

WORLD & NATION

Cardinal Bernardin unveils initiative

By Angela Apte
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago has announced a major initiative to help U.S. Catholics move past what he called a dangerous polarization in the church.

The initiative, called the Catholic Common Ground Project, is to include national conferences to draw Catholics into constructive dialogue on church issues, Cardinal Bernardin said.

At a news conference introducing the initiative Aug. 12, the cardinal said an advisory committee of seven other bishops, including Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles, and 16 other Catholic leaders from across the nation will assist him in the project.

"I have been troubled that an increasing polarization within the church and, at times, a mean-spiritedness have hindered the kind of dialogue that helps us address our mission and concerns," he said.

"The unity of the church is threatened" by the polarization, he said, and "the great gift of the Second Vatican Council is in danger of being seriously undermined."

Cardinal Bernardin released a 3,000-word statement, "Called to be Catholic," which he said will be a framework for the initiative.

It asks Catholics of diverse views to come together and approach current church issues with "fresh eyes, open minds and changed hearts ... to pursue their disagreements in a renewed spirit of dialogue."

Cardinal Bernardin told reporters that the initiative's first conference, tentatively



CNS/Jack Spratt
Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin announces the Catholic Common Ground Project at a press conference in Chicago Aug. 12.

slated for Chicago next year, will address culture and its influence on the church.

He said the group is not yet clear on who they will invite to the conference or how, but he "would be happy to see anyone" attend who is interested in being in dialogue.

His advisory committee will iron out details of the form of such conferences and how to follow up on them, he said.

He said he was particularly disturbed by what appears to be "a great deal of distrust" among Catholics today.

"The faithful members of the church are weary, and our witness to government, so-

ciety and culture is compromised," he said.

He said the discussions leading up to "Called to be Catholic" began three years ago.

He stressed that the project is not a response to specific groups or recent events in the church, such as the church reform calls of Call to Action and We Are Church or the legislation last spring by Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Neb., excommunicating Catholics who belong to certain non-Catholic or dissenting Catholic groups.

He also said it is not his intent to form "a teaching group, a dogmatic group" or some form of "official" dialogue group in the church.

"Our hope is with dialogue to come to a better understanding of church teaching and doctrine ...," he said.

Among church issues that the statement says ought to be addressed are:

- Changing roles of women.
- The eucharistic liturgy as most Catholics experience it.
- The meaning of human sexuality and the gap between church teaching and the views of many Catholics on some moral issues.
- The way decisions are made in the church.

Cardinal Bernardin said he has sent correspondence and copies of his statements to the Holy See but has not heard yet from Vatican officials.

He said he also contacted Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, to inform him that the project "does not in any way impinge upon the responsibilities of the conference."

Faithful asked to forgo meat over abortion

NEW YORK (CNS) — Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York has asked Catholics to wage a spiritual struggle against partial-birth abortions by committing themselves to abstain from meat on Fridays for the next year.

He also urged Catholics and others to write to President Clinton and to their members of Congress urging that partial-birth abortions be outlawed.

He made the requests in his weekly column, "From My Viewpoint," in the Aug. 5 issue of *Catholic News*, his archdiocesan newspaper.

Cardinal O'Connor described the "barbaric procedure" of partial-birth abortion as "infanticide."

This spring Congress passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, prohibiting the procedure unless the mother's life was at stake. President Clinton vetoed the legislation April 8.

A veto override effort is expected shortly after Congress reconvenes from its August recess.

Abstinence from meat, a traditional form of penance for Catholics on Fridays throughout the year, was once required under church law. After Pope Paul VI revised the laws on penitential practices in 1968 to make room for adaptations based on local culture and conditions, many bishops' conferences, including the U.S. conference, adopted policies allowing Catholics to substitute another form of penance on Fridays.

CALENDAR

All Diocesan

Religious Activities

■ **AUG. 20-21 — Keuka Days:** Parish Support Ministry of the Diocese of Rochester annual leadership gathering; Keuka College, Penn Yan; topics will include centrality of Eucharist, the consistent life ethic, small Christian communities; cost is \$10 for individuals, \$45 for groups of five or more; for more information contact your parish staff.

■ **AUG. 23-25 — Marriage Encounter Weekend:** sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter; Notre Dame Retreat House, 5151 Foster Rd., Canandaigua; 7:30 p.m. Fri. - 5 p.m. Sun.; for married couples wishing to enrich and deepen their relationships; for more information call Gary & Carol, 716/637-0601 or 800/795-LOVE.

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Meeting

■ **WED, AUG. 21 — Meeting:** of Elizabeth Ministers; St. Mary's of the Lake Parish Center; Tenth St., Watkins Glen; 7 p.m.; for women interested in helping other women through the challenges of motherhood; for

more information call St. Mary's, 607/535-2786.

■ **THU, AUG. 22 — Meeting:** of The Southern Tier Hospice Widow/Widower Support Group; 244 W. Water St., Elmira; 7-9 p.m.; for more information call Karlene, 607/734-1570.

Monroe County

Education

■ **MON, AUG. 19 — Information session:** for prospective students; Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary, 1100 S. Goodman St., Rochester; Remington Lounge (wheelchair accessible, listening device available); 5:30-7 p.m.; free and open to the public; reservation required; for more information call 716/271-1320 ext. 223.

Religious Activities

■ **THU, AUG. 15 — Evening of prayer:** sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy; Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester; 7:30-9 p.m. for those touched by HIV/AIDS.

■ **FRI, AUG. 16 — Renewal:** in the Spirit & Secular Franciscans; sponsored by St. Patrick's Fraternity — Secular Franciscan Order; St. Charles Borromeo Prayer Center, 3011 Dewey Ave., Rochester; 7:30 p.m.; for more information call 716/225-4134.

■ **AUG. 16-18 — Charismatic retreat:** "His Mercy Endures Forever"; Notre Dame Retreat House, Foster Road, Canandaigua; Fr. Dennis Kelleher, celebrant; for reservations, call 716/394-5700.

■ **TUE, AUG. 20 — Marian night of prayer:** with Fr. Joseph Trovato; Mercy Motherhouse Chapel, 1437 Blossom Rd., Rochester; 7-9 p.m.; park behind the school.

■ **WED, AUG. 21 — Charismatic Mass:** St. John Fisher College, Murphy Hall (across from campus); 7:30 p.m.; Fr. Bill Moorby, celebrant.

■ **THU, AUG. 22 — Meeting:** of centering prayer group; Guardian Angels Church, 2061 East Henrietta Road, Rochester; 7:30 p.m.; also Sept. 5; for more information call Nancy, 716/334-1412.

Social Activities

■ **SAT, AUG. 17 — Dinner night:** with St. Thomas More Singles Club; Sabrina's, 550 East Ave., Rochester; 5 p.m.; for more information call Anne, 716/482-5656.

■ **SUN, AUG. 18 — Festival:** Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 1080 Joseph Ave., Rochester; 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; American & Spanish food, raffles, activities for children; for more information call the rectory, 716/467-2725.

Sports Benefits

■ **MON, AUG. 19 — Golf tourney:** to benefit Mt. Carmel Parish; to be held at Winged Pheasant Golf Links; for more

information call James, 716/288-9932.

Seneca Cayuga

Meetings

■ **SAT, AUG. 17 — Breakfast meeting:** of the Seneca County D/S/B Group; Nicastro's Restaurant, Route 96, 4 miles south of Waterloo; 9 a.m.; for more information call Carl & Alma, 315/539-2284.

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Social Activities

■ **SUN, AUG. 18 — Festival:** All Saints Church, corner Route 34B and Myers Road, Lansing; noon-6 p.m., chicken barbecue, cake wheel, craft fair, white elephant sale, games for children and adults.

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Fundraisers

■ **AUG. 15-16 — Lawn sale:** St. Mary's Church parking lot,

16 Gibson St., Canandaigua; 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; for more information call Jennifer, 716/394-1220.

Meetings

■ **WED, AUG. 21 — Breakfast meeting:** of the Route 96 D/S/B Group; Steak-out Restaurant, Routes 96 and 31, Manchester; 9 a.m.; for more information call Rose, 315/462-3841, Marjorie, 315/462-9670 or Finger Lakes Social Ministry, 315/789-2686.

Religious Activities

■ **WED, AUG. 21 — Queen of Peace Night:** Notre Dame Retreat House, Foster Road, Canandaigua; 7 p.m.; service includes the rosary, silent adoration, Benediction, Mass, healing prayer and confession; celebrant will be Fr. Edward J. Dillon, pastor of St. Felix Church, Clifton Springs; for more information call Anne, 716/394-0604.

Social Activities

■ **SUN, AUG. 18 — Pancake breakfast:** St. Mary's Church, 16 Gibson St., Canandaigua; 8 a.m.-noon; for more information call Jennifer, 716/394-1220.

■ **AUG. 22-24 — Festival:** St. Mary's Church, 16 Gibson St., Canandaigua; 6 p.m.-midnight, for more information call Jennifer, 716/394-1220.