

**Mitchell's reform bill draws mixed reviews**

WASHINGTON — The goal of 95 percent coverage in a health care reform bill sponsored by Sen. George Mitchell, D-Maine, "falls short of truly universal coverage," two U.S. bishops said in a letter to senators. A separate proposal by Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., "even more clearly fails this test," the prelates said. The letter from Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles and Auxiliary Bishop John H. Ricard of Baltimore, dated Aug. 9, added that "the greatest threat to health care reform is the abortion mandates contained in proposals before the Senate." Meanwhile, Catholic Health Association president John E. Curley Jr. urged support for the Mitchell bill and a companion House measure sponsored by Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., despite "serious concerns" over their inclusion of abortion services, Medicare cuts and less-than-100-percent coverage.

**Politician upset over atheist show on cable**

WINDSOR, Conn. — A Catholic town councilwoman in Windsor is upset with a pro-atheist program shown on the city-funded local cable access channel. Mary Drost said she was offended by the program and comments made by its co-host, Jon G. Murray, president of the Society for the Separation of Church and State and son of atheist leader Madalyn Murray O'Hair. She is also upset that taxpayers are being forced to help fund the show's airing. Windsor allocated \$11,000 to fund WIN-TV's budget, about 26 percent of its general operating costs. On one installment of "The American Atheist Forum," Murray said confessionals are constructed as they are because "the priests couldn't contain themselves with some voluptuous woman down on her knees."

**Dubbed 'Godstock '94,' youths rally in Yonkers**

YONKERS, N.Y. — The weekend of the Woodstock anniversary concert also saw thousands of Catholic young people gathering under the auspices of the New York archdiocese for what one participant labeled "Godstock." Young New York '94 was held Aug. 13-14 at St. Joseph's archdiocesan seminary in the Yonkers area. Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York arranged the event in response to a suggestion made by a young woman last year in Denver that New York youths get together for a meeting similar to the international gathering with Pope John Paul II.

**Papal trip to Sarajevo still remains uncertain**

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — The decision on a papal trip to the besieged city of Sarajevo this September may not be made until the last minute, said Archbishop Vinko Puljic of Sarajevo. Pope John Paul II has expressed the desire to make the trip and a papal trip organizing team visited Sarajevo in August to see whether a visit is feasible given the continued war conditions.

Compiled from Catholic News Service reports.

**Rwanda-like crisis now in Burundi**

BUJUMBURA, Burundi (CNS) — Strikes and clashes shut down Burundi's capital of Bujumbura for a second day Aug. 9 and authorities stepped up security as diplomats expressed concerns that the country would follow its neighbor, Rwanda, down the path to murderous civil war.

At least 15 people had been killed in Burundi at the onset of clashes involving angry youths of the minority Tutsis.

Aid officials warned that their efforts to assist refugees in southwest Rwanda and eastern Zaire could be affected unless the security situation improved.

A strike called by opposition groups and clashes by Tutsis protesting the arrest of their leaders shut the capital down, witnesses said.

The government stepped up security, deploying hundreds of soldiers and police in the city center. Youths set up barricades with burning tires on roads downtown.

Trouble was sparked by the arrest of opposition politician Mathias Hitimana, leader of the Tutsi-led Party for the Reconciliation of the People.

Witnesses said scores were injured in the clashes that began Aug. 7.

"Social and economic life was dead today as it was yesterday. Almost every-

one stayed home," Daniel Philippin, chief delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, told Reuters, the British news agency.

U.N. officials in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi told Reuters that part of their Rwanda relief operation had been disrupted because of the insecurity in Bujumbura.

"The situation does sound tense and we have stopped some of our operations. Our airlifts into Rwanda and Zaire have not been affected but our land convoys could not go out today," an official said.

A civil unrest campaign was announced in early August by groups who accuse the government of oppressing the Hutu majority in Burundi, after recent campaigns to confiscate illegal arms in areas mainly inhabited by Hutus.

Burundi has the same ethnic mix as Rwanda — majority Hutu, minority Tutsi — but for three decades the two countries were political mirror images of each other.

Rwanda's Hutus won control after independence from Belgium and kept it until Tutsi-led rebels emerged as winners in July from the chaos of civil war and tribal bloodbath.

Burundi's Tutsi leadership was gradually yielding power to Hutus in the last few years, but renegade Tutsi soldiers

murdered the country's first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, in October.

Thousands of people were killed following Ndadaye's death and the country has remained unstable since then.

His successor, Cyprien Ntaryamira, also a Hutu, was killed in a plane crash with Rwandan military strongman Juvenal Habyarimana, in the Rwandan capital Kigali on April 6.

That incident touched off the Rwandan bloodbath.

A Catholic priest from Burundi is urging the British government and the international community to intervene in his country before it descends into a holocaust.

Father Stanislas Ngendakumana says action is urgently needed to prevent massacres there on the scale witnessed in neighboring Rwanda.

The Burundi priest, studying in Rome for the last three years, has spent the summer at St. Peter and All Souls parish, Peterborough, southeast England.

He was hoping to meet the member of Parliament for Peterborough, Dr. Brian Mawhinney, to press for international action in Burundi.

Includes reporting by Paulinus Barnes of Catholic News Service.

**Law changed to ease laicization of priests**

By Jerry Filteau  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Pope John Paul II has approved two U.S. modifications in church law to make it easier for bishops to impose penalties — including laicization — on clerics found guilty of sexual abuse of a minor.

Laicization, or returning an ordained person to the lay state, involves loss of all clerical rights and privileges.

As modified, U.S. church law now says:

— The penalties for clerical sexual abuse of a minor apply up to the age of 18.

— The statute of limitations for prosecuting such a crime is extended until the victim's 28th birthday — or until a year after the crime is reported if the first report is made after the victim's 27th birthday.

The changes, resulting from requests by the U.S. bishops to Rome last November, took effect April 25. The bishops' Office for Media Relations announced the changes Aug. 12.

They will remain in effect for five years but can be reviewed for possible renewal at that time.

A transitional statute of limitations, affecting any crimes against a minor committed before April 25, extends the statute of limitations for prosecution to the victim's 23rd birthday instead of the 28th birthday.

The bishops had sought the changes

to make ecclesiastical law governing clerical sexual offenses against minors more compatible with U.S. civil law. They were concerned about cases where a priest could be tried and convicted by the state for a sex crime against a minor, but no church penalties could be applied.

Where general church law sets out the penalties for a priest or deacon who commits a sexual offense with a minor, it defines a minor as someone who has not yet turned 16.

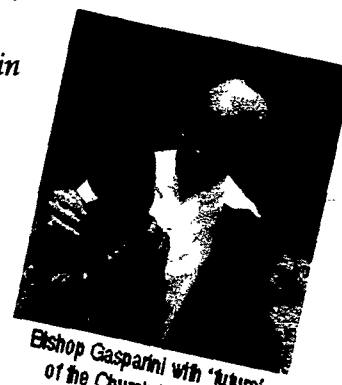
Since most state sex abuse laws in the United States define a minor as anyone under 18, the bishops had asked Rome to apply the same age to ecclesiastical law in the United States.

Many U.S. states have modifications in their statutes of limitation for cases of sexual abuse of a minor in order to take account of the many psychological and emotional conditions that may prevent a child from coming forward to report an abuser until many years later.

MISSION NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF...

... On October 7, 1993, in the Diocese of Agats in Indonesia, Bishop Alphonsus Sowada, O.S.C., ordained his first diocesan priest, Father Bavo Felndity; "this brings us much joy and hope for the future." ... A new local Religious Community in Awasa, Ethiopia, now has 23 members preparing for vows. As Sisters, they will teach in the newly-established Secondary School. Bishop Armido Gasparini, 80, writes: "I hope some will be ready to attend nursing classes." ... A Propagation of the Faith Gift Annuity helps you provide for the future of the Church in the Missions ... and provide for yourself now, giving you a guaranteed income for your lifetime. Please write for details.



Bishop Gasparini with 'future' of the Church in Ethiopia

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