NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

The papal envoy sent to move the U.S. church

Richard McBrien | Mar. 2, 2009 Essays in Theology

Archbishop Jean Jadot died in his native Belgium on January 21. He was 99.

For many readers, the name of Jean Jadot does not ring the proverbial bell. Others, however, are reminded of a different, better time in the recent history of the Catholic Church. For still others, the Jadot name generates negative rather than positive thoughts.

Jean Jadot served as apostolic delegate to the United States (the position has since been upgraded to that of nuncio) from 1973 to 1980. During that time, he recommended the appointment of just over 100 new bishops and the assignments of 15 archbishops. Pope Paul VI almost always accepted those recommendations.

Most of Jadot's appointments were unusually good, some less so. A limited sample (and I stress the adjective "limited") of those on the first list include: Howard Hubbard (Albany), Francis Hurley (Anchorage), William Borders (Baltimore), Patrick Flores (El Paso and then San Antonio), Joseph Imesh (Joliet), Michael Kenny (Juneau, Alaska), John J. Sullivan (Kansas City, Missouri), Rembert Weakland (Milwaukee), Peter Gerety (Newark), Raymond Lucker (New Ulm, Minnesota), John Cummins (Oakland), Walter Sullivan (Richmond), Matthew Clark (Rochester), Francis Quinn (Sacramento), Kenneth Untener (Saginaw, Michigan), John May (St. Louis), John Roach (St. Paul and Minneapolis), John Quinn (San Francisco), Raymond Hunthausen (Seattle), Frank Harrison (Syracuse), and William Skylstad (Yakima, Washington, later bishop of Spokane).

Read NCR's obituary of Archbishop Jadot: **Cleric who shaped U.S. 'pastoral church' dead at 99** [1]

There are several other names that could have been added to this list, except for space limitations. One could also cite Archbishop Jadot's capacity to recognize younger talent -- priests whom he made auxiliary bishops with the idea that they would one day be given dioceses of their own -- priests such as Joseph Sullivan of Brooklyn, Francis Murphy of Baltimore, Peter Rosazza of Hartford, and Richard Sklba of Milwaukee. But under Jadot's and Pope Paul VI's successors these and other highly qualified auxiliary bishops remained frozen in place.

Too many of the appointees after Jadot's term as apostolic delegate had abruptly ended in 1980 were selected not primarily for their pastoral aptitude and the credibility they enjoyed with the laity, religious, and clergy of their respective dioceses, but for their unquestioned and unquestioning loyalty to the Holy See.

This usually meant that they were totally closed to the idea of women priests, married clergy, and a critical second look at the Church's official teaching on birth control. All other priests were excluded from consideration.

Some of Archbishop Jadot's critics liked to portray him as a loose ecclesiastical cannon. However, after receiving a steady flow of anonymous hate mail from within the United States and being subject to hostile

gossip within the Vatican, Archbishop Jadot offered Pope Paul VI his resignation.

Jadot told his friend and biographer, Jack Dick, what the pope had said to him on that occasion. "No," Paul VI responded. "You are doing just what I want you to do."

Indeed, when Jadot met with the pope in early July 1973 to receive specific instructions about his new appointment, Paul VI informed him that he had been selected to "the most important of our posts" because he was not under the influence of the Roman Curia and would not have to follow in the footsteps of his two predecessors, Archbishops Egidio Vagnozzi and Luigi Raimondi.

The pope wanted to move the Church in the United States in a different direction, one more pastoral in orientation and more in line with the teachings and spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

That is exactly what Archbishop Jadot tried to do in his years as apostolic delegate, and nowhere were his efforts more focused than in his recruitment of candidates for the episcopate and in the promotion of bishops from smaller dioceses to archdioceses.

Catholics who were threatened rather than exhilarated by Vatican II saw this pattern of appointments as solidifying the reforms of the council. Consequently, they kept up a constant stream of complaints to friendly quarters in the Vatican, magnifying the smallest of problems to create the impression that the Church in the United States was running off the rails.

They were also aided in th

eir campaign by high-ranking members of the U.S. bishops' conference. According to Jack Dick, they were led by Cardinals John Carberry of St. Louis, John Krol of Philadelphia, and John Cody of Chicago.

When one carefully reviews the list of bishops whom Archbishop Jadot recommended for the episcopacy or for promotion within it, it becomes clear that his choices were, for the most part, of good priests who were ruled more by their pastoral hearts and their pastorally-grounded judgments than by rigid ideologies or hopes for career advancement.

One might ask if that is still the case today.

© 2009 Richard P. McBrien. All rights reserved. Fr. McBrien is the Crowley-O'Brien Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Source URL (retrieved on *03/10/2014 - 05:46*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/papal-envoy-sent-move-us-church

Links:
[1] http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/cleric-who-shaped-us-pastoral-church-dead-99