



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
**Office of Human Life,
Family and Bioethics**



Pro Bikers For Life®

“Boots on the Ground”: Pro-Bikers Abroad

Interview with Thomas M Upshur OFS, President of the Pro-Bikers for Life

PART TWO

Thomas M. Upshur, O.F.S. is the President of the Pro-Bikers for Life, an international Pro-Life organization whose mission is “to preserve human life” at all costs through sidewalk counseling, through prayerful witness outside abortion clinics, and through evangelization efforts using social media as well as in-person events. At the crux of their mission, the Pro-Bikers “do everything [they] can to support the Pro-Life cause.” Mr. Upshur took some time recently to answer questions about his organization and how their work serves to foster a culture of life at home and abroad.

*This is the **second part** of a **three-part series** highlighting the work of the Pro-Bikers for Life. This series of questions spotlights the evangelization efforts of Father Paulus and the PBFL in East Germany and highlights some of the PBFL’s current activities on Long Island.*

I had heard about Fr. Paulus becoming the new chaplain for your chapter in Germany prior to this interview. What exciting news! How did this come about? And what is the story behind the PBFL getting their “boots on the ground” so to speak in Europe?

Fr. Paulus and I have been friends for the last 14 years. We’re both artists, which has made for great bonding for us. We actually had an art exhibit together in Germany during the Summer of 2007 (preceding Fr. Paulus’s 1st Holy Mass in his hometown in East Germany). He really is an amazing artist and sculptor!

When he got his assignment to East Germany in 2013, Fr. Paulus had asked me to help him with logo designs, posters, banners, and even videos to help with his upcoming evangelization efforts. Then in 2014, Father Paulus created the God is Good (GIG) Festival which evolved around a young priest named Fr. Alois Andritzki who was killed in a Nazi concentration camp. In fact, Fr Alois was declared as a “Blessed” in the Church by Pope Benedict XVI in 2011! Father Paulus brought different Christian bands and rappers from Europe and the U.S.A for entertainment at the festival, so this, along with the PBFL creating Pro Life videos for the event, really rocked the house! The late Joseph Mario Reali was also part of the GIG Festival, and the youth



in Europe really love him for his Catholic values and call him the “Pier Giorgio Frassati of the USA.” Since we had two PBFL members from Germany (including a Catholic Nun), the PBFL thought it would be great to have Fr. Paulus as chaplain and leader there.

Whenever Fr. Paulus comes to the U.S. in the months of September and April to spend time with his community, he also participates in 40 Days for Life with the PBFL. After becoming a PBFL Chaplain, Fr. Paulus introduced us to a young singer from Europe named Bernada Brunovic (who is blind) and song writer Fr. Thomas de Beyer. They wrote a beautiful Pro-Life song called “Welcome on Earth” to help promote the dignity and the value of human life (if you’d like to hear it, you can listen to Bernada and Fr. Thomas’s song by clicking this link: <https://youtu.be/M-9Eax4SRJs>).

Can you tell our readers what activities you are involved with specifically on Long Island?

Well, the PBFL sponsors the “40 Days for Life” campaign twice a year in Hempstead. We also pray and do counseling outside the Planned Parenthood in Hempstead and our PBFL member, Michael Sweeney, conducts the sidewalk counseling training for this ministry. We also work with the Life Center of Long Island, as well as speaking at men’s retreats, high schools, colleges, Knights of Columbus events and Pro-Life Events. In fact, most of the PBFL members are also members of the Joseph Mario Reali Knights of Columbus Council #16261. We also work with Nassau County EMT and Founder of Safe Haven, Tim



Jaccard, as well as Pastor Joni with the March for Life in New York. Another event that the PBFL participates in is the First Friday Padre Pio Holy Hours at Holy Name of Jesus Church in Woodbury, New York, which is run by PBFL member Michael Reali and his wife, Lisa. And lastly, the PBFL helps with escorting the Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe to different places.

The 40 Days for Life Campaign will be beginning very soon, so be sure to contact your home parish or check out the 40 Days for Life website to sign up for vigil hours and witness to life!

To hear more about how the **Franciscan Friars of the Renewal** and the **Sisters of Life** got involved with the PBFL and how their humble witness of fighting for life have served as an inspiration for the PBFL, be sure to look out for next month’s newsletter in the **final part of this interview series**. Make sure you give us a like and follow us on social media to keep up with our Office’s upcoming projects!

If you would like to learn more about the Pro-Bikers and become more involved in the work of their mission, you can visit <http://www.probikersforlife.org/> or search “Pro-Bikers for Life” on their various social media platforms (including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube).