



Mission Report

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- * **Many in Ireland Hear Pro-Life Message for First Time**
- * **Members of Parliament Attend HLI Congress in Latvia**
- * **This Month's Pro-Life Resource: 10 Abortion Myths**

Left: At HLI-Ireland's annual pilgrimage to the Knock Shrine, children drew colorful posters of Our Lady, which they then made into banners or signs, and led the rosary procession around the grounds of the Knock Basilica.

Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

In this issue of *Mission Report*, Dr. Brian Clowes reports from Ireland, where he and I traveled together this past September to bring the message of life to thousands of people in the region. This beautiful land that once sent missionaries to spread the Faith around the world is now itself desperately in need of re-evangelization. The Faith and the moral principles of the Catholic Church are a fading memory in so many parts of the Emerald Isle. In fact, many who attended our talks were hearing the pro-life message for the very first time. But Ireland is also home to some stalwart defenders of Faith, Life, and Family, like Patrick McCrystal, who is the director of HLI-Ireland and who hosted our speaking tour in September.

Also in this issue, Dr. Joseph Meaney reports from Latvia, where HLI held an international congress on "The Right to Life and Freedom of Conscience," which was organized in collaboration with 40 Days for Life. In this former Soviet Republic, the Catholic Church still has a strong presence, but unfortunately the state of abortion laws remain virtually unchanged from the Soviet era, and the Total Fertility Rate is at a precariously low 1.65 children per woman. HLI's message of life was heard, nonetheless. Attendees at the congress included members of parliament and local government, and the event was featured on national television.

My dear friends, please continue to remember HLI missionaries in your giving throughout this year. The stories of their successes inspire us to work ever harder, and the challenges they face serve to strengthen our resolve. With your support, and the grace of Almighty God, HLI will continue to spread the Gospel of Life throughout the world. May God bless and reward you.



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President, Human Life International

MISSIONARY TRIP TO IRELAND

By Dr. Brian Clowes, HLI Director of Education and Research,
September 2016

On September 23, Father Shenan J. Boquet, President of Human Life International, and I arrived in Dublin to begin a whirlwind ten-day tour of the country. We traveled with Patrick McCrystal, director of HLI-Ireland, his daughters Esther and Mary Grace, Timothy O’Sullivan, William Smyth, Mairéad Bernal, Dennis Arnold, and Anthony O’Reilly to Dublin, Armagh, Waterford, and Cork, spreading the Gospel of Life during our “Defending the Family, Building the Church” tour.

As always, the Irish scenery was gorgeous, very neat and clean, even when seen at 60 miles an hour. This is usually the way we saw it, as we drove nearly 1,000 miles around the Emerald Isle. I had the honor of driving our nine-seater van, and only drove on the right (wrong) side of the road once!

We began with a Youth Mass at the Legionaries of Christ Center in Leopardstown, Dublin, where young people were enrolled with the Brown Scapular. Then we held our first of four conferences at the Clayton Hotel, covering the complete range of moral issues, from modesty in dress to contraception, abortion, and euthanasia. All of the speakers emphasized teaching and catechizing our children and spoke about authentic Catholic action. Keith Kavanagh stressed this last point during his talk, “Your Faith is Not Private — Do Something!” Those who attended the all-day conference were very enthusiastic, and many told us that they had never heard this information before. **One priest said that “HLI is the only group at the forefront of the entire integral life message from conception to natural death.”**

After the conference, we had an enjoyable buffet dinner, which featured



Patrick McCrystal, Director of HLI-Ireland, and his wife Therese and their youngest of seven children, Peter.



singing by Clare Quinn and the famous Dana Scallon. We also presented Dr. Rita O’Connor with HLI-Ireland’s Pope Paul VI Award for her stalwart defense of Faith, Life, and Family. **Dr. Rita’s Majella’s crisis pregnancy service has saved hundreds of Irish babies from abortion, including 26 in 2016.**

Then our eight-person road team began our trek to Armagh, Waterford and Cork. We spoke to hundreds of people about how **Ireland is still considered a shining beacon of hope to Catholics around the world**, despite the rot that is threatening to destroy her. We did not just preach doom and gloom, however. With God, there is always hope, and we showed people how they could spark an authentic Catholic renewal in Ireland. Indeed, we even gave them the physical tools they need to do so. HLI-Ireland provided each family a large packet of materials free of charge, including books, encyclicals, blessed scapulars and rosaries, a Holy Face medal and information on this devotion, and two CDs on the miraculous powers of the Holy Eucharist and Our Lady,



The media in Ireland are very anti-Catholic, and they especially hate pro-lifers. So an Irish pro-lifer made this illuminated van with large posters on three sides that proclaim "RTÉ CENSORS THE PRO-LIFE MESSAGE." (RTE stands for Radio Telefís Éireann, or Radio Television Ireland). Here is it parked outside the Tower Hotel in Waterford, where we had the third of our five major stops.

as well as the *Facts of Life* DVD.

The response of the people was usually a mixture of puzzlement and enthusiasm. Most were confused as to why they were not hearing about these things from the pulpit. There was also excitement, especially from the younger people. We showed them that, **although the world is getting darker, their light shines brighter by contrast and they can do something about it.** The priests who attended were also edified to hear true Catholic teaching unalloyed by dissent or doubt. One priest from Cork said, "It is great that HLI is faithfully fighting the good fight," and another said that the evening talk was "a great shot in the arm."

Both the personal high and low points of our journey happened in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh. One of the young men traveling with our group, 17-year-old William Smyth of Knock, told me that he would like to play a little on the enormously complex organ at St. Patrick's Cathedral. I certainly did not expect him to play the most beautiful Ave Maria and Imperial Wedding

March that I have ever heard. When William was nine years old, the famed organist Baron George Minne recognized him as a prodigy and dropped all of his other students to instruct him alone.

The next morning, our whole group returned to St. Patrick's to hear William play again, but the Cathedral was occupied by hundreds of middle-school students. A group of them were enthusiastically singing. Was it "Oh God, Beyond All Praising?" How about "Immaculate Mary?"

Unfortunately not. They were singing the theme song from the Disney movie "Frozen." What a missed opportunity to witness the beauty of the Faith in such a magnificent setting! **To us, this incident seemed to symbolize the sorry state of affairs in the Irish Catholic Church, peddling secular music in this sacred setting right before the altar.**

We took a break from our long drive to Knock to stop at the ruins of the Clonmacnoise Monastery in County Offaly. Some of the buildings, including the Connor

and Finghin Chapels and its round tower, are still in perfect condition after nearly 1,000 years. As a rain shower swept over and the wind chilled us, we tried to imagine how difficult it must have been for these men of faith to preach the Gospel under atrocious conditions that usually ended their lives before they were 40 years old. By comparison, how easy it would be for us to evangelize today, if only we had the will to do so!

The great Hollywood movies about Irish priests from the 1940s to the 1960s give us the impression that the Faith in Ireland is still strong and vibrant, but nothing could be further from the truth. If anything, the Church is probably in greater disarray in the Emerald Isle than it is in the USA.

Catechesis and instruction, particularly regarding sexuality, is almost non-existent. Father Boquet spoke to a number of the people who attended our talks, and only about ten percent of them said that they had heard anything on contraception or abortion from their priests and bishops. Then we have the atrocity of Ireland being **the only nation that has actually voted for same-sex “marriage”** by a nearly two-to-one margin last May. Pro-abortionists, now emboldened, are confident that they can force the repeal of Amendment 8, which would legalize abortion in Ireland, and I am afraid they may be right.

As in the United States, dissent is rampant in Ireland, particularly on the topic of contraception. The allegedly “Catholic” glitterati, led by such personalities as former Irish President Mary McAleese, could save so many lives and souls by their examples. Instead, they lead one blistering attack after another on the Church’s moral teachings. Their particular focus is on Blessed Pope Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae*. McAleese was one of 170 prominent dissenters who signed the so-called “Wijngaards Statement,” which demands that the Church jettison Her teaching on sexual morality, thus setting Her on

the road to becoming just another dying liberal Protestant denomination.

Betrayal on such a massive scale leads to predictable and heartbreaking results. We heard the story of one young lady whose husband was trying to pressure her into using contraception. She instinctively knew that it was wrong to destroy her natural fertility, so she went to six different Catholic priests to ask their opinions.

All six told her that contraception was acceptable, so she gave in to her husband’s demands. May God have mercy on the souls of those priests!

On October 1, HLI-Ireland conducted its annual pilgrimage to the Knock Shrine in honor of Our Lady. More than 1,000 people from the four corners of Ireland attended, many rising long before dawn to make the trek. The day began with the Stations of the Cross. Small children drew colorful posters of Our Lady, which they then made into banners or signs, and led the rosary procession around the grounds of the Knock Basilica. Then Father Boquet and several other priests prayed the Holy Mass in the Basilica before the 2,100 square foot mosaic of the apparition at Knock, comprised of nearly two million colorful pieces. During the Mass, many people approached the altar to receive the Sacrament of the Sick.

Then we all walked to the adjacent building to have a very enjoyable family evening of music, singing, and testimonies. Small children happily played and ran around the large room as children always do, and I could not help but be uplifted by their innocence and joy. We concluded our busy day with



A rainbow over Connor Chapel (c. 1200), at the ancient Clonmacnoise Monastery in County Offaly, with the River Shannon in the background.

a Holy Hour praying for the bishops of Ireland, half of whom had sent us their specific intentions. Afterwards, one lady told us she would “never ever forget this night.”

The next day, Father Boquet formally enthroned HLI-Ireland’s Cloak Charity Shop and the Guadalupe Center to Our Lady of Knock. Nearly a 100 people crammed into these small offices to see Father Boquet bless them, and then everyone enjoyed tea, biscuits, and ice cream afterwards in the warm sun. It really was a beautiful afternoon of fellowship and *craic* (enjoyable conversation).

MSNBC talk show host Chris Matthews has boasted that “Liberalism always wins.” At this point in time, it is hard to disagree with him. But, like an aggressively malignant cancer, liberalism also kills its host. Ireland has not replaced its population for nearly three decades and, **if abortion is legalized, it will not be long before more Irish die at the hands of abortionists than did during the Potato Famine in the 19th century.** Already, nearly 200,000 Irish babies have died in this brutal and inhumane manner, mostly in London at the hands of BPAS and Marie Stopes abortionists.

Ireland has once again become mission territory. As Member of the European Parliament Kathleen Sinnott told me years ago, Ireland is desperately eager to exchange its holy Faith for a worthless mess of pottage. Nominally “Catholic” Irish leaders are in the forefront of attacking the Church in their rush to become more “European.”

But we must not lose hope. Ireland was a central actor in the evangelization of the world. Ireland gave us the Faith. We must return the favor by helping bring it back to the Irish.

The Holy Spirit has a plan that we cannot begin to fully understand. And leading the way on Earth to implement it is HLI-Ireland, headed by the indefatigable Patrick McCrystal and his family, who have been laboring in the vineyard for decades.

Please pray for Patrick, for Human Life International, and for Ireland. May she rise again!



Father Shenan J. Boquet, President of Human Life International, was the principal celebrant for the Mass held in the Knock Basilica. The immense mosaic of the apparition, displayed behind the altar, consists of nearly two million pieces.

Invite Father Boquet
or another HLI expert
to speak at your parish!

Call 540-635-7884 or
email us at hli@hli.org
for details.



Host a weekend mission on how to rebuild
a Culture of Life, featuring an HLI speaker!

MISSIONARY TRIP TO LATVIA

By Dr. Joseph Meaney, HLI Director of International Outreach and Expansion, October 2016

Few recall that the Soviet Union was the first country to legalize abortion back in 1917. The traumas of the ongoing Soviet legacies in the Baltic region remain in many areas. Driving from HLI Poland's headquarters in Gdansk to Riga, Latvia via Lithuania for our latest congress, we skirted around the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, former Königsberg, annexed after World War II. It is home to almost a million people and the Russian Baltic Fleet, but Kaliningrad is separated from the mother country by Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus. This anomaly makes the Baltic nations nervous, especially in light of events in Ukraine. During the Soviet Era millions of people were deported east to Siberia and beyond and millions were moved west, especially after the Second World War. The former Soviet Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were left with large and unassimilated Russian populations living in their territories. Riga, Latvia's beautiful capital, is estimated to be made up of 41% ethnic Russians. The abortion laws and the state of the Church in this region are heavily influenced by the Soviet era.

My happiest discovery visiting Lithuania and Latvia for the first time was seeing the piety and fervor among Catholics. **The crushing Soviet persecution of the Church ultimately strengthened her.** It brought to mind an exchange I had heard at the 2011 HLI Asia Pacific Congress in Astana, Kazakhstan. "Who planted the Catholic Church in Kazakhstan? Joseph Stalin..." He exiled so many hundreds of thousands of Catholics from Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Volga Germans, etc. to Siberia and the east that he created a Catholic presence where none had existed before. I experienced the dynamic and strong Church that exists today in this former Soviet Republic.



HLI CONGRESS IN RIGA

On this HLI mission trip, we had an international congress on "The Right to Life and Freedom of Conscience" organized in collaboration with 40 Days for Life. The genesis of this congress goes back to October 2015 in Fatima, Portugal during the HLI World Prayer Congress. Our HLI European leaders requested an annual meeting to exchange information and work more closely together. Fr. Aivars Licis from Latvia was present and agreed to help organize a congress in Riga in 2016 along with Mrs. Dzintra Busmane.

We focused on the lack of conscience rights protections for medical students and medical professionals, as well as the minimal changes to the abortion law since independence from the Soviet Union. We wanted to give a boost to the Latvian affiliate of HLI and to have a productive and enriching gathering of HLI leaders from Europe. All these objectives were fulfilled.

The HLI congress took place in the grand chamber of the city of Riga and a live broadcast was streamed on the Riga City Council website. It was a great pleasure to have many European HLI leaders present and



HLI's International Congress on "The Right to Life and Freedom of Conscience," organized in collaboration with 40 Days for Life.

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If you have questions or would like more information, please contact HLI at 540-635-7884, ext. 225.



delegates from Latvia and Europe. The local Latvian organizers said the congress on October 22nd, the feast of Saint John Paul II, was the largest and most prestigious pro-life event in Latvian history to date. The retired archbishop, Cardinal Jānis Pujats, opened the congress. He speaks Latin fluently, but no other languages besides Latvian and Russian, so we conversed in Italian on my side and Latin on his! The current archbishop of Riga, Zbignevs Stankevičs, celebrated our main Mass and gave a wonderful pro-life sermon. **Members of parliament and local government attended, and the congress was featured on Latvian national television and the press, both Catholic and secular.**

Latvia is in desperate need of a pro-life reawakening. The country, and the other small Baltic republics, are at risk of disappearing. In 1915, there were 2.5 million people in Latvia. By 2015, the population had

crashed to under 2 million. The number of deaths has exceeded the number of births every year since 1991. Even with a terribly low Total Fertility Rate of 1.65 children per woman, Latvians are actually having more children than their Lithuanian and Estonian neighbors! (For obvious reasons, the average woman must have more than two children just to keep a community or nation from eventually dying out.) Migration trends can help or hurt. Unfortunately for the Baltic nations, they have a net outflow of, mainly younger people in reproductive ages, seeking work elsewhere.

Despite this bad news, there is a great deal of hope for Latvia. For one thing, their national anthem is a prayer asking for God's blessings on the



Dr. Jopseh Meaney speaking at HLI's International Congress in Latvia.

nation! I met many fervent Catholics, who currently make up about 20% of the total population. At one Mass, Confession was offered during the liturgy by the emeritus archbishop, Cardinal Pujats! I saw a handmade chess set with hollow pieces used to hide the vessels needed to celebrate clandestine Masses in communist prison camps. This legacy of heroism under Soviet persecution keeps the churches full. The faithful stay after Masses for Eucharistic adoration or the recitation of the rosary.

I would like to thank Mrs. Dzintra Busmane and Fr. Aivairs Licis for their kindness and for making all the events go smoothly. I was thrilled to work closely with Joannes Bucher from Austria on this congress. He coordinates much of HLI's work in Europe and chaired the HLI leaders' meeting. I drove from Poland to Latvia with Lech Kowalewski, whose wife Ewa has served HLI for over two decades, growing our network in the countries of former Soviet influence. Twenty three different HLI leaders met after the Riga congress and shared news of their wonderful efforts across the region. I do not have the space here to share all the exciting news, but Belarus was particularly impressive. Pro-life initiatives there have borne fruit, and 2016 will be their first year since 1993 with more births than deaths! Abortions are declining as more and more mothers receive help to choose life. Laws restricting abortion further may soon get passed.

HLI is poised to help all the countries from Poland eastwards to achieve major victories for the Culture of Life. The Catholic Church is strong and well led in these former communist countries, even where it is a small minority. Generally, the governments in the region recognize that a demographic disaster from low birthrates and abortion is brewing. Radical feminism has not permeated these societies as it has in the West. Everything is ripe for a "pro-life spring" if we can reinforce the efforts of our courageous HLI pro-life leaders.

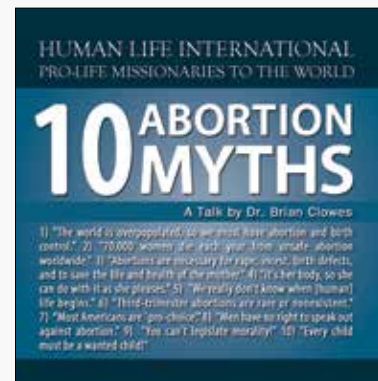
DONATE \$53 OR MORE TO HLI THIS MONTH AND GET OUR LATEST PRO-LIFE RESOURCE!

P.S.—This month, in appreciation for your gift of \$53 or more, I'd like to send you a talk on 10 Abortion Myths, by HLI Director of Education and Research, Dr. Brian Clowes.

This talk provides an overview of the ten most common myths that the media feeds us about abortion and explains how to refute each and every one. These are the same arguments that come up over and over again in everyday conversation, because most people have heard them so often they mistakenly accept them as facts.

In this talk, Dr. Clowes will give you the factual arguments that disprove the left's bogus claims. Some of the myths discussed include: "you can't legislate morality," "men have no say about abortion," and "abortion is needed for cases of rape, incest, or to save a mother's life." The next time someone claims that abortion saves women's lives or that the world is overpopulated, you will know exactly how to respond.

Please send your gift of \$53 or more to HLI this month, and let us rush this wonderful CD talk out to you!



10 Abortion Myths, by HLI Director of Education and Research, Dr. Brian Clowes is our gift to you this month in appreciation for your financial support of \$53 or more!