



Mission Report

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Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

In case you didn't see our announcement online, last month Fr. Peter West began a new assignment in his home diocese of Newark, New Jersey. This was a change we knew was coming for some time, but the HLI staff were still sad to see Father go. I know he will miss the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and working directly with our international pro-life mission, but Fr. West has always had a calling for pro-life advocacy that I have no doubt will continue in his priestly service in New Jersey. I, and the rest of the HLI staff, thank Fr. West for his service at HLI and wish him all the best going forward.

In addition to highlighting Fr. West's work at HLI, this month's newsletter also features a special report from Latin America about HLI's work to counter the dangerous anti-life agenda being promoted at the Organization of American States (OAS). This international organization, similar in many ways to the United Nations, has a real impact on legal and political decisions of the governments in the Americas. HLI's Latin American Affiliates have been working closely with other pro-life groups represented at the OAS to ensure that the resolutions passed protect the dignity and right to life of every human being from conception until natural death. As I've said in the past, the language used, and how certain words and phrases are understood, is very important in our battle to win hearts and minds.

As always, I am ever grateful for your prayers and financial sacrifices for HLI's life-saving mission and our pro-life missionaries around the world. Please continue to pray for HLI and for the acceptance of the Gospel of Life worldwide. May God bless you always.

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,

Father Shenan J. Boquet
President, Human Life International



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President

HLI BIDS FAREWELL TO FR. PETER WEST

By Krista Thomas, HLI Communications Manager, June 2015

Fr. Peter West has spent over 25 years defending the right to life of the most vulnerable members of society—those at the very beginning and end of life. Even before his ordination to the priesthood 24 years ago, he made pro-life and pro-family work a priority while bringing spiritual leadership to those in his care.

This summer, after serving for nearly four years as vice president for missions with Human Life International, Fr. West is returning to his home diocese of Newark, New Jersey to serve as associate pastor at the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

“Father West’s archbishop has been extremely generous in letting him serve in the pro-life movement full time for seventeen years—first with Priests for Life, then, the last few years with HLI. But with his last extension almost two years ago, his archbishop made it clear that Father was needed in his home diocese and would be heading home this summer,” said Fr. Shenan J. Boquet, President of Human Life International.

“Fr. West is as fearless as any pro-life leader I’ve seen, never hesitating to speak up and get in front of situations that demand a response,” continued Fr. Boquet. “He makes a wonderful case for life, and we expect him to continue to do so even as he resumes parish work. In fact, we hope he will continue to write for HLI and visit whenever his schedule allows.”

CALL TO PRIESTHOOD

It’s that same spirit that led Fr. West to consecrate himself to Jesus through Mary following the formula of St. Louis de Montfort in February 1986. The



next month, when he visited St. Thomas More Church in Fairfield, NJ, he found pro-life literature that had been left there by representatives of Essex County Right to Life.

What he saw touched him deeply.

“When I saw pictures of aborted babies—some who were fully-formed and thrown in the trash—and read statistics on the number of babies aborted since 1973, I was shocked and saddened,” said Fr. West. “We were losing more babies to abortion than soldiers lost in all our wars since the time of the American Revolution.”

The 55-year-old priest attributes his discernment to the vocation of the priesthood to his involvement in the pro-life movement. Considering the honorable sacrifices soldiers make for our country, Fr. West said that it wouldn’t be too great a request for God to ask him to give his life to the Church through the priesthood.

That’s when he started praying in front of abortion businesses, learning about life issues, and engaging directly in the fight for the lives of the preborn. Though he was arrested with other pro-lifers several times, he was undeterred.



PRO-LIFE SERVICE

One of his first pro-life assignments was as director of Respect Life at Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT, where as a seminarian he earned a M.A. degree in theology. Later, he was ordained on May 25, 1991 at Sacred Heart Basilica in Newark, NJ. The following seven years were spent in pastoral ministry at three New Jersey parishes where he preached frequently on pro-life issues. He convinced several women not to go through with planned abortions during that time. Fr. West then served as associate director with Priests for Life for 13 years before coming to HLI in 2011.

An ardent voice in the defense of the most vulnerable, Fr. West has preached at over 500 events worldwide, including in Rome, Mexico, Ireland, and the Philippines; has appeared on numerous radio and TV programs; and has published various articles in *ZENIT*, *The American Thinker*, *LifeSiteNews.com*, *LifeNews.com*, and HLI's *Truth & Charity Forum*.

Yet, one of the most inspiring periods in Fr. West's vocation as a priest came when he was called to be custodian of an icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa for HLI's historic From Ocean to Ocean Pilgrimage in Defense of Life. The North American portion of the worldwide peregrination of the Black Madonna began at St. Clement's Island, MD, in August of 2013 and concluded in November 2014 in Phoenix, AZ.

The pro-life prayer campaign drew thousands from across the



Fr. West at a March for Life rally.

U.S. and Canada, enkindling a great devotion to the Blessed Mother for the protection of life and family, and renewing the spiritual component of the battle against the Culture of Death. In fact, five abortion centers were closed after prayer vigils were held outside with the Black Madonna icon, and several women who were considering abortions chose life following these vigils.

BATTLE FOR THE CULTURE

Society is shifting, Fr. West notes, as younger people are increasingly more pro-life than the generation before.

"There is so much that is going wrong with our society, and many are in despair over these trends," said Fr. West. "But among this wreckage there is hope, including a reversal of the pro-abortion trends of the '70s through the '90s. Meeting so many young people around the U.S. and Canada, I think it's safe to say that today they understand what's at stake more than the previous generation, which is one of several signs of hope."

With the growing attack on marriage, says Fr. West, the faithful must focus more attention on the proper understanding of God's plan for marriage as a union between one man and one woman united for life. Married couples must also be truly and authentically open to the transmission of new human life made in His image and likeness.

"What better way to shepherd the flock than recognizing God's beautiful plan for sex, marriage, life, and family," said Fr. West, noting that even such important teachings come secondary to a well-rounded and sacramental faith.

FAREWELL AND GOD SPEED

"Many people know Fr. West, but not everyone knows what a character he is," said Fr. Boquet. "Since we both traveled so much, we often



Fr. Peter West leads a prayer rally with the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa for HLI's historic From Ocean to Ocean Pilgrimage in Defense of Life.

missed each other, but I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know him as a brother priest and as a friend. The staff benefitted greatly from Father's offering of the sacraments and from his humor and support, and we all hope he will come back to visit the beautiful Shenandoah Valley frequently. He'll be missed for sure."

Fr. West's boldness and compassion for all of God's people will no doubt continue to be a blessing as he ventures forth in this new assignment.

"An active interior prayer life is imperative to confronting the lies of the Culture of Death," Fr. West said. "Priests need to lead their flock, preaching about these issues frequently and encouraging their parishioners to speak the truth

in love, and to organize prayer vigils in front of abortion centers. Their support and defense of *Humanae vitae* and *Evangelium vitae* in marriage preparation programs is necessary for catechization and support of natural family planning."

Please join the HLI staff in prayer for Fr. West in his new assignment.

MISSIONARY TRIP TO PANAMA

By Mario Rojas, HLI Regional Director for Latin America, and Marlene Gillette-Ibern, Executive Assistant to HLI Regional Director for Latin America, April 2015

Panama ranks among the fastest-growing and most competitive economies in Latin America, but it also has one of the lowest birth rates in the Americas. Yet there remains a high number of young people here, and there is no doubt that these young people offer the strongest hope for the well-being and stability in Panama. Hence, there is a great need to continue educating the people in Panama on Life and Family principles and values.

In April 2015, Panama connected the North and South America regions to host the Seventh Summit of the Americas. This event is held every three years with the leaders of the 35 member states of the Organization of American States (OAS), of which the United States is a party. Human Life International representatives have attended OAS

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In June, Human Life International re-consecrated our worldwide pro-life apostolate to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Msgr. Barreiro and Fr. West wrote a timely piece about the Sacred Heart and an issue consuming the cultural dialogue today: same-sex attraction. Below is an excerpt of the article, posted on www.hli.org:

Finding Comfort in the Sacred Heart: Dealing with Same-Sex Attraction



by Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro with Fr. Peter West

... Persons who struggle with same-sex attraction (SSA) are often falsely told by society that the Church rejects them. Because of this confusion, many bear a great resentment against the Church, but Jesus and his Church never reject a repentant sinner. No one who calls on Christ for mercy and repents of his sin will be lost. The doors of the Church are always open to the repentant sinner.

The Heart of Jesus is especially moved by those who suffer in any way — be it mentally, physically or spiritually. Certainly, those who strive to lead chaste lives, but struggle with SSA bear a difficult cross and deserve our sympathy; however, this sympathy will be misguided if it leads to condoning immoral behavior.

In the past homosexuals were often the victims of ridicule and hid their proclivities for fear of being exposed. The Founder of Human Life International, Fr. Paul Marx, O.S.B. once wrote:

For too long Christian communities of all stripes have responded inappropriately to the issue of homosexuality. Too many Christians have spoken in anger when gentle strength might have been more appropriate. Too many homosexually oriented people have left churches feeling rejected because of who they are, not merely admonished or instructed as how to live.

Fr. Marx knew the importance of speaking the truth with love. Love does not condone sin; it firmly but gently draws the sinner to repentance.

In our times, same-sex advocates with powerful voices consistently encourage and celebrate homosexual attraction as normal, acceptable, and even as a special gift. Further, some contemporaries insist that persons are born with different sexual inclinations, therefore, society must accept and celebrate those differences ...

Read the full article online at www.hli.org.

Continued on page 6...

events for the past several years in order to work with other pro-life, pro-family groups to fight for language protecting the life and dignity of the most vulnerable in OAS declarations. These declarations can have real impact on the laws and policies of member states.

“SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

The summit’s main theme was “Prosperity with Equity: The Challenge of Cooperation in the Americas,” which was geared towards inclusion of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be obtained by 2030. As is often the case with governmental policy and NGO language, “sustainable development” here is sadly directed towards population control. Instead of improving real economic conditions, those with power seek to “end poverty” by blocking God’s gift of life. If the countries who are OAS Member States accept a similar version of the SDGs at the OAS level, it will become much easier to



obtain their acceptance of the SDGs at the UN level.

At the summit in Panama, Mario Rojas and Ana-Melissa Español (a member of HLI Panama Foundation for Life and Family) served as HLI’s

HLI’s St. Gianna Beretta Molla Guild



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primary representatives. Other HLI Affiliate representatives also attended the summit from HLI Bolivia, HLI Guatemala, and HLI Puerto Rico. Along with other pro-life groups, HLI's representatives worked to incorporate Life and Family principles in the recommendations adopted by OAS during the session. The large number of anti-life and anti-family organizations present were able to incorporate language promoting their radical agenda in some of the recommendations, but we were able to counter them and have success in several instances.

BATTLE FOR THE LANGUAGE

In one session, Mario Rojas obtained inclusion of language protecting parents in the education and formation of their children. At another session, Ana-



Mario Rojas and Marlene Gillette-Ibern at the Organization of American States in Panama.

Melissa Españó assisted in having the principle of respect for the health of the human person recognized as an inalienable human right. Marlene Gillette-Ibern was able to prevent incorporation of “respect for Mother Earth” and obtain incorporation of language in favor of human rights in the recommendations during another session. All other representatives for HLI also worked very hard during the other sessions, and had similar success in changing OAS resolution language.

In addition to influencing the resolutions, each encounter with individuals there was an opportunity for HLI's pro-life missionaries to work towards converting those currently influenced by the Culture of Death.

Such was the case during one session when Marlene Gillette-Ibern spoke to a civil society representative from Panama whose organization works on

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Here are a few of our upcoming pro-life mission trips, conferences, and events that could use your prayers to Our Lord for His help in blessing our work to build a Culture of Life:

June 30-July 5—HLI's Francophone conference for pro-life training of priests in Benin

July 19-23—HLI Tanzania pro-life leaders training conference

August 4-12—HLI Regional Directors' Summit in Front Royal, VA

August 23-30—HLI's REDESSVIDA Congress for pro-life training of seminarians and priests in Tucuman, Argentina

September 10-17—Fr. Boquet and Dr. Brian Clowes travel to Ireland for a pro-life mission trip

September 15-21—HLI's REDESSVIDA Congress for pro-life training of seminarians and priests in Lima, Peru

September 22-27—HLI participates in the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, PA

October 1-7—HLI's World Prayer Congress for Life in Fatima, Portugal

October 1-7—HLI's REDESSVIDA Congress for pro-life training of seminarians and priests in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

October 27-30—HLI participates in the World Congress of Families IX in Salt Lake City, Utah

November 27-29—HLI's 20th Asia-Pacific Congress on Faith, Life, and Family in Taiwan, Province of China

the alleged need to end “gender stereotyping.” Marlene was able to speak to the young man on the connection between sex and gender, and he was clearly surprised and moved by the conversation. Gender ideology is very present at OAS events and is the new vehicle for most of the anti-life and anti-family agendas.

GENDER IDEOLOGY

During his audience in Vatican City held on April 15, 2015, Pope Francis specifically addressed gender ideology as the new threat to marriage:

“Today’s catechesis is dedicated to an aspect central to the theme of the family: the great gift that God gave to humanity with the creation of man and woman and with the sacrament of marriage. ... Modern contemporary culture has opened new spaces, new forms of freedom and new depths in order to enrich the understanding of this difference. But it has also introduced many doubts and much skepticism. For example, I ask myself if the so-called gender theory is not, at the same time, an expression of frustration and resignation, which seeks to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it. Yes, we risk taking a step backwards. The removal of difference in fact creates a problem, not a solution.”

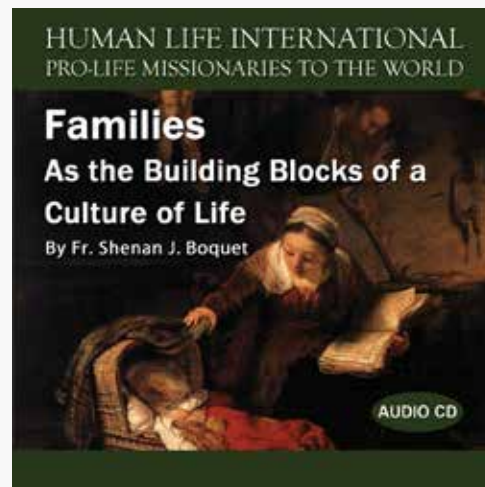
Combatting gender ideology and other threats to Life and Family at the OAS and UN is of great importance in our mission to build a Culture of Life. The agreements and resolutions adopted by member states at these organizations carry great weight in forming international law and governmental policy—especially in terms of the definition of language and what constitutes true human rights. This important work is only possible thanks to the prayers and financial support of the HLI Family around the world. On behalf of HLI Panama and all of our Latin American Affiliates, we are deeply grateful to all of HLI’s supporters in this shared mission to defend Life and Family.

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 latest pro-life educational resource: **“Families as the Building Blocks of a Culture of Life.”**

In this talk, Fr. Shenan J. Boquet discusses how families, as witnesses to the transforming power of God’s grace, are essential to God’s plan for healthy and faithful societies. Are we living witnesses to the love we have for God at every moment? This powerful message is not just for parents, for we are all tasked with teaching and preaching God’s love to every generation! Fr. Boquet offers some reflections on how to grow and flourish in faith in order to build a sustainable Culture of Life.

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



“Families as the Building Blocks of a Culture of Life” is this month’s pro-life educational resource when you give \$53 or more!