



Let the Bastards Go: From Cuba to Freedom on "God's Mercy"

Joe Morris Doss, Walker Percy

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Hispanic parishioners at Grace Episcopal Church in New Orleans told Doss and Frade of their friends' and relatives' dire situation in Cuba and pleaded for assistance. The two organized first a series of "freedom flights" that helped rescue more than one thousand people, but these were cut off when the great Mariel boatlift began. In a riveting narrative, Doss describes how he and Frade then purchased an old World War II submarine chaser they renamed God's Mercy, engaged in delicate diplomacy at the highest level of Cuban authority, and ultimately ran an American Coast Guard blockade to reach Mariel. Throughout his tale of the dramatic rescue, Doss intersperses compelling portraits of many of the participants and pilgrims, revealing the human faces behind a historic event filled with suffering, cruelty, and violence, as well as heroism and humor.

Doss originally wrote *Let the Bastards Go* -- the title echoes a Cuban anti-émigré slogan -- in 1984, and Walker Percy provided a foreword. Doss decided against publishing it then, however, fearing that the wounds within the Cuban American community were too fresh. Nearly twenty years later, both Doss and Frade -- now Bishop of Miami -- agree that enough time has passed. The inspiring story of God's Mercycan, and should, finally be told.

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