

Blast from the past

Do you like to visit flea markets?

Favor Antiques Roadshow over Monday Night Football?

If so, you would have had a blast helping us put together the special edition marking the 225th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, which was established Nov. 6, 1789.

I had the pleasure – along with Assistant Managing Editor George Matysek; Emma Welcher, our former social media coordinator; and Jessica Marsala, one of our freelance writers – of sifting through some of the thousands of Catholic Review photos stored at the Associated Archives at St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Roland Park, in search of gold. We wistfully left the attic of the archdiocese, knowing that we couldn’t share all of the old gems we came across.

On the third of my four trips there, I indulged myself and went to a box marked “R,” in search of news from Feb. 9, 1967, the day the roof collapsed on 120 schoolchildren and adults attending a weekday Lenten Mass at St. Rose of Lima in Brooklyn. The photo here was like a lightning bolt to the brain, reconnecting some old synapses. You can see a city fire or police officer in a white cap, taking in the damage from the choir loft.



It was in that loft, during an Advent Mass in December 1960, to the left of the clock that is stopped at 8:10 a.m., where Sister Esperance, my first-grade teacher, gently urged me not to sing so loud. Maybe it wasn’t as bad as Leonard Cohen’s “drunk in the midnight choir,” but evidently I could not carry a tune.

I was not deterred, however, as friends and family who have endured my attempts at karaoke will attest.