

Bishop James Hickey

'Non-Politician' Social Activist Bears Watching in Washington

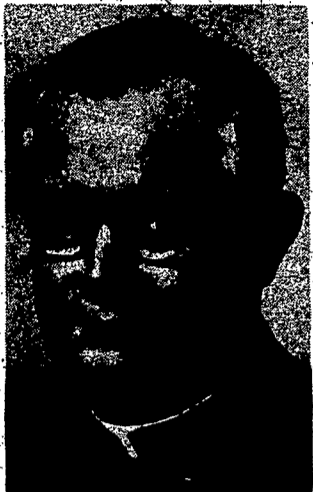
By Julie Delany
Religion Today

Washington — A new age of activism ignited by the political and religious passions of the 60s may be making a comeback in the Church. Watch Washington's new archbishop for details.

With Pope John Paul II drawing priest politicians out of places like Congress, James A. Hickey, the affable, activist bishop of Cleveland and new archbishop of Washington, may have something meaningful to say how action can be gotten even without holding political office.

"I'm not running for office," he said. "But I always felt it was my duty to be involved in civic projects. My first role in Washington has to be to sit and listen for about a year and say very little."

But observers say this is unlikely. The new prelate, who will assume his new duties on Aug. 4, plans to be active in community affairs



BISHOP HICKEY

which impinge on national and local politics.

While elected politics is definitely out of the question these days for Catholic priests, Bishop Thomas Kelly, the Rochester-born general secretary for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently testified before the Democratic National Platform Committee. His action underscores the fact that active participation in the democratic process is well within bounds for priests. Hickey follows in that tradition.

Hickey is strong on social action, and his appointment suggests that spiritual activism, coupled with religious sentiment, may be in the forefront. The Archdiocese of Washington is one of the most prominent

communities of Catholics and a breeding ground for progressive thought.

Underscoring this, Apostolic Delegate Jean Jadot recently was named to head the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians, and Hickey's predecessor, Cardinal William Baum, is now in Rome as head of the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. Washington, thus, carries considerable political clout with the Vatican — and its small membership (397,000) is not unaware of it.

Hickey is a strong, forceful man. "The man is a rock," Harry Fagen, head of the Cleveland social action office, said of him. "But he's the gentlest rock I've ever been around."

In coming to Washington, Hickey thus leaves a large diocese of 951,000 Catholics for a smaller but considerably more prestigious diocese. The head of the Washington archdiocese can be expected to become a cardinal in fairly short order.

Hickey has been an active supporter of civil rights and public school desegregation, thus following in the tradition of Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle, Washington's first archbishop, and Baum, its second. Hickey joined other religious leaders in a march last fall supporting Cleveland's controversial school desegregation plan.

He and the other Cleveland leaders dramatized their support by meeting on a bridge which separates black and white sections. "It was black people and white people holding hands on a bridge with American Nazis screaming at them," is how Fagen described it.

Hickey said the religious sector "worked very closely with other sectors to develop a sense of conscience. Violence is not the answer; we don't throw rocks and don't terrorize kids."

Also while in Cleveland, Hickey developed a national reputation for his efforts to bring separated, divorced and remarried Catholics back into the Church.

He was active in ecumenical and interfaith relations in Cleveland. He issued new ecumenical guidelines last June, has participated in a number of ecumenical services and invited the first Lutheran minister to preach at St. John's Cathedral.

The Church will be watching Washington and the focus will be on its archbishop. He could well be the indicator of things to come under Pope John Paul II.

Dearden Retires

Detroit (RNS) — Cardinal John Francis Dearden, one of the leading figures in the American Catholic Church in the post-Vatican Council II years, has resigned as archbishop of Detroit.

The Vatican announced July 15 that Pope John Paul II had "regretfully" accepted the resignation of the 72-year-old churchman who has been on a restricted schedule since he suffered a severe heart attack in 1977.

At a press conference, Cardinal Dearden said he retired before the mandatory

age of 75 because he felt "a sense of frustration in not being able to shoulder my share of the burdens of pastoral service."

He has been named apostolic administrator of the archdiocese until a successor is named.

In addition to his Detroit position, Cardinal Dearden served as president of the National Council of Catholic Bishops from 1966 to 1971, was chairman of the bishops' bicentennial committee and chief organizer of the Call to Action conference in 1976.

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Kodak Gives \$2 Million

The Eastman Kodak Co., as part of its celebration of its 100th anniversary of founding, last week announced a gift of \$2 million to the University of Rochester Cancer Center. According to Kodak Chairman, Walter A. Fallon, the gift "carries forward the precedent set by George Eastman who gave generously to support better health care and to promote higher education."

Fallon described Eastman as "dedicated to the business of living — in putting 'man's duty to man' up front."

The center researches the causes of cancers and improved methods for treatment and prevention. In addition, the center will provide education for health professionals.

Robert J. Sproull, president of the university, in accepting the gift lauded Eastman's concern, throughout his lifetime, with health, education, health education and health research.

At Workshop

Sister Anne Patrice Carrigan of St. Agnes' High School was among 19 English teachers from 16 area high schools who participated in a day long session on teaching writing at the University of Rochester recently.

In Denmark

Sister Anne Mary Dooley, a Rochester Sister of St. Joseph, is representing Niagara University at a Mid-Decade Forum on Women, being held this month in Copenhagen, Denmark.

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