



Mission Report

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- * **International Death Peddlers Target the Philippines**
- * **Pro-Life Training for Religious and Lay Leaders**
- * **This Month's Gift to Donors: *Speaking a Language of Life and Family* audio CD.**

Left: Fr. Shenan J. Boquet speaking at Holy Infant College in Tacloban City, Philippines.

Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

In this month's issue of *Mission Report*, Dr. Ligaya Acosta, HLI's Regional Director for Asia and Oceania reports from her home country, the Philippines, where so much pro-life activity happens due to her tireless and faithful service. I had the great fortune of joining Dr. Ligaya on this mission and was able to see first-hand both the challenges the wonderful Filipinos face and the great hope they offer through the example of their many leaders dedicated to defending Life and Family.

As you'll see in Dr. Ligaya's report, our days were filled with mission work from the early morning hours till late in the evenings. Dr. Ligaya did a wonderful job of planning this trip so that no time was wasted and so much was accomplished. We were not only able to give pro-life training to many groups, both lay and religious, but we also met with key Church leaders who support our mission and who work very closely with us.

In addition to all the personal training, we were also able to broadcast the pro-life message through a national television program and radio interviews. These powerful media outlets allow us to reach so many more people than can be present at a talk, and I thank Dr. Ligaya for arranging this most critical opportunity.

Finally, I had the great joy of meeting once again with the leader of HLI's Affiliate in the Philippines, Dr. Rene Bullecer. Dr. Bullecer has been a stalwart ally in the fight for Life and Family for many years, and co-organized with Dr. Ligaya our first event, which was in Cebu.

Once again, on behalf of the entire HLI family, I thank you, our faithful supporters, for your unceasing sacrifices in the cause of Life, without which our work in so many nations would not be possible. May God reward you!

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President, Human Life International



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President

MISSIONARY TRIP TO THE PHILIPPINES

By Dr. Ligaya A. Acosta, HLI Regional Director for Asia and Oceania, April-May 2017

The Philippines, a Southeast Asian country located in the Western Pacific, is comprised of more than 7,000 islands, with a population of over 100 million. A predominantly Catholic nation, **the Philippines has been a favorite target of international death peddlers trying to destroy the inherently pro-life and pro-family culture of this country.** Backed by mind-boggling amounts of money, the death agenda has sadly seeped into the country, aided by government and non-government organizations who are lured by the financial bonanza. Young people have been especially targeted, as well as women of reproductive age. All is not lost though, as there are still many faithful Catholics who continue to promote and defend Life, Faith, and Family despite increasing challenges. **Human Life International has long been at the forefront of this battle,** working tirelessly with as many people and groups as possible.

This past April and May, we embarked on a special mission to my beloved home country, the Philippines, accompanied by HLI President,



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet. At times, I feel guilty for overworking Father when he joins me on these mission trips. But on the frontlines of this battlefield, one understands that we labor on earth and rest in heaven! Each



Dr. Ligaya Acosta speaking at the National Lay & Life Advocacy Conference in Cebu City, Philippines.

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time I hear Father give a talk, my commitment to the mission is renewed a thousand times. And although there is a 12-hour difference between the Philippines and Father's home in Virginia, he is always ready to work, even when needing to awake in the earliest hours. It was sweltering hot during this trip, but the Filipino people more than made up for this by their warm response to our message. This also showed yet another proof of the power in the Gospel of Life!

THE NATIONAL LAY & LIFE ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

The day after our arrival in the Philippines, Fr. Boquet and I flew to Cebu City for the National Lay & Life Advocacy Conference, held April 28-30. Organized by HLI's Affiliate in the Philippines, headed by Dr. Rene Bullecer, in coordination with HLI-Asia, the conference had 300 participants from all over the country, including clergy, religious, and lay leaders. With the theme *"The Natural Family: Hope of the Dying World,"* the three of us – Fr. Boquet, Dr. Bullecer, and I – gave our presentations in turn. Other speakers during the conference included former Senator Francisco Tatad and current Congressman Raul del Mar of Cebu City, who updated the participants on issues in congress and further urged them to continue fighting the good fight.

While many of the participants were pro-life leaders who have been partnering with HLI for a long time, many others were new to our mission. So we were able to gain new partners and receive more invitations to conduct pro-life training.

VISIT TO TACLOBAN CITY

From Cebu City, Father and I flew to my home city of Tacloban in the late afternoon of April 30 where Fr. Boquet was welcomed very warmly by our people. Our readers may recall that Tacloban was completely devastated by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Dubbed the "strongest typhoon on the planet," it claimed tens of thousands of lives and rendered most of us homeless. Despite the catastrophic conditions, however, people never lost faith but clung to the Lord all the more. Now, the city has been rebuilt even more beautiful than before. But one of the terrible consequences



Dr. Ligaya Acosta and Fr. Shenan J. Boquet show their audience a 6-foot-long list detailing the many proven side-effects of contraceptives.



Left to right: Dr. Rene Bullecer, leader of HLI's Affiliate in the Philippines, Congressman Raul del Mar, Fr. Shenan J. Boquet, and Dr. Ligaya Acosta.

of Typhoon Haiyan was that in its aftermath came international death peddlers who offered their “aid” along with their anti-life wares. Our vulnerable people accepted what they offered in order to start anew and rebuild their lives.

From the airport, we traveled directly to San José Parish Church, ground zero of the typhoon, where many thousands of people had died.

Father was warmly welcomed by around 800 people, led by the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Erby Davy Lajara (current Director of the Diocesan Council on the Laity), who gathered outside the church shouting, “Welcome Fr. Boquet.” Children swarmed around Father to hug him and get his blessing.

As we entered the church, Father received a warm and joyful welcome. During Mass, he gave a very moving, spirit-filled homily, as he always does. After the Mass, everyone again gathered around him to ask for blessing by taking his hand and touching it to their foreheads – a great Filipino tradition to show their love and respect for priests.

From the church, we traveled to my home, where Father stayed while in Tacloban, and where a welcome dinner awaited. Guests for this welcome

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If you have questions or would like more information, please contact HLI at 540-635-7884, ext. 225 or check the box on the enclosed reply card.



dinner included some family and life leaders, priests, and members of my intercessory ministry, with whom I regularly meet when I am home to pray for HLI's intentions. It was indeed a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving to the Lord for the great blessing of hosting HLI's president, who was humble enough to make do with whatever we had in the house.

FAMILY AND LIFE CONGRESS/MEDIA INTERVIEW

On the second day of our stay in Tacloban, Father gave a talk to around 500 people from the Vicariate of Tacloban and from other towns in the Archdiocese of Palo. The participants included priests, religious, lay leaders, members of religious organizations, youth, and the general public, who all felt grateful and blessed with Father's talk.

Right after the talk, Father celebrated the noon Mass, at which the church overflowed with people. A late lunch followed at the St. Niño Parish convent, where Father was welcomed by two parish priests and shared lunch with other priests and lay leaders.

After lunch, Father was interviewed by a national TV station, which was aired for two days. Dinner was with pro-life leaders and two priests who serve as my Spiritual Directors. With the hectic schedule we always have in

Asia and Oceania, we don't often have much down-time, so rest and relaxation at times such as this – spent with precious people enjoying good food and conversation, as well as good laughter – is always a welcomed joy.



Fr. Boquet celebrating Holy Mass with Catholics for Life in Manila, Philippines.

BREAKFAST WITH THE ARCHBISHOP/ SYMPOSIUM ON FAMILY & LIFE

On the third day of our mission trip to Tacloban, we had breakfast with His Excellency John Du, Archbishop of Palo. Many things were discussed during the breakfast meeting, and **the Archbishop expressed his joy and gratitude for all the great work that HLI does** and invited HLI to return soon to speak to his seminarians and priests. We were joined by Fr. Erby and other priests who work with the Archbishop, as well as five family and life leaders in the Archdiocese.

From the Archbishop's residence, we proceeded to Holy Infant College, which is run by the Religious Sisters of Mercy (RSM). We were welcomed there by the Superior General of the Congregation, Sr. Marian Ladrera, and Sister Carmela, President of the school.

Around 200 people attended the talk, including RSM nuns from all over the country. Since I am from the area

and people often hear me talk, I asked Father Boquet to take all the time allotted to us, as it is a rare opportunity that our people get to hear him speak.

On the fourth day of our mission, Father offered a private Mass at my home for the Organizing Committee of the Tacloban Mission. After Mass, we continued our meetings and we planned a return trip to conduct pro-life training for at least 1,500 participants consisting of seminarians, priests, lay leaders, and students in the Archdiocese, as well as neighboring dioceses.

A DAY WITH THE SSVM COMMUNITY

From Tacloban City, we flew back to Manila on the evening of May 3. Then, on the morning of May 4, we travelled to Lipa City, around two hours by car from Manila, where we had lunch and fellowship with the Sisters of the Virgin of Matara (SSVM), headed by its Regional Superior, Argentinian nun, Mother Victoria.



A Happy reunion with Dr. Resty Monzon, former Executive Director of HLI-Asia, and his wife Dr. Edna Monzon in Manila.



Fr. Boquet speaking at Christ the King Parish Church in Quezon City, Philippines.

Most of the Sisters here are undergoing formation at Our Lady of Sheshan Formation House, with American nun Mother Compassionis, who worked hard with us in Taiwan for the very successful 20th ASPAC held there in 2015. It was in fact in Taiwan where HLI's relationship with the SSVM community was formed. The nuns here come from various countries, including Hong Kong, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

After lunch, we drove to Mount Carmel Monastery, where Father gave a talk on "*Living the Gospel of Life as People Consecrated to GOD.*" The talk was attended by almost 100 participants, comprised mostly of sisters and novices of the SSVM Community and the Third Order members of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. After the talk, Fr. Boquet celebrated Mass for the SSVM sisters at their formation house and then he heard confessions.

In the evening, we drove to meet with the Archbishop Emeritus of Lipa, HLI's good friend and supporter, Archbishop Ramon Arguelles. It was a one-and-a-half-hour ride, but the long trip to Batangas City where he now lives with his niece and her family was very well worth it. The Archbishop Emeritus, a vocal defender of life and family who fought with us openly against the

reproductive health bill in the Philippines, was also very touched that despite our busy schedule, we made time to visit him.

RADIO INTERVIEWS

On May 5, we visited the national Catholic radio, "Radyo Veritas," where Father and I were guests on two programs: "*Pamilya Mo Pamilya Ko*" (Your Family My Family), and "*Digma ng Buhay*" (Battle for Life). Each program has an estimated 50,000 listeners from all over the country and the world. A week before this interview, I had been the lone guest on this program, discussing various issues currently affecting life and family in the country.

MORE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

On May 6, day 10 of the mission, Father and I drove to Eastwood City in Metro Manila for a half-day talk with Catholics for Life, an organization of lay couples focused on families deeply rooted in the Eucharist. Father's talk was on "*The Challenges of Living the Fullness of Life in Jesus,*" which obviously conquered the hearts of everyone. Around 500 members attended the event.

The next day was Sunday, May 7. Father and I had lunch with former Executive Director of HLI-Asia, Dr. Orestes “Resty” Monzon, his wife Dr. Edna, and friends, who welcomed us warmly into their home.

After lunch, we proceeded to Christ the King Parish Church for another talk focused on “*Building a Culture of Life and a Civilization of Love.*” Right after the talk, Father celebrated Sunday Mass in the same church attended by around 600 people.

AN END TO THE BEGINNING

Time passed by so quickly. Soon it was time for Fr. Boquet to return to the U.S., which he did on the morning of May 8. As we said our goodbyes, I couldn’t help but feel mixed emotions of joy and sadness – joy because it is always such a great privilege to work with Fr. Boquet, who never fails to inspire us in the mission; and sadness because another great mission has come to an end – but only temporarily!

To all the benefactors of Human Life International: after God, we thank you for making this trip possible. Between the talks, personal meetings, and media broadcasts, we reached an estimated 102,720 people! Without your generosity, we could not have been able to do this wonderful work. Please know that even from afar you are constantly in our prayers, always begging the Lord to continue to bless and keep you and all your loved ones. We ask God to multiply your resources, so that through your love and generosity, we may be able to continue doing this work, which St. John Paul II told our founder is “the greatest and most important work on earth.”

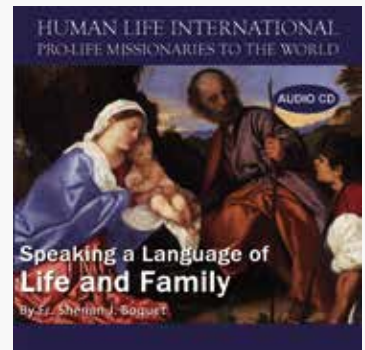
Please also keep us in your prayers. May everything we do glorify the Lord.

DONATE \$53 OR MORE TO HLI THIS MONTH AND RECEIVE A FREE GIFT!

P.S.—This month, **when you donate \$53 or more to support HLI’s life-saving mission**, I would like to send you our pro-life educational resource: an audio CD of my talk on “Speaking a Language of Life and Family.”

In this presentation, which I gave at the Eucharistic Convention in Auckland, New Zealand in April 2015, I discuss how happiness is found in the language of the Gospel, especially in the life of Our Lord Jesus. We must continually ask ourselves: Are we listening to and abiding by the language of God? Do we truly deny ourselves and take up our cross — through which we can be transformed and follow Jesus — in order to share the Gospel of Life with others?

I hope that through this talk you might understand more fully how the language of God teaches what true freedom is, a proper understanding of which is necessary if we are to truly flourish in our own lives.



The CD *Speaking a Language of Life and Family* is our gift to you this month in appreciation for your financial support of \$53 or more!

Please send your donation of \$53 or more to HLI today, and I’ll rush this gift out to you!