



# Mission Report

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Mario Rojas thanking Bishop José Saúl Grisales on behalf of HLI for the 18th REDESSVIDA Congress in Ipiales, Colombia.

- \* **A Joyful Spirit: the 22nd ASPAC in “God’s Country”**
- \* **Teaching the Truth of Science and Ethics in Costa Rica**
- \* **HLI Pro-Life Training Course Makes an Impact in Colombia**
- \* **This Month’s Gift to Donors: the audio CD *How to Open the Eyes of the Blind* by Fr. Shenan J. Boquet.**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Webster’s dictionary defines the word *impact*, as that which “has a direct effect on something or someone”. I believe this definition best summarizes the missionary activities of HLI, which you make possible through your prayers, support, and sacrifices. Because of you and our dedicated team of global pro-life and family leaders, we are influencing cultures, societies, and individuals – making an *impact* that is saving lives and families from the violence of the Culture of Death.

In last month’s *Mission Report*, I mentioned I would provide an update on HLI’s 22<sup>nd</sup> Asia Pacific Congress on Faith, Life, and Family (ASPAC), held in Kerala, India. I hope you followed me on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and were able to see firsthand all that happened during the impactful three-day event. (Also, you can read Dr. Ligaya’s full report on ASPAC next month in our April edition of *Mission Report*.)

The international congress hosted nearly 600 participants, representing 19 countries with the majority coming from across the great country of India. Participants included bishops, priests, religious men and women, doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, families, and young adults (many from Jesus Youth). I even met a 14-year-old young man named Austin, who traveled over 12 hours by bus from Bangalore in order to participate in the Congress. His overflowing enthusiasm and commitment to furthering the Culture of Life was mirrored in the joy and passion of each participant. **Despite the challenges and battles we face in serving life and the family, I was truly amazed and touched by the joyful spirit of the Congress.**

The overall theme of the congress centered upon the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Evangelium Vitae*. Every day there was Holy Mass – either in the Latin Rite or the Syro-Malabar Rite – celebrated by one of the bishops in attendance. Each 12-hour day was packed with presentations and breakout sessions, all aimed at inspiring,

Over, please



Fr. Shenan J. Boquet  
President



His Eminence George Cardinal Alencherry gives an address at HLI's 22nd Asia Pacific Congress on Faith, Life, and Family (ASPAC), held in Kerala, India. See next month's edition of *Mission Report* for the full story.

educating, and affirming each participant with a deeper knowledge of the issues affecting life and family, while also strengthening them to continue *to fight the good fight* – to give their all to the service of the Gospel of Life. Even during tea and coffee breaks, our team was bombarded with questions. **There was such hunger and desire for the truth. Your faithful commitment helped provide the opportunity for these questions to be answered and encouragement to be offered.**

It was appropriate that the 22<sup>nd</sup> ASPAC be held in Kerala, since it is known as “God’s Country”, having the greatest number of Indian Catholics and Christians. There are over 19.9 million Catholics in India, with 174 dioceses, representing around 1.55% of the total population. In each of my missions to India, I have experienced great enthusiasm among the Catholic population, which is self-evident in the number of Catholic churches being built and the growth in size of Catholic families. The Faith is indeed growing, and your dedication to spreading the Gospel of Life enables HLI to be of support to the bishops and Church in India – to make an *impact*.

In each missionary trip to India, I see such growth. I last visited Kerala in 2016 for the Pro-Vida Congress. Since then, so much has happened in the pro-life and family movement. There is a greater unified effort within the local Catholic Church to integrate bioethics (the teaching on life and family) into all diocesan pastoral activities. This is truly amazing, something

I wish would be evident in every diocese and episcopal conference throughout the universal Church. Of course, this is where HLI makes her greatest contribution.

The Christian Faith, it is traditionally believed, was first brought to this wondrous land by the Apostle, St. Thomas, who sailed to India in 52 A.D., landing at the port of Muziris, in modern-day Kerala state, where there was a Jewish community at the time. **Here, St. Thomas, in response to Jesus’ mandate “to go out to the whole world and to proclaim the Good News”, spent 20 years evangelizing and proclaiming the Gospel.** It is also here that he was martyred, giving his ultimate witness to the Gospel of Life. The bone of the right hand of the martyred saint is conserved in a reliquary at the church in Azhikode in Kodungallur, where St. Thomas first arrived by ship. I had the privilege of visiting this shrine on the final day of the Congress, where I prayed for you and the success of our global mission.

Pope St. John Paul II courageously proclaimed in *Evangelium Vitae* that, “what is urgently called for is a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life”. With your continued prayers and support, we will make his words a reality, not only in India, but also in every corner of the world.

Yours in Christ and Our Lady,

Fr. Shenan J. Boquet  
President, Human Life International



# HLI's Latin American Network of Priests and Seminarians for Life (REDESSVIDA)

By Nancy Tosi, HLI Advisor for Latin American Missions, October 2019

Two important congresses, the third National REDESSVIDA Congress of Colombia and the 18th International REDESSVIDA Congress, were held in Ipiales, Colombia, on October 16-18, 2019. Attendees included priests, religious men and women, seminarians, and members of the laity from several Latin American dioceses. Despite political issues in Ecuador which complicated the travel plans of many, including several of our speakers, about 100 people attended the Colombian Congress, and 240 participants made it to the International Congress. *"The Family, the Domestic Church, is the Temple of the Holy Ghost"* was the theme for the 2019 Congresses.

For over a year, we have been working closely with Bishop José Saúl Grisales and members of his Diocese of Ipiales preparing for these congresses. While he was yet a priest in the Diocese of Sonsón Rionegro, then-Fr. Grisales completed the HLI Pro-Life Training Course. After he was ordained a bishop, **Bishop Grisales decided that all parish priests in the Diocese of Ipiales, along with representatives of the laity from each parish, should take the Pro-Life Course.** We were overjoyed to award certificates of completion to 320 people during the congresses!

Having several participants already familiar with the related teachings of the Catholic Church concerning the defense and promotion of life and family proved to be very helpful as we tackled these issues in greater depth during congress seminars. In fact, our HLI team has decided to encourage more dioceses to take the



Pro-Life Course in preparation for attending future congresses.

When faithful Catholics are gathered together, good initiatives often spring forth. A beautiful example of this oc-



Bishop José Saúl Grisales, the HLI team, and 30 religious sisters attending the 18th REDESSVIDA Congress.

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## Many priests are now placing a greater emphasis on making sure their parishioners are well informed regarding Catholic teaching on life, marriage, and the family.

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curred when a woman I met several years ago introduced me to a gentleman who, after a personal encounter with God, now feels called to set up a foundation to help pregnant women. This generous soul has asked for our guidance and help with his project. The same gentleman also plans to work with his bishop and encourage him to host the REDESSVIDA Congress in the future.

Following the congresses, several priests have thanked us for the positive impact REDESSVIDA has made on their lives and on their priestly ministries. Many priests are now placing a greater emphasis on making sure their parishioners are well informed regarding Catholic teaching on life, marriage, and the family. **Several have expressed an interest in taking our Pro-Life Course and/or promoting it within their parishes.**

As an HLI team, we declared that the 2019 REDESSVIDA Congresses were successful! The information presented was comprehensive and well balanced, demonstrating that the findings of scientific research (medical and psychological studies, and statistical data)



100 priests and seminarians attended the REDESSVIDA Congress.

support the wisdom in living according to the teaching of the Catholic Church – respecting the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family. We extend our thanks to you, our donors, who help to make these worthwhile programs succeed!

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# Witness to Impact: Sr. Kathleen Fleming of Sri Lanka

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

Sr. Kathleen is an amiable religious sister from Sri Lanka, whom I have known since October 2005, when she helped organize an HLI speaking tour in her country. Since that first encounter, she has been a great friend and mission partner, as well as a consistent attendee at HLI's ASPAC conferences, bringing others with her to experience the truth of the Gospel of Life. Gaining much inspiration from the congresses, Sr. Kathleen says she is always grateful for the ability to share her knowledge with the people she serves.

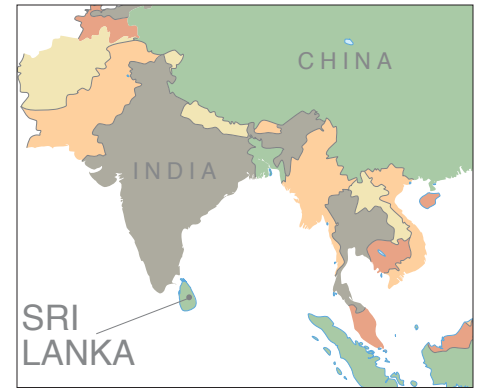
Sr. Kathleen is a testimony to the life-changing work of the Holy Spirit through HLI. Read on to see what Sr. Kathleen herself says:

*"I was happy that HLI visited Sri Lanka, as it had a great impact on the people. From then on, we really got various groups working on the ground, and I have been attending many programs and congresses organized by HLI, gaining a lot of knowledge for myself, which I try to impart among many of our people here in Sri Lanka."*

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**Sr. Kathleen is just one among the countless people around the world whose lives are changed by the mission of HLI.**

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*"Indeed, I feel very happy that I am able to do something to promote life. So I teach young couples to be joyful in generosity with Our Lord, to value life and children, and to be open to having more children instead of giving in to fear merely because of their financial status. Recently we had another program with young women who were really touched about things we taught them, especially regarding abortion. They said 'Sister, we will try not to promote abortion here in our areas.' So I'm very thankful to HLI. I really come to the ASPAC conferences because I know I will gain a lot of valuable knowledge, thinking always of bringing back and promoting this knowledge among the family apostolates here so they will also be inspired to be involved. I'm very happy for all that I receive and I eagerly look forward to attending future HLI congresses. Thank you, HLI."*

With the inspiration she has been receiving from her attendance at HLI congresses, Sr. Kathleen hopes that in the near future they will be able to host an ASPAC in Sri Lanka. Please help us pray for this intention, as



Sr. Kathleen (right, in white habit), with other participants of the 22nd ASPAC in Kerala, India, January 2020.

discussions are currently underway, with Sr. Kathleen at the forefront!

Our dearly beloved benefactors of Human Life International, Sr. Kathleen is just one among the countless people around the world whose lives are changed by the mission of HLI. Because they are touched and are convicted about the mission to promote Life, Faith, and Family, they multiply themselves and HLI's missionaries by sharing their revelations and realizations, enlightening countless others.

All of these good things happen because you make it possible! Your generous donations allow us to do what we do, to travel wherever God sends us into the world, to proclaim the Gospel of Life.

May God reward you and your loved ones with love, joy, peace, and good health!

God bless and keep you always.

## Mission to Costa Rica

*By Raymond de Souza, HLI Delegate for International Missions, November 2019*

In November 2019, on behalf of HLI, I took part in a diocesan conference in the town of Santa Clara, within the Diocese of Quesada, Costa Rica. The pro-life group which organized the conference was named *Opciones Heróicas*, "Heroic Options", and was headed by a young Catholic full of enthusiasm for the Cause of Life. Our conference was held at a compound owned by the Bishops' Conference, and about 250 people were in attendance.



One of the speakers was Dr. Pilar Mercado Calva, a geneticist trained by Servant of God, Dr. Jerome Lejeune, the renowned Catholic geneticist whose cause for sainthood is currently being postulated. During the conference presentations, Dr. Mercado summarized some of Dr. Lejeune's teachings, including his famous saying: contraception is to make love without making a child, whereas artificial (in vitro) fertilization is to make a child without making love, and both acts are incompatible with Natural Law. This distinction impressed the entire congregation despite their diverse backgrounds.

In another of her presentations, Dr. Mercado pointed out that, as a

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Raymond de Souza, HLI Delegate for International Missions (right), with His Excellency Bishop José Manuel Garita Herrera, and Dr. Pilar Mercado.



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## Bishop Garita emphasized that his flock must strengthen their commitment to support the Culture of Life through stable marriages and an openness to children.

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scientist, medical and scientific acts must not be separated from ethics; **science should be at the service of the person, not the person at the service of science.** Moreover, science should be limited by respect for laws proper to nature.

Dr. Mercado covered with great clarity the proper role of science in aiding the ill and infirm. Scientists need to persevere in battling against illness. It is not a triumph, but rather an act of cowardice, to cast aside the ill or to become discouraged at not having found a cure.

I spoke on the great battle of our time, the Culture of Life verses the Culture of Death, using Pope St. John Paul II's



Around 250 attendees at the diocesan conference in Santa Clara, Costa Rica.

## April 2020 Events

### Please Pray for HLI's Mission Work in April:

- March 21-April 7: Nancy Tosi, Fr. Shenan J. Boquet, Mario Rojas, Luis Martinez, and Cecilia Rodriguez will be in Torreón, El Salto, and Durango, Mexico, for three missions and a conference at the Durango VidaFest.
- April 14-29: Nancy Tosi will be on mission in Bolivia.
- April 15-25: Dr. Ligaya Acosta, Fr. Shenan J. Boquet and Dr. Brian Clowes will be on mission in Japan for pro-life trainings to seminarians and lay leaders.
- April 21-29: Emil Hagamu will be on mission in Namibia. The itinerary includes a two-day seminar to 40 pro-lifers on life and family issues with Bishop Joseph Shikongo of Rundu Vicariate officially opening the seminar, a two-day pro-life talk to 50 Catholics that will include lay faithful, religious women, and parish leaders, a one day seminar to 30 members of St. Mary's Parish in Rundu Town, and a one-day talk to seminarians at St. Charles Lwanga Major Seminary.

**Watch for details of these events in future issues of HLI's *Mission Report*.**

encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*. I also spoke on the promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which provide hope and encouragement.

It was clear the Holy Spirit was moving many hearts, as many young people sought information and advice during the breaks between sessions, which we were happy to provide even though time was limited.

Pro-life conferences in Latin America often end with the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, with the celebrant commenting on the Gospel of the day and sometimes applying it to the defense of life. The closing Mass for this conference was no exception; however, what caught me by surprise was that our celebrant, Bishop José Manuel Garita Herrera, spent most of his sermon elaborating on concepts from the presentations that Dr. Mercado and I had given during the conference. In his homily, **Bishop Garita emphasized that his flock must strengthen their commitment to support the Culture of Life through stable marriages and an openness to children.** He warned them to be vigilant against the Culture of Death, which is stealthily penetrating Latin America, resulting in declining birth rates.

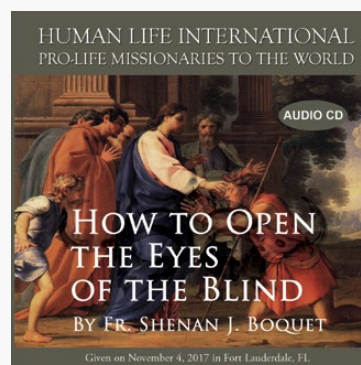
We pray that through the Holy Spirit, many will continue to live and promote fidelity to the Catholic Church's teaching concerning life and family by upholding integrity in science and ethics. Thank you for your support which allows us to educate so many people, and provides us with the opportunity to meet and form new pro-life advocates.

## 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 **How to Open the Eyes of the Blind** by Fr. Shenan J. Boquet.

In this talk, Fr. Boquet discusses the parallels of modern man's blindness to that of the men of Christ's time. Father reminds us how "They came to Christ and asked Him, 'Are you the one?' Then Christ responds with the words of Isaiah: 'The blind see, the deaf hear, the mute speak, the crippled walk, and the dead are brought to life.'" This is a parallel with today. We, too, are dealing with a deafness, a hard-heartedness in our culture. If this isn't a baby, how can someone sell its body parts? The evil one has used this to deepen his darkness. This great Campaign for Life is here to open others' eyes, and pierce through the callous, self-righteous abortion mentality.

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



**How to Open the Eyes of the Blind is our gift to you this month when you donate \$53 or more.**