

The Thomas More Association

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The extent to which devotion to St. Thomas More has spread throughout America in non-legal circles is indicated by his selection as a patron of an association for the promotion of good literature.

THE THOMAS MORE ASSOCIATION

IN 1955, the Thomas More Association with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois inaugurated an annual award, the Thomas More Association Medal, to the publisher who has made the most valuable contribution



to Catholic publishing during the past year. The award was established by the Directors and Staff of the Association because of their belief that the role of publisher is one of the most important and unrecognized factors in making Catholic books of quality available to American readers. By honoring these publishers the Association hopes to call the attention of the reading public to

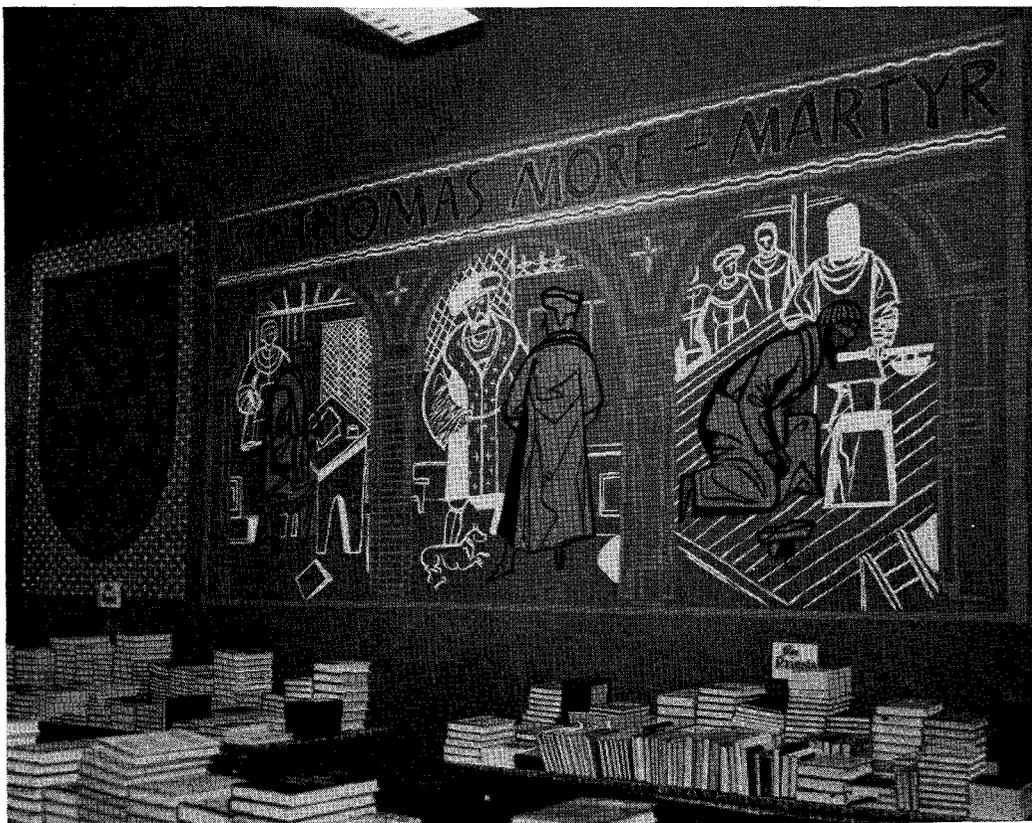
the important role the publisher plays, and at the same time to call attention to an outstanding job of creative publishing.

In 1939, inspired by concern over the apparent apathy of the Catholic reading public, Mr. John C. Tully, a retired banker and industrialist, initiated the Thomas More Association in Chicago, Illinois. Aimed principally at increasing both the writing and consumption of Catholic

works, the Association has proven a potent factor in the development of an American Catholic literature.

Under the direction of Mr. Dan Herr, former free-lancer for *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Life* and *Coronet*, the Association today maintains the largest Catholic book store in the world, located at 210 Madison Street in Chicago. Twelve thousand square feet of floor space have been utilized by approximately thirty-five staff members employed in selecting and preparing for worldwide distribution classics and best-sellers by Catholic and non-Catholic authors.

In 1942, the Association introduced its own publication, *Books on Trial*, specializing in book reviews intended to satisfy the wide and diverse interests of an heterogeneous American population. Not restricted to religious subjects, its coverage has recently included Truman's *Memoirs*; John Gunther's *Inside Africa*, and *Cash McCall*, by Cameron Hawley. Since 1949, *Books on Trial* has presented articles by eminent writers, including Evelyn Waugh, Richard Sullivan, Graham Greene, and George N. Schuster. The forty-cent monthly publication, averaging twenty-four pages, also contains sections for young readers,



The painting by Patricia Watters on the Association wall depicts three aspects of St. Thomas' Life—author, Chancellor, martyr.

religion, fiction, and current and perennial topics.

Maintaining rigid standards, *Books on Trial* has often refused to list any books under its own Book Club ratings because suitable selections have been unavailable. Its ratings are unprejudiced by fleeting popularity, and it often publicizes an older, hitherto unheralded volume on the theory that "any book that hasn't been read is a new book."

The "Thomas More Books to Live" series, conducted by the Association in cooperation with the publishing firm of Henry Regnery, is an effort to re-market important Catholic books that have either gone out of print or which, for one reason or another, had only a small audience when first published. An example of this was the distribution of Belloc's *Path to Rome*.

Two highly effective features of the Association's program are the Parish Library Service and the Book Fair Service. The latter aids parishes, schools, and other organizations to conduct weekly "book fairs" in which parishioners or students or members

are urged to purchase good Catholic books for their homes. The Parish Library Service gives professional direction to the growing number of parishes which are establishing their own lending and circulating libraries.

The first annual award went to Doubleday and Company for its Image Books series. On May 4th of this year, the second annual Medal was presented to Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. at the Hotel LaSalle in Chicago. The following citation was presented together with the Medal:

The Directors and Staff of the Thomas More Association honor Alfred A. Knopf and his staff for the vision and courage which brought us *The Cypresses Believe in God* and express hope that he will continue to search the world for new talents and that Catholic literature will benefit, as it has so richly in the past, from his efforts.

The dedication of the Association to St. Thomas More is recognition of his greatness as an author and scholar and of his position as a patron of the arts and friend of education as well as of his place of honor as a great lawyer and judge and as a saint of the Church.

