

# CENTENNIAL GAZETTE

St. James Cathedral, Seattle

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## A DIFFERENT KIND OF SHEPHERD

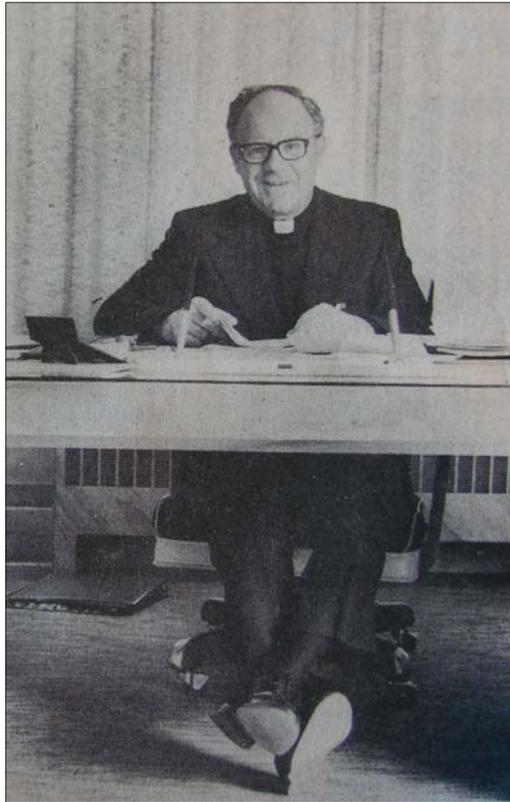
In 1975, Archbishop Connolly retired. He had served the Church in Western Washington faithfully for nearly thirty years and was now anticipating a well-earned rest.

His successor, appointed by Pope Paul VI, was Raymond G. Hunthausen, Bishop of the Diocese of Helena, Montana. When the news of his appointment reached Seattle in February, 1975, everyone wondered what this new shepherd would be like. Many in Seattle remembered him—the young Bishop of Helena had done his seminary studies at St. Edward's Seminary in Kenmore—but what was he like as a bishop and leader? And what new plans and ideas would he bring to the Archdiocese of Seattle? To find out, the Catholic Northwest Progress sent reporter Paul Clark to Helena to “live in the prelate's back pocket” for the weekend.

That weekend was a revelation. The revelations began the moment the reporter climbed off the plane at the Helena airport and found the Archbishop-designate waiting to meet him in person. “I had expected to be met by a priest-member of the Chancery staff, or a secretary,” he wrote. “I was very flattered to have a member of the American hierarchy take my luggage in one hand and my elbow in the other as he piloted me towards his car” – a Volkswagen Dasher!

And the surprises continued. Bishop Hunthausen lived simply, in a small apartment on the second floor of Helena's Chancery building. He was very much a family man, devoted to his mother Edna, beloved of his brothers and sisters and literally dozens of nieces and nephews. He loved sports, and was an avid skier. He had a varied background and a wide range of interests. He had taught chemistry at Carroll College in Helena (in addition to coaching football, basketball, baseball, track and golf!) and later served as college president before being appointed Bishop of Helena by Pope John XXIII in July of 1962. He was ordained a bishop just in time to attend the first session of the Second Vatican Council in October, 1962.

Back in his diocese, Bishop Hunthausen promptly began the work of implementing the Council's teachings.



Bishop Hunthausen in his office in Helena, shortly after his appointment to the Archdiocese of Seattle.

In response to Council's emphasis on collegiality in decision-making, Hunthausen established a Priests' Senate, as well as Parish Councils and a Diocesan Pastoral Council. And he truly listened to the voices of his priests, religious and lay faithful. Father John Robertson, the Bishop's Chancellor in Helena, observed that “nearly all decisions of vital importance to the diocese are reached through consensus rather than being unilateral actions on the part of the Bishop.” Hunthausen also listened to people of other Christian denominations and other faiths. The year before he came to Seattle, he was instrumental in establishing the Montana Association of Churches, an ecumenical organization which brought together Christians of many denominations to address issues of shared concern. And he had already begun to speak out for peace. In May of 1969, with the priests of the Diocese of Helena, he protested the construction of an anti-ballistic

missile system in Montana, calling the arms race “suicidal.” Long before he arrived in Seattle, the FBI was already keeping a file on Bishop Hunthausen!

Archbishop Hunthausen was installed as the second Archbishop, sixth bishop of Seattle at the Seattle Center Arena on May 22, 1975. To the thousands who gathered for that historic occasion, he spoke quite simply of his prayers for the Church in Western Washington. “I pray that we might truly be a loving people who recognize that if peace is to come into our world, it must begin with ourselves, at peace with God, and at peace with one another. I pray that we might understand we have a mission and that we might be serious about it. To be a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, has to be the most important thing in our lives. I pray that we can put aside the polarization in today's Church... I pray that we can bring the witness of unity so that the entire human family will see that we are one body with the Lord.”

—Corinna Laughlin

**Special note:** *In a forthcoming issue of the Centennial Gazette, we will take a closer look at the “Saint Gym” era in Cathedral history. Were you here in 1994? What do you remember about worshiping at O’Dea Gym during the time of the Cathedral’s restoration and renovation? Share your story by e-mailing [claughlin@stjames-cathedral.org](mailto:claughlin@stjames-cathedral.org).*