

World & Nation

Miami auxiliary bishop helps end prison takeovers

By Stephanie Overman
Washington (NC) — The Catholic Church, represented by the slight, frail figure of Miami Auxiliary Bishop Agustin A. Roman, helped the U.S. government reach an agreement ending the takeover of two Bureau of Prison facilities by Cuban detainees.

Now the Church, in the form of Bishop Roman and the U.S. Catholic Conference Migration and Refugee Services, wants to help the government live up to that agreement.

When the United States and Cuba resumed a 1984 pact that would return to Cuba detainees languishing indefinitely in U.S. prisons, the initial response was swift and violent. Cuban detainees rioted and took hostages at the federal penitentiary in Atlanta and at the detention center in Oakdale, La.

The sieges ended peacefully with the help of Cuban-born Bishop Roman who arrived at each site to encourage the detainees' cooperation. The bishop has long worked quietly for the Cubans' rights.

As a result of the agreements signed in Atlanta and Oakdale, the Cubans got an indefinite moratorium on the deportations and a chance to go to third countries instead of Cuba. Mostly importantly to them, each detainee will receive an individual hearing.

Deputy Attorney General Arnold I. Burns announced December 11 that the Justice Department is setting up a new program for the detainees. Immigration and Naturalization will make initial determinations on parole under this new system but these can be appealed to new review panels made up of Justice Department personnel.

"These new panels will provide one more opportunity, with ample advance notice, and with the advice and help of counsel, for obtaining parole," according to Burns.

New appeals panels have been created for repatriation hearings as well.

Burns said the Justice Department has been "considerably aided by the advice of Bishop Agustin Roman. We have no desire to detain anyone indefinitely," Burns said, but the Justice Department must find some

halfway houses so that parole is not in effect denied because of a lack of bedspace.

"To be frank, in the past ... because of an inadequate number of sponsors or halfway houses ... detainees approved for release have been held for some time after that decision was made," according to Burns.

"We must do better. We will do better," he said, adding that the Justice Department was pressing for more resources.

The Catholic Conference's Migration and Refugee Services has announced it wants to help provide more of those resources. The USCC agency sees "a pressing need for community programs in assisting those Cubans judged eligible for release," Monsignor Nicholas DiMarzio, MRS executive director, said December 11.

Noting that the Church already operates two release programs that help detainees re-enter society and rejoin their families, he said "the USCC is confident that it will be able to set up programs" that meet the needs of the Cubans and the government.

"This is especially important in light of the fact that the released Cubans will be subject to reparole evaluations. It is important for the protection of the local communities and the successful functioning of any release program that clear, fair and effective enforcement procedures become an integral part of any release program expansion," Monsignor DiMarzio said.

Raphael Penalver, an attorney for Bishop Roman, said the case of the Marielitos, known for their port of departure, Mariel,

Deadlocked Supreme Court fails to overturn Illinois court's decision against abortion law

Washington (NC) — In a 4-4 split decision, the U.S. Supreme Court December 14 upheld a federal appeals court ruling that had struck down an Illinois law requiring some girls under 18 to wait 24 hours before having an abortion.

By announcing that it was split on the issue, the high court let the appeals court's ruling stand. No opinion was issued on the case, nor was any indication given as to



NC photo from UPI
ACCORD IN ATLANTA — Linda Mormann, wife of freed hostage Leon Mormann, smiles at Miami Auxiliary Bishop Agustin A. Roman (left) after 89 hostages were released at the Atlanta Penitentiary.

Cuba, has been "a total exception" to U.S. immigration and refugee policy.

INS did not grant them entry visas but classified them as "entrants," Penalver said. This made them people "who were not given any constitutional rights," he said.

which of the justices had voted for and against the law.

The 4-4 split was possible because the Supreme Court has been operating with only eight of its full complement of nine justices since the retirement last summer of Justice Lewis F. Powell. Hearings opened December 14 on President Reagan's nomination of Judge Anthony Kennedy to the high court.

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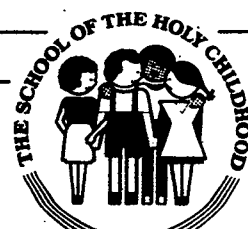
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