

## Controversial abortion bill goes to floor

**EDITORS' WARNING:** The following article contains graphic material describing a controversial late-term abortion procedure. This material may be disturbing to some readers.

By Patricia Zapor  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A bill banning a controversial type of late-term abortion was approved July 18 in a 20-12 party-line vote of the House Judiciary Committee.

Although the bill has vocal opponents, its Republican sponsors said they expect to have enough support for approval by the full House.

The "Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act" would make illegal a specific type of abortion usually used at 24 weeks of pregnancy or later. In the procedure, a fetus is pulled, feet first, through the birth canal until all but the head is outside the cervix. The doctor forces the tips of surgical scissors into the base of the skull. He spreads the scissors to enlarge the opening, then uses a suction catheter to take out the brain, allowing easier removal of the head.

H.R. 1885 would impose fines and a prison sentence of up to two years on physicians who perform such abortions, and allow the father or, if the mother was under 18, the maternal grandparents, to sue for damages. Women who have such abortions would not be subject to prosecution.

During a scrupulous debate on amendments, opponents of the bill, among other arguments, said it was the first step toward legislation banning all abortions, that such a law was better left to individual states, and that the bill constituted the Congress practicing medicine without a license by banning a procedure that doctors should have the option of using if they feel it is in the patient's best interests.

Some of the bill's supporters, including committee chairman Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., agreed that laws banning all abortions are their goal. Others emphasized the brutal nature of the procedure in question, noting that alternate methods of late-term abortions are available for the "tragic" cases of fetal abnormalities discovered late in pregnancy that were being emphasized by opponents of the bill.

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., suggested that if the bill's supporters believe the procedure constitutes murder, as Hyde and a couple of other Republicans on the committee have said, they should have made the penalties more in keeping with a charge of murder.

"Politics is the art of the possible," said Hyde, conceding that it would be much harder to win support for a bill with harsher penalties.

Rep. Charles T. Canady, R-Fla., the bill's sponsor and chairman of a subcommittee on the Constitution that approved the measure a week after it was introduced June 14, took issue with Frank's suggestion that all its supporters likened all abortions to murder and that the penalty should be stiffer if they believe that.

Canady said he believes that morally abortion and murder are the same, but acknowledges that in U.S. law they are clearly different and that he has never used the term murder for the procedure.

## Pope calls Serbian assault 'barbaric'

LES COMBES, Italy (CNS) — As Bosnian Serbs routed U.N.-protected Muslim enclaves, Pope John Paul II called their assault "barbaric" and said the world was witnessing the "undoing of civilization."

The Vatican, meanwhile, disclosed that it had condemned the actions in private meetings with Bosnian Serb representatives in Sarajevo.

"No cause, no project can justify such barbaric actions and methods. These are crimes against humanity!" the pope said July 17 from his mountain vacation retreat in northern Italy.

"What is being played out before the eyes of the entire world constitutes an undoing of civilization. These crimes will remain as one of the saddest chapters of European history," he said.

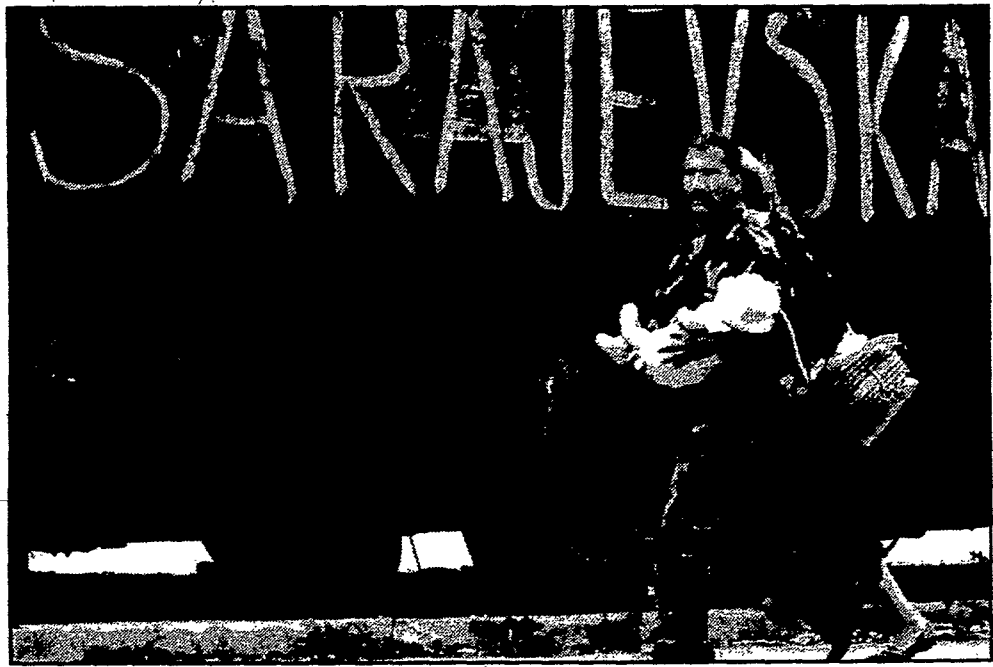
As the pope spoke, Bosnian Serbian forces were moving toward the U.N. "safe area" of Zepa, one of three Muslim enclaves in eastern Bosnia. Earlier in the week they routed the enclave of Srebrenica, driving out thousands of Muslim civilians. Many Muslims were reportedly murdered while others were rounded up into camps.

The enclaves were originally set up by the United Nations to protect Muslim civilian populations who had been driven from their homelands earlier in the Bosnian fighting.

The pope said his thoughts and prayers were with the thousands who have been "thrown back out on the road of flight, in a situation of extreme poverty." He urged the international community to provide aid to the refugees.

Both the pope and the Vatican stopped short of calling for armed intervention to halt the Serbian action.

In a statement issued July 15, the Vati-



Reuters/RNS

A Bosnian soldier carrying a baby rushes by a barricade at one of the most dangerous intersections in Sarajevo July 17. Bosnian Serbs have increased shelling and sniper attacks on civilian targets in the Bosnian capital since government troops canceled last month's offensive aimed at easing the Serb stranglehold.

can said the papal nuncio in Bosnia, Archbishop Francesco Monterisi, had met with Bosnian Serbs at their request to hear their point of view on recent developments.

The Vatican said the papal representative used the occasion to "express an energetic condemnation of the violence and unjust methods used by Bosnian Serbs toward the civilian populations and U.N. forces in Bosnia." He also denounced any solutions based on "ethnic cleansing," the removal of ethnic groups from specific Bosnian territories.

While the Vatican repeatedly has de-

plored human rights violations in Bosnia, such an explicit condemnation regarding Bosnian Serbs was unusual.

The Vatican said it agreed to meet with the Bosnian Serbs only because it did not want to leave any possible path toward peace unexplored. It said the meetings involved an exchange of views, but no mediation on the part of the Holy See.

Meanwhile, the president of the German bishops' conference, Bishop Karl Lehmann of Mainz, appealed to the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pavle, to use whatever influence he had to help end the "acts of inhuman barbarism" in Bosnia.

Bishop Lehmann said no military or political objective can justify the expulsion of entire populations. He sent the message July 14, after the fall of Srebrenica.

## Cardinal: Faith deepening as cancer treatment begins

By Jay Copp  
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — As Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin prepared for chemotherapy following his cancer surgery, he said that coming to grips with his mortality has deepened his faith.

"I've experienced an intimacy with the Lord I've never experienced before," the 67-year-old Chicago prelate told reporters. "I've put myself totally in his hands."

On July 10 — the 13th anniversary of his appointment as archbishop of Chicago — Cardinal Bernardin began a 28-day regime of chemotherapy and radiation treatment at Loyola University Medical Center. He had surgery there June 12 to remove a cancerous kidney and a malignant tumor at the head of his pancreas.

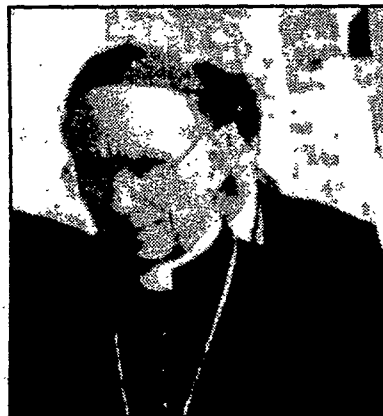
Pancreatic cancer is one of the most deadly forms of cancer and has one of the highest rates of recurrence, but doctors said early detection may have significantly improved the cardinal's odds of long-term survival.

Meeting with reporters July 6, Cardinal Bernardin said he was "ahead of schedule" in his recovery from surgery.

He said he lost 16 pounds after the operation and has suffered fatigue and had trouble sleeping. But he intends to resume his duties in early September, he said.

Facing cancer "enabled me to see more clearly what is essential and nonessential," he said. "So much time is spent on frivolous things."

He said he has been spending his time



Cardinal Joseph Bernardin

reading, listening to opera and attending Mass. He also confers on archdiocesan issues with Auxiliary Bishop Raymond E. Goedert, whom he placed in charge of day-to-day administration during his recuperation.

He said he has been going through some of the cards and letters he received and found many of the letters "very moving."

Among well-wishers who have telephoned the cardinal were President Clinton and Mother Teresa, whose Missionaries of Charity have a community in Chicago.

Father Ken Velo, head of the Catholic Church Extension Society and a close friend of the cardinal, told reporters that Clinton called from a golf cart during a round of golf to offer the cardinal his support and encouragement.

"Mother Teresa said she was grateful for all his help in the past and said the prayers of her sisters are with him," the priest said.

To help regain his strength, Cardinal Bernardin has begun to take daily walks of 12 blocks or so around his neighborhood. Passers-by regularly wave to him or stop him to wish him well and tell him they are praying for him.

Father Michael Place, research theologian for the archdiocesan curia, said Cardinal Bernardin is determined to continue his ministry and is not considering retiring.

"His life is given to the mission of the church," he said. "As long as he's able to do it, he'll do it."

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