Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the March newsletter I shared some about how the Lord raised up St. Faustina in the 1930s in Poland to bring a message to the world of the overwhelming mercy of Christ, who so eagerly wishes to pardon sinners. I also shared how Jesus showed her that there needs to be a response to His mercy, a “yes” as it were, that includes faith and repentance, and that there really is a hell and there are many there. (Diary #741) Since then I’ve actually had the chance to read more of her Diary and to participate in the Divine Mercy celebration at the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy on Eden Hill in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Every year on the first Sunday after Easter, which is now also recognized by the Church as Divine Mercy Sunday, thousands gather at the National Shrine to hear some speakers and participate in the Divine Mercy Mass.

This year I was one of the invited speakers and it was very inspiring to be there for the first time. Eden Hill is in the midst of the Berkshire Mountains in Western Massachusetts where the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception have their headquarters. As Sunday morning dawned, what seemed like an unending line of buses wended their way up the narrow mountain road—about 280 I’m told—to bring pilgrims from all over the New England and Middle Atlantic States and some from beyond. It was an amazingly multi-cultural gathering. The Marian novice who was my guide is a linguist and he said he recognized eight different languages being spoken as we walked through the crowd. There were many Philipinos and Haitians and Hispanics and Poles, a sign of where some of the strength of the Catholic Church is to be found these days.

There were about 18,000 in all—an amazing outpouring of faith, hope and love. The lines for confession were long and seemed to be unending as were the lines to purchase rosaries, religious articles and books, and yet there was a patience that was remarkable.

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EWTN broadcasts the event live each year and part of my duties was to do an interview with Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC and Fr. Joseph Roesch, MIC on being “apostles of divine mercy.” They asked me questions about the new evangelization and how it relates to Divine Mercy. I also gave a talk to all 18,000 on the need to say “yes” to Mercy. Video of both the interview and the talk can be found on a link at www.renewalministries.net.

The Divine Mercy is really more than just a devotion; it is a prophetic proclamation of the basic gospel message for our time. Just as in 16th century France the Lord revealed His amazing love to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque through His Sacred Heart, so in our time the Lord has revealed His heart of love and mercy through the image given to St. Faustina and the messages of mercy that accompany it. The rays of red and white coming from the heart of Christ symbolize the blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ and which symbolizes the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism.

St. Faustina frequently said that Christ was calling her to help prepare the way for His Second Coming and that out of Poland, a spark would come that would prepare the way for His coming. That spark could be the Divine Mercy message, with St. Faustina, and Blessed John Paul II, who canonized St. Faustina and recognized the first Sunday after Easter as a celebration of Divine Mercy. She also urgently pointed out, as does the Gospel, that the first coming of Christ was as a sacrificial lamb giving His life for the world, but the second coming will be as Judge and King in all His glory, and that now is the time of mercy, the time to believe and repent, but later will come the judgment.

“Souls perish in spite of My bitter Passion. I am giving them the last hope of salvation; that is, the Feast of My Mercy. If they will not adore My mercy, they will perish for all eternity. Secretary of My mercy, write, tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice, is near.” (Diary #965)

Just like St. Margaret Mary in the 16th century, or St. Catherine of Siena in the 14th century, there’s nothing fundamentally new in the message of Mercy, the return of the Lord and the final judgment, but this unchanging message is presented with new prophetic vigor to awaken us to what we already know but to which we are sometimes “asleep.”

The theme of the Feast Day at Eden Hill this year was our need to recognize that we are called to be “apostles of His Mercy.” That’s evangelization by another name!

Let’s continue to pray, suffer and speak when occasion presents itself, for the sake of the salvation of those we love, as well as for strangers we meet and certainly for our enemies and those who persecute us! At Renewal Ministries we pledge our continuing commitment to do just that with all the means at our disposal, all the means that your prayers and giving, so graciously make possible.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

P.S. We have two new resources for growth and evangelization this month which you’ll find on the enclosed reply card. We have a CD and DVD format of the two talks that my nephew, Fr. Jonathan Morris (you may have seen him defending the faith on Fox cable news) and I gave at the Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Toronto earlier this year, addressing the battle in which we find ourselves. Debra Herbeck’s newest collection of inspiring quotations focused on faith has also just come out. Listen, watch, read and pass them on!
I was born in London, England in 1939 and had a solid Catholic foundation under the tutelage of the Xaverian Brothers. At an early age I desired to become a missionary, however in the 1950’s the only avenue to achieve this was as a priest or religious brother. At sixteen I entered the Holy Ghost Fathers to discern my vocation to the priesthood, which would eventually have taken me to Africa. After two years I left the seminary realizing that the ordained priesthood was not my calling. I was required to complete two years of national service with the military so I served in the Royal Air Force on early warning radar at the height of the Cold War and continued my studies in Art.

In 1960 I met Madeleine and two years later we were married. I worked in the retail display field while Madeleine cared for our growing family. In 1967 seeking a better life, we emigrated to Canada with our three young children but sadly got caught up in the materialism that surrounded us in our new environment. The sixties was a time of rebellion and following the publication of *Humanae Vitae* by Pope Paul VI, I rebelled against Church teaching which led to the near destruction of our marriage. At this time Madeleine was crying out to God, asking if there was more to life, faith and marriage. She began to seek for answers in psychics and transcendental meditation and by God’s grace a friend invited her to a Catholic charismatic prayer meeting where she began to discover the Truth. I wasn’t in the least bit interested, but eventually out of curiosity, I decided to attend a meeting.

This began my journey home as I encountered men and women of faith who obviously knew Jesus in a way that was totally foreign to me. Following the Sacrament of Confession and a Life in the Spirit Seminar, God broke the chains that had gripped my life and were leading me to destruction. In the years that followed, the Lord began to lead me into the role of leadership and teaching. In 1990, in response to John Paul II’s call to a decade of evangelization, I went on a pilgrimage across Europe asking the Lord’s direction for my life. Madeleine and I visited Sion Catholic Community for Evangelization. The founder, Fr. Pat Lynch invited us to serve on their parish mission team doing extensive door to door evangelization. We had many reasons why this was impossible, but his words struck a chord: “If not you, who? If not here, where? If not now, when?” On our return home I found out that the company I was working for was in financial difficulty and I was unemployed. God works fast!

Returning to England the following year we began our service with Sion doing three week parish missions with two weeks of street ministry. Staying for two years, I grew in my knowledge of the faith and a desire to study Catholic Apologetics. Returning to Canada in 1993 we did a number of similar missions; however in 1996 the doors opened for me to travel to Africa. Soon after I met Ralph and Peter and was invited to join Renewal Ministries in Ghana. Since 1998 I have returned annually to minister in Africa. The Lord has a plan for our lives (Jer. 29:11–14) and I have seen His plan unfold over the years. Our “YES” enables God to use us as He desires.

Peter is a country coordinator for Renewal Ministries in Kenya. He served with International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services in 2003 and 2010 as Councilor to Canada and parts of the Caribbean. His art can be viewed at www.peterthompsonart.ca.
From the Field

You Shall Receive Power When the Holy Spirit Comes Upon You

In this season of the great feast of Pentecost the words of Jesus from Acts 1:8 are often repeated: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” Notice Jesus’ complete clarity about what the coming of the Holy Spirit would mean for the apostles, and for everyone who receives the Holy Spirit. To receive the Holy Spirit is to receive real life-changing power.

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us of this fundamental fact: “Jesus’ entire mission is aimed at giving the Spirit of God to men and women and at baptizing them in his regenerative bath.” The “regenerative bath” is the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to the apostles on the day of his Ascension: “You heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:4–5)

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the transmission of power from on high was the whole point of Jesus’ mission. He became one of us, took on human flesh, died and rose on our behalf and ascended to the right hand of the Father so that he could pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. (Acts 2:17) In his own person he took our nature into glory. In him, by his power, our human flesh which due to sin, had fallen from glory and was under the domination of the “law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2) was taken up into glory. The power by which Jesus plunges us into this bath of regeneration is the same power that raised him from the dead. The Holy Spirit released a power in Jesus that death itself could not contain. It is the power that “loosed the pangs of death”: it is so strong and overwhelming that it was “not possible for him to be held” by it. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus, obliterating death’s complete domination over human flesh. Death’s grip on humanity was broken and its total claim on our destiny was destroyed. Alleluia! Jesus’ aim, the culmination of his saving work, was to transmit that power to us. That is why he became one of us. St. Paul calls Jesus “the last Adam.” (1Cor 15:45) The first Adam gave each of us a share in his own nature; he “became a living being.” But because of his disobedience, his whole nature and ours by inheritance, became subject to the domination of sin and death. “Because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man.” (Rom 5:17)

What terrifying words. Death reigned over every dimension of human life, leaving the entire human race in despair, trapped, bound, and doomed, in complete subjection to a dark, disordered energy. That was the condition of the human race until that moment when the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. It changed everything. Blessed be God! Death’s reign was broken and the human race began its new existence beyond death. Jesus has within himself “the power of an indestructible life.” (Heb 7:16) He is the “last Adam” who has become a “life-giving spirit” (1Cor 15:45); he is able now to give “life to whom he will.” (Jn 5:21)

This is the power of Pentecost. Jesus poured out that indestructible life, the power of the Holy Spirit, giving the apostles a share in the new creation of which he is now the head, the “firstborn.” (Col 1:15) In the gift of the Holy Spirit, “he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (2Cor 1:22) The Holy Spirit is a down payment of what we will inherit—a share in Jesus’ existence in glory. By this precious gift, Jesus has made it possible for us to “escape the corruption that is in the world because of passion and become partakers of the divine nature.” (2Pet 1:4)

Through the help of the Holy Spirit the apostles received these “precious and very great promises” (1Pet 1:4) with a sure hope and an abiding joy. They knew the promises were meant for them and for every person who was “born of water and the Spirit.” (Jn 3:5) Pope John Paul II described what happened at Pentecost: “(The Spirit) released their deepest energies, concentrating them on the mission entrusted to them by the Redeemer.” Jesus told the apostles, “You shall be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8) This is the mission entrusted to the apostles and to every disciple. We too are empowered by the Spirit to be witnesses, to testify to the reality of what Jesus has accomplished for us, to tell of the “mighty works of God.” (Acts 2:11)

This is their testimony and ours: “Let all
the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified...Repent, therefore, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you.” (Rom 8:11)

“And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world...and this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life.” (1Jn 4:14, 5:11–12)

In this season of Pentecost, let’s open our hearts again to the Spirit. Let’s allow him to stir our deepest energies, to help us concentrate our mind, will, imagination and emotions on the mission that Jesus has entrusted to each one of us.

Come, Holy Spirit! Pour out your power upon us again. Stir us with apostolic fire, put your words on our lips, and confirm our testimony through signs and wonders. Guide our steps so that we might live each day in the grace of a New Pentecost.

Please Pray...

+ that the Lord’s message of mercy will penetrate hearts and bring many to repentance and conversion.
+ that the upcoming RM Schools of Evangelization and Bible Study are places of deeper encounter with the Lord and equipping for ministry.
+ for all our international missions this summer to Serbia, Hungary, Turkey, Tanzania, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Mexico, Uganda, and Latvia. May the name of Jesus be lifted up and may many know the joy and freedom of life in Christ.
+ for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

Thank you for your continued support through prayer as we labor together for the Gospel and the renewal of the Church.
One day in Africa a woman walked to visit her husband who was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, and was later vindicated. As she entered his cell the man could see that she was several months pregnant and jumped to the conclusion that she had been unfaithful to him. He flew into a rage and began to violently beat the woman, kicking her in the stomach and trying to kill the baby. She curled up to protect the child and as the man tired, she was able to escape. Later, when the child was born, everyone in the family and village remarked how much he resembled his father in jail. He finally repented of his anger and violence and asked his wife for forgiveness. This event of misunderstanding, hostility, violence, and attempted murder in the early life of the boy was to characterize the ministry and later life of Paride Taban, the man who became the first bishop of the Diocese of Torit, in what is now known as the Republic of South Sudan.

For nearly twenty years Bishop Taban was in the epicenter of brutal war and civil insurrection, daily bombing runs, and famine. He lost a vehicle and was almost drowned in a flash flood, had numerous vehicles riddled with bullet holes as he sped through ambushes, frequently had murder contracts issued against him by both sides of the war, and was imprisoned in Torit after leading a relief convoy to bring food to the starving people. When other clergy fled the violence and killing, he stayed with his people. He gathered refugees and worked tirelessly to feed them and teach them new methods of farming. He introduced oxen plowing to nomadic tribes and brought in grinding stones to grind meal to sustain them. He opened schools, built roads and clinics and picked up wounded from both sides of the conflict and took them for medical care.

He addressed sessions of Parliament in many European countries and spoke to both the House and Senate of the United States. He became an Ambassador for Peace, and the voice of a desperate and hopeless people who had no voice. His eloquent appeals and graphic accounts of the violence perpetrated on the people of South Sudan were a great help in bringing international pressure on the government of Khartoum, which led to the talks that eventually brought peace and independence to South Sudan.

In 2000, after a providential meeting with Bishop Taban, Renewal Ministries began a yearly collaboration that has borne much fruit, particularly in working with the priests there. In February of 2012 we joined the Bishop in the new Republic of South Sudan for evangelization training and a celebration of his 75th birthday at the Holy Trinity Peace Village in Kuron. Not an easy place to reach, we flew from the US to Nairobi and spent the night at the diocesan pastoral center. The next day we caught a charter flight to the UN camp of Lokichoggio and from there boarded another small plane for Kuron. The Bishop met us at the small dirt airstrip and took us on a short tour of his new clinic, which is run by a religious sister who is a nurse; it is the only clinic for hundreds of miles around. From there we continued on to the Peace Village.

Each morning we walked about three quarters of a mile to begin our training sessions at the youth camp. We crossed a dry riverbed where a colorful group of Taposa women and their beautiful children were digging a deep hole to collect drinking water. This type of drinking water often contains the eggs of the parasitic Guinea worm and causes much sickness and death. Everyone wanted to greet us along the way with “mata” and shake our hands. We had to dodge occasional herds of cows and donkeys vying for the water as well.

Our classes were attended by ten representatives from all three deaneries of the Diocese of Torit: twenty Taposa women who are Bishop Mission to Sudan

“We really stressed the new beginning the Lord was giving them with the coming of peace and independence, and that if Christ was put in the center of their lives, the new Republic of South Sudan could be whatever they decided to make it.”

About 150 students from the school in Bishop Taban’s Peace Village and representatives from the diocese of Torit attended the daily sessions where they were hungry to learn more about their Catholic faith.
Taban’s staunch supporters with the local tribe, around 150 students from the school the Bishop has started (there are normally 250 students but 100 were sent home due to the lack of food), and most of the teachers and workers from the Peace Village. The school only goes through 8th grade, but many of the students are in their 20’s. It was the first opportunity for all these youth to receive an education and they were really eager to learn all about the Catholic faith. They listened closely as we taught about the danger of tribal violence, raiding, and war. We really stressed the new beginning the Lord was giving them with the coming of peace and independence, and that if Christ was put in the center of their lives, the new Republic of South Sudan could be whatever they decided to make it.

Over the next several days we taught on the fundamentals of the kerygma, getting and staying free, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and Catholic apologetics. After all the teaching sessions we allowed questions and answers and did some type of ministry. At one ministry session we led everyone in an adult decision to make Jesus their Lord and Savior and invited the Lord to come and heal. At another we led them in a time of forgiveness, focusing on the hurts of the war and tribal conflicts. Another time we had them renounce patterns of sin and blocks to moving closer to the Lord. Everyone really entered into the renunciation with gusto!

The Bishop and six priests attended the sessions and at the end of the morning sessions they celebrated Mass for us all. The Bishop asked me to use the time at all the homilies to share reflections on our Catholic faith. At one Mass, as I was teaching on the Eucharist from John 6, I read from verse 67 where Jesus turned to the disciples and asked, “Do you want to leave me too?” To illustrate the point, I walked over to one of the priests, tapped him on the shoulder and asked that same question, “Do you want to leave me too?” I then looked him in the eye and quoted Peter who said, “Lord to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.” Later, this priest privately told me that he was considering leaving the priesthood and when I quoted Peter it was as if God had spoken directly to him!

Each day after Mass we made the trek back to the Peace Village for lunch and to rest for a few hours and then back for afternoon sessions. Surprisingly, almost everyone hung in for these sessions despite the oppressive heat. A number of the priests who attended had been with us in years past and it was so gratifying to hear how our teaching on freedom and praying for them had helped them so much.

Our time at the Peace Village culminated with a large outdoor Mass with over 1000 people in attendance. There were delegations from Norway, Sweden, Belgium, and the Ambassador from the Netherlands. There was a special representative from the new president of the Republic of the South Sudan and all three governors from East, West, and Central Equatorial Sudan. There were quite a few members of parliament and numerous tribal chiefs. Despite the seemingly endless speeches and protocol it was an interesting and informative day and Bishop Taban introduced us as the “spiritual arm” of the Kuron Peace Village.

The new Republic of South Sudan is still a very troubled region. The borders between the north and south are not clearly drawn and are the scene of almost daily conflicts. Bishop Taban has repeatedly been called in by the government to mediate tribal conflicts. We were told by one of the governors that the north is once again bombing villages and schools in the Nuba Mountains. Again, Christ is the only answer. Systems and governments don’t change. People change, but only after an encounter with the living God. We pray and trust that our time in Sudan facilitated this encounter.
“I have opened my Heart as a living fountain of mercy. Let all souls draw life from it. Let them approach this sea of mercy with great trust.

Diary of St. Faustina, #1520

June 2012

San Antonio, TX
ACTS Movement 25th Anniversary Celebration
Saturday, June 2
Ralph Martin
Contact: Jnash207@gmail.com

Marquette, MI, Annual Lecture Series
Sunday, June 6
Ralph Martin
Contact: ggostomski@dioceseofmarquette.org

Ann Arbor, MI, Renewal Ministries Gathering
June 8–10
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields and Guest Speakers
Contact: Kathleen at kkittle@renewalministries.net
or 734-662-1730, x132

Mission to Serbia
June 9–11
Deacon Zoltán Kunszabó

Mission to Turkey
June 11–23
John Kazanjian and Team
Contact: Kathleen at kkittle@renewalministries.net
or 734-662-1730, x132

Jamison, PA
St. Cyril of Jerusalem Day of Renewal
Saturday, June 16
Ralph Martin
Contact: annemariecostello@comcast.net

Mission to Hungary
June 16–August 17
Deacon Steve Thomashefski

Retirement Ministries

In the United States
Episcopal Advisor
Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, St. Louis, MO
President
Ralph Martin

In Canada
Episcopal Advisors
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Renewal Ministries is a Catholic ministry committed to renewal and evangelization in the church. It seeks to proclaim Jesus Christ through its TV and radio outreaches, as well as through books, tapes, conferences, retreats and other international evangelistic events.

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