

Ruling on repatriation seen based on hysteria

By Laurie Hansen
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops' top migration official said a Supreme Court decision allowing U.S. repatriation of Haitians was based on "hysteria" and what he believes was an unsubstantiated report that some 20,000 U.S.-bound Haitians were poised to exit their homeland.

In a Feb. 3 interview, Jesuit Father Richard Ryscavage, executive director of the U.S. bishops' office of Migration and Refugee Services, said that report and what he called "exaggerated" claims that an unusually high percentage of U.S.-bound Haitian boat people had tested positive for the AIDS virus "fed an alarmist feeling in Washington."

He said his office was urging members of Congress to "put on the fast track" a bill to halt the repatriation. Such a bill, if approved, could face a veto by President Bush.

"We're sending people back to a nation that's very unstable and violent with no assurances that they will not be persecuted as they fear they will be," said Father Thomas Wenski, director of the Pierre Toussaint Haitian Catholic Center in Miami, in a Feb. 3

interview with Catholic News Service.

The U.S. Supreme Court Jan. 31 lifted a ban that had prevented the government from sending Haitians back, ending months of legal wrangling that left more than 10,000 Haitians in a state of limbo at Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba.

The court's 6-3 ruling came on an emergency petition by the Bush administration, which argued that as many as 20,000 Haitians were preparing to leave their country and that the naval base at Guantanamo Bay was filled to capacity.

He added that "none of the cases (of Haitian asylum-seekers) we've received in Miami have been HIV-positive."

Father Ryscavage said he had no reason to believe that the AIDS virus was more prevalent among Haitian asylum-seekers than among the general Haitian population.

The priest argued that while it was true the base at Guantanamo Bay had become overcrowded, the Bush administration "could have pursued other temporary holding areas" in the Caribbean.

More than 15,000 Haitian boat people have been intercepted at sea since a military coup in September overthrew



AP/Wide World Photos
A morgue official drags the body of Yves Jean Pierre, bodyguard of Haitian Communist Party leader Rene Theodore, into the Port-au-Prince morgue Jan. 25. Jean Pierre was killed when a group of unidentified gunmen attacked Theodore's headquarters during a political meeting.

Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's president.

Some 10,400 have been housed in a makeshift tent city at the navy base, with others living aboard Coast Guard cutters moored offshore. About another 1,000 have been returned to Haiti, either voluntarily or aboard Coast Guard ships before the ban was ordered.

The first 150 of thousands being returned home by the U.S. government arrived in Haiti Feb. 3.

After passing through immigration,

the Haitians reportedly were given food and \$15 each by Red Cross volunteers and sent on their way.

Father Wenski charged that the returned Haitians were "basically being dumped in Port-au-Prince (Haiti) with no assurance that they will be able to get back to their families."

About 6,500 of those at Guantanamo have been determined ineligible for asylum by U.S. immigration officials. They were expected to be the first to be returned.

Vatican clamps down on priest over book

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican's doctrinal congregation criticized a book on sexual ethics and said the Canadian priest who wrote it may be disciplined unless he clarifies his positions on sexual morality.

The Vatican published a 13-page critique of *The Sexual Creators: An Ethical Proposal for Concerned Christians* by Oblate Father Andre Guindon, who teaches at St. Paul University in Ottawa.

A Vatican statement said the book includes fundamental clashes with church teaching, particularly on the issues of pre-marital sex, homosexual relationships and contraception.

Father Guindon has been asked to make a public declaration to bring his positions "into harmony with church

teaching," the Vatican said.

"Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action against him, which could include withdrawal of his right to teach as a Catholic theologian," it said.

The doctrinal evaluation, published Jan. 30, followed five years of correspondence between the priest and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The Vatican said the public critique was needed because up to now this dialogue has proved unsatisfactory. Pope John Paul II has personally approved the measures taken so far, it added.

The document noted that Father Guindon denied in 1990 that his book contradicts church teaching. But it insisted that the content of the book, first published in 1986, contains many fundamental errors.

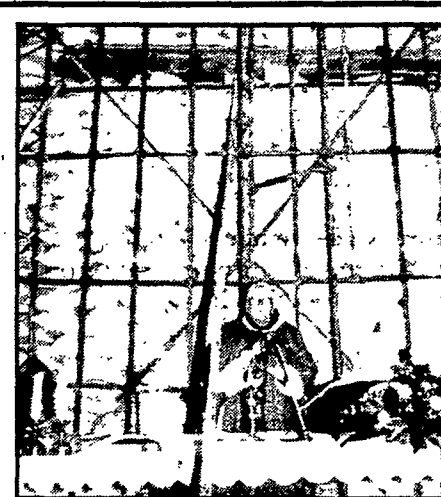
The Vatican critique cited the following specific areas of disagreement with traditional church teaching:

- Human sexuality. Father Guindon's book offers a "confusing inflation" of the meaning of sexuality, describing it in terms of "sensuality" and "tenderness" but independent of human reproduction, it said. Thus sensuality and tenderness are the criteria for judging all sexual activity, "not only conjugal, nor heterosexual only, but also homosexual," it said.

The book treats procreation as secondary and dispensable, it said. The church, however, teaches that the unitive and procreative meanings of the sexual act are inseparable.

- Objective morality. The Vatican said the book, in its treatment of sexual self-expression, describes the moral task as merely making "one's own

Continued on page 19



AP/Wide World Photos
MASS IN CROATIA — A wall of stacked sand bags serves as a backdrop as a Catholic priest celebrates Sunday Mass at a church in Karlovac, Croatia, Jan. 26. The cease-fire accepted Jan. 3 has held generally, but both sides of the civil war accuse each other of violations.

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