

The Bay of Pigs
08-26-2013 by Harry Zirkelbach



Following the ill-fated Cuba invasion known as the 1961 Bay of Pigs on 16-20 June, the recently inaugurated administration of President John Kennedy was in disarray. The failed invasion became a disaster from every perspective.

While captured Cuban leaders of the invasion force were tried and executed immediately, 1,207 of the 2,506 invading Brigade, were tried, sentenced.

Initially Fidel Castro chose to return most prisoners for materials that winnowed to food and medical supplies. There was to be no hint that this material be from the Kennedy Administration. Later these initial supplies were expanded to include objects like tractors, increasing the sum to \$53 million dollars.

On a Monday a few weeks following the disaster, a older man arrived at the White House carrying a sizable satchel.

He dumped the content on a conference table there. He knew the extent of the content. To make certain the gathering arranged for an immediate recounting.

The delivery was found to be over one million dollars in used bills.

That money was from the collections the previous Sunday of Catholic Churches in the Boston Diocese. The slender man was Cardinal Cushing, a long time Kennedy family friend.

Without condition, the money was given for the prisoner repartition.

Afterward, donations from many private sources exceeding Castro's demand, the initial Boston donation was returned.

The generosity of the Boston Diocese was never disclosed.

Of course this man of God was partly motivated to be generous because of his friendship with the Kennedy's. But basically it was a genuine immediate response that reflected the generosity of the early Church toward the poor, prisoners, needy. And the fact that it was never disclosed, was a disservice to this wonderful man and his vocation. Had it been made public, the Kennedy's Administration might have been embarrassed, but the example was lost to Americans of any religion, or even none, this unsolicited immediate outpouring of charity for those who could not help themselves.

You realize this is a creative writing class.

