



HLI MISSION REPORT

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By Joseph Meaney
and Dr. Ligaya Acosta

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Dear HLI Friends and Supporters,

This edition of *Mission Report* takes you to countries on either side of the Eastern Hemisphere – Italy and South Korea. Joseph Meaney shares his trip to Rome, where HLI was invited by the Pontifical Council for the Family to attend the International Pro-Life Study Seminar. Joseph also mentions HLI's pilgrimage to Rome, which takes place this coming October. Visit www.hli.org for more information on how you can register for that great trip. But first, Dr. Ligaya Acosta discusses her short but effective trip to Korea, where she spoke with people of several different cultures – Koreans, Filipinos, Panamanians, and Vietnamese – about the beauty of the Gospel of Life.

MISSIONARY TRIP TO KOREA—*Reported by Dr. Ligaya Acosta, April 22-26, 2010.*

I embarked on my second mission to Korea in East Asia with the invaluable help of Mrs. Fe Kim, a Filipino and President of the Filipino-Korean Spouses Association, and her supportive Korean husband, Mr. Kim Seung Jin. I met the Kims on my first mission to Korea in February 2008, in one of the most popular Marian shrines there. I'm sure Mama Mary brought us together because we share the





same devotion to Our Lady, and I have no doubt **she wanted us to do the mission of saving babies in Korea together**. At our first meeting, we got along well right away, as if we were friends since long ago – chiefly because we enjoyed sharing our experiences with and fondness for our Blessed Mother. When I told them the mission of Human Life International, **Mr. and Mrs. Kim realized that HLI is exactly what they need** to address the many problems regarding life and family faced by the growing number of multi-cultural marriages and families in Korea. Thus, we began planning for my second visit. The Kims discussed my visit with The Honorable Kwang Yul Shin, Ambassador of Public Relations in Incheon Metropolitan City and President of the International Conference on Foreign Welfare and the Pupyong Community Welfare Center. Thank-

fully, he readily approved the plan. We first scheduled the “HLI Seminar” in the last quarter of 2009, but unfortunately Mr. Kim experienced an accident necessitating a long hospitalization. So, we had to reschedule for April 2010.

HLI’S TRULY GLOBAL MISSION

I arrived in Korea on the very cold early morning of April 23, although the warm reception I received was enough to keep the cold away. Fe even brought me some winter clothes, concerned that the spring weather would still be too cold for me. In the afternoon, we made a courtesy call with the good Ambassador Shin, who, despite having another meeting, treated us to an early Korean dinner.

The next day, we travelled two hours by train to Seoul to attend a prayer meeting organized by Filipino residents. Despite the multiple problems many of them face as a result of their multi-cultural marriages, **Filipinos have retained their faith and have become evangelizers wherever they are planted**. Sadly, though, many of them have fallen prey to the culture of death without fully realizing it. They were thus grateful for my visit and for my **opening their eyes to the evils of contraception, abortion, and divorce**. After the meeting, we had a mini-pilgrimage to a Marian grotto and attended Mass at the Myeong-Dong Cathedral in Seoul, where I had the chance to pray not only for my mission to Korea but for HLI’s missionaries around the world, as well. I must say that I was apprehensive for this mission because of the short duration and the fact that I had only two main speaking engagements. Although I was asked to extend my stay so we could go to the other cities, I could not accommodate the request because of urgent commitments in my home country, the Philippines, which held very crucial Presidential elections in May.



Dr. Ligaya in Incheon, South Korea, with very Marian pro-lifers, Mr. & Mrs. KIM SEUNG JIN—the main organizers of the HLI Seminar.

But indeed **we can never underestimate how GOD can work through us**, particularly when we com-



Dr. Ligaya presenting at the HLI Seminar in Incheon, South Korea.

and ***was so touched by what he heard and saw during my presentation that he vowed to start a campaign to stop abortion in Korea, saying that he will discuss this with the government.*** (And he is an influential person in both the government and private sector!) He also said that he wants HLI to return to Korea in the summer to conduct sessions with the youth, whom he said very urgently need to hear the message. He also plans to put up streamers with the message “Stop Abortion,” all over the city. He continued to discuss his plans over lunch, with the realization that Korea needs to try everything to increase its population. ***This statement of mine made a deep impact on him: “If Korea continues to abort its children, there will come a time when there will be no more Koreans in Korea.”*** He shared that perhaps in the beginning abortion was needed because Korea was so poor after the war, but now that they have grown to be a wealthy nation, there is no reason for it. He listened intently as I discussed what happened to countries that implemented massive population control in the past, including Korea.

Korea now has one of the lowest birth rates in the world with an average of 1.08 children per woman – definitely below replacement level! As of July 2009, Korea’s population growth rate had plunged to a mere 0.266/1,000 population. Without the foreigners in South Korea, it would be a lonely place. And with a preference for sons, a significant number of men have to pursue marriage with foreign women, which has caused many difficulties due to cultural differences. These difficulties have also led to more contraception, abortions and divorce.

mit all our plans to HIM, as HE asks. Though short, my visit had a truly great impact, partly due to the attendance of Ambassador Shin at my talk in Incheon, and the fact that the seminar I conducted was not only attended by Koreans, but also people of other nationalities – Filipinos, Panamanians, and Vietnamese - who were all touched by the message and who even asked that I go to their respective countries, as well.

KOREA’S DEVASTATING POPULATION DECLINE

In his message after my talk, Ambassador Shin admitted that he always avoided talks on abortion but was so glad he came this time. He said he learned a lot



Dr. Ligaya speaking at a Christian Fellowship Church in Seoul, South Korea.

SPREADING THE GOSPEL OF LIFE

From Incheon, we again travelled by train to Seoul for another talk, this time with a non-Catholic, but Christian, Fellowship Community, composed mostly of Filipinos. Since we came early, we attended their service. Although they sang happy songs of praise and worship and the Pastor delivered a great sermon, I couldn't help but feel some sadness in my heart. They had no altar, and I thought how much they were missing by not having the Holy Eucharist, especially because it was a Sunday! **Thank GOD, though, everyone was touched by my talk.** I even had a mini-teaching on Natural Family Planning afterwards, per their request.

As I left Korea in the evening of April 26, I thanked GOD and Our Lady profusely for blessing the mission – short but with high impact. And of course, as always, I thank GOD for the many benefactors of HLI, without whom we can do nothing.

Upon reaching home, I got a call from Fe telling me that she received a lot of touching feedback from the seminar – even from those who were not able to attend! To GOD be the glory forever! ✠

MISSIONARY TRIP TO ROME—*Reported by Joseph Meaney, March 24-30, 2010.*



ANNUAL PRO-LIFE COMMEMORATION ON THE TIBER

My latest pro-life missionary journey to Rome was special. It came as I am preparing to move back to the Eternal City with my little family later this year to do graduate work at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. I shall continue to serve with Human Life International and oversee our expansion in Africa as I study Bio-Ethics. Many longtime HLI supporters will recall that I was chosen to found our HLI Rome office in 1998 and only came back to the United States in 2002.

It was an honor to be invited by the Pontifical Council for the Family to an international seminar to study Pope John Paul the Great's encyclical letter *Evangelium vitae* and the world pro-life situation. It so happened that the first day of the meeting coincided with the funeral of the Apostle of Life, Fr. Paul Marx, OSB. Cardinal Ennio Antonelli said a special prayer for the repose of the soul of HLI's founder, and I was gratified to see that **the select group of pro-lifers present included a large number of Fr. Marx's spiritual children.** HLI's affiliate leaders from Brazil and Zimbabwe attended, as well as our own Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro from the HLI Rome office.

NEW GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION

One of the greatest initiatives from this meeting was the decision that **the Council for the Family will formulate and distribute worldwide guidelines for Catholic marriage**



Cardinal Ennio Antonelli and Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro, in Rome at the Council for the Family meeting.

preparation. It was the consensus view of the international meeting that the current situation in many dioceses is unacceptable. Couples come in for a weekend session and are then deemed “prepared” to make a life-long commitment to Catholic marriage and family life. The contrast is especially stark when one compares “marriage preparation” to the years of formation required for ordination or making permanent religious vows. *Clearly our modern culture no longer supports marriage, the defense of life or family values as traditional societies did. HLI will support the Council for the Family in every way we can* as this new effort takes shape to better prepare Catholics for the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.



Seminarian Joseph Bergida in Rome, with St. Peters in the background.

The Church must adapt to defend the faithful as the world faces a crisis in marriage. Not only are fewer people getting and staying married today, but **there is a huge amount of confusion concerning the very definition of marriage.** One has to reiterate and defend the common sense notion that marriage is only between one man and one woman. In the midst of such sad facts, it is heartening to see at least some glimmers of light. I learned recently that Catholic marriages in the USA have the least chance of breaking up of any Christian denomination.

There are, of course, many encouraging signs in Rome for faithful Catholics. One of the best is the presence of so many zealous young seminarians eagerly preparing to enter the Lord’s vineyard. I had the pleasure of seeing Joseph Bergida, who is from my own parish of St. John the Baptist in Front Royal, Virginia. He kindly gave me a tour of the North American College, where diocesan seminarians from the USA stay

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while studying in Rome. Our own president, Fr. Tom Euteneuer, was sent there by his Florida diocese. The NAC, as it is called, has spectacular views of St. Peter's Basilica from its prominent position on the Janiculum hill. **It is now also full to bursting with seminarians, which is a first since the 1960s.** Joseph Bergida introduced me to several other seminarians while we visited. Another blessing in Rome is Archbishop Raymond Burke, who is the Prefect of the *Apostolic Signatura*, the high court of the Church. He never misses an opportunity to defend Catholic teaching and the right to life.

HLI ROME MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH PRIESTS AND SEMINARIANS

HLI has a flourishing outreach to seminarians, priests and religious studying in Rome. Msgr. Barreiro has built one of the finest libraries in Rome that focuses on Bio-Ethics and Moral Theology as well as life and family topics. **A big draw for students is the expert advice and personal assistance that Msgr. Barreiro provides.** In many cases he has even suggested good topics for licentiate and doctoral dissertations. Certainly some come because HLI has the generous policy of allowing serious students to use our photocopier. Our office location is ideal - only a few minutes walk from St. Peter's Square.

The HLI *Seminarians for Life Newsletter* is widely distributed in Rome. Msgr. Barreiro edits and frequently writes the Italian-language version. **I look forward to joining Msgr. in giving many pro-life talks to seminarians once I return to Rome.** We have a close relationship with several new congregations that send their men to study in Rome such as the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT) and the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate. Our own chaplain in the USA, Fr. Frank Papa, is a SOLT father.

TIBER ISLAND PRO-LIFE EVENT

It was a privilege to participate in the annual pro-life commemoration held on the Tiber Island. This symbolic place was chosen for several reasons. The island houses one of the famous Catholic hospitals in Rome and gives pro-lifers ready access to the river. Several years ago an environmentalist Italian politician complained that **the bodies of aborted children were being dumped into the Tiber River.** His concern was not that innocent children were being slaughtered by abortion or that their mortal remains were not being given a decent burial. No, he railed about the "pollution of the environment."

All decent people who learned of these comments were outraged, and a pro-life group called *Militia Christi* decided to do something about it. Every spring they hold a rally and prayer vigil to honor the innocent victims of abortion. Msgr. Bar-

THE PRO-LIFE WISDOM

of

Fr. Paul Marx

THE APOSTLE OF LIFE

Many of the [pro-abortion symposium] speakers claimed that if only the promiscuous would use a good contraceptive system, the number of abortions would be drastically curtailed. The pro-abortionists are still successfully peddling this nonsense today, particularly in developing countries. Even though you can find a great variety of condoms in any drug store and in most public restrooms, even



Fr. Paul Marx

though practically every insurance plan covers contraception, and even though many schools and universities now dispense contraceptives/abortifacients, the abortion rate is not decreasing significantly. In fact, through the 1960s and 1970s the rate climbed steadily, even as the various drugs and devices were becoming more freely available.

— *The Death Peddlers*, page 197.

reiro had the honor of blessing the wreath the pro-lifers brought and casting it into the Tiber in a simple but moving ceremony. I spoke briefly to the gathered crowd and encouraged them. A large banner placed on the island proclaimed the pro-life message to those passing by on a nearby bridge or going along either bank of the Tiber.

PRO-LIFE WORK IN THE MEDIA

One of the great strengths of HLI is our expertise on the international pro-life situation. **There are few places in the world where we do not have a presence, and every year we expand our outreach.** This leads to frequent opportunities to spread the pro-life message on radio or television programs, as well as in the written press and on the Internet.



Innocent victims of abortion are honored with a wreath at the annual pro-life commemoration on the Tiber Island in Rome.



Pro-lifers in Rome display a banner to honor aborted babies dumped in the Tiber.

I am fortunate to have several good personal media contacts in Rome. I saw Charles Collins who works in the English section of Vatican Radio. In the past I have given interviews to Vatican Radio in all of the languages I can speak: English, French, Spanish and Italian. Another great friend of my wife and myself in Rome is Mary Shovlain. She has her own company that produces Catholic documentaries and news. Her work is frequently on EWTN, the Global Catholic Network. She was producing a documentary on the Vatican's Sistine Chapel when I was visiting. **It is wonderful to have such great Catholics upholding the Faith in the media.**

My wife, Marie, and I are very much looking forward to going to Rome for a few years. Our little daughter, Therese Marie, will be learning Italian it seems! **HLI shall be having a wonderful Prayer Congress for Life in Rome this coming October 5-10th.** Please consider coming. This is the program: http://www.hli.at/rom_neu_2010/pdf/english_program_compact.pdf

We are also hosting a unique **Rome pilgrimage with Fr. Euteneuer and Msgr. Barreiro** that you can participate in! It will coincide with the end of the last few days of the Congress and will go to many of the unique shrines in Rome and Italy. Visit www.hli.org to register and for more information. **꺃**

As you can see, there is a very great need for HLI around the world. Thank you for your commitment to our mission. You help keep us going! Please continue to assist HLI with your prayers and financial support. Together, by the grace of God, we will fight the Culture of Death around the world and build up a Culture of Life.

God bless you always!



Rev. Thomas J. Euteneuer
President

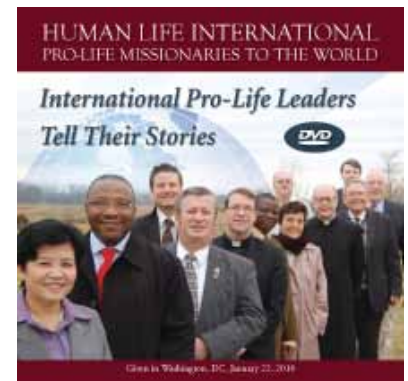
P.S.—This month, to thank you for your gift to HLI of \$49 or more, I'd like to send you this powerful DVD, ***International Pro-Life Leaders Tell their Stories***. It contains stories from Human Life International's regional coordinators, presented at a mini-conference on *The Fight for Life around the World* in January 2010.

Listen as these courageous pro-life leaders discuss the successes they've witnessed. Among the stories is that of Dr. Ligaya Acosta, Regional Coordinator for Asia/Oceania, whose 3-day visit to Malaysia became a 21-day speaking tour to 8,000 people – including 6,000 students who took a vow of chastity!

Learn about the challenges these leaders face, especially in the wake of the consequences of the Obama administration's devastating support for anti-life programs around the world. Mario Rojas, Regional Coordinator for Latin America, explains the massive amount of funding coming from the US into Latin American countries. USAID, he explains, has provided \$9.8 million to CS, an organization that promotes "reproductive rights" in Bolivia, which will be used to implement a 5-year project for "reproductive health and family planning!"

You'll also hear from Joannes Bucher on the pro-life situation in Europe, George Wirnkar on Francophone (French-speaking) Africa and Raymond de Souza on the state of Portuguese-speaking nations.

Please send HLI \$49 or more today so our pro-life missionaries, like Ligaya, Mario, Joannes, George and Raymond, can continue to keep fighting for life around the world!



The DVD, "International Pro-Life Leaders Tell their Stories" is our gift to you this month in appreciation for your financial support of \$49 or more!