



Mission Report

No. 383
Feb 2017

A PUBLICATION OF HUMAN LIFE INTERNATIONAL



- * **Planning the 2017 Asia-Pacific Congress on Faith, Life, and Family in **Thailand****
- * **Organizing Church and Lay Leaders for Life in **Zimbabwe****
- * **This Month's Pro-Life Resource: "**Marriage – For the Married and the Not Yet Married**"**

Left: In Zimbabwe, where contraception and abortion are ravaging the country, it is important to reach the youth before they are ensnared. Here, Emil Hagamu brings the pro-life message to over 600 high school students.

Dear Pro-Life Friend in Christ,

In this issue of *Mission Report*, Dr. Ligaya Acosta reports from Thailand, where she visited last October to lay the groundwork and make plans for the November 2017 Asia-Pacific Congress (ASPAC) on Faith, Life, and Family. You can see from Dr. Acosta's report that a tremendous amount of work goes into preparing for a Congress like this. I think you'll also be inspired by the stories she shares on great conversions that have come from these Congresses in the past. The work is hard, but the rewards are great. And the fruits of these Congresses extend far beyond the individuals who attend.

Next, we hear from Emil Hagamu, HLI's Director of Anglophone (English-Speaking) Africa. Emil reports from Zimbabwe, where the laws still protect life, but the culture is so steeped in contraception and even abortion that this country suffers greatly from their terrible consequences. Emil travelled far and wide, meeting with bishops, priests, and lay leaders to bolster the efforts of current pro-life organizations, like the Guadalupe Association, HLI's affiliate in Zimbabwe. He also discussed with leaders plans for a for greater Church involvement in providing the training and assistance needed in this region to counter the Culture of Death.

My dear friends, these reports we bring you each month demonstrate not only the great needs that our pro-life missionaries find around the globe, but also the beautiful results that their tireless work produces. On behalf of our missionaries, and all of our HLI family, I thank you again for your constant and generous support. May God bless you and your family.



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President

Yours in Christ and in Our Lady,

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet
President, Human Life International

MISSIONARY TRIP TO THAILAND

By Dr. Ligaya A. Acosta, HLI Regional Director for Asia and Oceania, October 2016

It was a different Thailand I saw when I arrived at the capital city of Bangkok in the afternoon of October 24. The first time I was here, the entire country was in festive mood with gold – the color identified with the King and the imperial household dominating the city. It was then blooming with royal decorations, celebrating the birthday of the country's well-loved monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej. This time, the dominant color was black! Even the huge billboards dominating the country's thoroughfares were predominantly black. The country was in deep mourning with the death of the King who reigned for more than 70 years, earning the distinction not only as the longest reigning monarch in Thai history, but also as the world's longest serving head of State. The somber mood of the entire



King Bhumibol Adulyadej
1927 - 2016

country, with people wearing black or with a black ribbon pinned on their arms, reflects their great love for their King who, despite coming to power at the tender age of 19, managed to propel the country to new heights. The mourning I was told will last for one year. Thankfully, Human Life International's 21st Asia-Pacific Congress on Faith, Life, and Family (ASPAC) has



been set for November 24-26, 2017, just after the mourning period.

It was primarily to prepare for the 2017 ASPAC that I came to Bangkok. Since the Taiwan, Province of China ASPAC in November 2015, I have received queries from all over the world, asking for details of the Thailand ASPAC.

The 2017 ASPAC is being hosted by the Episcopal Commission for Social Ministries of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Thailand (CBCT). Specifically, it will be led by Caritas Thailand, which is headed by His Excellency Philip Banchong Chaiyara, C.S.S.R., Bishop of Ubon Ratchathani, through its Secretary General Rev. Fr. Rocco Pairat Sriprasert. **Caritas Thailand, formerly known as the Catholic Commission for Human Development, is HLI's long-time affiliate in Thailand.**

My meetings were primarily with Father Pairat and his staff. Father Pairat has been given full authority to coordinate with HLI regarding the ASPAC, and he discussed our plans during the last CBCT Plenary meeting in September 2016 with the Catholic Bishops Conference



The first meeting held to organize the 2017 ASPAC Congress. Pictured in the center is Rev. Fr. Rocco Pairat Sriprasert, together with Mr. Jirawat Chenpasuk, Ms. Lakshmi Kasemwongraj, and Dr. Ligaya A. Acosta, HLI Regional Director for Asia and Oceania.

The primary purpose of this trip was to prepare for the November 2017 ASPAC, which is being hosted by HLI Affilate Caritas Thailand.



of Thailand. The President of the Bishops Conference is His Eminence Francis Xavier Cardinal Kriengsak Kovithavanij, Archbishop of Bangkok. Thankfully, the Cardinal has given assurance that he will attend the ASPAC and will be the celebrant and homilist for the opening Mass. All the bishops of Thailand will be invited to concelebrate the Mass with His Eminence. Those unable to attend themselves are asked to send delegates from their respective dioceses.

After some discussion and visits to various site options, it was decided that **the ASPAC will be held at Baan Phu Waan, the Archdiocese of Bangkok's Pastoral Training Center.** The center has 180 guest rooms with twin accommodations, five fully equipped conference rooms, five common rooms for workshops and recreation, two dining rooms, a museum, a library, a magnificent chapel, and two grand function rooms that can accommodate over 500 participants. Foreign participants will be given priority in the accommodations. Local participants needing accommodations will be housed in other hotels and Catholic centers in the

surrounding area, all within walking distance to the venue. Baan Phu Waan, translated into English as "House of the Sower of the Seed," is located in the region of Nakhon Pathom, an hour away from the city center of Bangkok. Being a Catholic Center, it gives special package deals for Catholic events like the ASPAC. The center and its facilities can be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLLB2ZXmVvI.

After a meeting with the center's manager and key staff, we decided to book the entire venue from November 23, the official check-in date through November 27, the official check-out date. We choose four nights accommodation rather than the usual three to solve participants' perennial problem of where to stay on the night of the last day and to ensure that everyone will stay until the end of the program.

To cover cost however, the registration fee will be increased from \$300 (USD) to \$350. As usual, this cost will include three meals and two snacks per day, airport shuttles, as well as dinner on November 23 and breakfast on November 27. Participants will also be treated with the traditional bonus cultural show in the evening of the second day of the conference and a city tour in the afternoon of the third day, courtesy of our hosts. Each day will start with the recitation of the rosary and Mass (except for the last day when Mass is reserved for the closing), and each day will end with Eucharistic adoration, calling for prayer in reparation for abortions done all over the world.

As usual the 21st ASPAC promises three full days of intellectual, social, and spiritual nourishment in the company of like-minded people from all over the world, with distinguished international and local speakers. Formerly held yearly, the ASPAC is now held every two years. (The 19th ASPAC was held in Kota



The 2017 ASPAC will be held at Baan Phu Waan, the Archdiocese of Bangkok's Pastoral Training Center.

Kinabalu, Malaysia in 2013.) This new schedule makes it easier for returning participants to save for the event. Attendees at the ASPAC include Church authorities — usually including a Vatican representative — clergy, religious, lay leaders, and other people wanting to learn more about promoting and defending Life, Faith, and Family.

We ask for prayers for this major event in Asia and Oceania, as well as help from generous benefactors who may want to sponsor bishops, priests, nuns, and lay leaders who desire to attend but lack the financial capability to do so. Most countries in the region still belong to the third world, and thus are in need of assistance. The commitment and zeal of our leaders though can never be discounted.

The ASPAC has produced and inspired countless committed promoters and defenders of the Life, Faith, and Family. Many times during the same Congress, I have people coming to me saying, “I honestly came thinking it was an opportunity for me to have a vacation abroad, but now after hearing the talks, I can’t sleep thinking what I can do to help in the cause.” One proof of this is **Mayor Sally Lee of Sorsogon City, Philippines, who after attending the 19th ASPAC in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, declared her city a “Pro-Life City.”** To this day, Mayor Sally, despite great pressure, has refused to accept contraceptives in her city.

I will also never forget the ASPAC in Kazakhstan when my interpreter suddenly burst into tears while translating for my talk, “Understanding Abortion: The Global Holocaust.” She told me later she had had five abortions, and it was only then that she realized the full humanity of the children she aborted. From the stage at many congresses, I have seen a lot of tears from participants hearing our talks especially on abortion. In Korea, an ambassador came up to me after my talk and said, “I have always avoided talks on abortion. Now that I have heard you speak, I vow to do something to promote life and family in my country.” The ASPAC also produces new committed leaders and groups, such as the Doctors for Life in the Philippines, inspired by the 2010 ASPAC held in that country; and the now active pro-life group in Taiwan, Province of China, inspired by the pro-life training

and ASPAC HLI conducted there in 2015. The countless inspiring stories from the ASPACs inspire us to continue offering these congresses in countries all over Asia and Oceania, despite the many challenges.

God is good and God is great indeed. I am forever grateful to all the generous benefactors of Human Life International, without whom we cannot do what we are doing. Please know that every single cent you give to HLI is multiplied a thousand times with our committed selfless service around the world.

While I always give back to God all the glory, I offer you the countless lives and souls saved as well as lives and hearts touched, with the life-saving mission of HLI. In my many prayers each day, I always thank God for you and beg for His protection, guidance, and care for you and your family. While I may never have the chance to meet you in person, please know that I remember you in my prayers each day, often with tears in my eyes, knowing full well how much you also sacrifice your resources to help us continue the mission.

May everything we do glorify

Invite Father Boquet
or another HLI expert
to speak at your parish!

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**Host a weekend mission on how to rebuild
a Culture of Life, featuring an HLI speaker!**

MISSIONARY TRIP TO ZIMBABWE

By Emil Hagamu, Regional Director of Anglophone Africa, November 2016

Zimbabwe is known for her firm support of life and family issues. President Robert Mugabe has spoken very strongly against any move to legalize abortion in his country or to condone homosexual behavior. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe has many problems, including a decreasing population, which is currently at 13 million people. This is due in large part to migration. According to local sources, there are 1 million Zimbabweans currently living in the United Kingdom. About 3 million are living and working in South Africa, and a half million are in Botswana and Zambia. The population has also decreased because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. **The current rate, according to local reports, is 14.7%.** Another reason for the decline in population is that so many women have embraced the Culture of Death. Contraception and abortifacients are freely advertised and used by most women, and abortion, though not legal, is on the rise, especially among young girls and middle-aged women.

PLANTING THE PRO-LIFE SEED

I arrived in Zimbabwe on November 8, 2016. I was met at the airport by Mrs. Monica Chihambakwe, a mother to six children and HLI's director of the Guadalupe Association of Zimbabwe. On the following day, Monica and I travelled with Veronica Chawasemerwa to Kwekwe, a small town in the southwestern part of the country. We were warmly welcomed by an enthusiastic young priest, Fr. Methuli Moyo, whom I had trained at Chishawasha Major Seminary and who also visited Dar es Salaam for more training in 2014 and

2016. On November 10 we attended Mass at Mary Ward (CJ) Sisters Primary School. A total of 1520 students attended this Mass. I was given the opportunity to introduce the team I traveled with and to introduce HLI and our mission around the globe. Sr. Florence Gandashanga, Superior and Headmistress of the school, was very



impressed with our work and invited us to give more talks at the school in the future. **We left very satisfied that the seeds were planted for the message of life.**

VISITING GWERU DIOCESE

We then travelled to the diocese of Gweru, where Bishop Exavier Munyongani was waiting to meet us. We introduced our mission to him and asked his support for our work in Zimbabwe. Monica introduced the Guadalupe Association and its connection to HLI. She expressed the desire of the Guadalupe Association to work with the Bishops' Conference and related the challenges she has faced. The bishop said that in order for the Guadalupe Association to work with the Bishops' Conference it must register itself under the Bishops' Conference as a Lay Apostolate Organization so it would canonically fall under his department.

Bishop Munyongani commended



Left to right: Veronica Chawasemerwa, Monica Chihambakwe, Emil Hagamu, Bishop Exavier Munyongani of Rweru Diocese, and Fr. Robert Muzingwa.

the work of HLI and was grateful for the pro-life material I gave him. **He especially appreciated HLI's program to seminarians**, convinced that these future pro-life priests would faithfully hand down the deposit of faith according to Church doctrine.

MISSION VISIT TO MASVINGO

We left Gweru for the diocese of Masvingo the following day. There, we were warmly welcomed by Bishop Michael Bhasera, who is the current Bishop Chaiman of Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference. In him we found a true pastor of the Church.

We spent half of the day with him, and he clearly understood and appreciated our message. He had known about the Guadalupe Association for a long time. He advised Monica and Veronica to meet the Secretary General of Bishops' Conference to express their desire to work more closely with the Bishop's Conference. It will be through the Secretary General that the Guadalupe Association will become fully integrated into the Church structure.

We finished our talk around noon, and then stayed for lunch. From there we set off for Harare.

ATTENDING SUNDAY MASS

I joined Monica and her children for Sunday Mass at Assumption of Our Lady Parish in Rhodesville, Greendale, Harare. I was impressed by the homily, in which the priest spoke of Jesus warning his followers that they would face persecution for their beliefs. This brought to mind our own work, for which at times we face persecution from those promoting the Culture of Death. This is very common in the world today. Defenders of life and family are often persecuted for standing for truth.



Emil Hagamu with His Excellency Bishop Michael Bhasera, Veronica Chawasemerwa, and a priest from the diocese of Masvingo.



Primary school children at Mary Ward Kwekwe joyfully listen to Emil Hagamu as he speaks to them of the beauty of human life.

A VISIT TO NYAVA VILLAGE

On Monday, November 14, we travelled to Nyava village, some 60 km (37 miles) north of Harare. I gave a talk to over 600 Nyava high school students on the dignity of human life and the virtue of chastity. **With the help of the fetal models, students were able to understand fetal development.** On the virtue of chastity, I challenged them to live a God-fearing life. I outlined four pillars for a successful student life: prayer, serious studying, sports activities, and work skills. I told them that if they abide

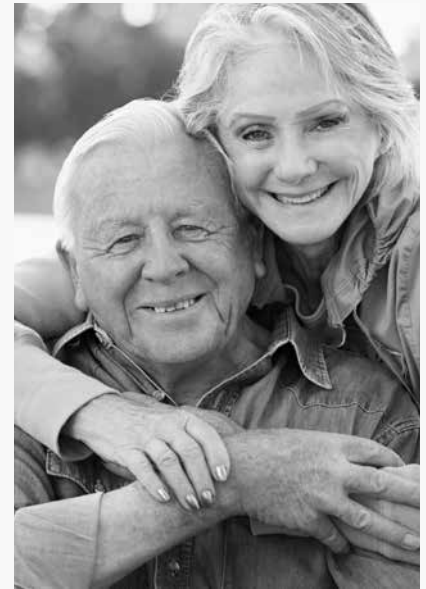
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by those principles, they would be able to defend themselves against the temptation to sin. On the following day I talked to 23 young couples on the consequences of contraceptive use and invited them to learn and live natural methods for child spacing, according to Church teaching.

CHISHAWASHA REGIONAL SEMINARY

At the Chishawasha Regional Seminary, I presented two talks to 183 seminarians, one on "homosexuality and our response to it" and the other on "how the new global ethic is affecting our faith and African traditional life." There were many questions from the seminarians after the presentations. After the talks, seminarians flocked to my table to get copies of my presentations. Two of the seminarians expressed interest in having me come to their own dioceses to give talks.

THE CULTURE OF DEATH

Zimbabwe is home to many anti-life organizations. Capitalizing on the Church's silence in preaching the truth about the Gospel of Life, advocates of the Culture of Death operate freely and have deeply penetrated into the country, including the rural areas. The contraceptive mentality is so engrained in the minds of the people that they think they cannot live without it. For example, I was shocked to find that **the women at Nyava village were resistant to the message on life and were even angry at me when I explained the grave consequences of contraceptive use.** I talked to a number of girls on the streets of Harare about contraception, and they all



Emil Hagamu gives a talk to over 600 Nyava high school students in Zimbabwe.

said categorically that they cannot live without it. Abortion services are also available in Zimbabwe despite the laws against it.

With contraceptives easily available from pharmacies and on the streets, prostitution is practiced by girls as young as 11 years old. Mbale and Domboshawa suburbs are notorious for prostitution. No one tells these women that contraceptives have grave consequences. **This explains the high rate of HIV infection in Zimbabwe.**

After spending two weeks and covering almost one third of the country, and after talking to bishops and priests, I saw clearly that Zimbabwe is in need of HLI's help. The Guadalupe Association of Zimbabwe is present only in Harare and has very limited funding. This leaves room to organizations that promote the Culture of Death with their huge financial resources to operate freely and to silence any opposing voice. Because of this reality, I would like to see three programs put in place, if we are to have an impact in this country: 1) we need to organize a countrywide program to promote a Culture of Life by visiting each diocese; 2) we need a program on natural family planning to be conducted at the diocesan level; and 3) we need to launch a country-wide program to educate people on serious consequences of contraception and abortion. With these programs in place, I am confident we can make an impact in this region and save many souls and lives from the ravages of the Culture of Death.

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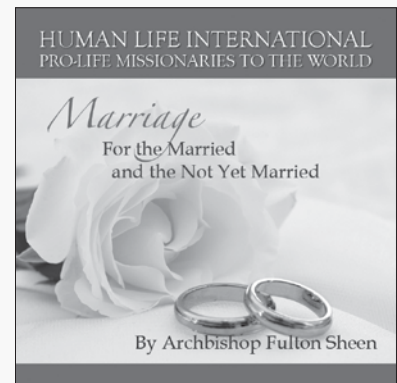
P.S.—This month, in appreciation for your gift of \$53 or more, I'd like to send you an audio CD by Archbishop Fulton Sheen called "Marriage – For the Married and the Not Yet Married."

This CD compiles two talks given by Archbishop Fulton Sheen about marriage. Archbishop Sheen shares his great wisdom about the differences between the expectations of love and marriage from the perspectives of a man and a woman. He also discusses the tensions in the human heart, why they arise, and how they can affect marriage. He reminds all who listen of the famous prayer of St. Augustine: "Our hearts were made for Thee, O Lord; and they are restless until they rest in Thee."

Archbishop Sheen also discusses the immense importance of marriage, especially as it is a symbol of the marriage between Christ and His Church. This is why marriage is held in such a high regard by the Church, why marriage is permanent and divorce is not allowed, and why marriage is between one man and one woman.

At a time when marriage is under attack in our society, **I hope this talk will inform you and give you the confidence to speak out in defense of marriage** as it is defined by the Church and by the natural law.

Please send your gift of \$53 or more to HLI this month, and let us rush this wonderful CD talk out to you!



The audio CD by Archbishop Fulton Sheen called "Marriage – For the Married and the Not Yet Married" is our gift to you this month in appreciation for your financial support of \$53 or more!