

Haitians Seen Victims in Both Haiti and U.S.

By John Dash

Recent developments in Haiti and in U.S. courts have brought attention to the plight of Haitians, here and in their native land.

In a stunning decision, an appeals court in Atlanta has rejected an Immigration and Naturalization Service move to overturn last June's ruling by Judge Eugene Spellman of

Miami which said the detention of Haitian refugees in 1981 and 82 was illegal.

In addition the appeals court went further than the Spellman decision and found in the treatment given to the Haitians by the U.S. showed "a stark pattern of discrimination."

Judge Phyllis Kravitch said, "There was ample uncontroverted evidence that plaintiffs were denied equal protection of the laws."

And word has arrived from Amnesty International's Urgent Action Service, that there are grave fears for the well-being of three Haitians now imprisoned in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital.

The three, Rock Charles Derose, Jacques St. Lot and Paul Theodot have been named by AI as possibly subject to torture. Of the three, Derose has reportedly been imprisoned the longest, since his arrest Nov. 12, 1981. "He is reported to be in serious need of medical attention," AI said, "although no details are available of his illness."

The international human rights monitoring group asserted:

"Medical treatment in Haitian prisons is thought to be grossly inadequate. In April 1982 adopted prisoner of conscience Roberto Thelusma died in the Penitencier National, reportedly after having been refused necessary medical treatment. Former detainees in the Casernes Dessalines (another prison) have reported that prisoners have been treated by someone they thought was a male nurse after being severely beaten, but it is thought that other treatment is not available."

"In addition, conditions in the Casernes Dessalines are said to be unhygienic and most detainees are held in solitary confinement..."

"Food is reported to be inadequate, sometimes inedible and irregularly distributed. Detainees are only allowed to leave their cells for a few minutes each day to go to the bathroom. Cells are reported to be small, with concrete floors and poor ventilation."

"Prisoners held there for interrogation have reportedly been severely beaten and sometimes tortured using the 'pau de arara' technique, in which a person has his hands and feet tied up and is suspended from a stick placed behind his legs; he is then beaten with sticks. In January 1982, Amnesty International received reports that Rock Charles Derose had been beaten during interrogation."

The other two men were arrested in January of this year. They had previously been imprisoned, but were freed under a "pardon"

granted last September. During their earlier arrest, St. Lot and Theodot were objects of AI concern.

In the United States, the decision by the appeals court has confirmed what had been charged and what had been observed by Rochesterians concerned with the plight of Haitian refugees, particularly those detained during the winter of 1981-82 at Ray Brook Federal Penitentiary near Saranac Lake.

The ecumenical group convened by Bishop Matthew H. Clark, the Cuban/Haitian Emergency Refugee Com-

mittee, has more than once charged that the treatment received by the Haitians at the hands of the federal government has demonstrated racism and discrimination.

Even federal employees interviewed by the Courier-Journal in 1981 could not remember precedents for the order issued by President Reagan to the Coast Guard to shoot if necessary to keep the Haitian refugees from U.S. shores.

Those Haitians who did land were rounded up and put behind barbed wire.

There were more than 1,700 so treated.

Haitians are now in the process of demonstrating to administrative judges of Immigration and Naturalization Service that they are political refugees. The U.S. State Department and the Attorney General have repeatedly termed the Haitians "economic" refugees and therefore ineligible for U.S. immigration.

U.S. foreign policy maintains friendly relations with dynast President-for-life Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

We Believe In Change

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 13/31-35. (R1) Acts 14/21-27. (R2) Rv. 21/1-5.

One of the great themes of Easter is passover: passing over from death to life, from darkness to light from the slavery of sin to the freedom of the sons of God. In a word, change! Sunday's readings emphasize change — a new creation.

The second reading presents the seventh vision of the final cycles of the Book of Revelation. John describes "new heavens and a new earth... and the sea was no longer"

The belief in a new creation is a witness to three things. First of all, it witnesses to our unquenchable desires. Nothing in this world can fully satisfy us. Our hearts are restless: all of us desire more than we have; we want "new heavens and a new earth." Secondly, this belief witnesses that all of us feel a need to change. We sense we are sinners and that things are not as they ought to be. Thirdly, it witnesses to the fact that all of us have a faith that somehow God is not going to leave things as they are. Even though man's sins have created chaos, someday, somehow, God will re-create everything — "the sea was no longer." The sea represents chaos. Chaos and death will be eliminated, life and order will reign.

Every Jew, too, dreamed of a new Jerusalem. Plato thought that in the invisible world there existed the perfect form or idea of everything on earth; that all things on earth were pale, shadowy, imperfect copies of heavenly realities. In this ideal world everything existed in perfection, and so a heavenly Jerusalem, perfect and ideal, of which the earthly Jerusalem was but an imperfect copy.

Plato's idea of pre-existing ideas and forms may seem strange to us and hard to grasp. Yet there is an element of truth in it. Does not the building exist in the mind of the architect before it exists in reality? So did not creation exist first in the mind of God. "I have loved you with an everlasting love." "In the beginning was the Word (who is the eternal mind of God). The Word was God. All things were made through Him and without Him was made nothing that was made." God has dreams for us. John is saying one day

these dreams will all come true. "I saw a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful like a bride, where all tears shall be wiped away and there shall be no more death or mourning, or crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away."

And for the first time in the Book of Revelation, God Himself speaks, "See, I make all things new." God will and God does, even now, make all things new through His Pauls and Barnabases (R1) and their preaching the gospel of "love one another as I have loved you.(R3)"

The first reading is about hte conclusion of Paul's first missionary journey to the Gentiles (45-48 A.D.) Charity begins at home, so Barnabas and Paul started their first missionary journey evangelizing their own localities: Cyprus for Barnabas, and Perge for Paul. From there, they trekked to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe "and opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." However they suffered much in the process. From Derbe Paul and Barnabas could have continued eastward and by an easy route could have returned to their home base, Syrian Antioch. Less spirited men would have done just that, but not these two. Loving as Christ loved, Paul and Barnabas circled back to the cities they had already evangelized. They did this in order to encourage their neophytes and to organize the Church. Having changed hearts and planted a new creation among them, the Church, they returned home.

"See, I make all things new." Gentiles rejoiced that the gospel was offered to them (R1), tears are turned to joy in the new Jerusalem (R2), and on the very eve of His death Jesus speaks of glory (R3) — for our Easter faith is resurrection!



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