

# Ultraright cleric with mean chip on shoulder

The media spotlight that shined so brightly on some of the events and people involved in the case against Cardinal Joseph Bernardin largely skipped over one of the behind-the-scenes players — a renegade Dominican who publicly celebrated the bogus charges of sex abuse.

In other circumstances, Fr. Charles Fiore might be dismissed as a disgruntled cleric with a wish to return to some idealized notion of church. But as the self-described "spiritual counselor" to Bernardin's accuser, Steven Cook, he deserves closer scrutiny.

Fiore loves to characterize himself as one of those guardians of orthodoxy who inhabit the extreme right wing of the Catholic church in the United States. Part of his package of ecclesiastical ideology is an open disdain for "liberal bishops" such as Bernardin, figures he believes have betrayed the true purpose of the church and led the faithful astray.

Fiore was scheduled for deposition in the Bernardin case, but reportedly an illness kept him from being questioned under oath. The recanting of the charges by Cook probably eliminates the possibility that Fiore will ever have to take the stand in the case. Disturbing questions remain, though, about how a man who spewed such venom against Bernardin was permitted by Cook's attorneys to gain

such a position of trust.

Immediately after the accusations were made public, Fiore took to the airwaves, a willing interview who gloried in Bernardin's misfortune. In one print interview, Fiore said he was disgusted with the show of support given Bernardin by the rest of the U.S. bishops because the cardinal "is an evil man."

In a Nov. 15 interview with Religious News Service, he continued, "I've watched this man for years. I've seen his thumbprints all over the place." In a subsequent interview, he

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charged that Bernardin, who received unqualified support from Pope John Paul II, "has not been totally loyal" to the pope. "On many issues having to do with the life and doctrine of the church, he has said and done things that are doctrinally suspect."

In self-righteous tones, he went after Bernardin and Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, chastising them for betraying the church and its teachings. "I dislike these people,"

he said. "I've been a priest for 33 years. I am married to the church. The church is my wife, and I don't like these people playing games with her. I don't like what I see. I don't like their double-dealing with doctrinal matters."

He apparently feels no restraint, however, in double-dealing with the truth, in trading in rumor and wild fictions and in trashing an honorable man's character.

Fiore has gained a certain credibility with those who have taken up the cause of sex-abuse victims and the fight against the often callous treatment of victims by bishops and other church officials. But his sympathy, as the Bernardin case shows, can come at a very high price. Certainly, there are more responsible clerics who would be willing to offer sober pastoral counseling untainted by irrational hatreds.

Fiore also holds a certain currency as a spokesman for the ultraright and as one of its chroniclers of all they claim is wrong with the post-Vatican II church.

He represents the worst of the ultraconservatives — mean-spirited and vicious in attacking those who hold different opinions. He also represents much of what was disturbing about the Bernardin case — an abundance of bluster and wild accusations without even minimum regard for evi-

dence or fair play.

For many of Fiore's 33 years in the priesthood, he has been at odds with his superiors. He was previously suspended and was unable to find a bishop who would accept him permanently. He currently is living, without permission, apart from his home province of Chicago in what has been described in the press as a \$500,000 home in Lodi, Wis. For many years he ran the day-to-day operations of his family's multimillion dollar business in Wisconsin, in violation of orders from his superiors in Chicago.

As is so often the case with ultraconservatives, orthodoxy runs only as deep as the rules they wish to keep.

Victims and organizations fighting for the rights of victims should be adequately warned now of the dangers of dealing with Fiore. We may never know the details of his dealings with Cook and members of Cook's family, with whom Fiore had contact, according to past press interviews. We may never know of his intense dislike of Bernardin fired into the memories recalled by Cook, memories that the accuser ultimately recanted as unreliable.

Those who advocate on behalf of victims, though, should make certain that he is not involved as counselor or consultant in any future cases. ■

Even lost fish show capitalism is by its very nature unbridled

meanwhile, blame small-boat operators who do not follow the rules, fishing out of season and using illegal nets.

Americans began to build — and overbuild — a U.S. fishing fleet. Glory days of unprecedented catches came and quickly went. "If present trends



11/11/93 file

# Accuser's counsel a critic of Bernardin

## Fr. Fiore once called cardinal 'an evil man'

By THOMAS C. FOX  
and DAWN GIBEAU  
NCR Staff

KANSAS CITY, Mo., and ST. PAUL, Minn. — A Wisconsin priest who counseled Steven Cook in the days leading up to his Nov. 12 lawsuit charging Cardinal Joseph Bernardin with sex abuse has for years been a bitter critic of the Chicago prelate, having characterized his episcopal "failings" as demonic.

The priest, Dominican Fr. Charles Fiore, has also had a troubled history with his religious order and, he told *NCR*, only days ago informed his superiors he plans to leave the order.

Fiore has been a member of the order's Midwest province but has not been active in it since 1986, according to province head Fr. Donald Goergen. He characterized Fiore's relationship with the Dominicans as "very conflictual."

Fiore's involvement, if any, in the lawsuit against Bernardin is not clear. However, Fiore told *NCR* he had spoken to one of Cook's attorneys, Stephen C. Rubino of Ventnor, N.J., a number of times concerning priest abuse issues during an approximate six- to eight-week period before the lawsuit was filed. Fiore said Rubino introduced him to Cook because Cook was troubled and in need of spiritual counseling in the days leading up to the suit's filing.

Fiore would not say what his counsel involved, but that it did not deal with the substance of the case. Fiore said he spoke only by telephone with Rubino and Cook and had never met either man.

For years Fiore has worked with victims of clergy sex abuse, reportedly having counseled some 175 to 200 victims.

The lawsuit filed in Cincinnati had originally targeted Fr. Ellis Harsham, a former instructor, who allegedly abused Cook in the 1970s while he was a student in a preseminary program there.

According to the suit, Cook began to recall in October 1993 that Bernardin had abused him once during that same period. Informed sources say some of Cook's recollections were aided by therapy and hypnosis.

Fiore's publicly announced involvement with Rubino and Cook caused some Bernardin supporters to ask if the controversial priest may have at least colored the lawsuit or even if the suit possibly had a hidden political purpose.

Rubino dismissed such charges. He told *NCR* that Fiore's input in the matter was limited to some private telephone conversations. He said Fiore has never been a paid consultant in the case.

Fiore, a regular contributor for the the far-right Catholic newsweekly, *The Wanderer*, has frequently attacked the U.S. bishops for their alleged failings in tackling the pedophile crisis. For years, however, his sharpest attacks have been lev-

eled at Bernardin.

Fiore recently told Religious News Service that Bernardin "is an evil man."

The conservative Fiore, writing in the Nov. 7, 1991, issue of *The Wanderer*, attacked Bernardin, who is viewed as a moderate to progressive, for having failed on a wide number of church issues.

Fiore wrote, "Chicago's Catholics (and others) already put off and angered by Bernardin — for his inept 'Consistent Ethic of Life' statements which undercut pro-life efforts, for his sudden school/church closings, for his lobbying of a frightening euthanasia bill recently passed by Illinois legislators and signed into law by Gov. Edgar — are clearly not mollified by repeated references to 'mistakes' when evidence indicates a 'cover-up' instead."

In the article, Fiore cast priest pedophilia in demonic terms. He said it has a "satanic hallmark." Especially so, he wrote, "when it involves individuals, acts and elements which have themselves been consecrated to the service of God."

Fiore called for Bernardin's resignation.

Goergen told *NCR* Fiore has been excommunicated (allowed to operate outside the order) since 1986 for the purpose of seeking a bishop who would take him. Fiore found a Ponce, Puerto Rico, bishop who incardinated him in 1986 on the condition that Fiore continue his search for a U.S. bishop.

That incardination expired in 1991. However, after further talks with the Dominicans and a personal appeal by Fiore to the Vatican, Rome granted him an exten-

sion that officially ended two days before the Cook suit was filed.

Fiore joined the Dominicans in 1954; he was ordained in 1961. He almost immediately began to have problems with his religious superiors, sources told *NCR*. At one point he ran into trouble for the way he had counseled students.

He again ran into trouble with the late Cardinal John Cody of Chicago over fundraising and antiabortion work. Cody reportedly banned him from preaching in the archdiocese.

Fiore was suspended by the Dominicans in 1984; in 1985 he was asked to leave the order.

During this period the priest, of Lodi, Wis., found himself involved in yet another controversy after he began work for his family's Wisconsin-based real estate and natural resource corporations. At one point he built a house near Madison, reportedly worth \$600,000, in which he now lives.

He told *NCR* he had verbal permission from his superior to carry on the \$20 million businesses after his mother died. He said he turned over operations to an attorney and acts now only as a consultant. He said he built the house with his inheritance money.

A profile last year of Fiore in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* quoted him as saying he no longer wanted to be part of the Dominican province. He said he did not like the way it "was going theologically," and that he knew there was a "growing number of homosexual priests in the province." In that article, he said he knew of six bishops who are pedophiles. ■

British Benedictine abbot resigns after male visitor alleges sexual assault

## Bernardin

Continued from page 3

mately 48 hours of receiving the allegation.

Once the Washington media had their encounter with Bernardin, nearly all the bishops had already changed their

with his priests, telling them he hoped he could somehow meet with Cook and speak to him.

A close Bernardin supporter said the



**THE WHITE HOUSE**  
**Office of the Press Secretary**

*file*

**For Immediate Release**

**November 14, 1996**

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT**

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death last night of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, the Archbishop of Chicago, one of our nation's most beloved men and one of Catholicism's great leaders.

Hillary and I loved and admired Cardinal Bernardin very much. In my conversation with him yesterday, I had the opportunity to remind Cardinal Bernardin of our deep feeling for him and of our admiration for his life's work. I am grateful today that I had that opportunity. Our conversation reminded me of the strength, grace and dignity with which he lived his life on Earth and with which he prepared to leave this life for the next.

Throughout his life, Cardinal Bernardin devoted himself to bringing out the best in humanity and to bringing together those who were divided. He fought tirelessly against social injustice, poverty and ignorance. As I said in September when I had the honor of presenting Cardinal Bernardin with the Medal of Freedom, Cardinal Bernardin was both a remarkable man of God and a man of the people.

Both in life and in death, he taught us the important lessons of community, caring and common ground. To quote the Archbishop himself from one of his last public appearances on October 24 of this year: "A dying person does not have time for the peripheral or the accidental. He or she is drawn to the essential, the important. And what is important is that we find that unity with the Lord and within the community of faith for which Jesus prayed so fervently on the night before he died. To say it quite boldly, it is wrong to waste the precious gift of time given to us on acrimony and division."

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*file*  
*Bernardin*



Bernard



## Balms for the poor

**Infectious diseases hinder developing countries from developing. Making existing drugs cheaper there would help. Making entirely new drugs would help even more**

PEER over the counter at a pharmacy in America, Europe or Japan and you see a wealth of drugs. Americans and Europeans spend more than \$220 billion a year on prescription medicines for everything from high blood pressure to low mood—a powerful incentive for pharmaceutical companies to keep them supplied with current remedies and to concoct new ones (see chart). Of course, drugs for such diseases as river blindness and sleeping sickness are not routinely found on western shelves since there is little demand for them. But walk into a dispensary in, say, Cameroon, and you discover that such drugs are equally scarce there—not because they are not needed, but because nobody can afford them.

Lack of money not only restricts access to existing drugs and vaccines and means of dispensing them; it also offers little incentive for drug companies to develop new medicines for people in poor countries. Globally, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that more than \$56 billion a year is spent on health research—but less than 10% of that sum is directed toward diseases that afflict 90% of the world's population.

As Piers Whitehead of Mercer Consulting notes, large drug companies are more like

supermodels than charities: they won't get out of bed and into work for less than \$350m in annual sales for any given product. This is because turning a gleam in a researcher's eye into a handful of useful pills is an expensive and time-consuming business: on average, it costs \$300m and takes more than a decade. Between 1975 and 1997, an impressive 1,223 new compounds were launched on the mar-



ket. But as Patrice Trouiller, a consultant with Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), an aid group, points out, only 11 of them were designed for tropical diseases.

The problem is not merely one of human welfare, important though that is. Many economists, among them Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard University (see pages 17-20), believe it is also an issue of economic development. Better access to better medicines is not the only way to improve the health of poor countries, but it is a significant one. And creating new drugs and vaccines is such a technology-intensive business that the developing world is likely to remain dependent on western pharmaceutical firms for years to come.

### New pills, old ills

Encouraging the development of new medicines is difficult because it requires both the push of financial incentives (to offset the risk of research in largely uncharted fields) and the pull of secure funding (to ensure that there is a paying market once the drugs are ready). Recently, however, some new ideas about how to solve these problems have emerged, based on new alliances between industry and the public sector.

One approach is that being taken by the new Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), which brings together public-sector organisations and drug companies under the umbrella of the WHO. Robert Ridley, director of MMV, sees the venture as a "not-for-profit virtual drug company", combining public- and private-sector research through funding collaborative discovery and development projects. Drug companies have millions of molecules in their chemical libraries created for more lucrative diseases such as cancer, along with thousands of old drugs currently used for other ailments, which could be developed for malaria at roughly a tenth of the cost of starting from scratch.

But finding the money to finance the research is not easy. MMV aims to register one new antimalarial product every five years, and is likely to need \$30m a year to do so. The drug companies' gifts-in-kind are worth millions, but the bulk of the required money is still expected to come from public funds and philanthropic institutions. Initial promises of \$5m have enabled MMV to begin the process of project selection, and the venture will be formally launched later this year.

Seth Berkley, head of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), is hoping to do something similar for AIDS vaccines. Roughly \$2 billion a year is spent on research into AIDS treatments, most of which are either too costly or too complicated for use in poor countries. But IAVI estimates that only



## Flying high

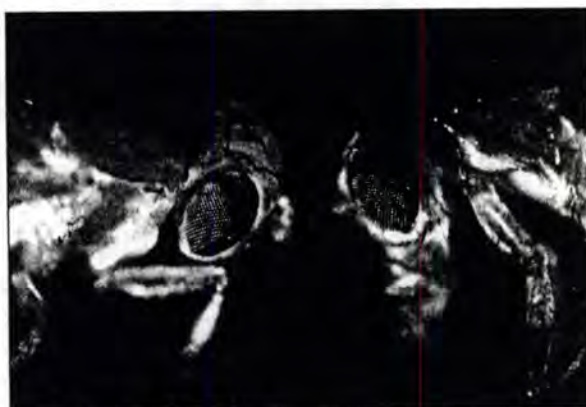
**C**OCAINE, as addicts well know, has curious effects on the body. One of them is "reverse tolerance": rather than becoming accustomed to cocaine with increasing exposure (as happens with, say, alcohol), the brain becomes more sensitive. With each hit, responses, such as fidgeting, are more exaggerated. This sensitisation is thought to be a first step in creating an overwhelming craving for the drug that eventually leads to addiction.

In humans, studying cocaine sensitisation is tricky since most governments have strong views on giving drugs to the uninitiated, and tend to enforce them with lengthy prison sentences. So instead researchers have turned to creatures such as the fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*, to probe the cellular basis for cocaine craving. In this week's issue of *Science*, biologists Jay Hirsh, Sarah Chaney and Rozi Andretic of the University of Virginia report that an appetite for cocaine seems to be connected to the mechanisms which control circadian rhythm—the so-called "body clock".

Fruit flies, like humans, have an internal biological clock that governs their activity over a 24-hour cycle. Ms Andretic recently found that the brain makes use of a biochemical called dopamine to regulate its circadian rhythm.

Other experiments on mice and flies have shown that dopamine is also involved in cocaine sensitisation. So the researchers put the two together and decided to see whether disrupting the body's internal clock might also affect cocaine craving.

When exposed to purified "freebase" cocaine, fruit flies behave surprisingly like junkies. They twitch, gnaw and groom themselves compulsively while wandering about in circles. As the drug dose rises, such erratic movements become more severe until the fly is paralysed and drops dead. Ordinarily, one cocaine hit is enough to sensitise a fly. But Dr Hirsh's team found that mutant *Drosophila* lacking genes called "Clock", "Period", "Cycle" and "Doubletime"—all of which are known to



Fruit flies on the rocks

control circadian rhythm—also lack heightened responses to cocaine even after multiple doses. In fact, "Doubletime" mutants proved particularly resistant to the drug, requiring substantially higher quantities before behaving strangely.

In fruit flies, a biochemical called tyramine seems to be responsible for such drug responses, and Dr Hirsh thinks that tyramine regulation is the chemical link between these two very different processes. After a single cocaine dose, the enzyme that makes tyramine becomes more active in normal flies. In the circadian-gene mutants, however, the enzyme's activity stays steady after a dose of the drug, so tyramine levels remain low. The absence of the circadian genes, which seem to regulate the release of tyramine, prevents flies from becoming more responsive to cocaine.

Whether sky-high flies can teach scientists much about human addiction remains to be seen. Only about a fifth of the people who use cocaine actually become addicted to it: the puzzle lies in understanding what distinguishes the casual user from the hardcore addict. But if the propensity to addiction is also genetically controlled in humans, it could provide a mechanism to address the problem at the cellular level, by regulating tyramine or its vertebrate equivalent. It might then be possible to treat cocaine addiction as a disease, rather than a criminal activity.

\$250m is spent creating vaccines, few of which are potentially useful for poor countries where about 95% of HIV infections occur. Dr Berkley wants to make life as easy as possible for potential vaccine developers by mustering expertise and money to help companies negotiate regulatory hurdles and organise clinical trials in developing countries.

IAVI is also trying to use the tricky issue of intellectual property to expand access to new vaccines. Patents have long been a sore point between the companies which own them and developing countries (such as South Africa) which want to get their hands on nifty new medicines and resent having to pay the premiums which patent-holders expect as a reward for their innovation. IAVI will invest in drug companies if they promise to provide their vaccines to poor countries (though not rich ones) at just above manufacturing cost, rather than including the usual hefty margin. If they do not, IAVI has the right to transfer the patent to another producer. IAVI has already struck a deal with one biotech company, Alphavax of North Carolina, along these lines and is hoping to do business with large pharmaceutical firms

as well. Another proposal is to allow companies that agree to develop an HIV vaccine a limited extension to their patents on blockbuster drugs in their most lucrative markets.

A different approach, being championed by MSF, is to make a virtue of the rarity of tropical diseases in the West. Since 1983 America has offered incentives in the form of tax credits and marketing monopolies to companies willing to develop drugs for "orphan" diseases, which afflict fewer than 200,000 people and so offer markets too small to attract much attention from pharmaceutical companies. The European Commission is preparing similar legislation, and Dr Trouiller of MSF is lobbying for tropical diseases to be included in it. But although orphan drug legislation has been a boon to America's biotech companies, which can use the prospect of a market of a few million dollars to lure investors, that is scarcely loose change for large pharmaceutical firms. And since only big firms can manufacture drugs in large quantities, it is crucial to engage their interest too.

A bill now before Congress could do just that. The Lifesaving Vaccine Technology Act

of 1999, introduced by Nancy Pelosi, aims to encourage drug makers to develop vaccines for malaria, tuberculosis and HIV, which together kill almost 8m people each year. The legislation proposes substantial tax credits on research and development expenses, and would cost about \$25m a year.

But while the bill has received backing from both politicians and industry executives for its tax credits, it may face opposition to its explicit endorsement of "tiered pricing"—the simple idea that poor countries be charged less than rich ones for drugs. In the past, American congressmen have complained that it is "unfair" that their voters should pay 100 times more for a measles vaccine than, say, a mother in Bangladesh.

Such opposition to tiered pricing alarms drug companies, according to Arnie Batson, a vaccine consultant with the World Bank. Even more worrying, says Walter Vandersmissen, head of government affairs at Smith-Kline Beecham Biologicals, is the prospect that rich countries might allow the import of discounted drugs from poor countries, and undercut the drug industry's sales in their profitable markets. (At the moment, America



and the European Union strictly control imports of drugs made outside their borders.)

Though many in the pharmaceutical industry are impressed by these proposals, some feel that there are now too many competing "initiatives" and that they all fall short of inspiring novel drug development. Mr Vandersmissen considers them "interesting think-tank exercises". The best way to stimulate new research, he believes, is to prove that sustainable markets can be created for relatively expensive medicines already on the shelf. This is the aim of a new international consortium, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, to be launched next year. It brings together the World Bank, the WHO, wealthy donor countries, poor recipient ones, philanthropic organisations and the drug industry, with the aim of improving access to existing vaccines and developing new ones.

According to Geoffrey Lamb, head of "resource mobilisation" at the World Bank, one way to finance such a programme is through a global trust fund for vaccines for needy countries. But wealthy donor governments are not keen to tie up large sums of money for long periods of time on uncertain odds. A more likely prospect, in Mr Lamb's view, is "contingent lending", in which donors promise to give money and needy countries promise to buy a vaccine if and when a useful one appears.

Ultimately, says Tim Evans, director of health sciences at the Rockefeller Foundation, rich donor countries prefer to give their money to projects (such as drug donation and immunisation programmes) which show results in a couple of years, rather than put up with the long and uncertain slog of developing new medicines. But some donors are prepared to take a more long-term view. The biggest splash has been made by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Since last December, the foundation has given \$50m for malaria vaccine development, \$25m for AIDS vaccine research and \$100m to the Gates Children's Vaccine Programme which aims to improve access to expensive new shots against hepatitis-B, *Haemophilus influenzae* and rotavirus.

Though such contributions are welcomed by international health workers, they are, in Mr Evans's view, largely "catalytic"—enough to kickstart a reaction among drug developers and public health authorities, but not enough to sustain it. He would like to see a new group of donors: multinational corporations whose business in poor countries depends on a healthy workforce, who would benefit from novel drugs for their old ailments. In the end, developing new medicines for the world's poorest will depend on appeals to both altruism and self-interest. Balancing the two may prove the toughest trick of all for the new alliances between the public and private sector.