

## National/International Report

# Coadjutor's appointment ends Seattle drama

By Jerry Filteau

**Washington (NC)** — A new plan announced last week to resolve problems in the Archdiocese of Seattle ended the impasse that developed last year when the Holy See tried to handle the issue by dividing episcopal authority.

In a single stroke May 27, Pope John Paul II:

- Restored Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen's authority in Seattle.

- Removed his auxiliary bishop, Bishop Donald Wuerl, who earlier had been given special governing powers in the Seattle archdiocese.

- Gave Archbishop Hunthausen a new coadjutor archbishop without any special powers.

Named coadjutor-archbishop of Seattle with right of succession was Bishop Thomas J. Murphy of Great Falls-Billings, Mont.

The announcement was made in Washington by Archbishop Pio Laghi, papal pronuncio to the United States.

A U.S. bishops' commission involved in resolving the case said in documentation accompanying the announcement that the real problem in Seattle is not Archbishop Hunthausen but a general "climate or orientation" in which he has been perceived as permissive "no matter how personally firm ... (he) may be."

Archbishop Murphy's appointment terminated both the special powers given to Bishop Wuerl and his 18-month appointment as auxiliary bishop of Seattle.

"Bishop Wuerl remains at the disposition of the Holy See for another assignment," the announcement said. It did not state where Bishop Wuerl would be reassigned.

The pope's Seattle decisions were "based substantially on the proposal we submitted," said the three-bishop commission, headed by Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago. The Holy See formed the commission last February to assess the Seattle situation and to recommend steps to resolve it.

The commission, whose other members are Cardinal John O'Connor of New York and Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco, is to work with Archbishops Hunthausen and Murphy for the next year to help them resolve problems in Seattle.

In conjunction with the announcement of changes in Seattle, the commission released its five-page Seattle report to the Holy See and a letter to all the bishops of the country regarding the resolution of the controversy.

Also released was a 1985 letter to Archbishop Hunthausen from the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The letter marked the conclusion of the congregation's two-year investigation of the archdiocese, which it had overseen since 1983.

The letter, formerly secret and itself a source of controversy and speculation, contains a list of problems found in the Seattle Archdiocese. Its contents had been given

confidentially to the priests of Seattle in 1985, and rumors of what it said had circulated since then.

The Bernardin commission said the 1985 letter should be used "as the primary guide for the direction in which the Church in Seattle must move beyond the point it has already reached."

The Bernardin commission's report drew a series of conclusions which, in both content and style, seemed clearly aimed at ending the Seattle controversy, one of the most divisive in-Church issues in U.S. Catholicism since the papal birth control decision of 1968.

The Bernardin commission's conclusions included that:

- "The ultimate key to the situation" is not a lack of firmness or adherence to Church teaching and practice by Archbishop Hunthausen. Rather, there is an "overall attitudinal 'climate'" in his archdiocese under which his "almost legendary ... compassion" has been misconstrued by others as "permissiveness."

- In the Vatican's actions on the case, the commission unanimously agreed that "no steps were intended as punitive, regardless of perceptions to the contrary."

- Bishop Wuerl, despite "dedicated efforts" to carry out the job the Holy See asked of him, was placed in "exceedingly

difficult circumstances beyond his control."

Agreeing with the Holy See's earlier judgments that changes are needed in Seattle, the Bernardin commission declared that there is a "climate of permissiveness within which some feel themselves free to design their own policies and practices."

At issue in Seattle have been a wide range of concerns, from unauthorized Catholic-Protestant Eucharistic sharing and other liturgical abuses to questions about the force of Church teaching against homosexual activity, from alleged Church approval of invalid second marriages to weaknesses in the formation and ongoing education of priests.

Despite frequent objections by his supporters that Archbishop Hunthausen was unfairly treated because he was never shown a specific list of complaints that he could deal with, the commission said that was not the fundamental issue.

It said the 1985 letter from the doctrinal congregation — however it was perceived at the time it was originally sent — was "reasonably clear in both specifics and intent" and also seemed aimed at correcting an overall climate of indifference to Church teaching and discipline.

In its report to the Holy See, the commission made a recommendation consisting of five elements which it called "essential."

## Auxiliary vs. coadjutor: Defining the roles

**Washington (NC)** — What is the difference between a coadjutor and an auxiliary bishop?

In simplest terms, a coadjutor is the closest helper a diocesan bishop can have. An auxiliary is also a helper, but he does not automatically have all the same power or authority as a coadjutor.

When a diocesan bishop dies or retires, a coadjutor automatically becomes the new diocesan bishop. An auxiliary does not.

There are also differences in everyday roles, in the diocesan chain of command, and in authority when the diocesan bishop is away or impeded in his work.

In a telephone interview, Bishop Adam Maida, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Canonical Affairs, said "a coadjutor is a bishop who has been assigned to a diocese and who will automatically succeed as the next diocesan bishop." Bishop Maida — who emphasized that he was commenting personally as a canon lawyer, not as a spokesman for the canonical affairs committee — added that "a coadjutor bishop aids the diocesan bishop in the entire governance of the diocese and takes his (the bishop's) place if he is absent or impeded."

In Church law prior to 1983, coadjutors could be appointed with or without the right of succession. In the new law, all coadjutors have the right of succession.

An auxiliary may be called on to aid in governing the whole diocese, or he may be given a more narrow, specialized role, such as responsibility for a geographical region of the diocese or for an ethnic, language or racial group.

But, Bishop Maida said, the new coadjutor archbishop would undoubtedly have a special consultative voice in all decisions in those areas where Bishop Wuerl had been given final authority. He cited a clause in Church law that says the diocesan bishop and his coadjutor "are to consult with one another on matters of major importance."

Asked whether — in light of the history behind Archbishop Murphy's appointment — the areas of concern in Seattle outlined by the Holy See would seem to automatically fall within the category of "matters of major importance" on which he should be consulted, Bishop Maida said, "very much so."

Another element of difference between the everyday authority of an auxiliary bishop and that of a coadjutor is spelled out in Canon 406 of the Code of Canon Law. This requires the diocesan bishop to name his coadjutor a vicar general of the diocese and "commit to such a bishop rather than to others those matters which by law require a special mandate."

Both Bishop Maida and Father Donald Heintschel, associate general secretary of the

These were:

- "The auxiliary bishop should be transferred to another See."

- "The archbishop should recover his faculties as diocesan bishop."

- "A coadjutor archbishop should be named."

- "The Holy See should establish target dates for the completion of the tasks referred to in the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith."

- "The commission should be mandated, for a period to be determined by the Holy See, to assist in the accomplishment of these tasks."

The Bernardin commission, which met May 19-20 with Pope John Paul II and officials of the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops, presented its conclusions as its "unanimous judgment."

Archbishop Hunthausen, in a letter to his priests and chancery employees released in Seattle May 27, said he did not totally agree with the Bernardin commission's findings but would accept them.

"I want you to know that, while I am not in agreement with a number of important aspects of the assessment and am therefore not prepared to endorse it, I have nonetheless come to the point of accepting the commission's proposed resolution to our situation," he said.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops and also a canon lawyer, said this language clearly gives preference to the coadjutor as second in command in any areas where someone other than the diocesan bishop can have authority only by special mandate from him.

With auxiliary bishops, church law recommends consultation by the diocesan bishop on major matters, but with coadjutors the law requires such consultation, Bishop Maida said.

For the rationale behind appointments of auxiliaries or coadjutors, Bishop Maida referred to the commentary on the new Code of Canon Law, which was commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America.

The commentary says that auxiliary bishops without special powers are usually appointed upon the request of the diocesan bishop to meet "distinctly diocesan" needs, such as a particularly large territory or population, or special language or ethnic groups.

It says coadjutors or auxiliary bishops with special powers are usually appointed on the initiative of the Holy See rather than at the diocesan bishop's request, and "normally because of certain personal problems experienced by the diocesan bishop in adequately meeting the varied responsibilities of his office."

Bishop Maida said a coadjutor "naturally will and should have a special concern for the diocese" because he will be its next bishop.

## INVITATION TO REPARATION

Do You Know That —

- 1987 is the year of Fatima — the 70th Anniversary of the apparitions there?
- Our 1987 response to our Lady's requests at Fatima can convert Russia once again?

MAKE THE FIVE  
1st. Saturdays of Reparation

Our Lady of Victory  
210 Pleasant St., Downtown Rochester  
Rosary & Mass, 10 a.m.-Sacrament of Penance 11:30 a.m.

St. Alphonsus  
95 East Genesee St., Auburn, N.Y.  
Sacrament of Penance, 10 a.m.-Rosary & Mass 11 a.m.

OR MAKE FIRST FIVE SATURDAYS ON YOUR OWN.



### GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH



## GIANT GARAGE SALE

June 5: 6-11 PM, June 6: 12-11 PM  
June 7: 9-3

Plants - Collectibles - Clothes  
Furniture - Freezer - Assortment  
Join us also for our Sun & Fun Fest  
at the same times on June 5 & 6!  
Food, Beer, Games, Baked Food Sale!  
Everything is there for you at  
**3264 E. Henrietta Rd.!**