



Mission Report

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- * **HLI Bids Farewell to Monsignor Barreiro as He Leaves HLI for a New Assignment**
- * **A Flourishing of Pro-Life Programs in Belarus**
- * **This Month's Pro-Life Resource: Contraception and the Mind of Christ**

Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

On behalf of the entire Human Life International family, I want to say: THANK YOU, Monsignor Barreiro!

With a deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God and to Monsignor Barreiro, I wanted to let HLI's supporters know that, after years of discernment, Monsignor has accepted an invitation to serve as parochial vicar of St. Mary Church in Norwalk in the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut. This assignment began on May 1. Though Monsignor has stepped down from full time service with Human Life International, his commitment to the defense of Faith, Life, and Family is not diminished. He will continue to preach the Gospel of Life



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President

and integrate Church teaching on Life and Family into his new pastoral duties, and will publish articles with HLI when his new duties allow.



Monsignor Barreiro in 1996 when he first came to work with HLI.

This announcement does, of course, come with some sadness, as Monsignor has been a part of the HLI family for almost 19 years, since he helped to open our office in Rome. He has faithfully served the cause of Life, Faith, and Family even through his battle with cancer over the last four years. Having handed the reins of the Rome office to Father Francesco Giordano last year, Monsignor feels that his work and HLI's mission are in good hands and that he is free to pursue a long held desire to return to parish work. On more than one occasion, Monsignor has shared with me his desire to work full-time in parish ministry. One of his concerns is that for the better part of his priestly life he has served more from behind a computer than at the Altar of Sacrifice. For years he has had the strong desire to serve the Lord, offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, conferring the Sacraments, and teaching the unchanging doctrine of the Church in a parish setting.

Monsignor wishes to serve Our Lord in accordance with His divine will with all the time that the Lord grants him. Though Monsignor's battle with cancer has taken a toll, he has courageously kept a busy schedule and a very high level of output, writing articles, giving advice to HLI's partners and affiliates, and keeping up vital correspondence with colleagues in Rome, the United States, and around the world. Most importantly, however, has been his generosity in celebrating Holy Mass and offering prayers for HLI's mission and partners, as well as his consultations on many complicated issues that arise in working to defend Life and Family from the heart of the Catholic Faith. His wisdom on canon law, theology, and Church protocol has been invaluable to me and to all of HLI, and his insights and presence will be sorely missed.

Monsignor has also blessed the Church by helping a large number of students at HLI's Rome office library, many of whom he helped in consultations on doctoral publications and other projects. Father Giordano and HLI's Dr. Joseph Meaney are just two of the many Catholic leaders who have benefited from Monsignor Barreiro's counsel and advice. When Dr. Meaney and Monsignor first opened the office almost 19 years ago, there was no library dedicated to bioethics among the many Catholic libraries of Rome. Thanks to Monsignor's efforts, there is now a thriving community of students engaged in these issues with fine resources around the small but influential HLI library.

I have spoken to Monsignor about the possibility of this transition for the last couple of years, and he is delighted that it has finally come together, although he will also miss being immersed in the fight for Life and Family. No doubt, he will remain in consultation with



his many friends, colleagues, and HLI partners going forward for as long as Our Lord allows him to serve. With his long experience in international diplomacy and Catholic intellectual inquiry, he will remain a great worker in the vineyard.

Please join me in praying for Monsignor's health and peace as he enters this new phase of his service to the Church. To learn more about the parish where Monsignor Barreiro will be serving, visit <http://www.stmarynorwalk.net>.

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Shenan J. Boquet".

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet

President, Human Life International

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!

Monsignor Barreiro's Legacy at HLI Rome Office

Fr. Francesco Giordano

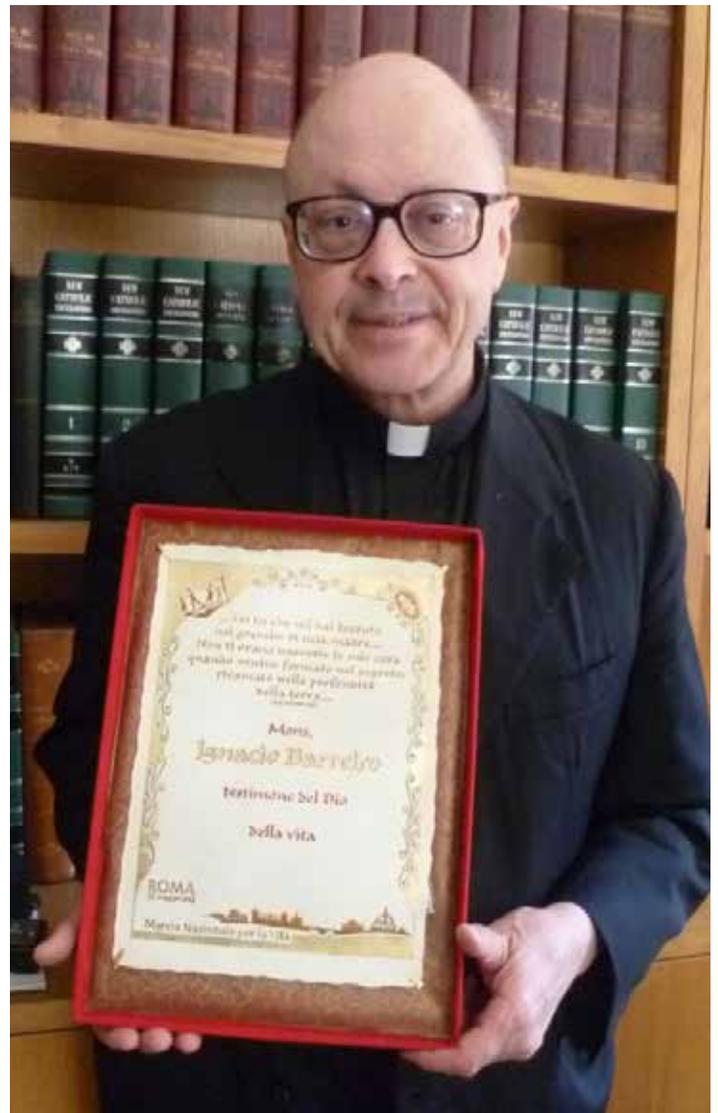
Since HLI's Rome office was founded by Monsignor Ignacio Barreiro Carámbula and Dr. Joseph Meaney in 1996, its purpose has been not only to establish a presence for the world's largest pro-life missionary organization, but to build a community to support the formation of clergy and religious who would serve the Church and introduce HLI's mission in new places. For this reason, they decided early on to provide a service that, strangely, the many Catholic libraries in Rome never had: a library that placed a special emphasis on bioethics and Catholic doctrine.

As the new Director of the Rome Office, I have inherited a great patrimony with which to operate, largely due to Monsignor's diligent and intelligent work here over the years. By "intelligent" I mean that, not only did Monsignor have vision when he started the library, but he has seen it through its development with intelligence. Every book and journal has been carefully selected for the international community of students in pontifical universities throughout the city of Rome. Indeed, many books in the English language cannot be found elsewhere in the Eternal City. For greater accessibility, students can browse through the library, and make free copies as needed. This is not something available in the majority of libraries in Rome.

Over the past year, I have noticed and increase in the number of visitors frequenting the library. The word



Above: Monsignor Barreiro with a seminarian at the Rome office library. Lower left: Monsignor with Cardinal Burke. Bottom: Monsignor with a life-time achievement award.



has certainly gotten around: we have easily over a 100 visitors per month. Since we are not open on weekends, this means that we have approximately five visitors per day on average — a good average given the size of our library. All of this is possible because of the work of Monsignor Barreiro, as well as the generosity of our donors, making my work much easier as I keep things moving along the course he established.

In addition to the library “clientele,” Monsignor Barreiro established many contacts with the Roman Curia and other entities in Rome, throughout Italy, and overseas. We are a reference point for many, due in part to our very close proximity to the Vatican. We regularly get calls from outside groups, related to HLI or not, asking for all sorts of assistance.

What I have tried to do with this legacy is to build upon the foundation laid by Monsignor. Since 2012, for example, we have participated every year with the Pro-Life March in Rome. For the last couple of years we have also collaborated on an English language international conference with the Voice of the Family coalition. With other collaborators, however, we decided we also needed an event in Italian that focused on issues pertinent to HLI’s mission. Thus, together with the group founded by Mario Palmaro, *Verità e Vita*, we have organized just such a conference, featuring renowned speakers like

Archbishop Negri of Ferrara, Mons. Livio Melina of the John Paul II Institute, and Judge Giacomo Rocchi. We launched the conference website on December 12, 2015, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The date was not random, as we cannot fail to seek her protection. The website has really developed well since December, thanks to the efforts of Daniele Sebastianelli.

Not only did Monsignor Barreiro establish a rich library with wonderful contacts throughout Rome and the world, but he has also provided it with an excellent staff. Marcello Riccobaldi, Serenella Verducci Sebastianelli and I truly work like a family. Marcello and Serenella not only work diligently, but they are also very proactive in seeking ways to make the office pleasant and efficient for our guests. I am also impressed with the love with which Serenella’s husband, Daniele, has been working to put the office on the internet. Such fruitful teamwork is essential to faithfully carrying out the mission for which this office was created.

In our continuing efforts to build a community and a network of faithful and well-formed clergy and religious, along with many other good relations in Rome and abroad, we are deeply grateful to Monsignor Barreiro. None of this would be possible without Our Lord’s blessing, or without Monsignor’s faithful service and vision for the HLI Rome office and library.



Monsignor Barreiro at the Pro-Life March in Rome.

MISSIONARY TRIP TO BELARUS

By Joannes Bucher, HLI Regional Director of Europe, February 2016

HLI's Dr. Joseph Meany once claimed that there was a fervent pro-life movement growing in Eastern Europe. This is truly the case. Without HLI missions, nothing would presently exist in this region. Almost eight years have passed since the first time I visited Belarus, and our movement is thriving. February's mission there with HLI President Fr. Shenan J. Boquet was a special mission trip to continue the flourishing of pro-life programs in Belarus.

I always say that Belarus is my first love — an allegory for the dramatic time I had visiting there initially. My first assignment as HLI Regional Director of Europe was to infiltrate the Eastern European region — namely, former Soviet countries — and convey the message of life. It was not easy for me to get there as my visa was incorrect, but when we tried again in Poland, I was allowed to pass the border at the very last second. It was at this time that I met Dr. Vladislav Volokhovich, or Vlady, one of our contacts, whom I believe is the person God is using to save babies in Belarus. Years later, we are observing the great fruits of his work.

Father Boquet and I met in Minsk, where we drove approximately 300 miles to Wizebsk to attend a pro-life conference among Vlady's volunteers. There are currently about 100 volunteers, most of which are Catholic, along with some Russian Orthodox and Protestant Christians. These volunteers come from eight cities of Belarus: Vitebsk, Mogilev, Gomel, Brest, Baranovichi, Postavy, Polotsk, and Orsha. Particularly active are volunteers in Mogilev, Vitebsk, and Baranovichi. Every month volunteers in these cities organize meetings to pray together and exhort each other in their good efforts.



THE FIRST CONFERENCE

The first conference in Vitebsk focused on how pro-life activities could be more effectively brought to this region.

Fr. Boquet presented a global picture of anti-life activities, while I spoke about our effective pro-life work and the miracles worked through us by God. HLI works in scientific, academic, political, and theological fields — standing in the middle of a spiritual battle, fighting for the dignity of the human person in light of Pope Saint John Paul's II encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*. This is vital: make the victim visible. The strategy of the abortion business is to make the victim disappear.

St. John Paul II, the great Defender of Life, said, "The center of the spiritual battle becomes obvious: Conversion of hearts, and then politics." Conversion of hearts can't be produced but is rather a gift of grace which demands our cooperation, pleading for the conversion of our brother. "The best we can hope to be is God's instrument in this conversion process."



HLI President Fr. Shenan Boquet speaking at a pro-life conference in Minsk, Belarus.



Participants of the conference in Vitebsk, Belarus.

AN AMAZING IMPACT

It all sounds reasonable, because the person who is being killed is not part of the conversation, the victim is not present. But if the victim were standing there saying: “Are you people talking about killing me? You, who say you want to kill me, and you, who are saying you are not for killing me, but you are for the choice of the person who wants to kill me. Are you both crazy?”

The impact of the person praying outside the abortion facility is incredible. He testifies on behalf of two victims, shattering the lies constructed by the adversary. The first victim — the preborn — becomes visible through this witness to the cruel ending of his precious presence, denied him by the ones involved in the abortion. The second victim — the mother — becomes visible as well. Through the offer of help to the woman ready to kill her child, the fraud of a “secure abortion” is unmasked, and the victimization of the mother is made clear. The mother is no longer one side of the battle between the pro-choice members and the pro-life members, as the abortion industry wishes to make her out to be. It cannot be stressed enough how important the person praying is in defeating these lies.

As Vlady stated, “Only a few people know that Joannes originally came up with the idea to organize

prayer and counseling in abortion clinics in Vitebsk, Mogilev, Baranovichi, and other cities. In the spring of 2008 he traveled to Belarus with the sole purpose of protecting Belarusian children from abortion. He suggested following the special prayer model of Fr. Philip Reilly, a courageous idea of praying at abortion clinics every day and organizing prayer marches. It didn’t seem feasible to us.”

Yet, the impact started eight years ago with organized prayer and counseling. At that time there weren’t any volunteers nor funds nor organizations to realistically implement these plans. And yet, what has been achieved in these eight years seems little short of a miracle. Now I can see the results with my own eyes, and it truly is a miracle. This is why it is of paramount importance to share this experience with other pro-life movements in Europe. Close to 800 children have already been saved because of the good work of God through Vlady in cooperation with HLI!

The main purpose of our visit to Vitebsk was to bolster what is now the only official pro-life movement there: Open Hearts Foundation, associated with HLI since 2008. In conjunction with our participation in the training program, we were also able to have a meeting with His Excellency Aleh Butkevich, Bishop of Vitebsk. During

this meeting, Bishop Butkevich spoke about the need to help his priests better understand the issues affecting Life and Family. A direct consequence of this meeting was HLI's assistance in securing a retreat master for the priests during their annual retreat in 2016 and 2017.

PRO-LIFE EXHIBITIONS IN 50 HOSPITALS

After this session, we traveled to Mogilev, another part of Belarus. While in Mogilev, Fr. Boquet, Vlady, and I met with a few doctors in one of the local hospitals where Open Hearts Foundation operates. During this meeting, the doctors expressed gratitude to Open Hearts Foundation for its defense of Life and Family. They also stressed that they want to stop doing abortions and asked us to help them. One of the doctors exclaimed, "Please help us to save our babies!"

Because of the work of Open Hearts Foundation and their collaborators, pregnant women considering aborting their babies are required to undergo a week of counseling. The purpose of the counseling is to help the mother see the beauty of life and offer her support in understanding the development of her baby. A number of those providing counsel have received pro-life and

family training through Vlady and the Open Hearts Foundation.

In over 50 hospitals, Open Hearts Foundation has pro-life exhibitions with large eye-catching posters celebrating the beauty of life. These visuals, provided by Human Life International, help many mothers decide to choose life!

In Mogilev, we also met Vlady's wife, who is pregnant with their fifth child. It is rare to see families with five children, but the country's president encourages large families and even provides them with free housing. In 2007, Belarus' birth rate was down to 1.3 but now has risen to 1.7.

TEACHING SEMINARIANS

From Mogilev we drove to Grodno, where we had the opportunity to speak with three bishops and trained seminarians in a half-day course. These young men asked lots of questions and were deeply touched by Fr. Boquet's presentation. The motivation that comes from a priest sharing his experiences is unbelievably thrilling.

From Grodno we traveled to Pinsk, where we also had the occasion for training seminarians in life issues.



Seminarians from Pinsk, Belarus.

Sharing the message is a faithful reminder of St. John Paul II urging that everyone, every man, every woman, every family, every church, and every Christian Association is called to passionately pray for the victory of the Culture of Life. This victory is not a military one, but a victory of the heart. It comes down to conversion, not strategies. But conversion means to see through the forces of evil (i.e., abortion industry) and fervently pray and fast so that each one is committed to the truth of life and to defending this truth because this truth has a glorious name: Jesus. That is why the crucial battle plan of pro-life warriors should be fought on a spiritual basis.

From Pinsk we drove through a terrible snowstorm to Minsk, where we visited Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, a long-time friend of HLI. He asked us to help organize a pro-life conference in 2017.

Our 2000-mile trip to Belarus brought great success and revealed the importance of HLI's global mission in Eastern Europe. All this is made possible through the support and prayers of you, our faithful donor. In closing, I leave you with this powerful statement by a Russian Orthodox student in Minsk: "With God's help, we will win this battle, so please keep on doing great work, HLI!"



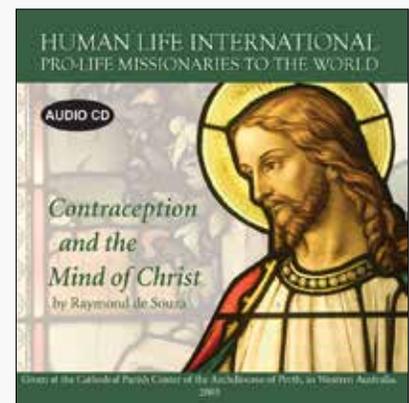
Fr. Shenan Boquet (left), Dr. Vladislav Volokhovich, and Joannes Bucher with His Excellency Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of Minsk.

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

This month, when you donate \$53 or more to support HLI's life-saving mission, you'll receive the CD, *Contraception and the Mind of Christ* by Raymond de Souza.

Pulling from Blessed Paul VI's courageous encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, Raymond de Souza implores us to learn the "mind of Christ." We should not simply follow what is acceptable in society but follow God's laws using a well-formed conscience. We need to keep our souls and bodies pure because humans consist of body and soul. De Souza also explains why contraception is against the natural law. If you or someone you know has ever questioned why the church teaches such a counter-cultural view of marriage, listen to this audio talk for the answer.

Please send your gift of \$53 or more to HLI today, and we'll ship this CD out to you today!



***Contraception and the Mind of Christ* by Raymond de Souza is this month's pro-life educational resource.**