

World & Nation

Church leaders demand reform of U.S. immigration policy



Police take cover as shots are heard Jan. 16 after a disturbance broke out in the predominantly black Miami neighborhood of Overtown.

Buffalo Catholic Charities aids Miami family

By Laurie Hansen

WASHINGTON (NC) — A lawyer-for Catholic Charities in Buffalo plans to file a U.S. asylum claim on behalf of a Miami family of Cubans who became caught in an immigration tangle after leaving the United States to view Niagara Falls from the Canadian side.

Franciscan Sister Kathleen A. Rimar, an immigration lawyer, was to file the claim sometime after Jan. 23, according to Roderick McDowell, executive director of Community Legal Services of Niagara South, located in Welland, Ontario.

Sister Rimar, reportedly on retreat, was unavailable for comment.

Recently wed, Carlos and Bernaida Fajardo and her two children left Miami Dec. 20 for a 1,300-mile car trip to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon.

The vacation ended abruptly when three days later, the family crossed into Canada to photograph the falls, and the U.S. Border Patrol refused to let them re-enter this country.

Canadian authorities issued the Fajardos a visitors' visa which ran out Jan. 15. As of Jan.

18, the family still was living in a motel in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

The family is "doing as well as can be expected. They've been in shock," said McDowell.

He said the Canadian government "hasn't made up its mind yet" on whether or not to grant the Fajardos refugee status which would enable them to remain in Canada.

Fajardo, originally from Cuba, entered the United States from Mexico in 1985. He worked as a boat builder in Miami.

His wife of two months, also Cuban, came to the United States with her children, Yordaly's, 9, and Yoandy's, 12, on a fake passport.

Fajardo's application for asylum had been pending before he crossed the border. Mrs. Fajardo and her children, however, were ordered to leave the United States last August after their asylum application was denied.

According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Fajardo family, in effect, deported themselves when they inadvertently left the United States. That exit nullified Fajardo's asylum application, said INS.

WASHINGTON (NC) — The bottleneck of thousands of Central American asylum-seekers in the lower Rio Grande Valley and the crisis created by their subsequent move to Miami have church leaders lobbying for reform of the U.S. asylum process.

"The problem is not Brownsville (Texas) or the Rio Grande Valley or Miami. The problem is Washington, and the only one that can resolve the situation is Washington," said Monsignor Bryan Walsh, director of Catholic Community Services in Miami.

Nicaraguans, for example, wouldn't be coming in such large numbers, he argues, if it weren't for "40 years of U.S. support of the (Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio) Somoza family and dictatorship, and the mess that has occurred in Nicaragua since."

What is needed, according to Monsignor Nicholas DiMarzio, executive director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's division of Migration and Refugee Services, is a joint legislative and executive effort to establish a "new form of temporary immigration" that would acknowledge what he called the "changing nature of forced flight."

Such a system would offer temporary haven — based on humanitarian concern rather than foreign policy goals — to foreigners fleeing the "horrors of armed violence, natural disaster and economic collapse," said Monsignor DiMarzio.

After the Immigration and Naturalization Service imposed a travel ban on asylum applicants Dec. 16, an estimated 10,000 newly arrived Central Americans found themselves stranded in the Texas border region.

Using scrap cardboard, plastic trash bags and old sheets, some erected a tent city next to the filled-to-capacity Casa Oscar Romero shelter run by the Diocese of Brownsville, and others piled into that city's abandoned Amber Motel until it could be condemned by local officials.

The Texas bishops, saying a lack of water, food, shelter and sanitary facilities could produce a "veritable disastrous health crisis" for both asylum applicants and local residents, appealed to President Ronald Reagan to take immediate action to resolve the situation.

Then, when U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela issued a temporary restraining order that suspended the travel ban, thousands boarded buses bound for Miami, where city officials an-

nounced they couldn't cope with another new wave of immigrants.

A Miami television announcer called it a "Mariel on wheels," fueling local fears that 1989 would be another 1980, the year that brought an estimated 125,000 Cubans to south Florida on the Mariel boatlift.

As Central Americans poured in, residents of Miami's largely black Overtown neighborhood rioted as the city prepared to host the Super Bowl. Community leaders said blacks were angry that new arrivals from Nicaragua received attention at their expense.

The crises in Brownsville and Miami prove "something we've been screaming about for over 10 years," said Monsignor Walsh.

By allowing the Central Americans to remain in the country to seek asylum yet refusing to grant them permission to work, the federal government is shirking its responsibilities and placing an unjust burden on the U.S. cities to which they migrate, he charged.

He said Congress hasn't wanted to face the fact that for growing numbers of foreigners the United States has become a nation of "first asylum," that is, a nation to which large numbers of individuals fearing persecution in their homelands — because of race, religion, political views, nationality or membership in a particular social group — flee in search of safe haven.

Traditionally, the United States has never looked upon itself as a country of first asylum because, compared to European nations, it is isolated — surrounded on two sides by large bodies of water, said Jesuit Father Richard Ryscavage, deputy director of policy at Migration and Refugee Services.

U.S. asylum procedures are acceptable "for dealing with an occasional tennis player from Europe or dissident from the Soviet Union," but unable to handle the massive numbers of asylum petitions currently being presented at the border and within the United States, said Monsignor Walsh.

Only in recent history have large nationality groups — mainly from Central America and nations in the Caribbean — come here directly from their homelands in search of asylum, said Father Ryscavage.

The federal government has reported receiving 23,253 applications for political asylum since last June.

St. Peter's Soup Kitchen Needs Volunteers



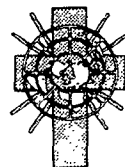
As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.

Thanks to your past support and generosity, we have been able to make the much needed improvements to our kitchen. We now seek volunteers or groups who can commit time on a regular basis to help prepare and serve our noon meal.

St. Peter's Kitchen serves the people of Rochester whose life is spent in poverty by providing thousands of cooked meals and articles of donated clothing each year.

If you would like to help out by volunteering any time at all, please call Lucille at (716) 342-1755.

St. Peter's Soup Kitchen, 681 Brown St., Rochester, N.Y. 14611



A sign of VOCATIONS

Last year in Asia, some 1,000 more young men began studies for the priesthood than had the year before. In Korea alone, the seminaries added 200 more students, ordaining 54 of Asia's 525 new priests.



Photo: MISSIO

But letters from mission seminary rectors still proclaim the need for support that such growth brings--no, demands. Won't you support a mission seminarian so, like the plea of Pope John Paul II, "no vocation will be lost"?



The Society for the Propagation of the Faith The Society of St. Peter Apostle

...supporting mission seminarians for 100 years

Fr. Robert C. Bradler
1150 Buffalo Road, Dept. C
Rochester, NY 14624

I'd like to ensure that no priestly vocations in the Missions are "lost." Enclosed is my contribution for a mission seminarian of:

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$700 (full year of study)
 Other \$ _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Your gift is tax deductible! #344 1/26/89