

Radical Islamists Free Captive Missionary

Islamist militants have freed a former Catholic missionary priest on a remote Philippine southern island, six months after the Italian man was abducted from his pizza parlor, a military spokesman said on Friday.

Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla told reporters Rolando del Torchio, 53, was found by police at a seaport on Jolo island, a stronghold of the small but violent Islamist militant group Abu Sayyaf.

“A team of police officers found him about to board a ferry and decided to bring the kidnap victim to a military trauma center,” Padilla said. “He will be taken care of by a military doctor due to poor health.”

He said it was not immediately known if a ransom was paid for del Torchio’s safe release. Some local media said 29 million peso (\$630,000) was paid.

The Italian, who previously served at the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, was seized on Oct. 7 by four gunmen, posing as customers, at Ur Choice Bistro Cafe, a pizza parlor he owned in Dipolog City on mainland Mindanao island.

Army and police units are on alert on Jolo where security forces are pursuing al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf, a group known for kidnapping, beheading, bombing and extortion in the southern Philippines.

Last month the Islamist militants seized 10 Indonesian crew of a Taiwanese tugboat near Jolo and demanded 50 million peso ransom. A week later, four Malaysian crew of another tugboat were kidnapped near Sabah in eastern Malaysia.

The Abu Sayyaf was holding two Canadian men, a Norwegian man, a Dutch man and a Japanese man in the jungles of Jolo. They threatened to execute the Canadians and Norwegian on Friday if \$85 million is not paid after a month-long deadline. {eoa}

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Key Question on U.S. Citizenship Test Changed

Score one for an “originalist” view of the First Amendment.

U.S. Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.), a key member of the House Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, announced Friday that the Department of Homeland Security was changing one of the questions on the citizenship exam. The announcement is the culmination of nearly a year of working with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Division.

At issue was a segment of the exam’s study guide that suggested the First Amendment protects the citizens’ right to “freedom of worship,” rather than freedom of religion. Lankford, who is co-chairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus and the first senator to join it, first learned of the incorrect wording in June of last year, which prompted a letter to CIS Director Leon Rodriguez.

Lankford explained his issue with the wording again Friday in his announcement applauding the change:

“At first glance, it appears like a small matter, but it is actually an important distinction for the Constitution and the First Amendment. The ‘freedom of religion’ language

reflects our right to live a life of faith at all times, while the 'freedom of worship' reflects a right simply confined to a particular space and location."

In a letter sent to Lankford's office Friday, Rodriguez explained the reversal, saying that "upon further consideration," CIS determined the change could be made because it didn't involve adding or deleting content. Approximately 40 web-based and printed materials will be changed as a result of the decision.

"In accordance with agency policy, if the applicant's answer to a civics question is 'an alternative phrasing of a correct answer,' U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officers will continue to accept both 'freedom of religion' and 'freedom of worship' as correct answers to question 51 when administering the naturalization exam," Rodriguez wrote.

Question 51 reads, "What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?" The study guide originally offered the following correct answers:

- freedom of expression,
- freedom of speech,
- freedom of assembly,
- freedom to petition the government,
- freedom of worship and
- the right to bear arms.

The study materials will now read 'freedom of religion' as the correct response. Based on reprinting schedules, they expect all materials to be updated by the end of 2016.

"I applaud the Department of Homeland Security for listening to me and deciding to change their material to reflect our First Amendment right of freedom of religion," Lankford said after receiving the notification. "We live in a great nation that allows individuals to live out their faith, or have no faith at all. To protect freedom and diversity, we must

carefully articulate this right throughout the federal government.”

How Ellen DeGeneres, Justin Bieber Are Funding a Megachurch Meeting Space

A new church in Detroit has the blessing of six different congregations and meets in a school funded by the pockets of Ellen DeGeneres and Justin Bieber, among others.

The Detroit Church launched this weekend in Detroit’s Spain Elementary-Middle School.

“We’ve been invited to take part in the greatest adventure of all time. This adventure is turning brokenness into life and making everything new. The only question is, are you in?” the church website reads.

The school was partially funded by a donation from comedienne and talk show host DeGeneres, according to the *Detroit Free Press*.

DFP also reports Bieber will donate \$1 from every ticket sold to his April 25 concert at the Palace of Auburn Hills to the school.

“There’s an amazing school in Detroit that’s getting national attention right now and needs your help. At Spain Elementary Middle School, many of the students are underprivileged and homeless, but that’s not their only obstacle. Almost all of their technology doesn’t work, their entire roof is falling apart and their gym is completely shut down. Spain Elementary

Middle School is in dire need of millions of dollars in renovations and we would love your help. Thank you for your attention and generosity in helping such an amazing school," DeGeneres posted on a GoFundMe page.

The donation is considered to be "Ellen's biggest, most generous giveaway ever!"

The Detroit Church wants to complement rather than compete with other churches in the area, according to the *DFP*.

"We exist to awaken Detroit to the greatest adventure of all time. We aren't another church on the corner with a steeple and a choir. We are bridging the gap between classic, resilient, Old Detroit, and fresh, energetic, New Detroiters: making One Detroit. This adventure is making perspectives new, families new, neighborhoods new. We get to share in the mission of Jesus as He makes all things new," according to the website.

The Amazing Testimony of Vietnam War's Iconic 'Napalm Girl'

It's one of the most iconic photos of all time and one of the most haunting. The image of a Vietnamese girl running naked in the street after a napalm bomb exploded on her neighborhood.

That was 1972. Today, Kim Phuc still lives with the scars but a new treatment is changing the way she and other burn victims live their lives.

The famous photo shows then 9-year-old Kim Phuc trying to

outrun her burning flesh after the South Vietnamese dropped a napalm bomb on her village of Trang Bang. Her burns were so bad, the doctors gave her zero chance of survival and took her body to the morgue where it remained for three days!

Napalm Scars

But Kim Phuc wasn't ready to die. She spoke to CBN's Wendy Griffith about what happened next.

"My parents found me there," she said.

"In the morgue? But you weren't dead?" Griffith asked.

"I had not died yet. God had a plan for me, He not finished with me yet," she said.

Today, Kim is 53. Her beautiful kimono hides the deep scars on her back and arms while her beautiful smile tries to hide the pain she still deals with daily.

"I pray every day because being in pain is not fun," she told Griffith.

Kim spoke to a group of doctors and plastic surgeons in Washington, D.C., recently about the day that changed her life.

"And suddenly the fire was everywhere around me and my clothes were burned by the fire and I saw the fire on my left arm and I tried to put it out," Kim recalled. "And I thought in that moment, 'Oh my goodness, I will be ugly and people will see me a different way.' But I was so terrified and then I ran out of that fire."

A Life-Changing Development

Four decades after that horrible day, Kim has new hope that her scars can not only look better but feel better.

"Kim's biggest problem is (and this is what's so great about

the technology) she has pain and that's from where the napalm stuck to her and caught on fire, it's really terrible," Dr. Jill Waibel, a Miami dermatologist, explained.

Waibel discovered that lasers can effectively treat burn scars by reducing pain and increasing mobility.

"Lasers used to make burns and trauma scars worse and so it wasn't until this new invention, the fractional laser, where the laser makes little tiny holes that vaporize the tissue and then the normal skin heals it," Waibel said.

"That actually is a game changer for burn and trauma patients – it heals the skin to almost normal," she said. "It takes a series of treatments but it really is the most amazing technology that burn and trauma survivors have had in over 100 years."

Kim has already had four of the seven treatments she needs.

"And my scar is getting much lighter and softer and that's given me hope that a year from now I will be free from the pain and my scar look much better," Kim said.

The maker of the laser, Lumenis, helped kick off the Restoring Heroes initiative, a program designed to help people like Kim and other war heroes receive this life-changing laser treatment.

"We're really proud to be working with Restoring Heroes because at the moment, although the technology is out there, people cannot be treated because there is no code for that, which means that unless you're paying out of pocket money, which is very very expensive for all these veterans, than they cannot be treated," Lumenis CEO Tzipi Ozer-Armon said.

"So we are very proud to be working with Restoring Heroes and trying to get a 'code' that will allow all these veteran hospitals (there are some 99 veteran hospitals) to treat all

these people," she said.

The Real Life-Changer

Despite the fear that no one would want her, Kim is now married and has two sons. She says her conversion from the Cao Dai religion to Christianity at the age of 19 changed everything.

"And when I read in John 14:6, where Jesus say, 'I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except by Me,' I was really confused," she told Griffith. "Oh, my religion different and why Jesus say that? I keep searching. And finally in Christmas 1982, I became a Christian."

"How did that help you forgive the people that dropped the bombs that burned you?" Griffith asked.

"The picture of Jesus Christ when they put Him on the cross and they kill Him, so Jesus say, Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing," she replied.

"So that picture, that words, Lord, help me to do the same thing like you did. And I started to pray for my enemies, and the more I prayed for my enemies the softer my heart became," she said.

Dr. David McDaniel, director of the McDaniel Laser & Cosmetic Center in Virginia Beach, is a pioneer in laser technology. He said Kim's story reminds him that although doctors and nurses treat the outside, it's Jesus who heals the heart.

"There's a very famous sign in a mission hospital in Africa that says, 'Doctors and nurses treat but Jesus heals.' We're just the hands and feet," McDaniel said. "So it's a great privilege to help her and there are a lot of heroes, they're not just warriors, they're children and everyday people from every walk of life that have been burned or wounded."

Kim says the famous Pulitzer prize photo that the Vietnamese

government once used as a propaganda tool to control her life is now a blessing she can use to reach the world.

“That picture became a powerful gift for me,” she said. “I can work with it, for peace and for good.”

Frederick Douglass Foundation Joins Criticism of California AG

Following the California Department of Justice’s raid on the home of David Daleiden, an investigative journalist and pro-life activist, the Frederick Douglass Foundation issued a statement rebuking the state’s Democrat Attorney General, Kamala Harris.

In it, the organization noted that the Democrat U.S. Senate candidate’s Twitter account she is “dedicated to fighting for justice and giving a voice to the voiceless.” The foundation, named for the famed abolitionist, called the seizure both a “flagrant abuse of the people’s power” and a “travesty of justice at the very highest levels.”

“Raiding David’s home can’t be about justice,” Frederick Douglass Foundation of California founder Walter B. Hoyer II said. “The state of California performs more abortions than any other state in the union.

“Who is fighting for justice for the most innocent among us, the innocent baby boy or baby girl in utero and who is giving a voice to the voiceless baby boy or baby girl in the womb of their mother in California? It’s not California’s Attorney

General Kamala Harris.”

“It’s chilling to think that irrespective of the great progress America has made in the area of justice, we still have public officials using their positions of authority to strategically target and intimidate because of social/political disagreement,” the organization’s president, Kevin McGary, said. “We’re still fundamentally a free country under the protection of the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution and no one should have to endure the full force of government due to disagreement.

“Can we seriously consider Ms. Harris for the United States Senate? Should we expect egregious acts of intimidation from our Senators sworn to uphold the United States Constitution? I say no!”

‘Don’t Judge Me’ One of the Most Misinterpreted Verses

When people claim “Don’t judge me,” is in the Bible, they’re not wrong, but they don’t necessarily have the context right, says ‘s Craig Groeschel.

“(This) is probably the number-one most quoted Bible verse by non-Christians and one of the more popularly quoted verses by Christians,” Groeschel says.

READ: [Can We Judge the Christianity of Donald Trump?](#)

He’s referring to Matthew 7:1-2: “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured again for

you,” Jesus Himself says.

READ: Jesus and Paul Call Us to Judge

“The only way I’ve ever seen someone say it is with attitude,” Groeschel says. “... I’m going to argue this is one of the most pervasive values in culture today—tolerate everything, every kind of behavior, every kind of belief system. You have no right to say if something is right or wrong. Do not judge or you will be judged.”

But the verse is not a license for a flesh free-for-all.

Watch the video to see how we should be looking at the verse.

Was the U.S. Government Complicit in the Murder of Americans?

In December of 2010, U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was shot and killed by Mexican bandits who were attempting to cross the border in Arizona.

After investigating the incident, officials discovered something familiar with the guns used in his death. They were weapons sold and trafficked to Mexico, where they would end up in the hands of that country’s most violent drug cartels, all with the U.S. Department of Justice’s knowledge—and support.

Operation Fast and Furious, as it was called, was a program in which Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives agents ATF agents allowed more than 2,500 AK-47s and other firearms to be purchased and trafficked by known Mexican

cartel members. When Congress demanded answers, however, they were met with stonewalling and a declaration of executive privilege by the White House.

After losing a challenge in federal court to the assertion of executive privilege, the Justice Department announced it was turning over thousands of pages of records to the House Government Oversight Committee. Those records were subpoenaed in January of 2011, and eventually led the first-ever vote to hold a sitting Attorney General—then Eric Holder—in Contempt of Congress over his refusal to provide them.

“The Department of Justice is pleased that the district court continued to recognize that the deliberative process component of the executive privilege exists and was a valid basis for the department to withhold certain documents when requested by the House in 2011,” Justice Department spokesman Patrick Rodenbush said Friday. “Although the Department disagrees with the district court’s conclusion that the privilege was overcome in this particular case by disclosures and statements made in other contexts, the Department has decided not to appeal the court’s judgment and has provided a production of documents to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.”

One of the first members of Congress to ask questions about the government’s involvement in the death of Terry—and, potentially other Americans—was now-Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa). He and House Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) had maintained pressure on the Obama Administration for more than four years to get access to the documents.

They said Friday the document release—despite numbering in the thousands of pages—fails to comply with the congressional subpoena issued one month after Terry’s death.

“Given that even after years of stonewalling these are only a

fraction of the documents that were subpoenaed by the House of Representatives, at this point, the usefulness remains to be seen," Grassley said. "I look forward to seeing what was actually produced, and what President Obama continues to refuse to be transparent about. It shouldn't have taken a lengthy court battle to get this far. The rest of the documents should be turned over so that the litigation can end and the American people can know the whole truth."

"What we need from the president is an explanation of why he felt these documents couldn't have been seen by the American people and why there has been no real accountability for the officials involved," Issa added. "Was he protecting the failed gunwalking operation or the cover-up?"

Operation Fast and Furious is expected to have wide-ranging implications. When Mexican cartel leader "El Chapo" Guzman was captured last year, guns from the operation, including a large-caliber rifle used to shoot at a police helicopter, were found in his hideout.

Whistleblowers in the ATF and Justice Department have also suggested Mexican citizens have been killed as a result of the program, and most of the guns are still missing and being used to carry out violent crimes in Mexico and potentially in the U.S.

How Your Breath Releases God's Life

My three-ring notebook contained 14 songs, and I carried it with me last Friday and Saturday, to accompany vocalists for the high school district music festival.

Then at church on Saturday night, I had to laugh at myself. Fourteen times that weekend, I had heard adjudicators preach good breathing techniques to my students, so when we started singing praise songs, all I could think about was how to breathe while I sang.

1. Put your dominant foot slightly forward.
2. Roll your shoulders back until they fall relaxed, in line with your heels.
3. Hold your head tall.
4. Take a full breath in, using your large abdominal and back muscles, not your small, fragile throat muscles.
5. While you sing, control the release of air by using your abdominal muscles, as if breathing out through a coffee straw.

One of our praise songs talked about the breath of God, and I pictured the creation of Adam.

“Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7).

Breathing and life go together.

My husband is a licensed clinical professional counselor. Do you know what he does first thing when people (and not always just his wife) are anxious? He walks them through deep-breathing exercises.

What if God wants us to do with our spirits what he created our bodies to do?

As much as there is a physical art and discipline to breathing well for singing, there is a spiritual art and discipline to breathing well for living. Why do some followers of Christ have peace and joy and others don't? Breathing technique.

When I try to figure out a problem on my own or try to pull

myself up in a difficult situation by myself, I quickly experience anxiety and a great weariness, the way a novice vocalist starts sucking air before getting to the end of a phrase. But when I pray and put all my weight on God's truths, I can endure hard things better and longer, because I have filled myself with life-giving oxygen.

One of the vocal adjudicators (a gifted fellow teacher from my school) said that throat tension (TENSION!) is a symptom of not getting a sufficient fill of oxygen by using the abdominal and back muscles.

We all breathe, but not everyone breathes well.

Try watching this video of Andrea Bocelli and Heather Headley. When they hold the huge notes for an impossibly long time at the end, ask yourself how they are able to sing with such strength for so long. Their voices go to the rafters.

Then imagine your life, your "voice" going to the rafters, filled with the truths of God and able to produce and sustain something beautiful for the world to hear. This is what God made you to do, but you have to get a good breath first.

Mark Levin: On Second Thought

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On Wednesday, nationally syndicated radio host Mark Levin—a staunch supporter of U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) for president—unloaded on those who said they would never vote for Donald Trump, even if he was the eventual Republican nominee.

On Friday, however, he announced he was joining their ranks:

I've backed Cruz, and I'm going to continue to back Cruz, but here's what I'm going to do. As a result of what the Trump supporters have attempted here, particularly Roger Stone, I am not voting for Donald Trump. Period.

And if anybody has a problem with that, Donald Trump, you can talk to Roger Stone. These bully, dirty tricks, Nixonian tactics, they're only going to backfire. They're only going to backfire. So, count me as #NeverTrump.

There's been too much of this folks, way too much of this.

The references to Stone, a former campaign adviser to Trump, appear to be pointed at attributed comments reported by several mainstream media outlets that he has since attempted to correct. In the reported comments, it is implied Stone is advocating violence against delegates who do not vote for Trump.

Instead, as was reported by Breitbart and a few other outlets, Stone's comments to a Philadelphia radio host were far less inflammatory:

We're going to have protests, demonstrations. We will disclose the hotels and the room numbers of those delegates who are directly involved in the steal.

If you're from Pennsylvania, we'll tell you who the culprits are. We urge you to visit their hotel and find them. You have a right to discuss this, if you voted in the Pennsylvania primary, for example, and your votes are being disallowed.

Stone has been a frequent guest on radio and television programs, discussing his theory that Republican Party officials have plotted to "steal" the presidential nomination from Trump at a contested or brokered convention. In response, he is reportedly organizing a "Stop the Steal" rally during the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

Cindy Jacobs Launches Move to Prayer Walk America

The vast majority of people in America believe in the power of prayer. As the late minister James Edwin Orr once said, “No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer.” Across the nation, leaders are hearing the Lord say that the U.S. is going to experience a great awakening.

Prompted by this message, a coalition of influential Pentecostal/charismatic and evangelical leaders met this past December at the international headquarters of Every Home for Christ in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The coalition—including Paul Cedar (Mission America Coalition), John Bornschein (National Day of Prayer), Ed Silvano (Harvest Evangelism), Dutch Sheets (Appeal to Heaven), Lou Engle (TheCall), David Butts (National Prayer Committee), Mike and Cindy Jacobs (Generals International) and David Kubal (Intercessors for America)—sought the Lord, strategized and came to a consensus that God was leading them to unite and issue a national call for multiple days of fasting and prayer walking.

Out of this, a broad coalition of ministries called As One has emerged. The vision is for believers to unite as one and appeal to heaven to change the nation’s spiritual climate. The basic strategy revolves around two 40-day periods of prayer walking, fasting and corporate prayer. The first will start Easter Sunday, March 27, and run through the National Day of Prayer on May 5. The second begins Sept. 30 and ends on Election Day. In addition, there will be much collaboration with major national prayer events happening throughout the year.

The plan is to prayer walk every street and zip code, which requires an army of believers who will strap on their walking shoes and cry out to heaven. God is looking for people who will take Him at His word to “give Him no rest” until the nation returns to righteousness.

The new national website, [www.prayerwalk.com](#), features more information on how you and your church can get involved, as well as devotions and other resources. *—Jackie Maslow*