

A New Shepherd for Seattle

This Wednesday, December 1, 2010, Archbishop-Elect J. Peter Sartain will be installed as the Ninth Bishop, Fifth Archbishop of Seattle. All are welcome to attend the installation liturgies, Tuesday, November 30 at 7:00pm, and Wednesday, December 1 at 2:00pm. As we prepare for this historic event, we look back at the bishops who have ministered here over the past 160 years. *This is the 6th and last in the series—read more online!*

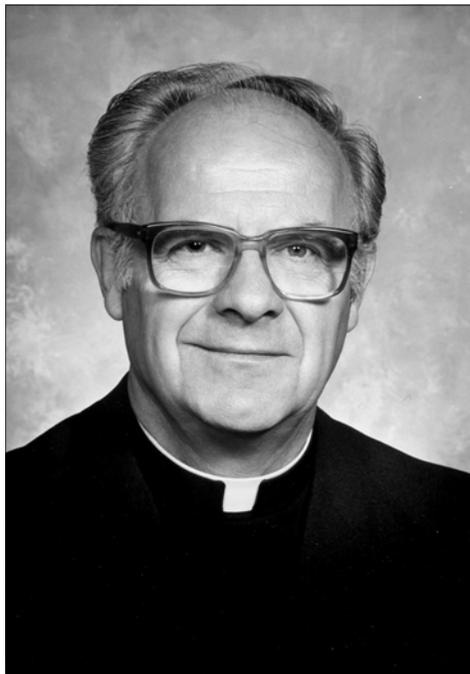
A NORTHWEST NATIVE COMES TO SEATTLE

Archbishop Connolly led the Church in Seattle for nearly thirty years. Like Bishop O’Dea before him, he was a “bricks-and-mortar” bishop who left a legacy of new churches, schools, hospitals, and retreat centers across the Archdiocese. But by the time he retired in 1975, it was clear that the boom times were over. The city was suffering as people migrated to the suburbs, and Catholic schools were hit hard (the Cathedral School was forced to close in 1971). The nation was in a long, slow, recession and many diocesan institutions were struggling.

Archbishop Connolly’s successor—whose years as Archbishop of Seattle would be marked by much joy, and by many difficult decisions—was Raymond G. Hunthausen, Bishop of Helena, Montana. Hunthausen was a Northwest native, born in Anaconda, Montana, and many in Seattle remembered him, as he had done his seminary studies at St. Edward’s Seminary in Kenmore. But what would he be like as a bishop and leader? And what new plans and ideas would he bring to the Archdiocese of Seattle? To find out, the *Progress* sent reporter Paul Clark to Helena to “live in the prelate’s back pocket” for the weekend.

That weekend was quite a revelation. The revelations began when 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 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.



Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen

Back at home, Bishop Hunthausen promptly began the work of implementing the Council’s teachings, establishing a Diocesan Pastoral Council and many other consultative groups. And he listened, preferring to reach decisions through consensus. Hunthausen was active in establishing ecumenical dialogue among Christian denominations in Montana. And he had already become a nationally-recognized voice for peace, advocating for nuclear disarmament.

Archbishop Hunthausen was installed as the second Archbishop, sixth bishop of Seattle at the Seattle Center Arena on May 22, 1975. Archbishop Jean Jadot, the Holy Father’s Delegate, read the Apostolic Mandate, the official document appointing Hunthausen Archbishop of Seattle. Then, in keeping with long tradition, the Consultors of the Archdiocese inspected the Mandate, and then showed it to the people for their acceptance. Only then did Archbishop Jadot and Archbishop Connolly together lead Archbishop Hunthausen to the cathedra (moved to the Arena for the purpose!), and present him with the crosier, the sign of the pastoral office.

Father Ryan was a young priest at the time, assisting as master of ceremonies for the installation rites. He remembers that Archbishop Hunthausen preached extemporaneously, without any notes. He began by asking the entire assembly to pray with him in silence to the Holy Spirit, so that he might say what needed to be said. “It was a new moment,” Father Ryan recalls.

Archbishop Hunthausen spoke quite simply of his dreams 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.” He quoted the words of another bishop, St. Augustine, to his flock: “If, then, I am gladder by far to be redeemed with you than I am to be placed over you, I shall, as the Lord Himself commanded, be more completely your servant.” In his sixteen years as Archbishop of Seattle, Archbishop Hunthausen would make those words his own.

—Corinna Laughlin