



Mission Report

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Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

In this issue of *Mission Report*, you'll hear from Raymond de Souza about back-to-back mission trips to New Zealand and the Dominican Republic earlier this year. Raymond's mission to New Zealand preceeded my own recent visit to that country, which you can read more about on our website, www.hli.org. We are beginning to work very closely with our friends in New Zealand at Family Life International, and we hope to strengthen our relationship with them even more to battle the many evils threatening family life in their country. In the Dominican Republic, Raymond was joined by HLI's Mario Rojas for a media blitz to spread the Gospel of Life on television and radio in this predominantly Catholic country that is facing new legal threats to the preborn.



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President

MISSIONARY TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND

By Raymond de Souza, HLI Special Missions Coordinator, February 2015

My mission trip to New Zealand was primarily the result of an invitation to speak at a Catholic Eucharistic Conference held in the country's capital city, Wellington. While there, several other opportunities to spread the Gospel of Life were arranged by our friends at Family Life International (FLI) in the northern city of Auckland.

New Zealand is an island nation that wasn't settled until the mid-thirteenth century by the Māori people,



Raymond de Souza addressing the crowd at the Wellington Conference in New Zealand.

who named the island *Aotearoa*, or the “land of the Long White Cloud.” New Zealand’s current population is a little more than 4.5 million, and government statistics indicate that the total fertility rate is 1.92 children born per woman—the lowest rate in more than a decade.

The fertility rate reached its peak in 1961 at 4.31. The decline beginning in 1961 is no coincidence. **In that year came the introduction of the oral contraceptive pill, with New Zealand women among the first to fall victim to the contraceptive mentality.** The overall fertility rate has been below replacement level for the last three decades.

According to the criminal code, abortion is only legal in certain cases, but since 1974 there have been more than 450,000 abortions committed in New Zealand. Same-sex “marriage” was legalized in 2013. And while euthanasia is still illegal, anti-life groups are pushing for passage. Currently, a terminally ill New Zealand lawyer has a case pending before the High Court for the “right” to assisted suicide. A hearing is set to take place on May 25, 2015.

THE REALITY OF THE DEVIL

After a 14-hour night flight from Los Angeles to Auckland, my stop was to the offices of Family Life International. From there we rode to the Church of the Sacred Heart, where a group of 50-60 young people held their weekly Holy Hour. In an atmosphere of profound recollection, those young folks spent an hour of silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, praying for the acceptance of the Gospel of Life in New Zealand. It was really touching to see their devotion. I conducted a pro-life training session with them after the Holy Hour and the coffee break (or tea break, since we were in New Zealand).

I was asked to speak on the reality of the devil and his works as the main promoter of the Culture of Death. I explained to them about the devil’s four-fold action (temptation, obsession, oppression, and possession) and the three agents of perdition (the world, the flesh, and the devil). I put a special emphasis on the devil’s work to promote ambiguity and confusion of principles which brings about relativism. The words of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger in *The Ratzinger Report* made a strong impression on them: “ambiguity is the mark of the demonic” (p. 150). I finished by encouraging them to follow the exhortation of Pope Saint John Paul II to avoid ambiguity and keep to the evangelical simplicity and clarity.

It was an excellent opportunity to promote HLI’s holy card of St. Michael the Archangel and our prayer campaign for the conversion of abortionists (www.stmichaelprayercampaign.com), emphasizing the role of the devil in the human sacrifice that characterizes the abortion culture and industry.

I also encouraged them all to participate in the 40 Days for Life campaign, which was being held in Auckland at that time. Again, I insisted on the importance of the Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament



and the devout reception of the Holy Eucharist as key elements in promoting the Culture of Life.

PRAYER, STUDY, AND ACTION

On the following day, I flew to Wellington (where I previously lived for several years) for the 20th Wellington Eucharistic Convention. It was a special occasion as the organizers celebrated 20 years of uninterrupted Eucharistic Conventions. The keynote speakers were His Excellency Julian Porteous, Archbishop of Tasmania, Australia, and yours truly, representing Human Life International. Archbishop Porteous had been the auxiliary bishop of Sydney when Cardinal George Pell was the local Archbishop, and I had the honor of being a guest at his house on the occasion of my last visit to Australia for a series of speaking engagements.

The conference had about 450 people in attendance, including young people of various ethnic backgrounds. Although New Zealand was colonized by the British, their low fertility rate has brought about vast immigration from India, the Philippines,



Raymond with Archbishop Julian Porteous of Tasmania, Australia.

Malaysia, and Singapore. But the main contingent of immigrants comes from the Pacific Ocean Island states such as Fiji, Samoa, Kiribati, and Tonga.

My first presentation dealt with “The De-Christianization of Western Culture and the Gospel of Life,” where I analyzed the elements of death in contemporary culture—namely contraception, abortion, euthanasia and same-sex “marriage”—according to St. John Paul II’s encyclical *Evangelium vitae*. I encouraged a three-fold response to the Culture of Death: *prayer*, *study*, and *action*.

The prayer to St. Michael, the prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Rosary, recited during a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, comprise the first element: *prayer*. The Study of *Casti Connubii*, *Humanae vitae*, *Evangelium vitae*, and HLI’s many pro-life resources, especially HLI’s Pro-Life Talking Points and *A Pro-Life Pastoral Handbook* by Dr. Brian Clowes, comprise the second element: *study*. *Action* includes participation in the 40 Days for Life, promotion of Holy Hours of reparation in parishes for the crime of abortion, and encouragement of clergy to become involved and evangelizing politicians.

My second address was about “The Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist” in the context of the pro-life struggle. I must say that both presentations were very well received, and many of the participants invited me to return to Wellington for a period of time much longer than my scheduled two days.

SPREADING THE GOSPEL THROUGH VIDEO

On the following day, and immediately prior to returning to Auckland, I recorded two hours of short video presentations for Catholic pro-life training to be used by our New Zealand friends. The organizers of the Eucharistic Convention proposed a plan to hold monthly meetings with me via Skype in order to keep the enthusiasm of the people going and to avoid neglecting pro-life and evangelization activity between Eucharistic pro-life conferences.

In Auckland, our friends at Family Life International gathered their supporters at Saint Joseph’s parish in the neighborhood of Takapuna for two evenings of pro-life training. One night focused on the de-Christianization of the Western culture (the same presenta-



Tongan youth at the Wellington Eucharistic Convention.

tion I gave at the Wellington Eucharistic Conference) and the next night was on the 12 promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the context of the Gospel of Life.

Several of the young people who attended my first talk on the devil returned for the presentations at St Joseph's parish and demonstrated a strong interest in participating in the Skype talks expected to begin in May. We are hoping these discussions will connect pro-lifers in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the U.S., and possibly India and South Africa. Later in the year, we will also start Skype conferences in the Spanish language. More on that later.

One can have the firm hope that a fuller cooperation with Family Life International in New Zealand will be very fruitful. They have been blessed with a number of volunteers to do the work of saving babies, as well as suitable premises to receive people and provide much needed support in cases of crisis pregnancies.

Please join me in praying for the pro-life movement in New Zealand and for HLI's life-saving mission across the globe!

MISSIONARY TRIP TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

By Raymond de Souza, HLI Special Missions Coordinator, March 2015

Less than 48 hours after returning to the U.S. from New Zealand, I was again on a plane—this time flying to Santo Domingo, capital of the

Dominican Republic. There I joined Mario Rojas, HLI Regional Director for Latin America, for a special mission trip.

The Dominican Republic has long outlawed the crime of abortion in any circumstance, but now **legislators in this predominantly Catholic country are drafting a bill to allow abortion in cases of rape, incest, or fetal impairment.** Catholic priests and laity are asking people to light candles and to display the national flag in their houses as a sign of support for the right to life. Catholic laity are also preparing themselves for legal battles before the Constitutional Court to seek a judicial decision that would declare any legislative bill in favor of abortion to be unconstitutional.

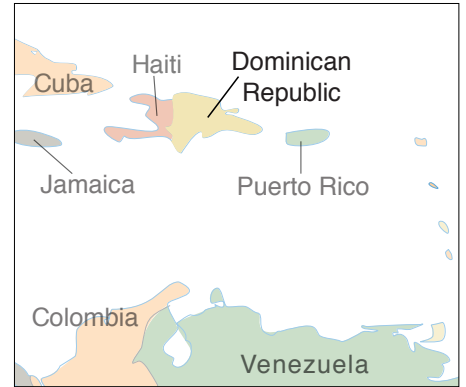
With threats mounting, Mario and I traveled to the Dominican Republic to assist the pro-life movement.

BUILDING THE RESISTANCE

HLI doesn't have a formal Affiliate in the Dominican Republic yet, but we are working with the great pro-life leader Miss Mercedes Perez Pimentel, President of the *Cimientos sobre la Roca* Foundation (Cements on the Rock), a pro-life and pro-family organization that plays a major role in the defense of life in the Dominican Republic.

I must say that the work of Miss Mercedes Perez in organizing our mission to the Dominican Republic was absolutely outstanding, and deserving of every praise. From talks in parishes and public halls to radio and television interviews, from contacts with pro-life associations to Church officials, Miss Perez showed a remarkable ability to coordinate and facilitate the work of HLI in her country.

Our first action was to meet with the board of directors of a very active pro-family association, the *Matrimonio Feliz* (Happy Matrimony), which plays an important educational role in the local Church. Mario presented the educational video titled "Population Control" from the HLI video series "HLI Lifelines" which I recorded a few years ago. He expounded on the



myth of population control and gender ideology, and I commented on the harmful effects of contraception around the world. I commented on the triad of the Culture of Death, as explained by Pope Saint John Paul II in *Evangelium vitae*, namely contraception, abortion, and euthanasia. Discussions lasted late into the night.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HEARD A PRO-LIFE HOMILY?

"Seminarians are, in a very special way, the future and hope of the Church" . . . and of the pro-life movement!



HLI's Seminarians for Life program: www.hli.org/sfl

EVANGELIZING “ON THE AIR” AND ON THE GROUND

We next conducted a live radio interview on Radio Juventus Don Bosco. Mario, Mercedes, and I shared the microphones, and were joined later by Fr. Gerardo de Oleo, who is a prominent pro-life leader in the country. From the radio station, we rushed to a local television station in order to record two interviews for the program “*Siguiendo sus Huellas*” (Following His footsteps). Mario and I were interviewed separately, and each interview lasted about one hour. They were both friendly interviews, allowing the Gospel of Life message to reach a wide range of people.

On Friday, Mario and I went to visit Msgr. Amancio Escapa Aparicio, O.C.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Santo Domingo and Director of the Cursillos in Christianity lay movement. His Excellency showed interest in our life-saving mission and referred us to the archdiocesan department more directly involved with promoting the pro-life cause. That evening, we addressed a group of members and volunteers of the *Cimientos sobre la Roca* Foundation, of which Miss Perez is the president. The Foundation has been doing excellent work, and we were glad to be able to stand with them and offer HLI’s support at this critical time.

The following morning, we went to the offices of the TV channel *TeleVida* to be interviewed by Mr. René García, who both produces and presents a much-watched weekly program. We talked at length about the work of HLI and the necessity of teaching people to defend Life, Faith, and Family, especially the young.

In the afternoon, Mario and I parted company for a few hours. He went to address one group of people and I another. By request of the parish priest at the *Jesus Maestro* parish, I gave a presentation on “The Real

Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist” and the importance of the Holy Hour of Reparation. It seemed that the impact of the address on the people was rather pronounced because immediately after the coffee break I was asked to give yet another talk. This time I spoke on the 12 promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the context of the defense of the family.

Later that same afternoon, we went to join the indefatigable Miss Mercedes Perez to attend a ceremonial opening of the annual Catholic Book Fair, where her Foundation had a booth promoting pro-life issues. There were probably 1,500 or more people present. The Book Fair was declared open by His Eminence Nicolás de Jesús Cardenal López Rodríguez. We had the opportunity to meet His Eminence later on by our booth, and later in the week we talked to him about organizing a future REDESSVIDA (Latin American Network of Priests and Seminarians for Life) congress in the country to train seminarians and priests on the defense of Life. Also by our booth we met the Apostolic Nuncio to the Dominican Republic, Bishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo.

On Sunday morning, Mario and I went to yet another TV station, *Tele-Radio América*. We were interviewed by Mrs. Pirooska de Almonte on her program “*En Pocos Minutos*” (“In a Few Minutes”) which is coordinated by Msgr. Fabio Mamerto Rivas, Bishop Emeritus, and the Rev. Father Angel Soto, SDB, a Salesian priest. By midday we had lunch



Raymond being interviewed by Rene Garcia.

with the 10th successor of St. John Bosco in the direction of the Salesian congregation, the Spaniard Fr. Angel Fernández Artime. A seminarian at our table was excited about having HLI working in the country, especially in the areas of education on apologetics and right-to-life issues. No doubt he will attend a future HLI pro-life seminarian training conference here.

The next day, we had a very fruitful meeting with the Auxiliary Bishop of the Santo Domingo archdiocese, His Excellency Víctor Masalles. He was particularly interested in the work of HLI to defend the Faith as the foundation of pro-life work in that Catholic country. His excitement was visible, and he invited me back to the Dominican Republic to speak in parishes, schools, and seminaries, possibly in September.

Mario and I were on the radio again shortly after meeting the bishop, being interviewed on the weekly program “*Dialogando con el Director*” (“Dialoguing with the Director”) by Fr. Manuel Ruiz. Father is the director of the Vida FM 105.3 and Radio ABC stations, which broadcasted the live interview together. On the evening of the same day, while Mario was

giving a talk to people in one parish, I was speaking in another—the St. Ignatius Loyola parish, whose parish priest is a great supporter of the pro-life work of the *Cimientos sobre la Roca*. My last action was to join Mario and Miss Mercedes Perez for an informal conversation with the Cardinal Archbishop of Santo Domingo, His Eminence Nicolás de Jesús Cardenal López Rodríguez, after the Mass he celebrated in the cathedral on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of his priestly ordination. **He was very happy to know about HLI’s REDESSVIDA congresses and immediately approved the planning of two congresses in Santo Domingo in the future** — one for priests and seminarians and the other for laity.

The following day, well before sunrise, I was on my way to the airport to fly back to the U.S. I felt blessed for having had the opportunity to work with Mario Rojas and Miss Mercedes Perez in a marathon of talks, radio and television interviews, and all sorts of activities to spread the Gospel of Life. This much-needed, life-saving work could not have happened without the support of the HLI Family, who bless our



Raymond with His Eminence Nicolás de Jesús Cardenal López Rodríguez and Mercedes Perez.

mission with prayers and financial sacrifices. I am looking forward to going back to the Dominican Republic soon to help strengthen the pro-life resistance at this important time. Until then, I continue to pray for the Church and for all in the Dominican Republic who work tirelessly to protect Life. Please light a candle for the families of the Dominican Republic as they fight against the legal assault on the preborn currently underway.

My Friend,

In both New Zealand and the Dominican Republic, HLI is working to establish permanent Affiliate relationships with the pro-life leaders already on the ground to offer greater assistance in building a Culture of Life. Expanding our Affiliate network requires a commitment of financial resources—which we are currently lacking—to have success in battling back the many threats of the anti-life agenda. But even in difficult financial times, we won't abandon our friends around the world who request our help to fight the evils threatening their families. And we will never abandon our mission, which Pope Saint John Paul II called "*the most important work on earth*," to protect the right to life of every human being from conception until natural death.

In this month of the Sacred Heart, please pray that our pro-life missionaries have the graces and resources to fulfill our life-saving mission worldwide. Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

May God bless you!

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,



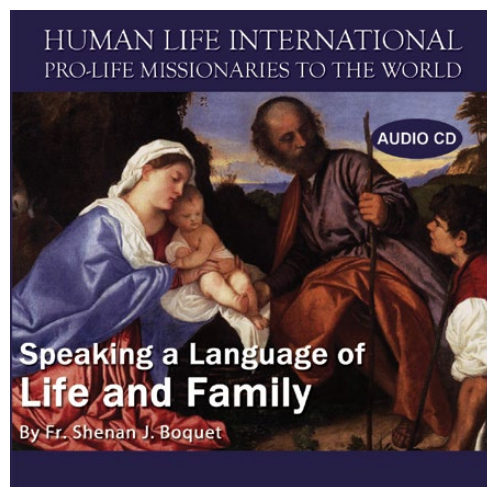
Father Shenan J. Boquet
President, Human Life International

P.S.—This month, **when you donate \$53 or more to support HLI's life-saving mission**, I would like to send you our latest 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.

Please send your gift of \$53 or more to HLI today, and I'll ship you this new pro-life resource!



"Speaking a Language of Life and Family" is this month's pro-life educational resource when you give \$53 or more!