

Priests for Life
2017 YEARLY REPORT
On the activities of
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Our Blessed Mother warned the three children in Fatima 100 years ago that “Russia would spread her errors” and that the world needs to pray for the “conversion of poor sinners.” We have seen a world 100 years later in 2017 whose connection may not be so obvious to the first phrase, but surely is in the second case. Conversion has always been at the heart of the Gospel message and it is eminently so with Fatima and the mass murders that are perpetrated both in the guise of religion and in the effect of no religion whatever, are if anything a bitter adversity and anger against God – and godliness. And growing.

The “errors of Russia,” unmatched as in Communism’s godlessness, however, have been clearly pointed out by a number of blogs and articles this past year, including Kevin Burke’s blog, drawing attention to not so much Russia but what Russia was morphed into, just days after the greatest natural miracle the world has seen – the miracle of the sun at Fatima, followed by the Soviet Revolution which ousted God from people’s lives at gunpoint. That in turn paved the way to the 1920 Soviet ordinance not only being the world’s first “state” to allow abortion on demand, but to actively encourage it.

When we look at this backdrop of much of the century to follow, not only in Russian lands and their conquests, but even in the West, the “error” of abortion, Our Blessed Mother Mary putting it mildly, has “spread” throughout the world. It has entrenched itself into the psyche of much of the world as well as eliminated billions of God’s unique human beings. To pray for world “conversion” is an inescapable essential need for civilization’s survival. And in some ways the mask of “choice” has torn from the face of this mega-slaughter, this worldwide wholesale elimination of preborn (and some born) babies, by widespread, persistent and increasing legal and social media efforts to expose what *really* happens in the killing centers continuing the “errors” of a past Soviet diabolical system, but now in the US and other Western countries.. The David Deleidens, Melissa Ohdens representing the upsurge of personal grand efforts and the ever-increasing initiatives of states in the USA alone to reverse and contain the “errors” has breathed new hope into the “conversion” our Lady has put forth.

With this connection, I had the opportunity to lead a pilgrimage to Fatima in May just two days before Pope Francis arrived there to canonize the two youngest children officially ever raised to the altar in church history, closest in age to the pre-born, the most innocent children in God’s realm. It was an opportunity to bring home the sober relation between today’s growing atheism and acceptance of abortion on one hand, now quite alive even in the West of civilization; but more, for us pilgrims to admire and emulate the spark of holiness and wisdom granted these children of Fatima, universes away from the schemes of Trotsky and Lenin’s bloody cataclysm. Or Roe v Wade. This pilgrimage was the centerpiece, spiritually, of my year. This included Lourdes as well, a constant festival of prayer.

My adhesion to the spirit and company of Priests for Life I see more as a privilege for me than just a good working relationship. This is due to the camaraderie of the organization, which Father Frank Pavone continues to manage, balance, encourage and lead effectively; and my working with other priests and especially our family of lay members deeply drawn in to particular focal points in the larger common mission of saving the unborn. This includes youth ministry (Bryan Kemper), Civil Rights of the Unborn (Alveda King), Rachel’s Vineyard and Silent No More outreach (Katie, Kevin Burke), and our team of administrators. There is also a spirit of freshness and renewal in our new habitat in Titusville, Florida, which we formally occupied since this October.

Beyond this tight knit faith-community, the larger privilege is meeting enthusiastic and dedicated, courageous lay people and priests and religious all over the country who work diligently to defend the preborn. To them I am not only very grateful, but from these I draw inspiration and persistence.

Here is a variety of some of these venues.

Weekend missions took me in January to preach at all Masses at **Sacred Heart Church in Richmond, TX** and follow each Mass with a Q and A session in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

In March I was in **Charlottesville, Virginia, at St Thomas Aquinas Parish** giving a day workshop on the Gifts of the Rings (not a Tolkien trilogy, but about the Sacrament of Marriage), before taking the weekend Masses at neighboring Holy Comforter Church.

Also in March I was invited to speak at the liturgies at historic **St Joseph on the Brandywine, (Wilmington, Delaware)** where former Vice President Biden was in attendance (9:30 Mass). Sunday afternoon the local coordinators put together a beautiful baby shower to honor and acknowledge two young single Moms who kept their baby aft some struggle and coaxing to abort. Priest For Life put a bundle of faith and kids' books for the Moms. The coordination of the feast of the Annunciation and the baby shower was intentional and spoke eloquently to the gift of Life and saving power of prayer, persuasion, presence and persistence at centers luring troubled pregnant mothers. It saves, as many of the people attending the baby shower can personally attest, given their own contacts with these mothers now present with their infants.

After Easter **St Joseph Parish in Downingtown, PA**, hosted a parish afternoon celebrating "Family Alive" for parents and children. Inspired by the World Meeting of Families and the visit by Pope Francis to Philadelphia in 2015, the Family Fully Alive Festival was started to continue this mission. Along with leaders from Birthright and local representatives for civic office, Kevin Burke and I spoke on the impact of abortion on family and loosening of family ties thereby, or even destroying them.

Over the new Year 2016 to the Holy Land I asked pilgrims Darren and Jean-Marie Jump to see what they could do to get PFL in their parish, **Holy Trinity , Orangeburg, SC**. The pastor and I decided the **July Fourth** weekend would be a great opportunity for this year to preach at the English and Spanish Homily emphasis was on returning to the roots of Life, Liiberty, and Pursuit of Happiness as God-given unalienable rights.

Monday after morning Mass at Holy Trinity Church and a group breakfast, we headed, Darren and Jean-Marie, to the local Pregnancy Care Center and in the evening I gave a piano concert billed Celebrating Life and Liberty.

I mentioned above some diminishing in scheduling. Some of that is the fact the parishes are being more and more inundated with requests for causes and the preaching leaves less time for the local pastors and associates to do the preaching. But particularly for me I had a serious accident which had me hospitalized with a fractured, now fused, C2 vertebra in the neck, which left me rather homebound for several months from July to October. Back on the trail again, I am looking forward to more opportunities to take to pulpit, classrooms, civic meetings and elsewhere, on line and broadcasts, including EWTN's Defending Life ongoing series.

The message of the powerful centenary of Fatima this year remains: conversion and praying for sinners. Somehow the preborn slaughtered have powerful spirits that are praying for sinners as well, all of us. My serious mishap afforded me much time to deepen perspective on what truly matters in life, drawing confidence and giving praise to the Lord. I pursue my priestly duties and experiences with hope, joy and gratefulness! It is, after all, in His Hands. May He be forever praised!