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Editorial serendipity

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NCR Today

Publishing a newspaper and keeping a web site is often a lesson in managed chaos. You try to plan ahead, but you never know when a story might break. You're never really sure that the story you just sent to the printer will be relevant by the time anyone sees it on paper. Web publishing alleviates that pressure -- a bit -- but even on the web, you're never really sure that you're up to date as you could be.

But sometimes things happen just right.

This morning is a case in point. We had already scheduled to post to the web site an editorial from our July 9 print issue (A hierarchy deeply damaged from within), which went to the printer last week and should be arriving in mail boxes even now.

This morning when I opened my e-mail box, I found a message from Jerry Filteau, forwarding a message he had received from a reader. That message contained the text of a talk by South African Bishop Kevin Dowling. (See Catholic social teaching finds church leadership lacking.)

I called Bishop Dowling to verify that the talk was really his. He confirmed that and said we could post it online. He sent me an original copy, to make sure the document was accurate. I re-formatted his Word document for posting and did some copy-editing and then posted the talk.

By then, the editorial from our July 9 issue had come online as scheduled.

It was not until I saw both pieces on our homepage that I realized how well they fit together. They really are a match set. It was a moment -- half planned and half happenstance -- of editorial serendipity.

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