



MaterCare International

"maternal health care is a human right"

Fall 2007

MCI Newsletter

Vol. 6. No.1

Upcoming Events

Catholic Inspired NGOs Forum (Holy See, Vatican)
December 2007

MCI Volunteer Speaker Training Session (Trenton, ON, Canada)
May 2008

Project Isiolo Fundraising Gala
Toronto, Ontario
May 2008

MCI Rome Conference
November 2008

Current Maternal Health Projects

Project Serabu, Sierra Leone
Project Isiolo, Kenya
Project Kigali, Rwanda
Project in Nias, Indonesia

Recommended Articles

"Women Deliver" Fails to Deliver
(C-FAM, October 16, 2007)

"Maternal Mortality Ratio Falling Too Slowly to Meet Goal"
WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA/World Bank Joint News Release (2007)

"Millennium Development Goals will not be met until 2282"
BMJ 2007;335:67 July 14

"Cursed by God"
Commonweal Magazine
September 2007

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www.matercare.org

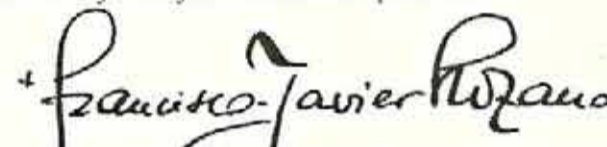
Holy Father sends message to MCI Conference in Zagreb

"The Most Reverend Valter Župan
Bishop of Krk
President of the Croatian Episcopal Commission for the Family

The Holy Father was pleased to be informed of the Regional Conference for Catholic Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to be held in Zagreb from 20 to 24 June 2007 under the auspices of MaterCare International. He sends cordial greetings to all the participants and he prays that these days of study and reflection will foster greater respect for motherhood and the culture of life. Those who work in this important field are called to assist Christian parents in their privileged mission of handing on new life, thereby "cooperating with the love of God the Creator" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2367). His Holiness commends the efforts made by health professionals to safeguard the dignity of childbirth, and he recognizes in such work an important way of taking responsibility for the gift of life which God has entrusted to us (cf. *Donum Vitae*, 1). Invoking upon all those taking part in the Conference the protection of Mary, Mother of our Saviour, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing.

CARDINAL TARCISIO BERTONE
SECRETARY OF STATE."

S osjećajima osobitog i bratskog poštovanja ostajem odan u Gospodinu.


✠ Francisco-Javier Lozano
apostolski nuncij

See conference summary... page 3

Executive Director Activities 2007

2007 continues to be another busy year for MCI's staff and executive director, Dr. Robert Walley. Dr. Walley has been traveling extensively in Canada, the United States, and Europe promoting and fundraising for projects that MaterCare International is developing for Rwanda, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. Dr. Walley had also been invited to lecture on maternal health in developing countries and pro-life issues.

MCI sponsored two international conferences for obstetricians and gynaecologists from post-Communist countries, which were held in Poland and Croatia. These conferences required

much legwork to make them successful.

Dr. Walley will be travelling to Sierra Leone in December to start "Project Serabu". Following the destruction from the civil war, the Diocese of Bo/Freetown received funding from the European Union to construct a new hospital. The EU declined funding for equipment and operations. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries with 0.4% of GNP going towards healthcare. It has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world with 2000 maternal deaths per 100 000 births.

MCI was requested to help equip and operate the maternity hospital.

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MaterCare International (Canada) Student Volunteers



What would we do without our student volunteers? MaterCare International's head office in St. John's relies on our student volunteers. Kathleen (Sweetpea) Callanan, who has been employed with MCI for the past 5 years during the summers, takes on the initiative every year to find student volunteers that come in once or twice a week to help with mail-outs, printing and folding newsletters and brochures and stuffing envelopes.

Every year, MCI holds a dinner for our student volunteers in which they receive a certificate of recognition for their dedication and service. A big thank you from the Board and Staff of MaterCare.

MaterCare Poland Conference a Success

The conference was sponsored by Fundacja MaterCare Poland, chaired by the founder, Professor Bogdan Chazan, and very well organised by Mrs Maria Srodon, MCI's Executive Coordinator for Eastern Europe. University students from the medical academy, and other faculties including, engineering, computer sciences, family studies, psychology and pharmacy, staffed the conference and reception desks, and provided audio/visual technical assistance.

Linking obstetrical practice with respect for motherhood and the Culture of Life was the theme for the conference, which was held, October 10th-14th at the Archdiocesan Retreat Center at Bielany in Warsaw, Poland.

Two hundred and forty registered from 14 countries. The majority came from Warsaw but included participants from eastern Poland, Russia (13 from Moscow and one from St Petersburg, half of whom were orthodox), 1 from Cuba, 1 from the Czech Republic, 3 from Ukraine, 2 from Latvia, 6 from Lithuania, and 5 from Byelorussia. Of the 80 participants that were doctors, 40 were obstetricians and gynaecologists.

The four-day conference included sessions on the Dignity of Motherhood, the Foundations of Obstetrical Practice, Human Dignity and Fertility, the Culture of Life and Obstetrical Practice, Valuing Human Life in Difficult Situations, Conscience and Obstetrical Practice, Consequences of the Reproductive Health Agenda, and Challenging the Status Quo.



Archdiocesan Retreat Center at Bielany, Warsaw

An interdisciplinary group of speakers from various disciplines including: scripture, moral theology, bioethics, psychology, psychiatry, philosophy, obstetrics and gynaecology, neonatology, pediatrics, general practice, pathology, and midwifery.



This is the sixth international conference organized by MCI for Catholic obstetricians and gynaecologists and the second for those from post communist countries of central Europe, the first being in Zagreb in June of this year. At the first such meeting in Rome in 2001 a common comment made by registrants was "I did not realize that I wasn't the only Catholic obstetrician and gynaecologist, who felt lonely and marginalized professionally". At this conference, the comment made by one registrant was "this was the first professional conference I had ever attended where spiritual, bioethical, and professional subjects were discussed together. The subjects presented were not those that one finds at usual medical conferences." The general feedback from participants was that the conference was excellent. Requests have been made for similar conferences to be held in Eastern Poland, Moscow, St Petersburg, Kaunas, (Lithuania), the Czech republic and surprisingly Cuba as one of the Russian doctors had been married to a Cuban and knew many Catholic doctors.

MCI is meeting a professional need which is achieving its number 1 goal: to "breathe" life back into the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology by evangelising obstetricians and gynaecologists in a like to like manner and is therefore "breathing" life back into maternal health care.

Donate your Air Miles to MaterCare (Canada only)

To date supporters have donated over 120 000 Air Miles which helps considerably to reduce travel costs.

MaterCare Air Miles Business Account number is: 8007 7296 378

Thanks to all supporters who have donated their AirMiles: truly, thanks to you, it is a success!

Question and Answers with Dr. Elvis Seman (MaterCare Australia)



Dr. Elvis Seman

Why did you join MCI and what does it mean to you: personally and professionally?

I decided to join MCI after meeting Dr. Robert Walley during a shared car ride to a Billings Conference in Melbourne several years ago. His inspiring MaterCare story & our subsequent meeting in Rome 2001, crystallized for me the importance of being part of a reputable organization, which effectively

Dr. Seman is head of a urogynaecologist unit in Adelaide, Australia. He serves on both boards: MaterCare Australia and International. He is married to Marija and has two children, Patrick and Jonathon. Dr. Seman enjoys music and spending time with family.

blended the three elements of Catholic faith, our profession of obstetrics and gynaecology, and service to our neighbor. MCI has thus meant a great deal to me personally and professionally. My life and that of MCI, has been deeply inspired by JP II and his writings on the culture of life. Professionally, MCI helps maintain the link between faith and medicine in my life. For those that cannot divorce the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology from their faith, MCI remains a beacon.

What is the most important thing that MCI does?

For me, the most important thing MCI does is keep the practice of our profession in perspective, both spiritually and in a practical global sense.

How are the MCI Rome workshops beneficial to you?

I have found the Rome workshops to be of great benefit in several areas, spiritual recharging, fellowship, practice improvement in a culture-of-sense, and planning for the next generation of obstetricians. Utilizing a retreat-style next to St. Peter's Basilica has reinforced our link to the Church.

What do you think has been the secret to MCI's success to date?

MCI's success to date has been Robert Walley and the great team of people he has built around him. I am very proud that in spite of tremendous growth, MCI remains spirit-driven and true to the intentions of the founding fathers.

MaterCare International's Zagreb Workshop 2007

MCI's First Workshop for post-Communist countries was held June 11-14, 2007 in Zagreb, Croatia. The workshop was initiated and co-organized by Marijo Živković, who is founder and president of the Family Life Centre in Croatia. Marijo has attended all 4 of MCI's workshops in Rome.



The Zagreb workshop was held at the Jordanovac Jesuit Centre. It followed the same retreat like format as the Rome workshops. During the opening address, members of other denominations were present. A statement "Human Life is a Gift of God" (translated into English, French, German and Italian), signed by the representatives of seven religious communities (Catholics, Muslims, Anglicans, Protestants, Orthodox, Baptists, and Jewish) on December 16, 2004 in Zagreb, was also presented.

Experts from Germany, Italy, Canada, the United Kingdom, Croatia, and Poland were brought in to speak on various ethic issues relating to respect and dignity for motherhood and the culture of life. Local doctors were able to present on the problems and challenges that obstetricians and gynaecologists from post-Communist countries faced during communism and continue to face today.

Marijo Živković spoke on family issues, demographics of abortion in Croatia. Dr. Robert Walley, founder and Executive Director of MCI, spoke on Linking Peace with respect for motherhood and about MCI.



The workshop was heavily promoted throughout Croatia and surrounding

countries, as well as through international organizations.

There were plenty of radio, TV, and newspaper articles leading up to the workshop. Several interviews were conducted during the workshop by Marijo Živković and Dr. Walley.

The number of participants for the Zagreb workshop was smaller than anticipated. Reasons for this include that local obstetricians and gynaecologists remain nervous about coming out in the open after spending their years in practice under Communism underground.

The workshop included several top clergy that provided morning mass as well as presented. During the opening mass Monsignor Henryk Jagodzinski, the Secretary of Apostolic Nunciature in Croatia, read a message from Pope Benedict XVI in which he delivered his Apostolic Blessing to all participants, as well as cordial greetings and a prayer "that these days of study and reflection may foster greater respect for motherhood and the culture of life".

Overall, the conference was successful and showed that there is a demand for more MCI workshops for obstetricians and gynaecologists in post-Communist countries.

MaterCare International

Executive Director (Founder)

Dr. Robert Walley

Editor, Public Engagement Director

Simon Walley

Executive Assistant

Wanda White

Administrative Assistant

Sandra Fowler

Volunteer Coordinator

Theresa Winchester

Student Volunteer Coordinator

Kathleen (Sweetpea) Callanan

Volunteer Business Manager

Jerry Oser

Volunteer Webmaster

Roisin Cowley

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Spiritual Director

Msgr. Maurizio Calipari

Announcement: MaterCare International's 5th Rome Conference

The next MCI Rome workshop will be held November 5-9, 2008 at the Instituto Maria SS Bambina.

Expert speakers will be brought in from around the world to present and discuss important pro-life and ethical issues that affect obstetricians and gynecologists and other allied health professionals.

The workshop will follow the same retreat like format as the other workshops. It will also include a wine and cheese (meet and greet) evening and the popular evening rooftop social gathering with the best view in Rome.

Program and registration will be formalized early in the New Year.

MaterCare Canada's 3rd Volunteer Training Session



MaterCare International (MCI) (Canada) held its 3rd volunteer speakers training session in April, 2007. Volunteers from across Canada traveled to CFB Trenton in Ontario for a 1-day training session. The purpose of the session is to learn about MCI,



what its all about, as well as the international health programs MCI is involved in. Volunteer speakers are important to MCI in that they help reduce the time MCI's staff is away from the office when presentations are requested. The next session is set for April 2008.

MaterCare Canada's Air Miles Program- update

MaterCare Air Miles continues to be a great success. MaterCare supporters have donated over 120 000 Air Miles which saves on flight, car rental, and hotels costs. The Air Miles have been used for staff traveling to do

presentations. We also used them to bring together volunteers from across Canada for a volunteer speakers training session, which also reduces administrative costs and time staff spend away from the office.

MaterCare International (MCI) is an international organization of Catholic obstetricians and gynaecologists and other allied professionals dedicated to the care of mothers and babies, both born and unborn, through new initiatives of service, training, research, which are designed to reduce the tragically high rates of maternal mortality, morbidity, and abortion.

Our mission is to serve the Culture of Life where it is most at risk- those crisis areas and 'hotspots' where mothers and their children - born and unborn - are neglected or abandoned outright.



Maternal Health Care
is a Human Right

MaterCare International

8 Riverview Avenue, St. John's, NL Canada A1C 2S5

Telephone: (709) 579-6472 Fax: (709) 579-6501

Toll free: 1 888-579-6472 (Canada & US only)

Email: info@matercare.org Website: www.matercare.org

- registered in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, and Australia.
- is the obstetrical arm of the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FIAMC).
- is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)