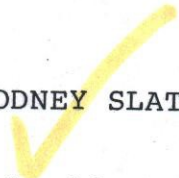


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: 2/11/97

NOTE FOR:  RODNEY SLATER

The President has reviewed the attached, and it is forwarded to you for your:

Information ☒

Action ☐

Thank you.

Staff Secretary
(x6-2702)

cc:



Chyon

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

2-11-97

Clinton has a special affinity with African-American religiosity

By ADELLE M. BANKS

c. 1997 Religion News Service

(Ed. note: Photo to accompany this story is available from RNS Online. To receive free software for downloading photos, call Mike Paquette at 800-767-6781.)

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For Meeker / Boer / McCurry / Palmer / Allen
↳ see Question p3

cc: HRC - Robby Stein
Carol Ann
JC Smith

BC

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

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→ Down
Hallway
of U.S. Hall

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WASHINGTON

DATE: 2/11/97

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Information ☒

Action ☐

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Staff Secretary
(x6-2702)

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cc: HVC - Rodney Slater
Cox / Lindsey
EC Smith

BC

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January 15, 1997

5

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

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###

HONORARY PARTICIPATION REQUEST

Please return to Room 457

Today's Date: February 10, 1997

'97 FEB 11 AM 10:07

Date of Request: 12/16/96
Request for: POTUS/FLOTUS
Type of Request: Honorary Patrons
Requestor Name: Mr. James A. Johnson
Title: Chairman
Organization: The John F. Kennedy Center For
the Performing Arts
Washington, D.C. 20566-0001

Contact Tel. #:

Event Date: 4/20/97

Event Description: Performance of "The King and I"

Notes:

The performance will raise money for the Kennedy Center's artistic, educational, and public service programming throughout the United States. The Vice President and Mrs. Gore have received the same request, but will defer to the President and First Lady should they decide to accept. Ann Stock and Melanne Verveer recommend that the President and First Lady accept.

The President and First Lady should ACCEPT.

Recommendations:

MW _____ TS _____ EL _____
(Unless otherwise noted, a yes answer
will automatically generate a message).

Comments:

2/11/97

Sent to Matt Milliken.

C. Cleveland

Todd -
Per Debi Schiff, they
need an answer by 2/11.
Sorry for the rush. Matt is
out today.
Lori Armons

REC
1-17-97
MP1

The Kennedy Center

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

rec'd 1/12/97
DMS



WASHINGTON, D.C. 20566-0001
202 416-8000
FAX 202 416-8205

Phil

January 8, 1997

Dear Debi --

As we discussed, here are the invitation letters to the President and Mrs. Clinton and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore.

As always, I truly appreciate your help in this matter. Would you please indicate that they should call me directly at (202) 416-8015 with their responses.

Thanks,

Charlotte

Matt -

You might want to get a pre-routing read from Tracy LaB.

TJ

Don

A.S. - V.P. / MEG got identical request that I've forwarded to Wendy Hartman

1/22.

it should
may be

potus / PLACES
per Ann Stock r
melanne!

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20566-0001
202 416-8000
FAX 202 416-8205

December 16, 1996

The President
and Mrs. Clinton
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton:

On Sunday evening, April 20, 1997, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will feature the spectacular musical production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* starring Hayley Mills. The evening will benefit the Kennedy Center's artistic, education and public service programming throughout the United States.

This production of *The King and I* has captured four 1996 Tony Awards, including Best Musical Revival and promises to be one of the outstanding events of the season. Plans are currently underway for a festive pre-performance black-tie dinner.

We would be very grateful if you would agree to be our Honorary Patrons for this truly extraordinary occasion. On behalf of the Committee for the fifth annual benefit, we hope you will be able to join us for what will be a truly spectacular evening. We would be honored by your acceptance of our invitation as your support and presence would greatly enhance the evening.

With warmest wishes,

Sincerely,



James A. Johnson
Chairman



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

February 10, 1997

1997 FEB 10 PM 5:32

Mr. Todd Stern
White House Staff Secretary
West Wing - The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Stern:

Enclosed are some thank you notes from a Brownie troop that toured the White House in December of 1996. The troop includes the six year old twin daughters of Treasury Deputy Secretary Lawrence Summers.

As you'll note, only two of the notes include return addresses: Megan Perez of 7207 Rollingwood Drive, Chevy Chase, MD 20815; and Carter Umhau of 2 East Kirke Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. A response to the brownie troop as a whole could be sent in care of Ms. Cheryl Ellis (the troop leader) at 5 Newlands Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. The girls would be thrilled to receive a response of any kind.

If you have any questions about this, please contact me at (202) 622-1080. Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Beth Lundquist
Confidential Assistant to
Deputy Secretary Lawrence Summers

Ph...
to him Daskind
for reply

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 11, 1997

TO: Bruce Lindsey
FROM: Phil Caplan

2-11-97

Just came in -

Send to Dorskind

Yes _____

no _____

send to Bruce Lindsey

Coordinate w/ Hake ~~Yes~~
no _____



Frank Keating
Governor

97 FEB 11 AM 10:45

February 10, 1997

President Bill Clinton
The White House
via fax

Dear President Clinton,

I would urge that you take prompt and decisive action to prevent the pending strike against American Airlines by the Allied Pilots Association. A shutdown of American Airlines would have serious consequences for the economy of Oklahoma. American is the largest private employer in our state, with more than 8,000 workers here. Should the strike proceed, placement of these employees on emergency leave without pay would result in a monthly payroll loss of \$31.3 million in Oklahoma alone. In addition, air service to Lawton, Oklahoma City and Tulsa would be severely disrupted.

I urge you to use the power of your office to encourage both parties to enter binding arbitration should no agreement be reached prior to the Friday night deadline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Frank Keating, written in dark ink, followed by a horizontal line.

Frank Keating

fak/mb

Just came in -

Send to Doriskind

Yes _____

no ☒ _____

send to Gore Lindsey

Coordinate w/ Harte ☒ Yes _____
no _____

2-11-97



GOVERNOR FRANK KEATING

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

State Capitol Building • Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Fax 405-521-3353

Voice 405-521-2342

FAX MEMO

PLEASE DELIVER TO: President Bill ClintonFAX NUMBER: 202 456-6703FROM: Governor Frank KeatingDATE: Feb. 11, 1997SUBJECT: American AirlinesNUMBER OF PAGES: 2 (including cover)

MESSAGE: _____

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE: The information contained in this facsimile transmission sheet and document(s) that follow are for the exclusive use of the addressee and may contain confidential, privileged and non-disclosable information. If the recipient of this facsimile is not the addressee, or a person responsible for delivering this facsimile to the addressee, such recipient is strictly prohibited from reading, photocopying, distributing or otherwise using this facsimile transmission, or its contents, in any way. If the recipient has received this facsimile transmission in error, please call us immediately and return

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For Meeker / Baker / McCune / Palmer / Allen
↳ see Question p3

cc: HRC - Robyn Shaver
Carol Miller
JC Smith

BC

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"If you've been raised in that kind of Southern Baptist ethos, you know the Bible, you can talk the Bible and you've been exposed to African-American Christians in the South ... you communicate scripturally with one another," said Casey, who also is a minister at the Brookline Church of Christ in Brookline, Mass.

But Casey said Clinton's connections with black Pentecostals in Arkansas was most significant. When Clinton speaks at Church of God in Christ meetings, he makes a point of recognizing and calling out the names of leaders who are more than mere acquaintances but are, rather, people to whom he gives credit for getting him to the presidency.

"You really got the sense that he felt like he was at home," Casey said of the 1993 Memphis speech at COGIC's annual convocation. "I think it's a combination of the music ... the biblical tradition that he knows quite well and a sense that this is a part of the electorate that has been with him since the beginning. Blacks in the mid-South have had an attraction and a loyalty to him that he can't claim with any other demographic group."

The humble roots of the Arkansas native also provide the president with a link to many African-Americans.

"We in the South grew up in a community with those whom were called poor whites," said the Rev. Bennett W. Smith Sr., president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention. "President Clinton comes from a very humble beginning."

Appearing at a dinner honoring Billy and Ruth Graham upon their receiving the Congressional Gold Medal last May, Clinton recalled how the evangelist's refusal to speak to a segregated audience at a Little Rock, Ark., crusade in the 1950s was a memory that has stuck with him.

Flo McAfee, a special assistant to Clinton who acts as his liaison with the religious community, recalled when they traveled last June to the rededication of Mount Zion AME Church, a burned church in Greeleyville, S.C.

→ Down
from
Casey
of
G.I. Hub

"Getting to this church reminds me of Arkansas, down a dirt road, tucked away," Clinton told her.

Although most observers say they see his relations with the African-American church to be more a matter of genuine concern, there are times when political expediency cannot be denied.

At a meeting last spring at the White House with other black religious leaders, Smith, of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, recalled the first words out of Clinton's mouth: "I cannot win re-election without your help."

Clinton also had a conference call with black ministers a week before the election.

"We understand that he generally has a respect for the African-American religion but he is a politician and he never forgets that," said Smith. "I think that it is politically expedient (for Clinton) to be on friendly terms with the African-American clergy."

Although he doesn't consider political aims to be an overriding motive in Clinton's relations with black churches, Bishop Milton Williams, leader of the Mid-Atlantic II District of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, said it would be naive to think they aren't a factor.

"I think he recognizes that this is where you find black people," Williams said. "A lot of the community is in the black church. ... You want to reach the black community, you go to the black church."

There were times in his first term when Clinton may have lost favor with African-American clergy, but for the most part they have stuck by him.

"Some of his decisions about welfare reform and some of the statements that were made regarding affirmative action during the election may have given people some pause, but I certainly think that it was for the most part not a reason for abandonment or rejection," said G. Elaine Smith of the American Baptist Churches.

Flo McAfee, Clinton's special assistant, said the 1996 election results indicate that the comfort level between Clinton and African-Americans has not declined. In fact, Clinton garnered 84 percent of the black vote in 1996, a slight increase from his 1992 win.

But McAfee insists that Clinton's ties with black churches is far more than politics in practice.

"There's nothing like a good sermon and some good singing," she said. "That's uplifting to him. ... He needs and enjoys that to uplift his spirit as much as they enjoy having him there."

###

DATE: 2-11

TO: Erikson Rubin
John
Sylvia

FROM: Staff Secretary

Do you agree with
this recommendation?
It so Poths could
announce it Thursday at
funeral & it could be
presented at a later time.

[Signature]

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 10, 1997

'97 FEB 10 PM 10:17

MEMORANDUM FOR TODD STERN

FROM: SAMUEL R. BERGER 

SUBJECT: Medal of Freedom for Ambassador Harriman

In light of the significant contributions Ambassador Pamela Harriman made to the foreign policy of the United States, especially during her tenure as Ambassador to France, I recommend that she be awarded the Medal of Freedom posthumously. Her service in France was invaluable in crafting a new relationship for the post-Cold War period with our oldest ally. In recognition of her contribution, French President Chirac conferred upon Ambassador Harriman the Grand Cross of the Legion d'Honneur, the first time France's highest decoration has been conferred on a foreign ambassador. I believe it would be appropriate for the United States to honor her with the Medal of Freedom.

Attachment

Tab A Biography of Ambassador Harriman

Pamela C. Harriman
U.S. Ambassador to France

Pamela C. Harriman has been the U.S. Ambassador to France since July, 1993.

She was born in Great Britain and attended Downham School, England, and did her postgraduate work at the Sorbonne, France. She holds an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from Columbia University. She is a naturalized American citizen and the widow of the former Governor of New York, W. Averell Harriman.

From 1980 through 1990, Mrs. Harriman was Chairman of Democrats for the 80's, a multi-candidate political action committee with the two basic goals: helping elect Democrats to federal, state and local offices and helping define the Democratic agenda. From 1990-1992, she served as Chairman of the Quarterly Policy Issues Forum of the Democratic Governors Association and as a National Co-Chair of the Clinton-Gore Campaign. She is a member of the Democratic National Committee.

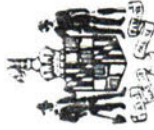
Mrs. Harriman is an Honorary Trustee and Honorary Member of the Executive Committee of the Brookings Institution, Vice Chairman of the Atlantic Council, a Trustee of Rockefeller University, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and is a member of the Trustees' Council of the National Gallery of Art. She is on the Board of the Friends of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, the Advisory Council of the W. Averell Harriman Institute for Advanced Soviet Studies, is a Vice President of the English-Speaking Union of the United States, a Member of the Board of Directors of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and serves on the board of various philanthropic foundations.

November 1995

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

2-11-97

SENATOR
JENNIE
FOREHAND
17th DISTRICT



MARYLAND STATE
LEGISLATURE

214 SENATE OFFICE BLDG.
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

301 858-1134

1 800 492 7122 EXT. 113

FAX 301 858-3830

712 STATEWOOD ROAD
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850
301 702-4772

Most of us have never been
invited to the White House - even for
a garden event. See what you can do!
I'm a 19-yr. legislator & chair
the Southern Leg Conf. Committee on Economic
Dev. - Transportation + Cultural Affairs
and on Soc. Tech Council.
You + Hillary are great! Jennie
Forehand

Nittale

- See Nittale for back
- Do nice reply -
- prob. should do more
work for St Leg - also
should identify those
already transmitt. See Nittale

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 10, 1997

97 FEB 10 4:37

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

SAMUEL BERGER

SUBJECT:

Adjustment to Selected Reserve Callup Numbers for
Operation JOINT GUARD

At Tab A the Secretary of Defense informs you that he and General Shalikashvili intend to lower the ceiling on the number of Selected Reservists activated to support Bosnia operations. The current ceiling of 8,181 Selected Reservists remains in effect until May 31, 1997. A new ceiling of 6,700 extends through August 15, 1998.

NATO is maintaining a mission capable force in the former Yugoslavia until June 30, 1998. The 6,700 ceiling extends beyond that date to permit an orderly redeployment and demobilization process and use of accrued leave for those activated reservists.

Attachment

Tab A Memorandum from Secretary Perry

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

0366



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

17 JAN 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Callup Authority Adjustment for the Selected Reserve in Support of Operation JOINT GUARD

In December, 1995, you authorized the involuntary recall of Selected Reservists for operations in and around the former Yugoslavia. On October 25, 1996, the approved recall authority provided for a maximum callup of 8,181 Selected Reservists in support of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR until May 31, 1997. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I have determined that there may be a need for up to 6,700 Selected Reservists to support Operation JOINT GUARD from June 1, 1997 until August 15, 1998. The Selected Reservists required to support current operational missions will be ordered to active duty pursuant to your Executive Order of December 8, 1995.

The Presidential Selected Reserve Callup (PSRC), 10 U.S.C., Section 12304, authorizes the involuntary call to active duty of up to 200,000 members of the Selected Reserve for 270 days. This period includes time for mobilization, training, deployment, redeployment, demobilization, and use of accrued leave. NATO will maintain a mission capable force in the former Yugoslavia until June 30, 1998. Accordingly, I am informing you that Selected Reservists will be on active duty until August 15, 1998, at the stated levels, to allow the Reserve Component sufficient demobilization time following mission completion.

William J. Perry

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of this - Be

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

2-11-97

Senate to Hear Testimony on Deregulation Bill

By AARON LUCCHIETTI
And JEFFREY TAYLOR

Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The Senate Agriculture Committee begins hearing testimony today on a proposed bill that could substantially deregulate commodities trading on the nation's futures exchanges.

The bill, introduced by U.S. Senators Richard Lugar, Patrick Leahy and Tom Harkin last week, would allow futures exchanges to operate with less regulation from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the federal government agency that has overseen commodities trading since 1974.

Among the controversial provisions in the legislation is an amendment to the Commodity Exchange Act that would allow futures exchanges to offer markets outside the scope of direct CFTC oversight, as long as the market would be restricted to "professional" investors. Most banks, some companies and select individuals with assets of more than \$10 million would fit in such a class, Senate Agriculture committee staffers said. Currently, futures contracts traded on exchanges require CFTC approval and are accompanied by detailed risk-disclosure requirements.

Congressional aides predict that some form of Commodity Exchange Act deregulation is likely to become law in the current session. The sponsorship of Sen. Lugar, of Indiana, a prominent Republican lawmaker from an agricultural state, enhances the chances of such a move as does a general deregulatory mood in the current Congress.

Exchanges say the legislation allows for more customization and product innovation for individual customers. "For the

first time, the Senate committee is saying it's time to strengthen futures markets in America," said Jack Sandner, chairman of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. "It's time to take a look at a less burdensome regulatory framework."

Exchanges have been pushing for less regulation for years, arguing that their large institutional customers often turned to the less-regulated over-the-counter interbank market. In addition, with foreign competition increasing, the exchanges are quickly losing market share. In the past nine years, the U.S. market share of total futures trading world-wide has dropped to less than 40% from 75%, according to numbers compiled by the Futures Industry Association.

The easing of regulation of such professional traders could have wide-reaching effects. In addition to financial products such as interest-rate and foreign currency futures, the exemption of regulation for professional traders will apply to non-agricultural commodities markets such as energy and metals. "The potential would be there to design a program around professional markets for virtually any commodity," said R. Patrick Thompson, president of the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Stock-index futures and U.S.-based agricultural products such as corn, wheat and livestock wouldn't be made available

in less-regulated professional markets as part of the current proposal, Senate Agriculture committee staffers said.

Exchanges say that 90% to 97% of their business could be constituted as professional. And many retail investors could indirectly be tied into professional markets through accounts with large futures commission merchants. Local traders who trade on their own accounts would also fall under the professional category, exchange officials say.

At today's hearing, CFTC Chairwoman Brooksley Born is expected to strongly object to many of the bill's provisions, arguing that it will gut the agency's ability to protect investors in currency and other markets.

"While we are still reviewing the proposed legislation, I am concerned that it could result in profound deregulation," Ms. Born said in a statement after the bill's introduction last week. "Important protections for the public, market participants and the stability of the financial markets could be eliminated," she said. Despite concerns, CFTC staffers are said to like the Senate bill introduced by Mr. Lugar slightly better than the similar House bill introduced by Rep. Tom Ewing (R., Ill.).

Others contend that the retail investor could be left out of such an arrangement if the exchanges were to decide to proceed with professional markets. "If all the institutions opt for the less regulated market,

then the 3% [of retail investors] might be in an illiquid market," said John Damgard, president of the Futures Industry Association.

Also, Mr. Damgard recommends that a uniform standard for professional markets be introduced instead of the current proposal that separates agricultural trading from metals and financial futures. "If we see a wholesale move to professional markets, I don't think we ought to eliminate the agricultural commodities from the same opportunity," he said.

Both congressional staff members and the CFTC predict that the bill will change substantially if it does become law. The hearing process is the beginning of a long road for the bill in which various interests including the CFTC will lobby hard for changes they want. Some predict the CFTC will be able to soften provisions of the bill it doesn't like, as the Securities and Exchange Commission was able to do with a deregulation bill passed last year.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1997

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

2-11-97

Best!



KUP'S COLUMN

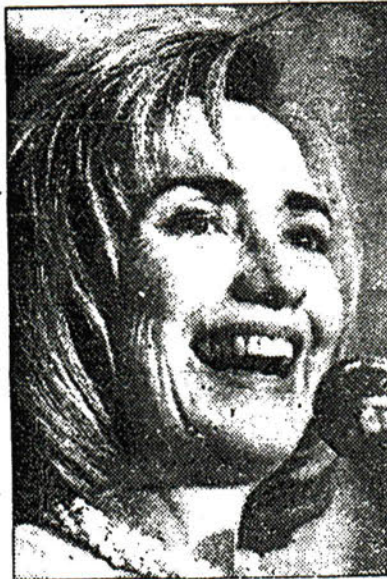
By Irv Kupcinet

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin recently confided to Washington correspondent Trude Feldman in a lengthy interview that he would like to help others in the public eye cope with unfair character assassination, as he once had to do after the sexual charge, later withdrawn, by Steven Cook. Bernardin declared he was especially saddened by the attacks and slander on first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and added, "I admire and respect her and I'd like to see her get some relief from the constant vilification and disparagement."

THE RINGING OF HAND-HELD BELLS by youngsters from various parishes accompanying the body of Bernardin from his State Parkway home to Holy Name Cathedral was inspiring. One priest appropriately dubbed it "heavenly music."

CHICAGO POLICE will be joined today by state and sheriff's police, as well as the Hillside force, in escorting the body from Holy Name Cathedral to Mount Carmel cemetery in Hillside. Flying in from Washington will be Vice President Al Gore, accompanied by wife Tipper; Chief of Staff Leon Panetta; Health Secretary Donna Shalala, and Chicagoans Kevin O'Keefe and Rahm Emanuel of the White House.

SUPERMODEL Cindy Crawford, the idol of her hometown DeKalb, will return shortly to spend the Christmas holiday with her mother, Jenny Moluf, who remarried in 1989. "To me, Christmas means family," says Cindy, "and my



Hillary Rodham Clinton
Won Cardinal Bernardin's respect
answering critics who have maintained he wouldn't spend enough



To HRC

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

2-11-97

Fyg

B.



Trude B. Feldman, a syndicated feature writer who has covered the White House for the past 30 years, first met Cardinal Bernardin in 1973 at a Sunday worship service in the Nixon White House. The daughter and granddaughter of rabbis, as well as the sister of three rabbis, Trude Feldman has often interviewed the cardinal on religious issues and Middle East crises.

A faithful servant to the end

■ Cardinal Joseph Bernardin died as he lived, with dignity and an all-encompassing faith in God.

By TRUDE B. FELDMAN

I acknowledge death as a natural part of life. This enables me to face imminent death with faith and serenity. I know I am a part of a bigger picture, and the Lord is part of that picture, so I am now very much at peace."

These were some of the sentiments given me by Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin in an exclusive, one-on-one interview — his final one — before his death.

America's senior-ranking Roman Catholic died Nov. 14 and was interred last Wednesday.

The 68-year-old prelate — good-hearted, noble and saintly — was a model spiritual leader, even a potential first American pope. Yet he humbly rejected such accolades.

"I choose to be known simply as one who was faithful to my vocation — my call," he told me. "I want to be remembered, more specifically, as one who tried — sometimes with success, sometimes without — to bring people together. I have tried to be a mediator, a reconciler. I am not, however, a compromiser of truth."

He added that he came to Chicago's archdiocese 14 years ago when there was much turmoil; that through his presence and his ministry, he brought people together to heal the rift between modernists and traditionalists in the church, and to strengthen the church's relations with other faiths.

These achievements were acknowledged on Sept. 9 at the White House, where President Clinton awarded Bernardin the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor that can be bestowed upon an American.

Describing the cardinal as both a remarkable man of God and a man of the people, the president said: "When others have pulled people apart, Cardinal Bernardin sought common ground. In a time of transition in his church, his community, his nation and the world, he has held fast to his mission to bring out the best in humanity and to bring people together."

The president added that throughout the cardinal's career, he fought tirelessly against social injustice, poverty and ignorance.

Cardinal Bernardin told me that he would cherish the Medal of Freedom because few churchmen have been so recognized. "Being a churchman and a representative of the Catholic faith, I take my notion of freedom from the Scriptures," he noted. "Jesus said, 'The Truth will make you free.'"

"As a priest for 44 years and a bishop for 30 years, I have tried to proclaim the truth as I see it. So the freedom I espouse is the particular freedom that comes from knowing the truth and trying to live by the truth."

Eleven days before receiving the presidential medal, the cardinal announced that his pancreatic cancer had spread to his liver, was inoperable and that he had little time to live.

In an earlier interview in September, I asked the cardinal if he believed in miracles — that perhaps God might yet spare him so as to enable him to continue to champion his causes.

"Yes, I do believe in miracles," he responded. "That is part of our Catholic tradition. However, miracles are a grace of God. It's up to God to decide whether he wants to perform a miracle. If God offers that to me, I won't turn it down, but I don't pray for that. Rather, I pray that God will give me the strength and grace to live the rest of my life fruitfully, and that, in a sense, is a moral miracle or a miraculous reality."

As to whether he was at peace with God's will, the cardinal put it this way: "It is not so much that God is willing this (cancer). But God has created us as human beings with free will. We have bodies that are mortal, subject to deterioration, illness and, ultimately, death. This is part of the human condition. It's not as though God says, 'Now, today, I want you to have cancer' or 'I don't want you to have cancer.'"

"I don't think it works that way. God created us and gave us the gift of life. He has also promised us the gift of eternal life if we are faithful. We should value these precious gifts even when our eyes are clouded by a veil of human tears."

"I do not blame God at all, but I did ask God for his help in coping positively with the two recent traumas in my life."

The cardinal was referring to his cancer and to a 1993 lawsuit accusing him of sexually molesting 17-year-old seminarian Stephen Cook in 1977.

Three months later, Cook recanted the charge and it was dismissed. After accepting Cook's apology, the cardinal convinced him to attend a Mass, which Bernardin said "brought closure and peace to the two of us."

Last year, at age 36, Cook died of AIDS.

In our 75-minute interview in Washington, Bernardin, who had been a leader in confronting the burgeoning scandal of sexual abuse by priests, brought up the Stephen Cook episode. He detailed the profound anguish, grief and humiliation he suffered from the false accusation. He also used the experience as an example of what harm slander and innuendo can do, not only to one's dignity and reputation, but to one's sense of purpose and contribution to society.

"In a matter of minutes, Mr. Cook's false accusation went around the world and jolted me very badly," the cardinal remembered. "The matter gnawed at me because my concern then was that if not totally cleared up, it would undermine others' view of my integrity and thereby diminish my ability to teach and to lead."

"Now, if you ask which of the two traumas was more difficult for me, I can tell you, without hesitation, that the false accusation was the most devastating because it was the

result of human evil. I'm not talking about Stephen Cook, but about those behind him who used him. That falsehood caused me more pain psychologically because it attacked my integrity and credibility, which are critical to my very being. If these had been destroyed, I would have been destroyed."

Concerning his cancer, Bernardin pointed out that as mortal human beings, illness is part of the human condition, and that not

one of us is exempt from disease or deterioration of one kind or another.

Characterizing the evolution of his religious beliefs that enabled him to be at peace with the will of God — to be taken now, and in this manner — he explained that when he was Archbishop of Cincinnati 17 years ago, he went through a kind of conversion.

"I have always been a man of faith," he said. "I believe in God and in the hereafter, and I try to live a moral life. But at a given point, I began to realize I was calling other people to a level of spirituality to which I myself was not aspiring. So I decided to spend more time with the Lord. I began by devoting the first hour of the day to prayer. In so doing, the rest of the day is permeated

by that, and the presence of the Lord becomes more perceptible and intense."

He said that from the time he was told of his cancer, his life entered a new phase, that of preparing for the transition "from this life to eternal life."

His abiding faith in God made his last days easier for him to think of death as a friend, he said, and his positive attitude was sustaining him. That was evident when he said "there is living to be done by dying" — a fact he demonstrated during his final days of activity.

I asked the cardinal what he would want if he were granted three wishes between now and Thanksgiving.

"Between now and the time the Lord calls me, I have no big plan or program," he responded. "Basically I want to live each day as best as I can. That really is what I hope to achieve. So between now and Thanksgiving Day, I trust the Lord will continue to give me the grace and strength I need — to live whatever time I have left in a constructive and fruitful way ... for myself personally and spiritually and also for the well-being of the people whom I serve and love."

"Second, I wish that during this time I'm able to continue to bring consolation and support to people who have terminal illnesses, especially those suffering from cancer."

"As you know, in my special ministry, I'm working with about 600 cancer patients and I want to continue to minister to them, to reach out to them, to help them comprehend the healing power of faith."

For his third wish, he said he would like to help others in the public eye to cope with unfair character assassination.

"For example," he said, "I'm especially saddened by the slander and attacks on President Clinton's wife, Chicago's own Hillary Rodham. I admire and respect her, and I'd like to see her get some relief from the constant vilification and disparagement. Free from concern about unjustified criticism, imagine — with her brilliance — how much good she could do for society."

Cardinal Bernardin died 62 years to the day that his father — a stone cutter — died of cancer. The day was also the 92nd birthday of his mother, who had taught him at a young age to be selfless, unassuming and empathic.

"My concern has always been for the welfare and human dignity of all of God's children," he told me. "And although we were financially poor, we were rich in parental love and guidance."

In the numerous talks I have had with Cardinal Bernardin, I found him to have an angelic demeanor, especially since he learned of his cancer. Sincere and genuine, he was a giant of a man and a deep thinker who kept up with current events and was involved in a broad spectrum of issues, from health care to economic injustice.

Before concluding one of our telephone conversations three days before his death, Bernardin reflected: "Earlier you asked me how I wanted to be remembered. Well, I wish to add that I'd like people to think of me as a devoted and caring servant of the church and of all mankind. And, yes, I hope the blessings I am receiving now will serve as an inspiration to others seeking spiritual strength and sustenance."

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES