Dear Companions on the Journey,

A letter from Ralph Martin

Back in the nineties (last century!), Fr. Michael Scanlan, at that time President of the Franciscan University of Steubenville (FUS), heard that I had just gotten an MA in theology from Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit and invited me to begin teaching summer theology courses at the university. I began teaching intense three week summer courses almost every year, first on the Catholic mystics and then on evangelization. I’ve had a long connection with FUS through Fr. Mike; I served on the Board of Trustees for three terms and spoke at numerous summer conferences. My children went there and a son-in-law now teaches and lives there with my daughter and five grandchildren. It has been several years though since I have been able to teach at FUS with time spent living in Washington D.C. and then in Rome, so it was good to be back again this summer for a three week course. I had 19 graduate theology students in my class—the largest grad theology class of the term—and very much enjoyed teaching on the Theology and Spirituality of the New Evangelization—things that we live and breathe in everything we do at Renewal Ministries, and that I also am able to teach about at the seminary in Detroit. I had four “Nashville Dominicans” in my class as in previous years and it was a joy to connect with them and with other sisters on campus whom I had taught in previous years.

While teaching the course I received an email invitation to teach on the New Evangelization to a wider group of their sisters at their motherhouse in Nashville, TN next summer which I am happy to do.

As President and then Chancellor for many years, Fr. Mike finally retired about a year ago and moved to the T.O.R. Franciscan retirement home in Loretto, Pennsylvania. Anne was able to join me for the second half of the course and one Saturday we made the 2 ½ hour drive to Loretto to visit Fr. Mike. It was a joy to see him and we “recounted the wonderful works of God” together for about an hour, with special mention of the FIRE ministry that he, I, Sr. Ann Shields, and later Peter Herbeck carried out for many years. He was also the co-host of The Choices We Face for many years and a longtime member of our Board of Directors. He sent his special blessing and prayers to all of us associated with Renewal Ministries. He is 81 years old now and walking with some difficulty but the inner Spirit burns bright!

Another highlight of my time at FUS this past summer was the chance to visit and give a talk at Catholic Familyland sponsored by the Apostolate for Family Consecration which is headquartered not too far from Steubenville. Anne and I drove out there on the morning of a very hot July 4th and I gave a talk on the New Evangelization. We were both very impressed with this ministry which is devoted to strengthening Catholic families.

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“What a joy it was to be able to visit Fr. Mike Scanlan in his retirement home in Loretto, PA. He sends prayers and blessings to all involved with Renewal Ministries.”
Dear Companions on the Journey,

Through week-long summer family camps and through a multitude of media and publications, if you can handle a bit of "camping conditions," although they have many cabins and rooms as well—this would be an excellent thing to encourage Catholic families you know to do—or to do yourself. Their web address is: www.familyland.org. In the times in which we are living, organizations that are supporting the family are of great value.

And finally, I have some really good news. A number of years ago on a 30 day silent retreat I sensed the Lord asking me to write a book that would help dispel confusion about what was necessary in order to be saved. Perhaps you've heard me talk about the "broad way and the narrow way" over the years! I do it as often as I can. I never thought I'd end up writing the book first as a Licentiate Thesis and later, in an expanded form, as a doctoral dissertation, but that's how the doors opened and that's how the Lord led me. I completed the book/dissertation last year in Rome and am happy to report that on September 7th the book will be available. The title is *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization*. It is a serious book and not everyone will be interested in every part of it, and you can certainly skip the footnotes if you wish! But I am really overwhelmed at the number of Church leaders and theologians and "ordinary" folks who were willing to read it and write an endorsement for it. I never would have imagined that it would receive these kinds of endorsements. Here are a few:

- "For many years we have all appreciated Dr. Martin’s considerable contributions to the mission of the Church. Now he gives us a profound doctrinal foundation for understanding and implementing The New Evangelization. It is a shot in the arm for bishops, priests and laity as we respond to the Holy Father’s call." *Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York*
- "Ralph Martin clarifies a doctrinal point that has been often obscured but must be recovered as a necessary foundation for the New Evangelization. This is a uniquely important book." *Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago*
- "Dr. Ralph Martin’s book contributes significantly to a richer understanding of our..."

The Nashville, TN Dominican Sisters are a dynamic group. Here are some of Ralph’s current and former students.
faith, helps restore confidence in the Gospel message and engenders a desire to share the truth of Christ’s message. An important contribution to the pastoral strategy of the New Evangelization.” Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, D.C.

• “If the pastoral strategy of Vatican II has led to ‘practical universalism’ in certain quarters, this reading of the Council provides a refreshing reminder of the undiminished urgency and validity of the missionary mandate of Jesus to his followers to evangelize.” Peter Cardinal Turkson, President, Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice

• “These penetrating reflections will compel us to reassess our pastoral approach to the preaching of the Gospel in these new circumstances and will command the attention of all those who take up the challenge of the new evangelization. An important book.” Archbishop J. Augustine Di Noia, OP, Vatican City

• “Our response to the New Evangelization will lack enthusiasm, and conviction, if we don’t realize what’s truly at stake here: our eternal salvation in Christ. Ralph Martin’s book provides much-needed clarity on these very important issues.” Archbishop Robert Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis

• “I highly recommend that all Catholics and other Christians concerned with salvation give this important book the attention it deserves.” Bishop David L. Ricken, Green Bay, Wisconsin, Chairman, Bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis

• “Here is a scholarly shout, a bracing splash of cold water. In this book the teachings of Vatican II come alive again and we rediscover the authentic doctrine of salvation. What a contribution!” Deacon James Keating, Ph.D., Omaha, NE, Director of Theological Formation, Institute for Priestly Formation

• “Ralph Martin has written a thoughtful and thought provoking book. He convincingly demonstrates, in his careful attention to the relevant texts of Vatican II, that what is at stake for many, in whether they hear the Gospel or not, is nothing less than eternal life.” Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap., Executive Director, Bishops’ Secretariat for Doctrine

The Apostolate for Family Consecration conduct very useful summer sessions to strengthen families. Here are some of the hundreds of children happily enjoying their week at Catholic Familyland while their parents hear talks on strengthening family life.

As grateful and amazed as I am about these endorsements, one of my favorites comes from a young man who lived with our family for several years, started an appliance repair business (and repaired our appliances for many years!), and now is president of an appliance parts internet company, and the father of a family of five. He has been a faithful supporter of Renewal Ministries and reader of our newsletter and so when he heard about my dissertation he asked to read it, and this is what he said:

• “Even though I’m a business man without theological training I found Ralph Martin’s book compelling and had a hard time putting it down. It cleared up a lot of confusion for me and I know many other Catholics like me would benefit from it greatly.” Chris M. Hall, President, Repairclinic.com

For the first few months we are making it available at a significant discount along with our usual free shipping. You will find the details on the enclosed Reply Card. Thank you for your prayers, support and love all these years! The battle continues and the Lord is with us!

Your companion on the journey,

Ralph Martin
From the Field

God’s Possession

The opening chapter of St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is a beautiful prayer of blessing, a form of prayer called a berakah (Hebrew) found in the Old Testament. The prayer is a hymn of praise celebrating the great deeds and the blessings that God, our Father has bestowed on us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Reading the prayer it’s not hard to imagine St. Paul’s heart singing, bursting with gratitude and wonder at what the Lord has done for us. He’s like King David who said in Psalm 45:1: “My heart overflows with a goodly theme; I address my verses to the king…” (RSV) His heart overflows because he knows what God has done.

God has been faithful to his promises toward us; he has literally “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” (1:3) The Holy Spirit helps St. Paul to articulate the inexpressible, to identify the “spiritual blessings” we have all been given in Christ. He identifies seven fundamental blessings in the body of the prayer. I commend them all to your meditation. But, for the sake of brevity I’d like to highlight just two of them—the first and the seventh blessings because they communicate essential truths about God’s purpose for us that I believe too many people miss in our day. The first blessing is found in verse 4: “…he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.”

The first truth to lay hold of is that God chose us, we did not choose him. Jesus said the same thing to the apostles: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit…” (John 15:16) It is by God’s choice alone that we have been given “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” Let that truth sink into your heart. Repeat this to yourself many times each day: “God chose me. God has blessed me with ‘every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places!’”

God chose you in him, that is, in Jesus. You and I have access to the blessings of God, a share in his life, because we are united to Jesus himself. As the Father’s beloved Son, all the blessings of heaven belong to Jesus. The plan of God from before the foundation of the world, was to make heaven accessible to us by sending Jesus to become one of us. Because Jesus took on human flesh and raised that flesh to glory through his passion, death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father, we now have access to heaven “in him.” In Jesus, God has made the impossible possible, the inaccessible accessible. On our own, none of us have access to the Father’s house, to his glory: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23)

God’s choice has been ratified and made a reality in our lives through our baptism: “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into his death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) When you were baptized, God destroyed your sinful body, the old self that needed to be crucified with Christ and put to death, so that you could be united to him in a resurrection like his. (See Romans 6)

We are chosen because we are united to Christ. All of this St. Paul tells us, “...was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him.” (3:11–12) Faith enables St. Paul to see and receive God’s “eternal purpose” for his life. He knows that what he has received is real. God has taken the initiative in Christ to change Paul’s condition before God, to give him a new kind of relationship through which he now has direct access to God.

Because he is in Christ, St. Paul knows he has been given a share in Jesus’ relationship to the Father. Jesus is the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased. St. Paul accepts that new status the Father has given to him through faith; faith gives him a new “confidence of access” to the Father. Through faith the Holy Spirit enables St. Paul to see himself in an entirely new way. He can say with confidence, “I am the Father’s beloved son. He looks at me with favor and with the tenderness of a loving Father. He has chosen me in Christ to be his son and he invites me each day to confidently enter his presence, to draw near to him, so that he can change me, to conform me to the image of Jesus his firstborn Son.”
By Peter Herbeck, Missions Director

The Father’s plan is the same for us. You are the beloved son or daughter called to enter the Father’s presence with confidence. He wants us to speak with him freely, from our hearts, to offer our petitions, to give Him praise and to express our love for Him. It’s so important that each one of us accept and live in this privileged position in Christ and let it change the way we look at ourselves. Like St. Paul we have reason to live life with a new boldness and confidence. Claim that life, step into that new identity and don’t look back!

The devil works overtime to convince each one of us that everyone is chosen but me; or that I may have been chosen, but I’ve blown my opportunity because of my own sin and weakness. Don’t entertain the lies. Stand in the truth. God knew exactly who we were when he “chose us before the foundation of the world.” Your weakness is not a surprise to God! The Father wants us to have “confidence of access” even when we are coming to him to repent of our sin. When we enter the confessional and kneel before the priest, we do so with humility and sorrow for our sins, but we are to come with great confidence in God, knowing He is ready to receive us and to forgive our sins.

He knows we’re not perfect. That is why he has given us his Son Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the sacraments, the Sacred Scriptures, and all the means necessary for us to become all we are meant to be. Remember, God has chosen you so that you can be “holy and blameless before him.” You are not yet perfect, but God is determined to bring you to perfection! To be holy means to be “set apart” for God. St. Paul is telling us that God has chosen us to become his special possession. He wants to set us apart, here and now, at this time in our lives, for a sacred purpose.

The seventh and final blessing that St. Paul identifies makes that purpose clear. He tells us that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the “first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s possession, to the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:14, NAB) What we have received in the Holy Spirit is a promise, the first installment of a full payment that is to come when we die. That installment is a payment, a redemption: “You are not your own, you have been bought with a price.” (1 Cor 6:20) By the precious blood of Jesus a payment was made on our behalf to buy us out of the condition of slavery to sin that made it impossible for us to have “confidence of access” to the Father’s presence.

“You know that you were ransomed from your futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot.” (1 Peter 1:18)

Jesus redeemed us for a purpose—to become God’s possession, to live not for ourselves but “to live for the praise of his glory.” I pray that we all may enter fully into this blessing, to receive this gift with boldness and confidence, and to live each day for the praise of his glory! This truly is our destiny, the reason for which we were created.

Please Pray…

+ for God’s grace to be present as we film another season of *The Choices We Face* television show this month. May the message of God’s personal love be communicated with clarity and power.

+ for courage, strength, and inspiration for our Church leaders as they face increasing opposition to the message of the Gospel.

+ 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.

“You are the beloved son or daughter called to enter the Father’s presence with confidence. He wants us to speak with him freely, from our hearts, to offer our petitions, to give Him praise and to express our love for Him.”
The School of Evangelization 2012
By Nancy Greenhaw

The Evangelization School at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota this summer was attended by 50 “students” from six different states. One of the most unusual was a young man of 12 who graduated from high school at eight and was in his second year of college. He was one of the most attentive in class and asked many insightful questions. Everyone seemed really ready to embrace evangelization in their parishes and in their ministries, and to apply the teaching to their own personal lives. There seemed to be a spiritual hunger and people often commented: “We can’t get this kind of information anywhere.” For all, there seemed to be a major shift in their understanding of the urgency of the call to the New Evangelization.

One of the highlights of the school was the empowerment night. After Peter’s teaching on the Holy Father’s call for a New Pentecost, and Lloyd’s teaching on the necessity of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the work of evangelization, everyone was excited and eager for the release of the graces of Baptism and Confirmation into their lives. The Holy Spirit didn’t disappoint! After the Renewal Ministries and CORE Ministries team prayed individually for the participants to receive these graces, we all came together in the center of the Chapel to pray for the various gifts of the Holy Spirit. As the fire of the Holy Spirit fell on the room some began to speak in tongues for the first time, others felt heat and trembling in their hands, and all felt a new call to mission, excitement, and peace through a personal encounter with the living God.

The School of Catholic Bible Study 2012
By Debbie Herbeck

After a four year hiatus, The School of Catholic Bible Study, formerly held only in Michigan, welcomed 40 participants at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. Co-hosted by Renewal Ministries and CORE Ministries, the school focused on equipping students to make scripture study a more active part of their lives. A definite highlight for everyone was the daily teaching by Bishop Jan Liesen of the Netherlands who received his Doctorate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome and is a member of the International...
Theological Commission. One student commented, “I enjoyed the lectures on the Gospel of Mark from the Bishop. They were accessible, rich, scholarly, but not over our heads. They really opened my eyes and expanded my appreciation of the Bible.”

Two Renewal Ministries’ board members who lead, organize and develop effective Catholic bible studies also joined us as presenters. Sharon Doran from Omaha, NE who leads the Seeking Truth Catholic Bible Study (www.seekingtruth.net) shared her moving story of how God called her and her husband more deeply into Scripture study. She also taught us how to utilize Lectio Divina for the meditative study of Scripture. Laurie Manhardt, author and developer of the Come and See Catholic Bible Study series (www.catholicbiblestudy.net) brought her love of the Scriptures and her years of expertise in leading studies to her presentations at the School. Not only were the participants inspired and empowered to study God’s word, but they were equipped to return to their homes and parishes to bring the light of God’s truth to those around them. One participant echoed what many said, “Thank you to everyone who made this such a Christ-centered weekend and helped to share the Bible. My friends and I want to supplement what we are doing at home, make it more prayerful; there is so much here that I’ll take back from this weekend.”

“Will Many Be Saved?
What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization
By Ralph Martin, S.T.D.

The Catholic Church is intensely focusing on the need for a “new evangelization.” But the question in the back of many people’s minds is: does it really matter, isn’t almost everyone saved? Ralph Martin’s new book, hailed by Cardinal George as “uniquely important,” examines what precisely Vatican II teaches on this most important of all issues.

**Special discount through our Newsletter and Website!**
When ordering online enter coupon code WMBSNEWS

“For many years we have all appreciated Dr. Martin’s considerable contributions to the mission of the Church. Now he gives us a profound doctrinal foundation for understanding and implementing The New Evangelization. It is a shot in the arm for bishops, priests and laity as we respond to the Holy Father’s call.”

*Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York*

“I highly recommend that all Catholics and other Christians concerned with salvation give this important book the attention it deserves.”

*Bishop David L. Ricken, Green Bay, Wisconsin, Chairman, Bishops’ Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis*

See enclosed reply card or visit website at www.renewalministries.net to order!
On the Road

“We ought to act as if we were at war—and never relax until we have won the victory.”

St. Teresa of Avila

September 2012
-
Mission to Hungary
June 20–September 20
Deacon Steve Tomasheski

Lincoln, Nebraska
Diocese Evangelization Conference
September 7–8
Ralph Martin, Sr. Ann Shields
Contact: 402-488-2040

Ann Arbor, MI
The Choices We Face Television Taping
September 10–14, 17–18, 24–28
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck

St. Paul, MN, Understanding the Council after Fifty Years Conference
September 20–21
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Orlando, FL
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference
September 28–30
Ralph Martin
Contact: vm1954@aol.com

*Events not open to the public

October 2012
-
*Colorado Springs, CO
Legatus Chapter Meeting
October 3
Debra Herbeck

*Denver, CO, Legatus Chapter Meeting
October 4
Debra Herbeck

Brooklyn, MI, i.d.916 Young Adult Retreat
October 5–7
Contact: intentionaldisciples@gmail.com or pburar10@yahoo.com

*Green Bay, WI, Diocesan Clergy Congress
October 8–9
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck

*Monroe, MI
Directors of Religious Education Meeting
October 13
Sr. Ann Shields, SGL

*Ann Arbor, MI
Renewal Ministries’ U.S. Board Meeting
October 14–15
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, SGL

*Rome, Italy, The Angelicum
Theology and Spirituality of the New Evangelization Course
October 15–30
Ralph Martin

*Columbus, OH, Legatus Chapter Meeting
October 18
Sr. Ann Shields, SGL

Mission to Slovakia
October 18–November 3
Tom Edwards and Team
Contact Kathleen Kittle at: 734-662-1730 ext 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

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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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