

WORLD & NATION

Cardinal Bernardin's cancer returns

CHICAGO (CNS) — Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago announced Aug. 30 that the pancreatic cancer for which he underwent surgery in June 1995 has recurred in his liver.

"I have been told that it is terminal and my life expectancy is one year or less," he said at a afternoon press conference at the archdiocesan Pastoral Center.

The cardinal, who turned 68 in April, said he would begin a different form of chemotherapy called Gemzar, or gemcitabine, and "if successful, this therapy may increase my time somewhat but it will not effect a cure."

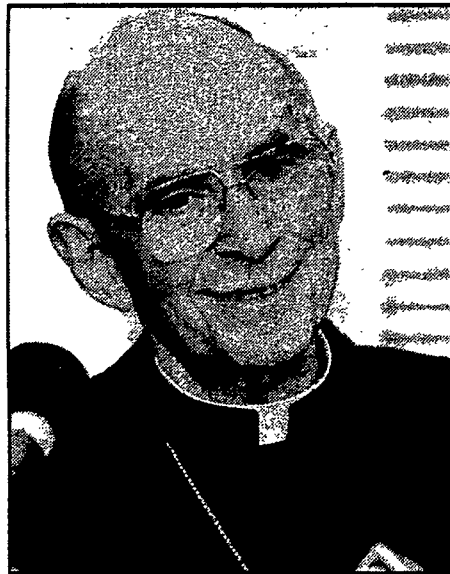
"I have been assured that I still have some quality time left," he said in his prepared statement. "My prayer is that I will use whatever time is left in a positive way, that is, a way that will be of benefit to the priests and people I have been called to serve, as well as to my own spiritual well-being."

Since his cancer diagnosis last year, the cardinal also has experienced other health problems.

Last winter, he suffered several compression fractures in his spine, which doctors attributed to osteoporosis, possibly exacerbated by radiation therapy following his cancer surgery.

Later, the Chicago Archdiocese announced Aug. 5 that he tentatively was scheduled to undergo surgery Sept. 16 to relieve severe leg and lower back pain caused by spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spinal column that can pinch the nerves.

At that time, the archdiocesan communicate said Cardinal Bernardin "con-



CNS/Reuters

Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin told the media Aug. 30 that his cancer has returned. He said the cancer is terminal and doctors told him he has a year or less to live.

tinues to receive weekly maintenance chemotherapy treatments, and he remains cancer-free."

The cardinal said Aug. 30 that the cancer recurrence was found during tests conducted at Loyola Medical Center in preparation for the planned September surgery. "In light of this latest diagnosis," he said, "the back surgery for the spinal stenosis has been cancelled."

Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland, president of the U.S. bishops' twin conferences, said it was "with great sorrow

that I have heard from Cardinal Bernardin about the recurrence of his cancer."

In an Aug. 30 statement issued in Washington, Bishop Pilla called the cardinal "a great human being and a great Christian."

He said Cardinal Bernardin "has endured this suffering with great faith, hope and love; and — true pastor that he is — he has used his time of sickness to reach out and comfort other victims of cancer."

"We have no doubt that he will use the days left to him as he has used all the days of his life so far: for the glory of God and the well-being of God's people," Bishop Pilla said. "He will be constantly in our prayers."

At his press conference, Cardinal Bernardin said though he knows there will be difficult moments ahead, "I can say in all sincerity that I am at peace."

"I consider this as God's special gift to me at this moment in my life," he added.

"As a person of faith, I see death as a friend," he said, "as the transition from earthly life to life eternal."

The cardinal pledged to "keep a full schedule for as long as I can," and to "keep everyone informed of my health."

He asked the priests and people of Chicago to "pray that I may continue to serve you and the broader church with understanding, compassion and fidelity."

He also asked members of the media — with whom he said he enjoyed "a good professional relationship" during his 14 years as archbishop of Chicago — to pray for him. "And, in return," he said, "I will pray for you and your loved ones."

USCC letter cites growing economic rift

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Taking many of its cues from a statement marking the 10th anniversary of the U.S. bishops' 1986 pastoral letter on the economy, the bishops' 1996 Labor Day statement notes that in the United States, there are "three nations living side by side."

In one nation, said Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., chairman of the bishops' Domestic Policy Committee, people are "growing more powerful and productive. ... People are creating busi-

nesses, surfing the Web, and managing their investment portfolios."

A second nation, he said, "is being squeezed by declining real incomes, frightened by corporate downsizing and fearful about keeping their jobs and health care. In this economy, people wonder whether they can afford a good education for their kids and a decent retirement for themselves."

A third community, said Bishop Skylstad, "lives on the margins of our econo-

my. Families, often without fathers, jobs or a living income, are the signs of an economy that leaves millions behind. In this economy, people wonder whether they can pay the rent or afford food at the end of the month."

The statement, "An Economy of Paradoxes: Labor Day Challenges," was released Aug. 23 in Washington. The U.S. Catholic Conference, public policy arm of the nation's bishops, has customarily issued a statement in observance of Labor Day, which this year occurred Sept. 2.

The Labor Day statement noted that the bishops, in their statement last November for the 10th anniversary of the pastoral on the economy, cited a number of key questions. "Several are particularly appropriate for this Labor Day reflection," Bishop Skylstad said.

• "How can our nation work together to overcome the scandal of so much poverty in our midst, especially among our children?"

• "How can our church take a leadership role in calling those in positions of power to promote economic growth, job security, decent wages and greater opportunities?"

• "What are the moral responsibilities and limitations of markets, the state and the voluntary sector? How can business, labor, various levels of government and mediating structures like churches, charities and voluntary groups work together to overcome economic injustice and exploitation in our communities?"

• "How can the dignity and rights of workers be protected and enhanced in an economy where increasing competition, frequent downsizing and less unionization have left many workers at risk?"

Noting that this year's Labor Day statement comes in a presidential election year, Bishop Skylstad said, "In the midst of all the campaign rhetoric and economic debate, it's time to refocus on some traditional values from Catholic teaching — the dignity of work, the living wage, the social contract between employer and employee and the common good."

Bishop arrested at abortion protest

By John Burger
Catholic News Service

DOBBS FERRY, N.Y. — A retired bishop and a Franciscan priest and brother will stand trial Oct. 17 on charges that they disturbed the peace while blocking the entrance to an abortion clinic parking lot in Dobbs Ferry.

Father Benedict J. Groeschel, a well-known speaker and author of books on spirituality, was arrested Aug. 24 with retired Bishop George E. Lynch and Brother Fidelis Moscinski.

Father Groeschel, director of the Office of Spiritual Development of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in Larchmont, said his action was prompted by debate over the legality of partial-birth abortion.

"Partial-birth abortion has made it absolutely clear that nobody can say that a fetus is not a child," Father Groeschel told *Catholic New York*, newspaper of the New York Archdiocese.

The three blocked the entrance to the clinic parking lot from 7:30 to 8 a.m., when they were ordered to disperse and placed under arrest. They pleaded not guilty to disorderly conduct and were released on their own recognizance.

Father Groeschel was arrested in a similar protest in 1988 in Manhattan. Bishop Lynch, a retired auxiliary bishop of Raleigh, N.C., who lives in his native

Bronx, and Brother Moscinski, who is studying for the priesthood in the Franciscan Friars of Renewal, have been arrested at the Dobbs Ferry clinic and others numerous times in the past few years.

In February, Bishop Lynch and Brother Moscinski were convicted in federal court of violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act. They have appealed part of that ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

All three said they blocked the entrance on Aug. 24 to save the lives of unborn children. Several cars attempting to enter the parking lot had to be diverted while the men were sitting there.

Father Groeschel said he chose to engage in the protest because of President Clinton's veto of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act April 10.

The legislation vetoed by Clinton would have banned a procedure used in late-term abortions in which the unborn child is partially delivered before surgical scissors are stabbed into the base of the infant's head. The child's brain is then removed by suction, allowing for easier delivery of the rest of the body.

As part of church support for an override of President Clinton's veto, the U.S. bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities will lead an ecumenical prayer vigil at the U.S. Capitol 2 p.m. Sept. 12.

Override votes in the House and Senate are expected to occur after Sept. 15.

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