

A New Shepherd for Seattle

On 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 in Western Washington over the past 160 years.

THE BLANCHET BROTHERS RETIRE

The Blanchet brothers –Augustin in the north, Francis in the south–were getting on in years. They had come to a rough-and-ready frontier, and had gradually brought order out of chaos, building churches, schools, orphanages and hospitals, recruiting priests and religious from Europe, Canada, and the east coast of the United States, raising funds, and traveling incessantly through their vast territories by inadequate roads in all weathers and in all dangers. They had witnessed massacres, epidemics, wars, and a Gold Rush, and had waged their own battles against anti-Catholic legislation that regularly threatened to reverse all their hard-won advances in the region.

The work took its toll on the brothers. At the laying of the cornerstone of Portland's cathedral in 1878, it became apparent to all that Archbishop Blanchet was in failing health. Though he presided at the ceremonies and even took time to distribute candy among the orphan children, he was moving slowly, and walking with a noticeable limp. The people were greatly concerned, but not really surprised – he was just one month short of his 83rd birthday, after all! A few weeks later, he announced his retirement, writing, as he always did, with an abundant use of the royal "we." "It has pleased God to send us... an affliction which impaired our right leg, and rendered somewhat difficult the visitations of the remote missions of our Archdiocese," he began. He had requested a coadjutor in 1876, and now, at last, his successor was on his way: the saintly Bishop of Vancouver Island, Charles Jean Seghers.

Never was bishop more ready for his successor's arrival! Blanchet sent a carriage drawn by four white horses to the wharf to meet Archbishop-Elect Seghers and bring him to Portland's cathedral in a grand procession. When he arrived at the church, the venerable Archbishop Blanchet greeted him with these words: "My Lord Archbishop Coadjutor: This day of your reception in this cathedral as my coadjutor and future successor is the happiest day of my life." And the Archbishop really meant it. In private he said, "I am glad to have a coadjutor... I'm going to throw all my miseries on his shoulders."



Bishop Aegidius Junger

BISHOP JUNGER

Just before Archbishop Seghers came to Portland, in June, 1879, Bishop Blanchet of Nesqually quietly submitted his resignation as well, which was accepted *nunc pro tunc*, which meant that he would continue as administrator of the diocese until a successor could be appointed.

F. X. N. Blanchet had waited years for his replacement to arrive; A. M. A. had to wait only a few weeks. On August 6, 1879, Father Aegidius Junger was appointed the second Bishop of Nesqually. He was well-known to both Blanchet brothers, having served for several years as Vicar-General for the Archdiocese of Portland. He was consecrated at St. James, Vancouver on October 28, 1879. As far as episcopal

consecrations go, it was a simple ceremony – just the two Blanchets were present as consecrators, instead of the customary three bishops.

But simplicity was well-suited to Junger, who was, by all accounts, a quiet and humble man. He preferred the peace of the Walla Walla Valley to the growing cities of the western part of his territory. He loved serving the people, especially the children, but he did not excel at the political negotiations over land and property which were also part of the bishop's responsibility. The latter years of his ministry were somewhat embittered by a lengthy legal battle over 640 acres of land in downtown Vancouver, the site of the original St. James church, a battle which the diocese ultimately lost.

But Junger never complained. He worked and traveled tirelessly, even as his health gave way. Just two weeks before he died, he visited the Holy Names Sisters in Seattle, celebrating Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in their Chapel. On his return to Vancouver, the famous Mother Joseph persuaded him to stay at Providence Hospital to be cared for by the Sisters. But it was too late: the Bishop died suddenly on December 26, 1895, with Mother Joseph at his side, but before his Vicar General, Father Schram, or his doctor could be summoned. He was only 62 years old. He was buried in the cathedral he had proudly built in Vancouver, and with the new year preparations to receive his successor were underway.

—Corinna Laughlin