

New U.S. Cardinal Strong Ecumenist

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — In naming the archbishop of Washington, D.C., one of 21 new cardinals, Pope Paul VI focused attention on an American who projects an image of openness, spirituality and ecumenism.

Cardinal-designate William Wakefield Baum, young for a prince of the Church at 49, has had a long career marked by his work with persons of other faiths, races and nationalities.

As archbishop in the nation's capital he has handled thorny problems in intergroup relations with grace. In years of theological dialogues he retained the respect of Protestants and fellow Catholics for strict adherence to doctrinal orthodoxy, tempered with respectful understanding of others' views.

"In naming Archbishop Baum to the College of Cardinals, Pope Paul has paid tribute to the fine qualities of a remarkable churchman," Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said on the day of the appointment.

A native of Dallas and a priest of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., the new cardinal-elect holds a licentiate and doctorate in theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

Ordained in 1951, Archbishop Baum held several parish appointments and diocesan posts until 1962 when he went to Rome as an adviser-expert at the Second Vatican Council. He was in Rome throughout the course of the four-year conciliar deliberations.

His grasp of the issues facing the Church in the light of the new ecumenical posture so impressed the U.S. hierarchy that he was named the first director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the newly reorganized National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

He served in that office from 1964 to 1967 and pioneered in arranging, and participating in, a wide variety of interreligious meetings.

He also received Vatican recognition in those years, with appointment as the Holy See's permanent observer-consultant to the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), an effort by major U.S. Protestant denominations exploring possible merger.

After three years of schooling in the administration of a diocese as chancellor in Kansas City, the then-monsignor was appointed Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Mo.

For three years he served as bishop in an area dominated by Southern Baptists and Missouri Synod Lutherans, and shared Springfield with the headquarters of the Pentecostal-oriented Assemblies of God.

When, on May 9, 1973, the prelate was installed as the successor to Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle in the Washington see, a strong ecumenical spirit marked the liturgy. Protestant, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish dignitaries were among the guests of honor.

A month later Pope Paul appointed the new archbishop to be a member of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians.

GEORGE WHO

A Bicentennial musical, "George Who" will be presented this weekend, May 7-9, at East Rochester High School. Performed by the Village Youth Community Chorus, the show is sponsored by the East Rochester Association of Churches. It was written by John Wilson and Marti McCartney.

The first act is a spoof on the life of George Washington; the second, a tribute to the music of George M. Cohan. The show begins at 8:15 p.m. on Friday and Sunday, and 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Saturday.

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