



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on September 29, 2009

HLI President Wants to Refocus Abortion Battle

“I do believe the battle for [overturning] *Roe v. Wade* is lost,” the Catholic priest who heads Human Life International told about 220 pro-lifers at the annual New Hampshire Right to Life Banquet in Manchester on September 27. “We could waste a lot of time and effort trying to overturn *Roe v. Wade*,” said HLI President Father Thomas Euteneuer in reference to today’s political realities.



With “the most intensely pro-abortion President” and “the most intensely pro-abortion Congress” in the nation’s history now controlling the political agenda, Fr. Euteneuer believes there is little chance of seeing another justice added to the Supreme Court who might be inclined to reverse the 1973 ruling that women have a constitutional right to abortion. The possibility is even slimmer, he said, if Barack Obama wins a second term. Yet even if the ruling were overturned, he added, the issue would then be left for the states to decide. If some states banned abortion, people would merely travel to a neighboring state, he said.

“I think we need to redirect our focus off of politics and onto the culture,” said Euteneuer. The pro-life movement should continue to support pro-life candidates and legislative efforts to protect human life at all stages of development, he said, but more of the focus should be on personal involvement in prayerful picketing of abortion clinics and in providing alternatives to abortion through Crisis Pregnancy Centers and other organizations that provide both material assistance and counseling to encourage women to choose life for their preborn babies.

He praised the activities of 40 Days for Life, a movement that combines prayer and fasting with prayerful witness in front of abortion facilities. A similar group, called Helpers of God’s Precious Infants, prays the rosary in front of abortion clinics. The organization of lay people has drawn over 100 bishops and hundreds of priests throughout the country to join them in their public witness, Euteneuer said. Yet many clerics remain unwilling to publicly defend the sanctity of human life, he said.

“I want you to pray for the conversion of the clergy,” he said. The priest described how people participating in prayer vigils against an abortion clinic in Fort Pierce, Florida, had their prayers answered in an unexpected way when they were able to convert a vacant office space across the street into a Crisis Pregnancy Center. “The real miracle,” he said, “was that our bishop loaned me the money.” While literally facing the clinic with a life-giving alternative, the center has been able to draw women



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away from the abortuary, he said.

“That Crisis Pregnancy Center has saved somewhere in the order of 1,000, babies,” said Euteneuer. Many women were convinced they should go through with their pregnancies after seeing their infants through ultra sound scans, he said. But in terms of material resources, those promoting a culture of life are overwhelmed by the institutions and money promoting abortion, he said. Planned Parenthood Federation of America recently went over \$1 billion in annual revenues, he said, in addition to money raised by the organization in 183 countries around the world.

“This is an international conspiracy against life,” said Euteneuer, noting that the late Pope John Paul II used the term “conspiracy” to describe the “culture of death.” A strong pro-life witness needs to combine both prayer and action, he said, to overcome a shortage of money and professional help. “Most Crisis Pregnancy Centers operate on a shoestring budget and a lot of volunteer effort.” He urged his listeners to be witnesses for their faith in their homes and families as well as in public settings.

“We need to be ready to speak up for what we believe in,” he said. “We have to make strong witnesses for Christ in our society.” He urged prayer especially on behalf of young people, many of whom are already turning away for the “culture of death,” he said. With as many as 200,000 people turning out for the March for Life in Washington, D.C. each year, “I can guarantee that half that crowd is (age) 25 and below,” said Euteneuer. “We need to be a leaven in our society and not be afraid to take back our culture.” The pro-life effort should be “80 percent prayer and 20 percent action,” he said, a formula that drew a mixed review from New Hampshire Right to Life President Kurt Wuelper, who spent the next several minutes promoting the organization’s Political Action Committee and other fundraising activities.

“I don’t know if we want to invite Father Euteneuer back again,” Wuelper said at the end of the priest’s talk. He later said he was only half-joking. “My comment was not completely unserious,” he said. “Because this is a fund-raising banquet, right?” Still, he said, “He and I are in complete agreement that this is a spiritual battle.”



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