

## Brothers of Holy Cross, Eastern Province



# JUSTICE NOTES



"What we have in us of the image of God is the love of truth and justice"—Demosthenes

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"Sir, please come with me." I looked at the uniformed man incredulously. "Yes, you Sir, please follow me." I followed the airport security agent out of the line of passengers and walked with him toward a designated area. I was the only passenger pulled out of line. "Please remove your shoes. Place your bag on the belt. Your book, too." I did as I was told. "Raise your arms." I raised my arms. The agent swept my body with his security wand. "Turn around slowly." I turned around slowly, but my mind was racing, "Why did they choose me?" "Place your foot on this stool." "Unbuckle your belt buckle and let it hang." I followed all of the security agent's commands without question, immobilized by my amazement that he thought I could be a security risk.

After the search was over, seeming much longer than the ten minutes it took to conduct, I regained my sense of composure. My shock of having been pulled out of line gave way to a growing sense of anger, "How dare they treat me like that?" I buckled my pants, sat down and put on my shoes, retrieved my knapsack and book, and walked away, but not without every other passenger eyeing me suspiciously asking themselves, "Am I safe flying with *him*?"

I still had thirty minutes to kill (no pun intended) before I was due at the gate for boarding. I decided to use the time to hang around the security area at Bradley International Airport just to see whom else the guards would choose for their next victim. Standing with my arms crossed, I waited. One after another was escorted to the security area and put through the same drill I had just undergone. Those who followed me had one thing in common—all were, without exception, white, male, and had dark facial hair, either beards or mustaches. It felt somewhat obscene—dirty—watching these grown men unbuckle their pants in public, twirling around barefooted on command.

Putting the ordeal behind me, I boarded the plane in Hartford to return home to Valdosta, Georgia. My next destination would be Hartsfield International Airport, Atlanta. After the plane took off I was soon engrossed in my novel. The two and a half hour flight was uneventful, thankfully. We landed smoothly and I quickly disembarked, having only forty-five minutes to make my connection. The monitor read: VLD 4232 C 31 5:17 ON TIME. I made my way to the next concourse, found the gate, and took a seat. A voice announced that the gate had been changed to C 29 and thirty of us, a full flight, made our way as a pack down two more gates. A confused employee greeted us, uninformed of the last minute change. She picked up the phone, gave somebody what for, and instructed us to return to our previous gate. Grumbles, groans. We made our way back to the original gate. “Please stand against the wall and we’ll board the plane to Valdosta momentarily.” We stood against the wall. I decided to resume my novel, pessimistic about what “momentarily” could mean.

“Sir, are you going to Valdosta?” “*Sir*, are you going to Valdosta?” I picked my head up out of my book and looked around at the mention of Valdosta. More loudly now, “*Sir*, are you going to Valdosta?” I searched for the person asking the question and located the face of an Atlantic Southeast Airlines security agent standing twenty feet away. A “Red Jacket,” as they are called. A supervisor. I made eye contact with the frustrated man and noticed his finger pointing in my direction. No other male passenger was responding to his finger, all eyes were fixed on me. I mouthed the words, “Me?” and the supervisor barked, “Yes, *you*, are *you* going to Valdosta?” No more “Sir” at this point. I shook my head affirmatively. “Then step out of line and come over here.” He pointed to the make shift security area.

“Not again,” I thought. “This is unreal.” A young agent with a nervous twitch in his voice instructed me to begin the familiar routine. “Please take off your shoes, Sir.” His “please” did nothing to diffuse the indignation building inside me. I held up my hand and stopped the procedure. “Just a minute,” I said emphatically, the young man too startled to respond. I called to the “Red Jacket” and asked him to come to the table. He came and stood there impatiently. “Yes?” he asked condescendingly. I asked him directly, “Why did you choose *me* out of all of the passengers going to Valdosta?” “Because I have the authority to do so,” he responded with a blank face, walking away. I watched his back moving through the crowd and was speechless, the wind knocked out of me as if I had been punched in the stomach. My head began to swim, my thoughts racing. The adrenaline rush had been activated by my limbic system. This was “fight, flight, or freeze.” Obviously I was under attack. Well, my dignity and self-respect at least. The powerlessness of the situation overwhelmed me. “Because I have the authority to do so” rang through me head.

The issue of profiling is a matter of justice, not a matter of national security. Profiling occurs when law enforcement officials or, in my case, airport security agents, target someone for investigation on the basis of that person's race or characteristics, national origin, or ethnicity. Examples of profiling are the use of race to determine which drivers to stop for minor traffic violations ("driving while black") and the use of race to determine which motorists or pedestrians to search for contraband. The stories reported in the media demonstrate the severity of the problem:

Dr. William Woods, an African American based at Lake Forest Hospital in Chicago, has been the victim of racial profiling on numerous occasions. During a hearing before the city council concerning the prevalence of racial profiling in Highland Park, a liberal North Shore suburb, Dr. Woods testified that, "Things got so bad I didn't want to leave the house at 2 a.m. to deliver a baby. I've been stopped several times, and once I had guns pulled on me en route to a music lesson."

Source: Chicago Sun-Times, January 11, 2000

In the summer of 1998, an African American family's vacation got off to a bad start when two officers from the Nassau County Sheriff's Department in Florida pulled them over. The officers refused to tell John Tolbert why his family was pulled over. The Tolberts stood on the side of the highway as the officers "searched the inside (of) the car, they took all of our luggage out of the trunk placing it on the highway and search(ed) every piece, they open(ed) the hood of the car, search(ed) under the hood, they looked inside the filter under the hood, they searched the trunk, they took the back lights out (of) the car inside the trunk and search(ed) it." The officers called in another officer with a K-9 unit. No drugs were found. The officers continued to humiliate the Tolberts by searching them and making Mrs. Tolbert lift her t-shirt. Finally, after enduring this 2 hour stop, the officers issued John Tolbert a warning for weaving. Said Tolbert, "If I was a white man with his family, and said I was going on vacation as I told the officer, they never would have searched the car for two hours and embarrass and humiliate me and my family. I felt like we were not citizens of the United States."

Source: Complaint filed with the ACLU, November 1999

Last April, Aaron Campbell was pulled over by Orange County sheriff's deputies while on the Florida turnpike. The stop ended with him being wrestled to the ground, hit with pepper spray and arrested. It turned out that Campbell was a fellow police officer, a major with the Metro-Dade Police Department, and had identified himself as such when he was pulled over for an illegal lane change and having an obscured license tag.

(Originally published in "Police Profiling Goes on Trial" in the Washington Times on January 12, 1998.)

Ray Marshall, an attorney from San Francisco, was stopped in 1997 as he crossed the Bay Bridge one night after work in his Mercedes. The officer told Marshall he hadn't made a complete stop at the intersection to the on-ramp. The officer then asked him a series of intrusive questions, which ranged from how long did he own the car to where he bought it, how much he paid for it, and where he lived. They were personal questions, "which I thought were disturbing and not relevant to whatever violation I might have committed," Marshall said. "It happens, in my estimation, on a regular basis to, if not yourself, a relative or someone that you know," Marshall said. "When it does happen you feel powerless. You don't want to have a confrontation that could escalate it, but at the same time there is a high level of frustration, guilt and resentment."

Source: San Francisco Examiner, March 27, 2000

What you can do: Write to your Congressional leadership in support of

**S. 989/H.R. 2074, the "End Racial Profiling Act of 2001,"** that would:

- Concretely define racial profiling and declare it illegal.
- Give victims of racial profiling the ability to sue police departments that have violated their rights.
- Allow the Attorney General to mandate data collection by federal and state law enforcement agencies on any police "stops," including those done by police departments, immigration and customs agents.
- Provide grants to police departments to establish data collection and other management programs.
- Require the Attorney General to report on the results of the data collection studies.



Reflect on the words of Frederick Douglass, written in 1857 but just as relevant today, to inspire and motivate you during this Lenten season:

### **No Struggle, No Progress**

The whole history of progress of human liberty  
Shows that all concessions  
Yet made to her august claims  
Have been born of earnest struggle.  
If there is no struggle  
There is no progress.

Those who profess to favor freedom,  
And yet deprecate agitation,  
Are men [and women] who want crops  
Without plowing up the ground,  
They want rain  
Without thunder and lightning.  
They want the ocean  
Without the awful roar of its waters.  
This struggle may be a moral one;  
Or it may be a physical one;  
Or it may be both moral and physical;  
But it must be a struggle.  
Power concedes nothing without a demand.  
It never did, and it never will.

Find out just what any people  
Will quietly submit to  
And you have found the exact measure  
Of injustice and wrong  
Which will be imposed upon them,  
And these will continue till they are resisted. . .  
The limits. . . are prescribed  
By the endurance  
Of those whom. . [are] oppress[ed].

Men [and Women] may not get all they pay for  
in this world, but they pay for all they get.  
If we ever get free  
from the oppressions and wrong heaped on us,  
we must pay for their removal.  
We must do this  
by labor,  
by suffering,  
by sacrifice,  
and if needs be  
by our lives and the lives of others.

### **“Eating is a Moral Act”**

Family farmers are facing a crisis unlike any they have ever seen. Farms that have been in families for generations are going under, and rural communities are equally devastated.

The roots of today's farm crisis are clear:

- Chronic low prices plague all crops in all regions around the country.
- The breathtaking consolidation of agribusiness and the retail food industry has taken away the bargaining power of farmers to get a fair price.
- International trade policies continue to benefit global agribusiness companies at the expense of family farms, local businesses and rural communities.

The Senate just passed their version of the Farm Bill in a vote of 58-40. Selected leaders from the House and Senate will now meet in a Conference Committee to reconcile the considerable

differences between the House and Senate versions of the farm bill. These negotiations are done behind closed doors, but will result in the farm bill that is ultimately voted upon in both houses of Congress.

→Write to President Bush and Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, and express your support for justice for farm families:

Dear President Bush and Secretary Veneman:

I call upon you to pledge to restore social and economic justice for rural communities and people who live there by:

1. Changing current U.S. farm policy so that family farmers can earn a fair price from the marketplace;
2. Strengthening antitrust laws and enforcing them to the fullest extent; and
3. Implementing trade policies that put people first.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

For more information on this issue, see Bro. David Andrews' website at the National Catholic Rural Life Conference: <http://www.ncrlc.com>.

Reform



NOW!

Bread for the World's 2002 Offering of Letters campaign, Working from Poverty to Promise, urges Congress to improve and strengthen Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This campaign focuses on poverty reduction by supporting workers as they seek self-sufficiency.

#### What is TANF?

TANF stands for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. It is the nation's safety net program for no- or low-income families with either a pregnant woman or at least one child.

## Who receives TANF?

72% of TANF recipients are children.

As of March 2001, there were 5,488,616 people receiving TANF benefits.

## History of TANF

In 1996's welfare reform debate, Congress abolished AFDC—Aid to Families with Dependent Children—and created TANF. Federal TANF funding expires September 30, 2002. This means that Congress must reauthorize (or renew) TANF by that date.

## TANF Successes

- Caseloads have declined by as much as 62% since the peak in 1994.
- Since 1996, an additional 25% of single mothers—a group which in the past has been the most likely to be on welfare—is working.

## TANF Failures

- 40% of the 2.5 million families who no longer receive cash assistance were unable to find work.
- The average wage for recipients who do find a job is only \$6.75 per hour.
- Since 1996, single parent families below 70% of the poverty line fell 7.85% deeper into poverty.
- About 1/3 of people leaving TANF say they have had to cut the size of meals or skip meals because they did not have food.

## Unemployment and increasing caseloads

By the end of 2001, unemployment had increased to 5.8 percent. For female headed households, the unemployment rate had increased to 7.9 percent.

As unemployment increases, TANF caseloads are expected to increase as well. In the first three months of 2001, TANF caseloads were increasing in one-third of the states, and by September 2001, 33 states reported higher caseloads.

Alarming, more and more families are reaching their lifetime limits on assistance at the same time the economy—and job prospects for families leaving TANF—are in decline.

More information on TANF and Bread for the World's Offering of Letters will be available at our province meeting in Valatie in April 2002. Plan to watch a short, informative video on the topic and become a part of the solution by signing on to a letter to our Congressional leaders.

***With one hand he put  
A penny in the urn of poverty,  
And with the other took a shilling out.***

~ Robert Pollock, *The Course of Time*

Take the following quiz to test your knowledge of justice issues:

**1. Fair trade upholds:**

- a) Basic human rights for Third World workers who produce goods for our consumption.
- b) Promotes the middle-person in order that brokers and retailers can sell for as much profit as possible.

**2. The United Nations labor agency indicates that 250 million 5 to 14 year olds are employed, half of them full time. Child labor perpetuates:**

- a) much larger profits for their families
- b) an endless cycle of illiteracy and poverty

**3. A maquiladora is a free trade zone where workers are paid low wages, work long hours with no benefits or occupational health and safety, (i.e. Mexico, Guatemala, the Philippines)?**

- a) True
- b) False

**4. 1.3 billion people survive on less than the equivalent of \$\_\_\_\_\_ a day.**

- a) \$1
- b) \$2
- c) \$5

**5. 358 people have the same net worth as the bottom \_\_\_\_\_% of the world's population - 2.3 billion people.**

- a) 20
- b) 45
- c) 60

**6. Ninety percent of all sweatshop workers are women.**

- a) True
- b) False

**7. Eighty-six percent of spending for personal consumption is made by just \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the world's population.**

- a) 15
- b) 20
- c) 35

**8. Of the 250 million children between ages 5 and 14 working in developing countries, which country has the highest proportion?**

- a) Asia
- b) Africa
- c) Latin America

**9. Men are primarily responsible for getting food to our tables in most of the world.**

- a) True
- b) False

**10. The world now produces enough food to feed every man, woman and child by U.S. standards.**

- a) True
- b) False

**ANSWERS**

- 1. A 2. B 3. A 4. A 5. B 6. A 7. B 8. B - About 40% of children between 5 and 14 are working. 9. B - Women are primarily responsible for getting food to our tables in most of the world. To illustrate, women plant and harvest 80% (4/5) of the food grown in Africa each year.
- 10. A