



# Mission Report

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Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

For all the gains we make in building a Culture of Life, there are always setbacks. But even when we face stumbling blocks, we never give up hope because we know that “with God all things are possible.” In the African nation of Malawi, the pro-life movement has struggled to combat the growing threats to Life and Family. But HLI’s Emil Hagamu is helping Malawi’s pro-life leaders reorganize and go on the offensive in the fight for Life. In Macau, as Dr. Ligaya Acosta reports, we are still in the beginning stages of forming a solid pro-life resistance to the Culture of Death, and our recent mission trip showed great signs of hope and progress.



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet  
President

## MISSIONARY TRIP TO MALAWI

*By Emil Hagamu, HLI Regional Director of English-speaking Africa, December 2014*

I have travelled on pro-life mission trips to Malawi almost every year since 2005 to help reinvigorate the local pro-life organization so that it can effectively combat the Culture of Death. Pro-Life Malawi is the only pro-life



Participants of the Malawi conference listen to a talk by Emil Hagamu (far left).

organization in this growing nation. So, spreading the Gospel of Life has been difficult. This is why on my last mission, HLI sponsored a three-day conference to help pro-life leaders in Malawi organize and reevaluate how they combat the growing threats to Life and Family.

Compared to the neighboring countries of Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and even Tanzania, Malawi has the highest population density in the region. According to the 2011 census, Malawi has a population of over 14 million with a population density of 121 people per square kilometer (.6 miles). Tanzania, according to a census conducted in 2012, has a population of 45 million with a population density of only 51 people per square kilometer. Zambia and Zimbabwe both have populations of 13 million, but Zimbabwe's population density is higher (33 people per square kilometer) than that of Zambia (17 people per square kilometer) according to censuses conducted in 2010 and 2012 respectively.

### GROWING THREAT

Over the past 10 years I have witnessed the increased presence of population control organizations determined to destroy Malawi's life-loving culture. For instance, a diabolical coalition has formed involving Marie Stopes International, Population Services International, and Malawi Family Planning Association, **Banja la Ntsogolo**. Translated literally, Banja is "family" and Ntsogolo is "future," and the coalition's deceptive name gives the perception of caring for the Malawian future family. In reality these organizations are the pioneers of the population control agenda in Malawi.

Backed by huge sums of money, these three organizations have been responsible for promoting the contraceptive mentality and abortion culture in Malawi. They have hijacked the media and pop culture and have targeted those in the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of gov-



ernment to force policy and legal changes. Through financial incentives, government corruption pushes through their wicked agendas. Once this is accomplished, programs associated with the Culture of Death receive a national mandate and have the power to silence the opposition. Unfortunately, even some church members become beneficiaries of these programs. This is the situation Pro-Life Malawi has been struggling to combat over all these years.

### TRAINING PRO-LIFE LEADERS

HLI's pro-life training conference took place at Sadiki Government Training Center located on the shores of Lake Malawi. In attendance were participants from the Catholic dioceses of Lilongwe and Dedza. The training period was limited, so the timetable was very tight. Each day began after morning prayers and Eucharistic celebration, after which we covered many issues over our three days together. The topics covered include: the essence of prayer in the pro-life ministry; the sacredness of human life; the science of fetal development; marriage and the family and natural family planning;



Radio Maria journalist interviews participants at Malawi conference.



the evils of contraception and abortion; and growing threats to human life, marriage, and family.

Collaboration with bishops and priests was greatly emphasized. Bishops are, in the words of Pope Saint John Paul II, *“the first ones called to be untiring preachers of the Gospel of Life.”* Bishops also provide motivation to those working in this field when confronted by the agents of the Culture of Death. Priests at the parish level are also very important as they are the direct arm of the bishop to the flock he is entrusted with. Priests have the advantage of celebrating the Gospel of Life with their flock in liturgy, in small Christian community gatherings, and in the family.

Malawi’s pro-life leaders vowed to work tirelessly towards educating others in their parishes and encouraging them to live the Gospel of Life. They agreed that if they are to be effective Ambassadors of Life, they must 1) lead by example; 2) be faithful in proclaiming what the Church teaches concerning the evil of contraception; and 3) show the goodness and beauty of Natural Family Planning.

By God’s grace, among the participants was a journalist working with Radio Maria in Malawi. Although he was a trainee himself, he also performed his job as a journalist and reported on what was taking place. His interviews were broadcast by Radio Maria, and many people heard about *“the most important work on earth”* that we do at HLI. We thank God for the gift of this young journalist who, by all standards, will be very instrumental in proclaiming the Gospel of Life.

The Sunday before I left, I attended Holy Mass at the Poor Clares Convent in Lilongwe. I used the occasion to pray for Malawi’s pro-life movement. The liturgy was superb, especially the singing. One would be tempted to think that a host of angels had joined us in that liturgical worship. Watching the sisters pray, I was convinced they were praying for their country, which is being devastated by the Culture of Death. I joined them to pray for the people of Malawi so that the all-loving God would give them strength against the blowing wind of the Culture of Death. I asked God to bless Pro-Life Malawi and guide it through this period of darkness in Africa. Please join in these prayers for the pro-life movement in Malawi.



Malawi pro-lifers after the conference.

## MISSIONARY TRIP TO MACAU

*By Dr. Ligaya Acosta, HLI Regional Director for Asia and Oceania, February-March 2015*

I embarked on my second mission trip to Macau, a Special Administrative Region of China, on February 27, 2015. I coordinated this trip with Rev. Fr. Jay Gapayao, SOLT, Pastoral Mission Coordinator of the SOLT Mission in Macau. Unlike my first visit, when I was alone and knew practically no one, I was joined this time by HLI President Fr. Shenan J. Boquet and HLI Director for Research and Education Dr. Brian Clowes, whom I have always called, “the walking Pro-Life Encyclopedia.”

Departing from Manila, Philippines, I arrived in Macau one day ahead of Fr. Boquet and Dr. Clowes in order to make final arrangements with our hosts. Upon arrival, I sat down for a meeting with SOLT priests Fr. Jay, Fr. Andy (team leader and house servant), and Fr. Art (procurator and secretary) to finalize our mission plans.

Dr. Filomena Yip-Chow, Secretary General of the Macau Catholic Advisory Council, whom I had met during my first mission trip to Macau, caught up with us later. She invited us to visit her office, where we had a joint meeting with her staff and with Pastoral Care for Filipino Migrants, represented by Fr. Jay and the Filipino Lay Family & Life Coordinator, Ross Belle Balatbat. It was a very cordial and fruitful meeting, at which we discussed pertinent issues, as well as plans for a return trip to Macau for future pro-life training for clergy, religious, and lay leaders.

## MIGRANTS KEEP MACAU FROM COLLAPSE

On the evening of February 28, we had a pro-life training session for the youth, which 35 attended, together with 15 adults and the three SOLT priests. My talk was entitled “*Pre-Marital Sex, Contraception, Abortion: Why not?*” and I focused on all the pressing issues affecting the youth in Macau. With God’s amazing grace, the youth all took the vow of



Father Boquet (right), Dr. Brian Clowes (back), and Dr. Ligaya Acosta reunited in Macau, with host SOLT priests, Fr. Jay and Fr. Andy.





chastity after my talk, promising to remain chaste until marriage. Afterwards Dr. Clowes and Fr. Boquet expanded on these pressing issues with their presentations. We concluded the night by celebrating Mass with Fr. Boquet as main celebrant and homilist. Filipino migrants filled the chapel to overflowing.

March 1 was our busiest day, traveling from one training session to another either by riding a public bus or walking through Macau's hilly terrain. Our first stop was for a meeting with the parish priest of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, located on top of a scenic hill. Churches in Macau, I learned on my first visit, were each built on top of a hill to symbolize the superiority of God over the government and men. Unfortunately, today Macau is overtaken by secularism and materialism, and the beautiful churches are promoted more as tourist spots than places for worship.

The 10 a.m. Mass, where Fr. Boquet was the main celebrant with Fr. Jay concelebrating, was overflowing. As I looked around, I saw that the majority of attendees were Filipino migrants. Fr. Boquet,



**Part of the Faithful at St. Augustine Church listening to the talks of Fr. Boquet, Dr. Clowes, and Dr. Acosta.**

as always, delivered a very powerful, spirit-filled homily, which clearly touched the faithful. From there, we hurried to our next commitment at St. Augustine Church, where the three of us delivered post-communion talks to around 1,500, mostly Filipino migrants.

Since my first visit to Macau, I have figured that if all migrants suddenly returned to their home countries, Macau's population growth would be on a standstill! With a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of only 0.93 children born per woman (2014 estimate), Macau has the third worst TFR in the world. It is truly a dying country! Thus, there is an urgent need to preach the Gospel of Life here. Though abortion is still illegal, it is widely practiced. Macau's criminal code stipulates that abortion is penalized with up to three years imprisonment for both the woman and the person committing the abortion. However, there are exceptions. An abortion may be carried out within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy "if an abortion constitutes the only means to avoid serious harm or danger to the life or to the physical or psychological health of the woman; if it's proven that the unborn fetus suffers from a serious illness; or if there are serious indications that pregnancy resulted from a crime."<sup>1</sup> Familiar words; but my experience shows that this actually opens the floodgates to abortion-on-demand! Also, one could easily walk through

1. ***"Are Women allowed to have Abortions in Macau?"*** 17/09/2012, Macau Daily Times, <http://archive.macaudailytimes.com.mo/the-lobby/macau-faq/38628-are-women-allowed-to-have-abortions-in-macau.html>, Accessed 17 March 2015.

the borders to mainland China, where abortion is legal and the one-child policy mandated.

As we made our way through the crowd, which overflowed into the church yard, I had to control my tears. I recalled my first visit here, when I was alone in the church, fervently praying to Our Lord and Our Lady to bless HLI's mission in Macau. God certainly granted my prayer!

### **BLESSINGS FROM THE BISHOP**

Next we hurried to the Pro-Life Symposium, where around 350 Filipino migrants attended with a sprinkling of locals, including Dr. Filomena, who is actually from Hong Kong. Held at the St. Joseph Seminary Church, the Sunday event started at 1 p.m., with top officials of the Philippine Consulate in Macau attending. Even Consul General Lilibeth Diapera attended and stayed until the end of the session. A priest from East Timor, Rev. Fr. Domingos Gusmao, expressed an interest in having us in his country, which is predominantly Catholic, in order to counter the work of the death peddlers that are active there.

Later, we scheduled a meeting with the most gracious Bishop of Macau, His Excellency Jose Lai Hung Seng, whom I had first met during my June 2014 mission trip. The bishop was very happy with our visit and with the feedback from our mission. Our meeting lasted a couple of hours. He also approved our plan for pro-life training for clergy, religious, and lay leaders and directed the SOLT priests to continue coordinating with us. From there we traveled to meet with the Macau Family Advisory Council and members of the Pastoral Care for Filipino Migrants.

Our next destination was the convent of the Missionaries of Charity,



**The Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity.**

which was just across the road. As always, it was heartwarming to see the Sisters of Blessed Mother Teresa, whose impressive ministry with the poorest of the poor has never failed to touch me. In Macau the sisters help run a large daycare center for Chinese children of various ages. They later attended our special session with clergy and religious, which was held the next day.

### **TRAINING PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS**

We held our pro-life training for clergy and religious at St. Lawrence Church. This event was hosted by the president of the Association of Clergy and Religious in Macau, an Indian priest, Fr. Joji. We were privileged to meet key people managing Catholic schools and various institutions in Macau. It was evident that they were hearing this information for the first time! As I found during my first visit here, abortion, contraception, divorce, and homosexuality — though huge growing issues in Macau — are never talked about. For these reasons, we delivered HLI's pro-life training program, which they were grateful to receive. Their newfound education will go far in reaching the faithful in their own ministries.

Our training session with the clergy and religious led to an invitation to visit Claretian Congregation's *O Clarim*, a widely circulated Catholic Weekly Newspaper of the Diocese of



Macau. The paper is headed by Filipino Claretian priest Fr. Jose Mario Mandia, or Fr. Jojo as he is fondly called. His deputy, Francisco Lio, gave us a tour of their modern facility, which includes a printing press, radio and TV studios, and three impressive theaters which regularly show wholesome commercial movies to the public for a fee. The largest of the three theaters can accommodate almost 1,000 people while the smallest accommodates 150. Considering its comfortable seating arrangements, I imagined conducting HLI's pro-life training here and possibly a future Asia-Pacific Congress on Faith, Life and Family (ASPAC)!

*O Clarim* reported on our visit in Macau and showcased a big picture of me on the front page giving my talk, *"Marriage and the Family: Bedrock of Civilization."* The headline read: *"So That All May Have Life: Human Life International Holds Conference in Macau."* More articles followed, including interviews with Fr. Boquet and Dr. Clowes.

As I left Macau late in the day on March 6, I profusely thanked the Lord for hearing our earnest prayers by blessing the Macau mission. As the Bible says, *"Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established"* (Proverbs 16:3). While I give Him all the glory, I am truly grateful to the very gracious Bishop of Macau, His Excellency Jose Lai Hung Seng, for readily granting his blessing for this mission. I'm also grateful to the committed, humble, and joyful SOLT priests; the coordinators of the Catholic Pastoral Center; the Macau Family Advisory Council and Association of Clergy and Religious members; the many other people in Macau who graciously attended to all of our needs; and the faithful who attended our sessions.

It could not be stated enough that our life-saving mission would not be possible without the many generous benefactors of HLI. Without this necessary support, HLI would not even exist! As always, I pray that our almighty God protect you and your family. Please pray for our mission in Macau and that we might have the resources and opportunities to continue this pro-life mission, which is so urgently needed around the world today.

May everything we do glorify the Lord!



Above: SOLT priests Fr. Jay, Fr. Andy and Fr. Art; Sr. Rosa Viloria of the Good Shepherd Women's Crisis Center; and Lay Couple coordinators Romy and Ross Belle Balatbat.

Below: Dr. Acosta gives a talk to the youth of Macau.



The Most Gracious Bishop of Macau, His Excellency Bishop Jose Lai Hung Seng, and SOLT Priests, Fr. Art (to the left of Dr. Clowes), Fr. Andy, and Fr. Jay.

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My Friend,

I join Emil and Dr. Acosta in asking for your fervent prayers for the people of Malawi and Macau, and for our life-saving mission around the world. No matter the country, HLI's pro-life missionaries are always outspent financially by those promoting the Culture of Death. But we won't be outspent spiritually! We are in a spiritual battle for the future of our culture, and your prayers can make all the difference. On behalf of our HLI family and those we faithfully serve, I thank you for your continued prayers and financial support of our pro-life missionaries, allowing them to continue their global life-saving work.

May God bless you!

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,



Father Shenan J. Boquet  
President, Human Life International

**P.S.**—This month, in appreciation for your generous donation to HLI of \$49.90 or more, I would like to send you the book, ***Fire of Love: Understanding Purgatory***, by St. Catherine of Genoa.

Here is the description of the book from the publisher:

The truth about Purgatory . . . revealed more than 500 years ago to a canonized saint!

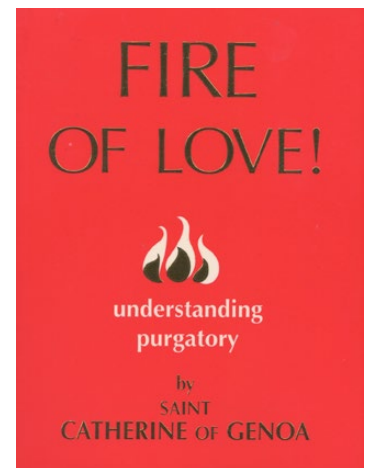
Here is the sensible view of Purgatory, tainted by neither childish superstition nor modern skepticism.

From these holy pages by St. Catherine of Genoa, you'll learn:

- ✓ Why it's sensible to believe in the existence of Purgatory
- ✓ Why Purgatory is both a sorrowful and a joyful place for a soul to be
- ✓ How the purifying fires of Purgatory reflect God's love
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Five hundred years ago, *Fire of Love!* transformed the world's view of Purgatory, revealing these purifying fires to be the glow of God's love. Now is the time to let these pages transform your own view of Purgatory, and to discover in them a sweet manifestation of the unfathomable depths of God's love.

***Please send your donation of \$49.90 or more today, and let me rush this book to you!***



***Fire of Love: Understanding Purgatory is our gift to you this month in appreciation for your financial support of \$49.90 or more!***