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Pro-Life Missionaries to the World

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- ★ **The Philippines Suffers the Sharpest Population Decline in Asia**
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- ★ **75% of Cuban Babies are Aborted!**
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Dear HLI Friends and Supporters,

In this month's *Special Report*, Brian Clowes shows the stark contrast between the Death Peddlers' plans for the Philippines and the pro-life resistance in that Catholic land. Plus, Joseph Meaney reports on a missionary trip that he and I made together to Cuba, where Pro-Vida Cuba is planting pro-life seeds for the future by training seminarians and medical students. Finally, we have included in this issue the homily that I was privileged to deliver at the First Anniversary Memorial Mass for Terri Schiavo.

HLI MISSIONARY TRIP TO THE PHILIPPINES—Reported by Brian Clowes, June 8-18, 2006

The Culture of Death has certain characteristics that pro-lifers recognize in cultures and countries all over the world. To begin with, **the anti-lifers simply cannot leave people alone to just live their lives as they wish.** The population controllers and other anti-lifers are *fanatic meddlers* who are absolutely driven to impose their will upon every human being on earth. **Population control is the most fanatical of the various anti-life philosophies.** No matter how underpopulated a nation, no matter how much it needs *other* assistance, the anti-lifers force their "one size fits all" philosophy on everyone. Human Life International's pro-life missionaries have traveled to the most remote villages imaginable—places like Kenya, Sri Lanka and New Zealand—and **Planned Parenthood and the**

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other population control groups have already been there, preaching their warped gospel of sterility and biophobia.

Another characteristic of the Culture of Death is that it defiles, corrupts, and blemishes everything it touches, destroying innocence, chastity, purity, and truth. It is like a cup of grimy, black motor oil poured into a pristine pond. It quickly spreads out and makes everything filthy and squalid. Absolutely nothing escapes its polluting influence, and the only defense against it is eternal and hawk-like vigilance and a determination to stop it at its very source. **Acceptance of even the tiniest portion of the anti-life agenda is invariably fatal to a nation's soul and well-being.**

THE LAST BASTION

The Philippines, the most Catholic nation in the world, has been under intensive attack by the population controllers for decades. Since the 1960s, the anti-natalist propagandists have been trumpeting their doctrine of smaller families, and the Filipinos have unfortunately been listening to their message. According to the United



Nations Population Information Network, or POPIN, the average married Filipino woman had 7.3 children in the 1950s. Now she has just 2.6 children, **a plunge of 64 percent**, one of the sharpest declines in Asia. POPIN predicts that the country's total fertility rate, or TFR, will sink below the replacement rate of 2.1 in just five years, and will continue to decline to a disastrously low 1.35 in just 30 years.

Is the Philippines better off than before due to the billions of dollars that have been spent in trying to limit its population? Is it a richer nation now that it has accepted the Western ideal of small families?

No way. There are still millions of poor in the Philippines, most without electricity, clean drinking water, and even the most basic education or health care. **The Western "solution" has only made large poor families into small poor families.** But this is all right, according to the United States in its *National Security Study Memorandum 200*. This document specifically targets 13 nations (one being the Philippines), stating that the USA must hold down the population of the developing world in order to have easier access to its natural resources.

NSSM-200 also says, "No country has reduced its population growth without resorting to abortion." Despite the fact that they comically refer to themselves as "pro-choice," the anti-lifers have legalized abortion in more than 100 countries of the world without once asking the people what *they* want or what *they* need. Since the people find them and their comprehensive agenda repugnant, they always use force and deception, as they are doing today in the Philippines.

THE DEATH BILL

For eight years, anti-lifers have been pushing House Bill 3773 in the Philippines, which would:

- guarantee universal access to "reproductive health care services," including contraception, abortifacients, and sterilization;
- mandate comprehensive sex education for all school children, from grade 5 to 12, with no opt-out, including all Catholic schools;
- "encourage" a two-child family, with incentives for those families that complied;
- force the Catholic Church to provide contraceptives and abortifacients to its employees, and force it to pay for sterilizations (as always, anti-lifers who push the concept of "separation of Church and state")



Brian gives his talk on “The Population Control Agenda” before 3,500 people in the Ultra Stadium.

have no trouble with the state forcing the Church to violate its teachings);

- provide, at government expense, “reproductive health” vans in each Congressional district that would distribute contraceptives and abortifacients door-to-door; and
- as usual, a large part of this anti-life bill is taken up with describing the severe punishments that will be inflicted upon anyone who does not obediently comply with all elements of the Bill. These include fines of 20,000 pesos, up to six months in prison, deportation, and dismissal from government service.

Pro-lifers in the Philippines refer to this as the **DEATH** bill (**D**ivorce, **E**uthanasia, **A**bortion, **T**otal population control, and **H**omosexuality).

There is nothing religious or Filipino in House Bill 3773. Although Filipino hands may have written the words, **the ideas and ideology originated with the United States Agency for International Development in Washington, D.C., and with the International Planned Parenthood Federation, based in London.** The words “reproductive health” appear 55 times in the seven-page bill, and the words “responsible parenthood” appear 13 times. These are *American and European* terms. In fact, they do not even translate into Tagalog.

After pro-lifers ferociously attacked HB 3773, its supporters issued a laughably inept 13-page defense of their bill. Among the more ridiculous arguments the document contains are the following allegations:

- *Ninety percent* of pregnancies in the Philippines are “unwanted.”
- HB 3773 is not about “population control,” but “population management” [nobody could explain the difference between the two terms to me].
- “Very few women can use NFP effectively” [this is a completely unsupported and irresponsible assertion, seeing as how the “family planner’s bible,” *Contraceptive Technology*, rates NFP more effective than all methods of contraception and *as* effective as abortifacients].
- Making condoms available does not increase sexual behavior [and, if you believe that one, you will also believe that giving kids cars will not increase “driving behavior”].
- The Philippines has a total fertility rate of 3.7, among the highest in the world [POPIN says 2.6]; and
- The population of the Philippines will reach 260 million [POPIN says 107 million].

One of the most frightening provisions of HB 3773 is that, if it is enacted, **the population program would not even be run by the Philippine government.** Instead, it would be operated by a bureaucracy overseen by three non-elected officials from non-governmental organizations like International Planned Parenthood Federation or Family Health International.

PRO-LIFERS FIGHT BACK

The pro-life response to HB 3773 has been vigorous and widespread. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo promised Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, Chairman of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, that she would veto the DEATH bill as “the best birthday gift I can offer you.”

The bishops of the Philippines are setting an example that pro-lifers in the West fervently wish their bishops would follow. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has said that **Catholics**

who promote or use artificial contraception may not receive the Sacraments, and they have instituted the Basic Ecclesiastical Communities seminar, which runs for eight consecutive Sundays. Everyone must receive this course upon entering adulthood, or they may not receive the Sacraments. The seminar includes salvation history, the basics of the Catholic Faith, and intensive information on pro-life and family issues.

Some Catholic politicians refused to take the course, but when one prominent mayor refused the seminar and then died and was refused Catholic burial rites, all government officials in the region hurriedly signed up.

As Sister Regina Arguelles tartly observed, “If you want to be a Catholic, act like one and follow the Church’s teachings.” At HLI, we could not agree more.

COUPLES FOR CHRIST STEPS UP TO THE PLATE

There is one organization that may very well spell the difference between victory or defeat in the Philippines.

Couples for Christ (CFC) was founded in Manila in June 1981 by 16 couples who saw a need for evangelization in many areas of the world. **CFC currently has 1 million members worldwide in 153 nations**, and it is the only one of 123 ecclesial communities recognized by the Vatican that was originated in Asia.

The organization began with five major pillars of activism: **Pastoral support, evangelization and mission, family ministries, social ministries**, and **Gawad Kalinga**, or outreach to the poor.

Gawad Kalinga is certainly the most visible and impressive of these original five pillars. This involves a comprehensive attack on the **root causes** of poverty. In the West, the solution is simply to pour billions of dollars into anti-poverty programs. After trillions of dollars spent, we have more poor people than ever before. But Couples for Christ have found the answer.

They take applications from young married couples with children under ten years old. **Those who are accepted receive comprehensive training in family business skills**, such as sewing or farming, and also in family life and morality. Then the poor families help build new houses that they can move into in a matter of just a few weeks. These homes are two stories high and have a room on each floor. They occupy about 200 square feet and are attached row-fashion in brightly colored rows reminiscent of small Tyrolean villages—a far cry from the rust and tin-colored shacks the people used to live in.



Top: One of the brightly-colored Gawad Kalinga villages, a far cry from the rust- and tin-colored shums the people used to live in.

Left: Entrance to the Santo Nino-South Florida Gawad Kalinga village.

The impact of Gawad Kalinga has been amazing. So far, **Couples for Christ has built more than 1,000 of these villages all over the Philippines and have saved more than 100,000 families from poverty**. By 2010, CFC hopes to have 700,000 such villages occupied by some three million people who used to be the poorest of the poor. Many of CFC’s *GK* projects are located in the country in order to encourage the poor to move out of the overcrowded cities and into rural areas, where they can more easily make a living (the percentage of the population of the Philippines that lives in cities has increased from less than 30 percent in 1950 to 62 percent currently).

The total cost of permanently solving the poverty problem of a family of four by the *GK* method is about



Mr. Rouquel Ponte of the Couples for Christ leadership kicks off the “God is Love and Love is Life” training conference in the Ultra Stadium in Pasig City, Manila.

\$1,000 US. If the \$20 billion the United States has spent on population control activities had instead been put into programs like *Gawad Kalinga*, every poor Filipino would have been brought out of destitution, and the poverty problem in the Philippines would have been largely solved by now.

In June 2005, the CFC International Council added two more pillars to its activism: **Pro-life** and **special ministries**. The CFC’s pro-life ministry is expansive in scope: to oppose violations against the sanctity of life and the family, including not only abortion, contraception, sterilization, and population control, but also embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, *in-vitro* fertilization, homosexual acts, radical feminism, situational ethics and moral relativism, Godless sex education and values clarification, divorce, redefinition of the family to include homosexual “marriage,” erosion of the rights of parents, pornography, prostitution, substance abuse, consumerism, domestic violence, euthanasia, war, and capital punishment.

Once again, the CFC leadership strikes at the root of the problem. CFC has many pro-life ministries, but the one that seems to encompass them all is the pro-life outreach of Youth for Christ (YFC) and Singles for Christ (SFC)—the 100% Pure Program, which seeks to inoculate the youth against the corrupt values of this world. ***Instead of assuming that our young people are little more than animals, as Planned Parenthood does, the 100% Pure Program trusts them to live up to their God-given potential.*** It teaches kids to resist the many siren calls of the world and refuse to get involved in drug, tobacco, and alcohol use, and such illicit sexual activities as homosexuality, masturbation, the use of pornography, and premarital sex.

Many of CFC’s well-established ministries, including Teodora, the Handmaids of the Lord (widows), the Servants of the Lord (widowers), Sword of Gideon Isaiah 61:1 (Prison Ministry) and its Medical Mission provide the leadership and the direction for all of the group’s pro-life activities.

The CFC pro-life ministry has 10 Board members, including Mr. Frank Padilla, Chairman and President of CFC, Maribel Descallar, President of Teodora, who is also the Pro-Life Executive Director, and Mr. Rouquel Ponte as Vice-Chairman.

HLI TRAINS THE CFC PRO-LIFERS

Mrs. Maribel Descallar had seen Human Life International’s eight-hour *Basic Pro-Life Training Program* in 2003 and thought that it was just what they needed. So the CFC leadership requested that HLI train its people in critical areas around the world.

I began this task by traveling to Vancouver, British Columbia, Toronto, Ontario, and Chicago, Illinois on consecutive weekends in March of this year and training more than 1,000 members of Couples for Christ based in North America.

Then I headed to Manila for the seventh time in ten years to the heart of the ministry of Couples for Christ. The group had promised to assemble such a large crowd that they had rented the Ultra facility in Pasig, an NBA-sized indoor stadium! And CFC certainly delivered on its promise.

During his opening homily before a huge crowd, **Bishop Roberto Mallari, D.D.**, Executive Secretary of the Episcopal Commission on Family Life of the CBCP, said that we should “perceive life through the eyes of God.”

This is a theme that I talk about constantly during the *Pro-Life Basic Training Program*. There are two

Sermon from the First Anniversary Memorial Mass for Terri Schindler Schiavo

By Rev. Thomas J. Euteneuer, *Human Life International*, March 31, 2006

Dearest Mary and Bob, Bobby and Suzanne, and the Schindler and Vitadamo families,

What a supreme honor it is for all of us to be here with you celebrating the memory of Terri on this first anniversary of her passing from death to life. I am particularly grateful that you called me and asked me to come; I am unworthy of this honor, but God wills it, and I dedicate all I do here to the memory of our beloved Terri.

Last night in La Clínica Guadalupana [Clearwater, FL], I met a woman who was visiting from Argentina, and we spoke about Terri, whose saga she had witnessed on TV last year at this time. About one month ago I was in Kenya and had a long conversation with a large group of university students about Terri. They were intensely interested in her and the impact that her death had on our culture. Last year I visited Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Europe and spoke to people in all those places about Terri and her witness.

THE LIVING CRUCIFIX

It is not untrue to say that the *whole world* saw Terri's witness! They saw her through modern means of communication and saw what we all saw: a *living crucifix* set before the eyes of the world to remind us of the fundamental truth of our Faith; namely, that life always conquers death and that no matter how powerful death may claim to be, it is never more powerful than life. This was Terri's unique vocation and message, the thing that she was given to accomplish. God did not will Terri's horrible death. He just permitted it in order that a greater good would be brought out of it; and Terri fulfilled that role perfectly.

My friends, the world right now is awash with

innocent blood. It needs constant repeating that thousands of people die like Terri around the world every year,

the victims of human cruelty and indecency. Even in our own country, I am sure the victims can be counted in the thousands. The statistics about the killing of innocents through abortion hardly need to be recounted: the UN says that somewhere near 60 million surgical abortions every year are performed around the world.

In the face of all this, our Church has taught the truth about these attacks against innocent human life with the highest authority; we have explained it, catechized it, preached it and even at times yelled it from the rooftops, but men are deaf and they adamantly refuse to hear the message. Words and teachings are important, of course, but in a society saturated with information at every turn, men need to *see*. They need images that can convince them of the truth. And so we were given the image of a living crucifix in Terri so that we would not miss the message of man's cruelty and God's mercy; and there is nothing the devil hates more than a crucifix, especially a living one!

LIGHT VS. DARKNESS

Indeed, with the total outpouring of grace and prayer during that time, God shed His divine light on the experience to set in bold relief the contrast between life and death, light and darkness. The grace of Terri's death showed the world the contours of good and evil in clear light: we saw innocence and beauty confronted with the ugly arrogance and brutality of people like Michael Schiavo and George Felos. Truth was set off in bold relief from the despicable lies and distortions and manipulations of the promoters of euthanasia. We saw



Terri's powerlessness set in stark contrast to the raw abuse of power by the likes of George Greer and others. And in this past year the distinctions have been made even clearer as was shown by the recent interview of Michael by Matt Lauer. Even Matt Lauer was not buying his lies and deceptions.

WE WILL REMEMBER

But the memory of one who was so conformed to the dying of Christ will endure long after the memory of the cruelty has faded. Hers will be an enduring legacy and memory because she was so united to that Crucifixion, an image that can never be erased in the hearts of men. We will never forget Terri!

Oh yes, history will also record the Judas who sold the innocent one for thirty pieces of silver. It will remember the Pontius Pilate who sat in judgment on an innocent woman and three times condemned her to death. It will remember the pharisaic lawyer who agitated the crowds, manipulated perceptions, and declared solemnly to the world that it was "expedient" that this one woman die for the sake of humanity. And we will certainly remember that pathetic and absent clergy who like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane acted in unison for the first time when, as the Gospel relates, "they all forsook him and fled" (Mk 14:50).

There were some courageous exceptions to the clerical cowardice though, and our dear Msgr. Thaddeus Malanowski [the main celebrant of the Mass] who stood by that Calvary with the Schindler's is most to be commended and thanked for his great pastoral concern during all those years of Terri's passion. The likes of Fr. Pavone, Fr. Johanson, Fr. Pecchie [the pastor of the parish where the Mass took place], and our dear Franciscan brothers will live as an enduring legacy and testament to those who did not abandon Terri in her need.

STANDING AT THE CROSS

The negative testimonies, however, will be eclipsed by the image of John and Mary and the other disciples who stood at the foot of the Cross

of the innocent one. Bob and Mary, Bobby and Suzanne, and your families: your accompaniment of Terri in her suffering will not be forgotten, nor will your own unique witness, which was and still continues to be nothing short of heroic. I know that the last thing you would want would be any attention drawn to yourselves, but God apportions the role of eyewitness to a few select people, and you were privileged to be there as eyewitnesses of this passion play. Eyewitnesses are always sent out to give testimony to the truth that they have seen, and by all accounts you have been relentless for the past year in making this truth known to the world. We are so blessed by your zeal and commitment to this work, and undoubtedly God will continue to bless and expand your mission. We pray for that!

The negative memories will also be eclipsed by the gratitude we have for Terri's defenders who, like the holy women that accompanied Jesus to Calvary, were powerless to stop the killing but gave Him their voice and their presence so that the world would know that not all were in agreement with this evil. Some thousands came from literally every state in the nation to stand in solidarity with Terri, not even knowing her, but with full compassion for her suffering. Others, like Nicodemus

who stood up in the midst of the Sanhedrin, confronted the crowd of Pharisees and defended her honor forcefully: men like Glenn Beck, Sean



Fr. Tom with Mary and Bob Schindler.

Hannity, Randall Terry, Fr. Pavone, Pat Buchanan, and my goodness, even Jesse Jackson!

HOPE LEADS US ON

Hope is the one of the three Theological Virtues (1 Cor 13:13) and is described as an anchor firmly affixed in the sanctuary of the Temple of heaven with a chain that stretches down from heaven to

earth to give us one thing that will never change or be moved while all of life may be crumbling down around us. It is the virtue that helps us to make sense of all the sufferings of life and to relativize them with a vision of heaven. It does not minimize suffering but gives us the necessary endurance to deal with it in a Christian way. It applies an eternal view of things to all the hardships of life so that we will not despair in the short term and will continue looking up to the one place where we can find help; namely, in God.

We now look to the future with eyes full of bright hope. Yes, it's dark and it seems that the storm is worsening, as euthanasia and other evils gain a stronger foothold in our societies. We certainly know that we will be fighting the culture of death for a very long time, both in this country and abroad. But in that darkness we have a light, we have Terri's light and hope to guide us into the future.

All we have to do now is to lift high her Cross and show the world the living crucifix that Terri has become for us. We need to constantly proclaim the hope that she represents for our world, a hope which defiantly proclaims that Christ has conquered death and that the culture of death will never have the last word! Indeed, with Terri's light we have ultimate hope that we will transform "this present darkness," (Eph 6: 12), this culture of death, into a culture of life for all mankind.

And let us finally pray that God will grant us the grace to persevere, like Terri, to the very end and to that blessed Day when Christ will bring us home to see Terri again face to face.

May God bless you!

(This sermon was given at St. Patrick Church in Largo, FL on the first anniversary of Terri Schindler Schiavo's death in the presence of her family and many friends. We offer our gratitude to Fr. Paul Pecchie, pastor, for his courtesy in hosting the Mass.)

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ways of looking at the world: through the limited eyes of man and the infinite and eternal eyes of God. If we look at things through our physical eyes, we see the Philippines as just another of the more than 100 "third world" nations scattered all over the earth. But, if we look at the world through the eyes of almighty God, we see that **the Philippines is really the only "first world" nation on earth in a spiritual sense.** Ireland and Poland have slid into "second world" status and are not even replacing their populations. Almost all of the rest of the "developed" world, including North America, Oceania, and Europe, are mired in a kind of spiritual "third world."



Bishop Roberto Mallari gives the opening talk at the conference.

I emphasized that Couples for Christ, a very large and superbly organized group, are perfectly suited to battling the Culture of Death all over the world, for two reasons:

1. CFC is ideally situated to carry out the Great Commission. More than 11 million Filipinos, half a million of whom are CFC members, live outside their homeland; and
2. CFC is well organized already, a million-strong Filipino army just waiting to be sent into battle to defend their homeland against all of the elements of the DEATH bill.

I carried this message to thousands more enthusiastic CFC members in Davao City and Cebu City. One

of the points I emphasized over and over is that divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia will only make all of CFC's other ministries more difficult. The more effort CFC puts into resisting the DEATH Bill and other anti-life initiatives, the easier its overall evangelistic mission will be. **Divorce, homosexuality, euthanasia, and abortion have not improved the standard of living in the United States, nor have they even begun to touch the problem of poverty.** Instead, we have more broken families than ever before, and this leads directly to increased poverty, ill health, crime, lack of education, and a huge galaxy of apparently insoluble problems. This, of course, is how the Devil always works. He promises you everything, then betrays you.

CONCLUSION

Couples for Christ, a huge, highly organized and fervently Catholic group, is ready to take the leadership role in the grassroots pro-life movement in the Philippines. Human Life International stands ready to provide the training and expertise CFC needs in order to jump-start this most critical ministry.

During this 10-day journey, I traveled more than 20,000 miles, gave 12 hours of talks to more than 8,000 people, did a vast amount of networking, and, perhaps most importantly, learned that, when Sister Mary Pilar Verzosa of the Religious of the Good Shepherds tells you not to eat the raw fish, *you do not eat the raw fish!* 卍

HLI MISSIONARY TRIP TO CUBA—Reported by Joseph Meaney, May 28-June 4, 2006

My images of Cuba came from the 1950s and early 1960s: Fidel Castro, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Che Guevara, etc. In fact, Fr. Tom Euteneuer and I discovered on our HLI missionary trip a country frozen in time, but also one where the ice is starting to crack and crumble. We drove throughout Havana in a 1953 Plymouth and saw many buildings in the city on the verge of collapsing. Most heartbreaking is the moral decay, which is illustrated by the fact that **three children die from abortion for every one Cuban born.** The Pearl of the Caribbean is in desperate need of conversion from an abortion culture that is so institutionalized "it is in the air the Cubans breathe."



In response to this pervasive culture of death, **Pro-Vida Cuba** (Pro-Life Cuba) began in July 1995, during a visit of Father Paul Marx. The movement has the support of the National Cuban Bishops Conference, which approved its bylaws. Pro-Vida Cuba functions as a lay movement, within the Lay Ministry of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of Cuba, whose president is Bishop Emilio Aranguren of Holguín. Pro-Vida Cuba has working groups distributed among 10 of the 11 dioceses in the country. For the past 11 years, Pro-Vida Cuba has been actively working in defense of life within the Catholic Church in Cuba and through it with the Catholic people. Because it is a movement of the Church, the work is permitted by the civil authorities. Its fundamental limitations are the same as those of the Catholic Church: **it does not have access to the mass media, and it has very limited funding.**

All this served as a foundation for Pope John Paul II's historic missionary journey in 1998. **For the first time since the 1959 Marxist Revolution, huge public Masses and assemblies were held, and all the Catholic events aired on the state-controlled television.**¹ Fr. Tom and I came, following in the Holy Father's footsteps and at the invitation of the Catholic Church and Pro Vida Cuba, for their national leaders' meeting. Many of the young leaders of Pro Vida Cuba told us they had entered the Church after being inspired by John Paul II's message of love.

I was struck by one doctor's pro-life conversion story: At a Sunday Mass he heard a homily by a pro-life priest, forcefully condemning abortion and birth control, especially abortifacients such as the intra-uterine

¹ I learned that since the papal visit in 1998, Christmas is once again a holiday in Cuba.

device (IUD). Because of a lack of religious instruction, he was ignorant that the Church condemns all forms of artificial contraception. The doctor spoke to the priest and later to the directors of Pro Vida Cuba, Drs. Hector and Conchita Gonzalez, *and now he is the leader of the pro-life apostolate in Pinar del Rio Diocese*. This testimony drove home to me the immense value of having priests proclaim the Church's teachings in defense of life and chastity from the pulpit.

The pro-life movement in Cuba is young and highly educated. They work heroically in extremely difficult circumstances and achieve successes like converting an abortionist who stopped aborting after 20 years! We spoke to many medical professionals, both pro-life and not. Some are experts in Natural Family Planning. They frequently work closely with the parishes to provide marriage preparation courses and cooperate with the outreach to youth. In one excellent initiative, **Pro Vida Cuba members have developed a program to fight AIDS using the “abstinence before and fidelity within marriage” message that has proven so effective around the world.** Many women have resisted the pressure to abort and have turned to crisis pregnancy centers, which came into being through the HLI affiliate in Mexico and are staffed by dedicated nuns.



Fr. Tom with the directors of Pro Vida Cuba, Drs. Hector and Conchita Gonzalez.

Fr. Tom and I encouraged the pro-lifers by relating our experiences from the work of HLI on all continents. We also learned why three out of four pregnancies end in abortion in Cuba. Some of the answers startled us.



Joseph Meaney, speaking to medical students.

In Cuba, young married couples frequently live crowded together in the same home with their parents or grandparents because there is no other available housing. Pregnant mothers living in these cramped conditions are sometimes told by their elders that they must abort or leave! Grandchildren are viewed as loud and messy intruders rather than being cherished. The state-controlled medical profession is also oriented against life, as is seen by the most commonly asked question following a positive pregnancy test: “Are you going to keep it?” Doctors are directed to make sure that no children with the slightest risk of handicaps or genetic disorders are born, which leads to intense pressure on pregnant mothers to have abortions. Finally, promiscuous sexuality is taken as a societal norm in Cuba from a very young age, and this message is reinforced in sex education classes and in the public boarding schools in the countryside. Everyone is informed that a free abortion is guaranteed for any unwanted pregnancy.² As can be expected, **IPPF is massively present in Cuba in over 100 government clinics in which they distribute birth control and advise “safe abortion.”**³

Something unique to Cuba, in my experience, were the many billboards announcing the successes of the Revolution and denouncing the “Plan Bush” to destroy all that socialism holds dear. No commercial advertisements are allowed in these spaces, which are reserved for propaganda. This same message is reiterated in all major publications and broadcasts. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent loss of \$4 to \$6 billion in annual economic aid that kept Cuba afloat, Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez has provided petro-dollars to help sus-

² One of the only ways for an abortion to be illegal in Cuba is if the abortionist charges money for the procedure!

³ IPPF’s name in Cuba, *Sociedad Cubana para el Desarrollo de la Familia* (SOCUDEDEF), is a real travesty: Cuban Society for the Development of the Family. http://www.ippf.org/imspublic/IPPF_CountryProfile/IPPF_CountryProfile.aspx?ISOCCode=CU

tain the Cuban economy, which is also supported by the foreign tourist industry. This latter development, which unfortunately includes sexual tourism, is now a fixture of Cuban life again. In the 1950s, many Americans visited Cuban casinos and indulged in vices such as prostitution and abortion.

SIGNS OF HOPE FOR CUBA

One of the genuine highlights of our trip was speaking to the seminarians in Havana from all the dioceses of Cuba. These 50 seminarians represent the future clergy of their nation, which desperately needs them. There are only 300 or so priests in Cuba, despite a population of over 11 million and over 500 years of evangelization.⁴ The young men responded enthusiastically to our pro-life exhortations and had many questions. Thankfully, the formation they are receiving is genuinely Catholic. In fact, we were told that the scourge of Liberation Theology—a condemned Marxist interpretation of both the Bible and the teachings of the Church—never became popular in Cuba, as it did in Latin America. Living in the “worker’s paradise” for a few months changed the thinking of foreign priests and nuns who came to Cuba with these Liberation Theology ideas.

We also met the papal nuncio, **Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi**, who is very interested in promoting the pro-life cause. He told us that the higher echelons of the government are now openly concerned about Cuba’s demographic crisis. They published the statistic that by 2015 Cuba will have more retired pensioners than productive workers. The birthrate dropped by almost half from 1970 to 2004.⁵ This is one area where the Church and State have a common interest: promoting the birth of children. “Patria o Muerte!”—“Country or Death!” is Cuba’s national motto. *Having more children or suffering national death is the choice facing Cuba today.*

Cubans thirst for the truth. The Passion of the Christ film was shown in Churches throughout Cuba the day after its worldwide release. On the other hand, the blasphemous Da Vinci Code movie has yet to come out in Cuba. The book, however, has circulated there, and the 11-year-old granddaughter of Hector and Conchita came home one day with the tale that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalen! They had to explain to her the lies in Dan Brown’s book and set her classmates straight as well. These negative external influences are also a threat in Cuba.

Our last event in Cuba was the Vigil of Pentecost Mass with Cardinal Jaime Ortega y Alamino of Havana. The Cathedral was full of Catholics from many different movements. Pro Vida took its rightful place as one of the most important apostolates of the Church in Cuba. Fr. Tom and I marveled at their enthusiasm, as the people thanked the Holy Spirit for His transforming power and gifts with powerful singing after a three and a half hour ceremony in the steaming tropical heat!

It was a unique trip and one where we felt a bond of prayer with those suffering and striving so courageously. Cubans have a touching national devotion to Our Lady under the title of *La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre*—Our Lady of Charity. The small yet ornate wooden statue of Mary and the Child Jesus, which was discovered floating on the sea in 1612, was taken as a symbol by the earliest leaders and troops in the fight for independence from Spain. John Paul II made a point of going there to crown the statue as queen and mother of



Dr. Conchita Morales, director of Pro Vida Cuba, talks to Cuban seminarians.

⁴ Most foreign-born priests were expelled after the Cuban Revolution, and only a small number have been allowed to enter as missionaries in recent years.

⁵ The numbers cited by Maria del Carmen Franco of the Cuban National Statistics office were 237,079 births in 1970 and only 127,077 in 2004.

all Cubans. We must pray and have faith that through the intercession of Mary, her Son Jesus can and will bring about peace and conversion in Cuba. 🙏

Dear friends, as always, we thank you for your support of our mission, and we remind you to keep in your prayers all of our pro-life friends in Cuba and the Philippines. Be assured of their prayers for you as well, for I know that they are deeply grateful for the sacrifices you make in order to keep our missionaries returning to their countries for the defense of life and family.

May God bless and reward you!

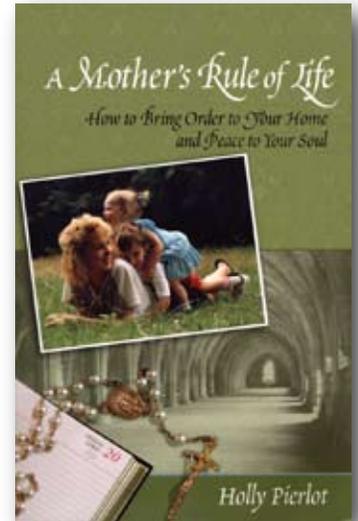
Rev. Thomas J. Euteneuer

Rev. Thomas J. Euteneuer
President

**Yours FREE
with a \$39
donation.**

P.S.—This month I'd like to send you a wonderful resource that *every Catholic mom should read*. (If you're not a mom, I *highly* recommend you give this to one as a gift!) It's the book **A MOTHER'S RULE OF LIFE**, and it is not only inspiring and practical, but can also be life changing!

The subtitle of this book says it all: **“How to Bring Order to Your Home and Peace to Your Soul.”** It is not just for the frazzled, although they might benefit most from it! **It really lays out the mode in which every woman—and every man, for that matter—should live:** thinking life through; prioritizing roles & goals; putting order into your life; scheduling; and faithfully following your personal “Rule.”



It's not as difficult as it might sound! In fact, putting order into your life tends to simplify, not complicate it.

Religious orders have always been based on a Rule. And each order's Rule has been particularized for the vocation to which that order has been called. ***Needless to say, motherhood is a vocation that has its unique qualities and demands.***

But how does one live out this vocation? Without a Rule of Life it can be chaotic and stressful. That is how the author of this book, Holly Pierlot, found her own life before she determined that there must be a better way to live than simply reacting to the urgencies of the day's demands. She did her research, and she found her answer in the age-old, time-tested (and proven) methods that have been perfected by Catholic religious for centuries.

And now the wisdom she gained can be yours! I will send this book to you this month as a special “thank-you” for your gift to HLI of \$39 or more!

Don't wait another day to put order and peace in your life! Learn the secrets of:

- Better understanding your personal roles
- Prioritizing according to what God sees as most important
- Scheduling according to your priorities
- Following faithfully the personal Rule you've created
- Enjoying the peace that comes from a well-ordered life!

Please **send your gift of \$39 or more today**, and don't forget to mark on the reply card that you would like to receive this life-changing book—and may God bless you always for your continued support of our mission!