

New Catholic Review editor brings three decades of experience

When 49-year-old Christopher Gunty takes the helm of The Catholic Review as associate publisher and editor, July 1, the Chicago-area native will bring with him nearly three decades of experience in Catholic journalism.

Mr. Gunty, who is currently associate publisher of The Florida Catholic Inc., a group of zoned newspapers serving most of the dioceses of Florida, will succeed Daniel L. Medinger, who resigned in February after leading the paper for more than 20 years. Mr. Gunty will also serve as chief executive officer of The Catholic Review's parent company, The Cathedral Foundation, Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien announced April 17.

"We are very pleased to have someone of Chris' experience and reputation in the Catholic publishing industry directing the operations of The Catholic Review and The Cathedral Foundation," the archbishop said. "We are especially pleased by Chris' strong grasp of the industry's emerging trends and his approach to meeting the demands of a 24-hour news cycle that has changed the media landscape."

Mr. Gunty, who has three grown children and is married to Ann Augherton, the managing editor of the Arlington Catholic Herald in Northern Virginia, said he's excited to come to The Catholic Review because "it's one of the best Catholic papers around, is consistently award-winning, has a great history and a great sense there of how to speak to a community."

He spoke about Baltimore's rich Catholic tradition – of being the Premier See – and said the staff will need to think about "how can we, as the storyteller, as the professional journalist, make the Gospel message come alive."

A high school and college seminarian, Mr. Gunty said he was two-thirds of the way through his junior year of college at Niles College Seminary at Loyola University in Chicago, when he realized he was not called to be a priest. The English major instead found his calling in the Catholic press, where he has served as a writer, photographer, editor, circulation manager and associate publisher. He spent four

years with The Chicago Catholic and 18 years as founding editor and associate publisher of The Catholic Sun in Phoenix. He joined The Florida Catholic in December 2003.

He served as president of the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada from 1996-1998, and in 2000 received the CPA's highest honor - the St. Francis de Sales Award for Outstanding Contributions to Catholic Journalism.

The media-savvy editor, who has a Facebook page and a Twitter account, said he heard recently from the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism that "readership is not dying."

"Print circulation might be declining, but if you look at readership overall on both the print product and the Web, readership is increasing," he said. "One of the things that excites me (about The Cathedral Foundation) is the multifaceted aspect of the operation - the newspaper and other publishing aspects. I think that if what we're seeing is people moving away from reading a traditional newspaper, then we need to have other products available for people to read."

Of all his achievements in the Catholic press, Mr. Gunty said he's most proud of simultaneously revamping The Florida Catholic's print edition and Web site.

"A big part of that was it wasn't just a redesign of typefaces and column formats - we rethought the way we approach stories," he said. "We thought, how do we do these stories so they're easy to read, so they make more sense and so they attract readers better?"

Mr. Gunty said The Catholic Review has a solid foundation, and he's going to spend some time getting to know the staff and the archdiocese. He said he's committed to using all the tools that the Catholic press has to offer to tell people the stories that are part of their lives. At The Florida Catholic, he and staff implemented daily morning prayer, which may be a possibility at The Catholic Review as well.

"It has to be more than a job," he said. "It has to be a vocation, and there has to be a spiritual nature to what we do."