

World & Nation

Amnesty deadline draws lines of last-minute applicants

By Laurie Hansen

Washington (NC) — As a yearlong legalization program drew to a close, lines of immigrants wound around church- and government-run legalization centers nationwide.

A U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) official, meanwhile, said the Church would urge allowing more illegal aliens to become legal U.S. residents. More than 2.1 million illegal aliens filed for legalization, including about 125,000 who applied May 4, the last day of the program.

At a May 5 news conference in Washington, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Commissioner Alan Nelson said a "so-called fear factor" had not kept illegal aliens from coming forward. But church officials disagreed, citing "lack of confidence" in the government program as one factor that kept eligible immigrants from applying for legalization.

In an interview May 4, Monsignor Nicholas DiMarzio, executive director of the USCC's division of Migration and Refugee Services, said the Church would urge Congress to revise immigration law to allow more illegal aliens to become legal U.S. residents.

He said that Congress, in its attempt to solve "the old social problem of undocumented workers," created a new social problem of "disfranchised undocumented workers," which he called a new "at risk" group that must suffer the effects of employer sanctions "without a safety net."

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act permitted immigrants who had resided illegally in the United States since before Jan. 1, 1982, to apply for legal status, but excluded those who came after that date.

In addition, it allowed the levying of heavy fines and criminal penalties on employers who hire illegal aliens.

An estimated 100 diocesan offices and Church agencies participated as QDEs, or agencies that contracted with the federal government to assist aliens apply for amnesty in an official capacity.

In Dallas, Vanna Slaughter, program director for Catholic Charities' Immigration Counseling Services, said May 3 her agency had been "deluged" by legalization applicants.

"There were long lines when we opened at 8 a.m. and applicants keep coming until we close at 10 p.m.," she said. "At some parishes that are processing applicants, workers don't leave until 11 or 12 at night."



NC News

OLDEST RESIDENTS — In Fresno, Calif., Victoriano Nuno Olivares, 88, and his wife, Maria Cedillo de Nuno, 92, are sworn in during immigration proceedings that made them the oldest couple in the United States to receive temporary legal residency. The Mexican natives celebrated their new status with family members, immigration officials and Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet Marian Freeman (second from left), who coordinates the legalization-assistance effort for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Fresno.

In the interview, Monsignor DiMarzio said Church agencies had not received proper credit for the "tremendous job" they did in helping aliens.

Monsignor DiMarzio said that according to agency records, the Church offered legal advice to an estimated 600,000 aliens, many of whom went directly to INS to file their applications.

He praised the INS for its role in processing aliens' applications and hiring "courteous staff," but was critical of the agency's interpretation of the 1986 law, calling INS legalization regulations "overly restrictive."

Nelson, at the May 5 news conference, said more than 80 percent of legalization applica-

tions came directly to INS offices, without the involvement of private organizations and attorneys. He called the figure proof that a "so-called fear factor, in which people were believed to be afraid to submit applications directly to INS, never materialized."

But Monsignor DiMarzio listed "lack of confidence" in the program among reasons eligible immigrants did not come forward. In addition, he said, some did not apply because they:

- Did not know about the legalization program. Church officials have said INS publicity on the government's legalization program was too little and came too late.

- Didn't have enough money. To finance the legalization program, INS

charged families \$420 and individuals \$185 to apply.

- Couldn't locate enough documentation to prove to the government that they had lived in the United States since before 1982.

- Were initially ineligible for legal status, but the rules have changed and "nobody's been able to reach them."

- Thought the program was "just for Hispanics or just for Mexicans."

In a separate interview, Father Ronald Marino, director of legalization for the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., said the fact that the law "did not address the family unity question" made some families fear they would be split up when one member qualified for legalization and others did not.

Book portrays first lady as indifferent to abortion

By Julie Asher

Washington (NC) — Nancy Reagan reportedly told then-White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan she wanted no mention of abortion in the President Reagan's 1987 State of the Union message, saying, "I don't give a damn about the right-to-lifers."

Regan quoted the first lady in his just-released memoirs, "For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington."

According to the book, Mrs. Reagan, in a telephone conversation with Regan Jan. 24, 1987, demanded that all mention of the abortion issue be removed from the draft text of the address. She had phoned Regan in Washington from Camp David.

Regan also wrote that he told her the president "particularly wanted some language on this subject included in his address."

In 1987, pro-lifers noted the omission from the State of the Union address of two staples of the Reagan agenda — opposition to abortion and tuition tax credits. They went unmentioned for the first time in years.

Abortion was back in the State of the Union speech for 1988.

At the White House, Gary Bauer, who is assistant to the president for policy development, disputed Regan's assertions about Mrs. Reagan and the pro-life movement.

Bauer told National Catholic News Service May 9 that in the last two years the Reagan administration has done "a number of things for tougher (anti-abortion) legislation and cutoff of funds for Planned Parenthood."

Bauer said that the president's proclamation of National Sanctity of Human Life Day last January "some day will be historic ... In any of those cases I've never known of Nancy Reagan interfering."

Mrs. Reagan's press office did not respond immediately.

Two pro-life leaders May 9 expressed caution over the accuracy of the quote, but also said they would not be surprised by such a comment from Mrs. Reagan.

"I am not at all surprised," Nellie Gray, head of the annual March for Life, said about Regan's assertion. "We certainly have not been able to get help for the innocent pre-born children out of this administration."

Joseph M. Scheidler, director of the Pro-Life Action League, said he always questioned Mrs. Reagan's interest in the abortion issue because, he said, she emphasized the drug crisis and her "Just Say No" campaign to the exclusion of life issues.

"Why not say no to abortion, no to promiscuity?" Scheidler asked. He added that his organization was to send a letter to Mrs. Reagan May 9 asking for clarification.

"We'll see what she says. It's unconscionable if she said it," he added. "I think (President) Reagan is committed (to pro-life), and if he is resisting her to meet with us and show concern, I think that's a strength."

In his book Regan claimed that the first lady was so involved in key White House matters that she even oversaw the annual State of the Union message.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater told reporters that "I don't have any knowledge at all" about Mrs. Reagan's alleged statement about right-to-lifers. He denounced Regan's memoirs as a "kiss-and-tell" book and an attempt "to exploit the presidency ... for personal self-interest."

While not mentioning abortion in his 1987 State of the Union address, Regan did, in a separate statement sent to Congress to outline administrative views on pending legislative questions, indicate further support for measures denying government funding of abortion and for other pro-life bills.

In his 1984, 1985 and 1986 State of the Union speeches, Regan specifically called for efforts to end legal abortion in the United States. In 1986, he termed abortion "a wound in our national conscience" and pledged to "do what I can to see that this wound is one day healed."



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