



Mission Report

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Pictured left: Dr. Ligaya Acosta, Regional Director of HLI Asia and Oceania, speaking at the Congress on Life, Faith and Family in Mongolia.

Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

In this month's issue of *Mission Report* we start with Dr. Ligaya Acosta's report from Mongolia, where evangelization is desperately needed. Approximately twice the size of the state of Texas, there is only a small Christian presence. As you will read, fewer than 1,500 Catholics reside in the entire country. Our sacrifices are needed to counter the contraceptive mentality and acceptance of abortion there, where thousands are aborted annually.

Throughout the mission in Mongolia, we were tremendously blessed to have the support of Bishop Wenceslao Padilla. Sadly, about one week after our departure, I learned that Bishop Padilla, a longtime supporter of HLI and a personal friend, died of a heart attack. Our friends in Mongolia have asked for prayers as they mourn the loss of their dear bishop and shepherd of nearly 27 years. Please join me in praying for the repose of Bishop Padilla's soul.

If you thought the only government pressuring parents to have small families is China, with its two-child policy, you would be incorrect. One such example is Rwanda. Although the country was once very much against contraception and abortion, the more so given the 1994 genocide, it has since strayed from that course. A decade ago the country began pressuring parents to limit their children to three. According to the Rwanda Demographic and Health Study issued March 2016, "About half of currently married women (47 percent) and men (49 percent) age 15-49 want no more children or are sterilized." Read more in this issue about the difference HLI is making there, even at the family level.

On behalf of our global pro-life family and those we serve in charity and truth, thank you for your generous support, which makes this mission and its impact possible.

Yours in Christ and Our Lady,

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
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MISSION TRIP TO MONGOLIA

By Dr. Ligaya Acosta, Regional Director of HLI Asia and Oceania, August 2018

Mongolia is a landlocked country in Northern Asia, located between China and Russia. Its vast desert and semidesert plains rich in natural resources offer a continental climate where it's possible to experience all four seasons in one day as you traverse the country.

Businesses and trade are largely controlled by China, Russia, and Korea. And, while significant progress has been made since the last time I visited—such as tall and colorful buildings, several car companies, and western style restaurants and stores—29.6% of the total population still lives below the poverty line.

A July estimate puts the country's population at only 3,068,243, spread over a land area of 1,553,556 square kilometers. This results in a population density of just two people per square kilometer! The population growth rate is 1.18%, with a total fertility rate of 2.09 children born per woman. In a place where livestock animals (50-60 million) easily outnumber humans, it is no wonder that most of the new apartment buildings are largely uninhabited.

Despite this, international death peddlers are hard at work in Mongolia. In 2016, there were 18,316 abortions performed. That's 18.64% of the population. Induced abortion is considered merely another form of contraception.

Christians comprise only 2.2% of the total population, which is largely Buddhist (53%). Furthermore, 38.6% of the population claims no religion at all. Muslims make up 3% of the population and Shamanists make up 2.9%, while the remaining fraction of a percent is comprised of people of other religions. This absence of Christianity is why Human Life International's



pro-life message is so integral for the people of Mongolia to hear.

THE MISSION

After almost two years of planning and preparation, I left the Philippines—my home country—on the morning of August 15 to start a 13-day mission trip to Mongolia, where I was joined by HLI President Father Shenan J. Boquet and Dr. Brian Clowes, HLI Director of Research and Education. **Primarily, our mission was to conduct two sets of pro-life trainings—one for the clergy and religious of the Prefecture of Ulaanbaatar and the other for lay leaders, teachers, and the faithful from all over Mongolia.**

We were accompanied on our travels by Bishop Wenceslao Padilla and the spiritual director of the Marriage and Family Life Commission of the Prefecture, Fr. Ronald Magbanua, who is also pastor at Good Shepherd Parish and a superior of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) community in Mongolia. The CICM community of priests and seminarians, as well as its sister



HLI President, Fr. Shenan J. Boquet, speaking at the two-day diocesan Congress on Life, Faith and Family for Lay Leaders and Teachers in Mongolia.

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congregation, feted us with a wonderful welcome dinner and a farewell lunch, and for that we are very grateful.

TRIP TO AVAIHEER

We spent our first weekend in Mongolia on a road trip to and from Avaiheer, five hours by car from the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Our destination was Our Lady of Mercy Parish, run by the Consolata Missionaries, where we were warmly welcomed by Italian parish priest Fr. Giorgio Marengo, his assistant parish priest, the Consolata sisters, and several guests from Europe.

After dinner, Fr. Boquet, Dr. Brian, and I took turns giving talks and encouraged everyone to attend the scheduled pro-life trainings to hear more about HLI's pro-life mission. We were very pleased that they did send a delegation to listen to our presentations.

The next day, we celebrated Mass at the parish church, attended by around 30 people. The bishop was the main celebrant, concelebrated by both Father Giorgio and Father Boquet, who gave the homily.

PRO-LIFE TRAINING FOR CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS

Our next destination was Ulaanbaatar, and we arrived there about midnight after a long day of traveling. The next morning we woke up early and began the three-day pro-life training for clergy and religious, held at the Catholic Church Formation House. Forty participants attended, including the bishop, the vicar general, priests and sisters from all over Mongolia, some catechists, and a seminarian.

By God's amazing grace, everyone was touched by our presentations and was grateful for the HLI materials we gave to each one. Because of the generosity of you, our donors, we were able to offer participants the HLI *Facts of Life* DVD Library, the *Pro-Life Handbook*, the educational series on contraception, marriage, and conscience, the 10-week fetal models, and baby-feet pins. All

in attendance were incredibly excited and appreciative of all that we brought.

DIOCESAN CONGRESS ON LIFE, FAITH, AND FAMILY

After the three-day pro-life training, we moved to Good Shepherd Parish, also in Ulaanbaatar, to begin the Diocesan Congress on Life, Faith, and Family—our two-day training. **We had expected 70 participants, but the number increased to 120 when the administrators of the Catholic schools who participated in the three-day training decided to have all their teachers attend.**



Dr. Ligaya Acosta, Regional Director of HLI Asia and Oceania, with Bishop Wenceslao Padilla, Apostolic Prefect, Prefecture of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The presentations truly touched the hearts of the participants and I saw many of them silently wiping away tears, especially during the session on abortion, which is so rampant in their country. Participants expressed their profuse gratefulness, offered touching reflections, and discussed their impressions during the open forum, where they also verbalized their wish to have HLI visit the other cities and towns in Mongolia, where everyone, they said, needs to hear the pro-life message.

A significant number of participants lined up for private counseling sessions and confession, especially after hearing the talks on abortion, contraception, and marriage and the family. Contraception, abortion, and divorce are all legal and rampant in Mongolia. In addition, brought about mainly by alcoholism, pornography, and the fact that, in the villages, families live in one-roomers where privacy is alien, promiscuity and incest are rampant.

15TH EPISCOPAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE BISHOP

After taking Father Boquet and Dr. Brian to the airport in the early morning of August 26, Father Ronald and I proceeded to Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral for the grand celebration of the bishop's 15th episcopal anniversary. In addition, it was the second year anniversary of the ordination of the first indigenous priest in Mongolia—Fr. Joseph Enkh Baatar.

The celebration was amazing! Priests throughout the entire prefecture concelebrated the Mass with the bishop, which was attended by



Graduates of the two-day Congress on Faith, Life and Family.

Catholic faithful from all over Mongolia, as well as some government officials and friends from other church denominations who all came to honor and celebrate their dearly beloved bishop. Not only is he the first bishop of Mongolia, but he was also, along with two other CICM priests, the first to introduce Catholicism to this country nearly 27 years ago.

A touching video depicted the bishop's life and accomplishments since his arrival in Mongolia. **Today, there are around 1,300 baptized Catholics in the entire country, as well as three parishes.** Programs and services to complement the introduction of the faith have flourished, including Catholic schools, an orphanage, and homes for the poor and elderly that are run by various congregations of priests and sisters. One beautiful woman serving at Good Shepherd Parish was once a street kid with seemingly no future, but because of the opportunities afforded her by the orphanage, she was able to turn her life around. She obtained a college degree, married a good man, and began a family. Two other locals are now in a seminary in Korea and will soon become priests.

As I left Mongolia in the wee hours of August 27, taken to the airport by the good bishop himself, along with Father Ronald and ICM sister, Sister Marife, I couldn't stop my tears from falling. I thanked God for this wonderful privilege of preaching and promoting the Gospel of Life to the peripheries of the earth.

I must give God all the glory for another successful mission, but I also thank the generous benefactors and staff of Human Life International for their continued support, which enables us to do all that we do. Please know that we always keep you in our many prayers each day and ask those who attend our sessions to also pray for you, that God may continue to bless you and your family and keep you always under His love and care.

May everything we do glorify the Lord!

Defying Rwanda's Cultural 3-Child Limit

“Each one of you is a treasure to this family and to one another.” These words, spoken by a young Rwandan man to his children, illustrate the essence of HLI’s pro-life message. Standing firmly against Rwanda’s three-child limit, Martin and his wife, Victoria, have six beautiful children.

Earlier this year, Victoria attended a pro-life training given by Emil Hagamu, HLI’s Regional Director of English-speaking Africa. Emil conducted a three-day training in Rwanda on human life, fetal development, marriage, family, and on threats to building a Culture of Life. While his eyes were opened to the aggressive anti-natalist policies in Rwanda, his heart was filled with hope by the people he met. And though he said he realized during his presentations that some trainees had never before heard that



Mrs. Victoria Manirafasha, an HLI training participant and mother of six.



God, in conjunction with a husband and a wife, is involved in creating a new human being, **he felt that his presentations helped bridge a gap and create an understanding of the Church’s teachings about the gift of life.**

WHY SIX?

Twenty-seven-year-old Victoria has been married to Martin since she was 15 years old. She had started dating Martin at an early age and they planned to wed once she turned 18, but she states, **“Rebel group soldiers were going in the villages abducting and raping girls. . . . Realizing the gravity of the situation, my parents asked Martin to marry me to keep me safe.”** Martin has kept his promise, both to his wife and his children.

Victoria and her husband have created a beautiful family and chose not to adhere to the three-child policy because they believe that all children are a blessing from God. Out of curiosity, one of their children recently asked why they have six children instead of three. Victoria said that she and her husband took some time

to discuss it before they talked to the children. Once they were ready, they convened a family meeting. According to Victoria:

Martin politely asked them, “Who among you would not like to be born?” They stared in astonishment. Then [he pointed] at each one of them and asked, “Is it you, or you, or you?” The answer from each was, “No, not me!” and “No, no, not me!” All rejected outright not wanting to be born.

Then my husband told them: “Each one of you is a gift to us; we are proud of each one of you. We do not regret that God has given us the six of you; after all, each one contributes to making the home warm and happy.” Then I asked, “Which among you is useless to this family?” They answered, “None of us.” So, I responded, “Let it be known to you that I am happy with each one of you, for each one of you contributes value to the family.”

PROMULGATING THE LIE

The government of Rwanda has conceded to Western population control propaganda and now teaches that having too many children causes poverty. Consequently, it has taken measures to reduce the country's fertility rate. Its population control agenda includes the widespread use of contraception, abortion, and sterilization, and a three-child policy has been put in place for each family. “The rate at which the population is growing is one of the major threats to economic and national development,” said Jean Claude Ngendandumwe, executive secretary of the Rwanda Civil Society Platform.

The United Nation's Population Fund (UNFPA) echoed a similar sentiment during this year's celebrations to mark International Population Day. In

its statement, UNFPA said the high population growth rate is a threat to economic gains.

Rwanda is regarded by many as one the countries in Africa that has made rapid gains in economic development, thanks mainly to the commercialization of Rwandair because it made Kigali a hub of transit passengers. This has, however, come with a price. Though reducing the number of people for economic gains has been hailed by many as a hallmark of progress, the staggering result of this policy is that the growth rate has dropped from 7.96% to 2.40% in just 18 years. The results are obvious: The population is stagnating and will eventually decline.

THWARTING LIFE

A silent genocide is taking place in Rwanda. Unlike the 1994 genocide, this genocide is directed toward the unborn through contraception,

December 2018 Events

Please pray for HLI's Mission work in December:

- December 1-5 HLI Latin American advisor, Nancy Tosi, returns to continue pro-life training in Sonson RioNegro, Colombia, where she is teaching a course on Theology of the Body.
- December 6-11 Nancy Tosi travels from Sonson RioNegro to Armenia, Colombia, to continue a mission course on Project Rachel (post-abortive healing).
- December 5-9 HLI President Fr. Shenan J. Boquet will be traveling to EWTN Global Catholic Network to tape programs such as Johnnette Benkovic's “Women of Grace” program. Please watch online for more details that week.
- December 8-22 HLI's Regional Director of English-Speaking Africa, Emil Hagamu, travels to the Mbinga Diocese, Tanzania, for an extended mission trip.

Watch for details of these events to be reported in future issues of HLI's Mission Report.

A silent genocide is taking place in Rwanda. Unlike the 1994 genocide, this genocide is directed toward the unborn through contraception, abortifacients, chemical and surgical abortion, and sterilization.

abortifacients, chemical and surgical abortion, and sterilization. As Emil found when he spoke to those who attended his trainings, people see nothing wrong with contraception. **They have never been taught how the pill can harm women or how contraceptive devices or hormones can thwart life and even kill unborn babies. They don't know how these things destroy marriages and families.**

Currently, although the constitution states that abortion is illegal, the Penal Code provides a wide range of exceptions in which abortion is allowed to take place provided the procedure is carried out by a medical practitioner. Thus, the Penal Code has essentially legalized abortion on demand. And, sadly, abortion *is* rampant. It is alleged that 60,000 induced abortions were performed in Rwanda in 2009, for an annual rate of 25 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15–44. That statistic should be taken with a dose of salt, however, as these numbers are generally exaggerated by pro-abortion organizations.

According to Victoria, “Parents who have more than three children are stigmatized and humiliated for having ‘too many children.’ Health attendants coerce women into abiding by the limit and even children are taught that having too many children



Emil Hagamu, Regional Director of English-Speaking Africa, presenting a talk on Life and Family during an HLI training session in Rwanda.

causes poverty. At times, women who undergo cesarean births are sterilized without their knowledge if [the officials] learn the woman has already three children or more.”

Emil says that participants at the trainings claimed that they do not hear teachings on the evil of contraception and abortion. Neither do they hear any talk on homosexuality and same sex marriages. These assertions call upon pastors to re-examine themselves and what they teach from the pulpit, for it is through their silence that the flock is lost.

TRUE POVERTY

Yet, there is still hope in Rwanda. Rwandan people love life and family. Respect and worship for the sacred are still predominant. Despite witnessing the drop in church attendance, Emil feels that the majority of the people are still deeply religious. He said those in attendance at his trainings vowed to start their own pro-life movement to confront the Culture of Death in their

dioceses. They even came up with a proposed name: Family Life Apostolate Rwanda. They plan to consult their bishops, and, upon approval, will officially launch the movement.

The future of the pro-life movement and of the Rwandan nation lies in its children, and because of your generous support, HLI has been able to help people in Rwanda see that they cannot throw their future away.

Saint Mother Teresa once said, “It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish.” The economic status of a country or a city or a family should never come before the life of a child. True poverty is a child lost or a family destroyed.

Martin and Victoria are just one couple, and their family is just one family. But their story is not unique. Many in Rwanda crave the knowledge that Emil and HLI teach. Many want to know how to value life and strengthen their families. This all begins with education.

Victoria and Martin ended their family meeting with a warning to their children not to believe the foreign ideas that are destructive to African cultural values. She concluded, “We firmly believe here that each child is a gift to the family, as well as a gift to each other. When God gives you children, you should thank Him!”

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 our pro-life educational resource: ***Parts I & II of HLI’s Marriage Series booklets***. (See next month’s *Mission Report* for Parts III & IV.)

A gift from God in the beginning, renewed and elevated by Christ, marriage is the great sign of how God loves us, pointing toward the flourishing of all persons and societies.

Men and women were created with complete, but at the same time complementary, natures. In a very real way, men and women were made for each other in both nature and spirit. The necessity for love and unity is built into our nature as men and women, and it is intimately connected with the fruitfulness of family life. Indeed, as we shall see, the sacramental union towards which men and women are called is inseparable from the manifestation of that very love’s fruitfulness: children and the creation of society’s most basic unit, the family.

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



Parts I & II of HLI’s Marriage Series booklets are this month’s pro-life educational resource when you give \$53 or more!