers and foreigners, but you are the fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God.'"

Program at WTAQ Studio

Shortly after 11 o'clock the activities were transferred to the main studio, atop the Bellin building in Green Bay, for the introductory programs of the National Broadcasting Company's Thesaurus transcription service. The employment of the NBC Thesaurus assures WTAQ listeners a high type of entertainment.

The balance of the day and night was devoted to civic programs from these cities, De Pere, Appleton, Neenah-Menasha and Oshkosh, marked by microphone appearances of the One Hundred and Twenty Second Field Artillery band of Appleton, Tom Temple's orchestra of Appleton, LeBaron Austin and his choral group of Green Bay, the Green Bay City band, directed by Prof. Alex V. Enna, the St. Norbert College band and the Rhythmettes, dance orchestra of Green Bay.

Congratulatory letters were received from Governor Philip F. LaFollette, U. S. Senator Robert LaFollette, U. S. Senator F. Ryan Duffy of Fond du Lac, and other dignitaries.

Congratulations are extended to St. Norbert college upon the opening of its new radio station WTAQ, marking another progressive step in the onward march of the local educational institution.