

Forum

The Haitians ... A Greater Law Applies

By William F. Willoughby

Boca Raton, Fla. — To me there is something horribly ironic, even sinister, about the whole scene on Florida's Gold Coast. Boca Raton, which claims to have more millionaires per 1,000 population than any other city in the United States, is the scenario. Beautiful and ugly. Ugly and beautiful.

It is hardly believable as one drives along Ocean Boulevard toward the Indian River outlet which flows abruptly from the heart of the city. Even in the midst of the opulence one is startled to read real estate signs on the site where a tower is going up to add to the skyline. "Townhouses. \$495,000 and up."

While I was here 16 visitors came to Boca Raton. Boatmen all. But boatmen who probably never want to see another craft in their lifetimes. They landed their boat in the midst of the Boca Raton opulence hardly able to walk.

But these visitors were not welcome. They were black. Their skin was cracked from long days in the sun. Some had diseases — even the diseases one doesn't talk about in polite society.

Among the 16, there probably was the equivalent of \$100. After all, the average annual income in the place they came from is only \$200, and they had spent their life savings and the savings of others who had scrimped and saved to help them make the break for freedom and for hope.

Like 1,000 other Haitians who had slipped onto shore in March and 1,000 more in April, they were not welcome in Boca Raton or in Pompano Beach or Miami or a dozen other points between Miami and Palm Beach. They were arrested and sent to detention centers because they had arrived in the United States without the proper authorization.

Daily as I read the newspapers — the statistics on the Haitians arriving were as avidly followed by Floridians as some pluperfect baseball fans follow the stats on their favorite ballplayers — my spirit moved within me. Most of the stories put more emphasis on the illegal entry aspect than they did on the reasons why these poor individuals risked everything

(and more) they had, to make the trip across the Caribbean.

Naturally, we have to have laws which regulate such things as immigration, and I can understand why Miamians in particular, after "being taken over by 500,000 Cubans," as so many people I encountered quickly reminded me, are not eager to have another big onslaught of aliens.

There are indeed laws and there are circumstances. But believe me, for the person of faith there is another law that somehow has to abrogate man's laws, has to look past the circumstances. That is the law of compassion, of love, and anyone who professes to be a person of faith and does not feel compelled and impelled by it, has a big hole in his bucket. His profession of faith just doesn't hold water.

While I was in Boca Raton, a diminutive young woman and her small church were thrown into the limelight of the Haitian immigrant problem. She, a white missionary among the black Haitians in normal times, could not restrain her compassion for the Haitians who were being shunted from place to place.

Only days before I arrived on the scene she made the mistake of buying a large two-story frame house and adjoining smaller one in a semi-cluttered area of town. She dutifully went before the city fathers and told them she wanted the place for a center to help Haitians in getting jobs and places to live.

The plans were reported in the newspapers. No big fuss. Then, all of a sudden, Miami Immigration officials called and said they had such a large influx of Haitians that they had no jails or barracks or anything else to put them in. Could she help?

"Well, yes, we can. They won't be very comfortable because we just bought the place and we haven't been able to fix it up yet. But send them along."

The Immigration people did. More than 200 of them. All at once.

Marian didn't even have permission to go ahead with the center for Haitians, let alone take half the country in at one time. No food, no clothing, next to no money, no mattresses, no medicine. No permit.

Only compassion. And loads of love for fellow humans.

A handful of people began complaining, but the vast majority in the neighborhood were, if not happy about the new visitors, at least humane about it. Soon clothing came in and food and mattresses.

By now people came from miles around. Ministers and their congregations jumped in to help. I saw at least 20,000 pieces of clothing piled inside and outside the house. People were eating their first good food in months. A doctor worked virtually around the clock.

The upshot is that Marian can't use the house for a center to help the Haitians.

The town fathers had to back off from giving her a permit for the center. But the last time I talked with her city and county officials were looking into turning some abandoned, rundown barracks once used by migrant workers, over to her. Then hundreds can be housed.

Not exactly the same as the neighborhood with the \$495,000 townhouses. But then \$495,000 townhouses where there is no compassion are not exactly homes.

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

Court Again Considers Abortion

On the basis of its own record, the U.S. Supreme Court will probably rule the Hyde Amendment to be unconstitutional.

(This is the provision, fiercely debated in Congress, that public funding of abortions should be allowed in only the most extreme circumstances.)

First, there is the real issue of constitutional separation of powers among the branches of our federal government.

One of the clearest prerogatives of Congress is its basic control over the federal budget. The justices might see the rejection of Hyde as the court's usurpation of a congressional function.

If it does decide that poor women have a legal right to federally funded abortions, will the court also accept the responsibility for determining how much money Congress and the Administration must budget for this purpose? What would it do if an indignant House of Representatives provided inadequate funding for this purpose?

Second, the public opinion on this issue has changed dramatically since 1973 when the court accepted Justice Blackmun's tortured justification for the right to abortion on demand.

At that time, the opposition to abortion was widespread but quiet. Prevailing law supported this opposition. Most of those who saw abortion as legally unacceptable probably assumed that the court would not overturn the prevailing legal position.

Now, however, it must be quite clear to the court that a very large, fiercely determined segment of the population is determined that Justice Blackmun's reasoning must not prevail.

Moreover, aside from the popular pro-life movement,

this opinion has been subjected to some very heavy scholarly criticism (typified by the work of John Noonan). By this time even some of the justices who supported Blackmun must have regrets about the quality of his legal reasoning.

Finally, there is a substantial difference between saying that a woman has a legal right to have an abortion and saying that the government has an obligation to pay for it.

Still, these are the same men who handed down the 1973 ruling (with the exception of Stevens who replaced Douglas). My assumption, on the basis of past performance, is that they will find some way of ruling the Hyde Amendment unacceptable.

And if that happens, I have another assumption. Instead of discouraging the pro-life movement, such a ruling would give added impetus to the drive for a constitutional amendment to protect unborn human life.

Several years ago, I thought there was no realistic prospect for such an amendment.

However, two developments during these years persuade me that the odds are better than I previously thought. The pro-life advocates have demonstrated their staying power. The numbers seem to be increasing, not diminishing.

Secondly, I see a very slow but definite change in the public opinion regarding the acceptability of abortion. Publications, prominent commentators, legal scholars are expressing a concern about abortion which was not previously present.

Whatever the court decides, this issue isn't going to fade away.

Looking Back ...

From the pages of the Courier-Journal ...

75 years ago this week ... As followers of this column are aware, we are constantly surprised by the subject material in the 1905 editions.

On May 6 of that year, for instance, there is a story headed, "The Snake's Terrible Fangs." The story begins: "Snakes never close their eyes, because they have no eyelids." The story goes on to explain the structure and function of poisonous fangs.

On the same page is an excerpt from the Tombstone Epitaph of guess-what state. The story provides the clue; it has the headline "Arizona Forever." And it goes, "The inherent brains and resources of Arizona are forcing her to the front. In every capacity she is asserting her superiority and knocking the persimmon." (That's right, "knocking the persimmon.") The story says that "Arizona cowboys may not have that quality of stove polish on them that distinguished Eastern society (does) but they simply have the stuff to get there."

50 years ago this week ... The 30th International Eucharistic Congress opened in Carthage, Tunisia, with "50,000 cheering the papal legate's arrival." The paper headlined that it was the "Greatest Religious Demonstration Ever Held in Ancient City." The pope was Pius XI and his legate Cardinal Alexic Lepecier.

On the bottom of the same front page was this piece: "New York, May 9 — Seven hundred and fifty Children of Mary, ranging age from 16 to 25 years, received Holy Communion in a body in St. Patrick's Cathedral Sunday morning, after which they went to the Pennsylvania Hotel where a Communion Breakfast was served. Not a girl present had paint on her lips or rouge on her face. Most of them had dresses below their knees."

25 years ago this week ... "Feeneyites Back in Town" read the Page 1 headline. The story: "A group of women calling themselves the 'Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary' are selling a book entitled 'Our Glorious Pope' was reported this week in down town Rochester ... Catholics are warned that these women, who wear religious garb, are followers of the excommunicated priest, Leonard Feeney of St. Benedict's Center in Boston."

10 years ago this week ... "Abortion May Go To High Court" was the lead headline on Page 1. Did it ever!

A centerfold feature focused on Bishop Hogan's trip to the missions of Latin America. One photo showed the bishop with Father Luis Espinal, the priest who was assassinated just last month. The two are pictured during Sunday Mass in LaPaz, Bolivia.

Sunday Scripture Quiz

I. Gospel Reading:
Jn 14:23-29 — Christ's peace ultimately solves our divisions.

Below is a key passage from Sunday's Gospel reading. You can determine what this passage is by finding the answers to the questions below the puzzle and then putting the letters in their appropriate box. The first one is done for you.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35		
				N				H				
38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60			
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71		
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- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Beloved disciple: | J O H N |
| 2. Goal of all: | 21 41 9 19 60 |
| 3. Concern for others: | 52 14 40 23 |
| 4. Long knife: | 3 68 39 58 71 |
| 5. Believe in: | 57 70 59 18 62 |
| 6. An ailment: | 16 50 42 55 25 5 45 |

Based on scripture readings for Sunday, May 11, 1980, C Cycle.

Following are key passages from Sunday's scripture readings. Fill in the missing words.

II. First Reading:
Acts 15:1-2:22-29 — The Apostolic Council heals the Church.

Phrase: It was _____ by the _____ and the _____ in _____ with the whole _____ church, that representatives be _____ from among their _____ and sent to _____ along with _____ and Barnabas.

III. Second Reading:
Ro 21:10-14:22-23 — The community of Christ's love is the real Church.

Phrase: The _____ carried me _____ in _____ to the _____ of a very high _____ and showed me the holy _____ Jerusalem coming down out of _____ from _____ It _____ with the _____ of God.

Answers on Page 15

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|-------------------|---------------|
| 7. Females: | 49 35 65 2 28 |
| 8. Light rain: | 44 20 6 13 |
| 9. Heat water: | 64 63 17 38 |
| 10. Crafty, sly: | 33 10 22 27 |
| 11. Contend with: | 11 4 35 51 |
| 12. A sauce: | 24 28 68 |

Passage I words: Peace, disease, women, duel, love, John, mist, sword, ball, soy, wily, trust.

Passage II words: Antioch, apostles, Paul, Jerusalem, number, resolved, chosen, agreement, presbyters.

Passage III words: God, mountain, angel, splendor, spirit, gleamed, away, city, top, heaven.