

WORLD & NATION

Cardinal decides to halt chemotherapy treatments

CHICAGO (CNS) — Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago said Oct. 17 that he has halted chemotherapy for the cancer in his liver and has been told he has perhaps six to seven months to live.

The cardinal met briefly with reporters following a Catholic Charities luncheon.

He also told them he has canceled plans to attend the 50th jubilee in Rome of Pope John Paul II's ordination to the priesthood because "I have to conserve my energy. My biggest priority is to serve this local church."

But he said he plans to attend the Nov. 11-14 meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington.

He heads a committee that is to present the bishops with a major proposal for restructuring the conference. "We're scheduled to make our final report next month, and my hope is that I will be there to make that presentation," he said.

Cardinal Bernardin underwent surgery in June 1995 for pancreatic cancer. This August he learned the cancer had returned in the liver and was inoperable.

He said he was told then that chemotherapy had about a 30 percent chance of slowing or halting the new tumors for a time.

"The fact of the matter is, the chemotherapy wasn't doing much good in terms of restricting the growth of the tumors. ... The side effects of the chemotherapy were not commensurate with the results, so there did not seem to be any reason to continue," he said.

He said the chemotherapy caused fatigue and digestive problems.

He added that the cancer itself is a kind that causes deep fatigue. "It's a fatigue you feel all the time, and resting does not necessarily cause it to go away," he said.

He said he plans to continue working,

but the cancer "has made me selective, because I don't have the energy."

"My immediate plan is to live day by day, as best I can," he said.

He said he planned to give a public talk the evening of Oct. 24 on his Catholic Common Ground Project to restore U.S. Catholic unity, following a meeting most of that day with his advisers on the project.

News reports which had described that meeting as a moving up of the project's first conference next March were mistaken, he said. There has been no change in plans to hold the first conference in March.

The Oct. 24 meeting and lecture were set up, he said, because after the wide positive response to the announcement of the project in August, his advisory committee felt that something more needed to be done before the spring conference.

He said he planned in his lecture to "bring into clearer focus" what the Catholic Common Ground Project is all about.

Archbishop urges new death penalty position

OMAHA, Neb. — It is time for Catholics to recognize the growing awareness of the church that capital punishment is no longer justified, according to Archbishop Elden F. Curtiss of Omaha.

"I am asking Catholics in the archdiocese who support the death penalty in the state to rethink and reevaluate your position," the archbishop wrote in his Oct. 18 column in his archdiocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Voice*.

"Our developing opposition to the death penalty because of our deep sense that all human life is always sacred does not diminish our acknowledgement that serious crimes require serious punishment," Archbishop Curtiss said. "But we are coming to the awareness that adequate protection of society can take place in a more humane way than by employing an act of killing to punish serious offenders," he said.

John Joubert, convicted of killing two young boys, was executed in Nebraska's electric chair in July.

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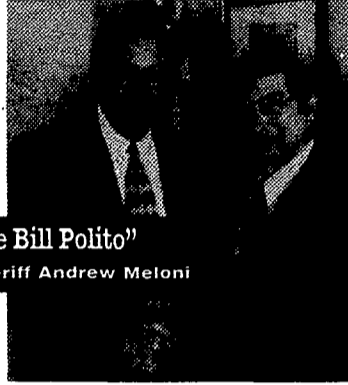
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