Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We’ve had a little time now to absorb the American election results and I know many of us are disappointed and tempted to discouragement. I know many of us tried to follow our Bishops’ guidance and recognize that we can never vote to promote intrinsic evils such as abortion, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, same-sex “marriage” and the like. It is particularly distressing to see that once again large number of Catholics (50%) voted for candidates that are strongly and officially committed to advancing such gravely evil practices.

Unfortunately, we’re reaping now what has been sown. Almost 50 years of confused preaching and teaching, faulty catechesis and less than clear moral guidance, has produced a large number of Catholics who don’t understand what it is to be a Catholic, what it is to be a disciple of Christ. We all now must share in the suffering that is the result of such sins of commission and omission as we see our culture further deteriorate, and the challenges of raising our children and grandchildren in a godly way of life increase.

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It was a privilege for Ralph to be chosen to do the first reading from the prophet Jeremiah at the Papal Mass that concluded the Synod.

But all of this is happening under the wise and just Providence of God. He has permitted the infidelities that have led to this point. He has always in the whole history of salvation given people what they choose, letting the consequences of such choices unfold, in the hope that people will eventually, after severe chastisement, return to their senses and to the ways of the Lord. Or, at least, a remnant will.

“It was he who created man in the beginning,
And he left him in the power of his own inclinations.
If you will, you can keep the commandments
And to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.
He has placed before you fire and water:
Stretch out your hand for whichever you wish.
Before a man are life and death
And whichever he chooses will be given to him.” (Sirach 15:14-17)

continued on pg 2
Never have I seen the American Bishops more united than they are in opposing the governmental attempts to require Catholic institutions and Catholic business people, to provide insurance plans that violate our beliefs.

We need to trust that God has a plan for bringing good out of such evil. Perhaps the humiliation of seeing so many Catholics vote irrespective of the Bishops’ guidance will be another wake up call to how, as a Church, we need to “get our act together.” And as the gap between the direction our culture is heading and what it means to be a Catholic is widening, this is really a “gut check” time for Catholics. We can’t straddle the fence anymore. Choices have to be made. Even if we are a smaller Church in some ways perhaps we will be able to give a more unified and more coherent witness to what faith in Christ really means, from which a new evangelization can be launched.

There are many signs that this is exactly what is happening. Never have I seen the American Bishops more united than they are in opposing the governmental attempts to require Catholic institutions and Catholic business people, to provide insurance plans that violate our beliefs. And of course, for a number of years now the Bishops have been working very hard to ensure that catechetical texts being used are now in harmony with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, although their admission that for many years they weren’t is sobering. The recently concluded Synod in Rome on the New Evangelization is another sign of hope. (As many of you know I was appointed to participate in this Synod as an “expert” and was able to help with the formulation of a number of the final propositions which will be given to the Pope as a basis for his Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the new evangelization. My reports on the Synod can be found on the homepage of our website: www.renewalministries.net under the Bulletins section.) Indeed, what we need is a “new evangelization” that is directed towards baptized Catholics who aren’t living in harmony with our faith, inviting them to conversion.

Another encouraging sign is the remarkably clear and courageous proclamations of the Gospel such as the one we are reprinting in this newsletter by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, President of the US Bishops’ Conference. Read it and be encouraged! Also, the Episcopal Advisor to the US branch of Renewal Ministries, Archbishop Robert Carlson, has published a clear and courageous pastoral letter on evangelization. You can access it at the Archdiocese of St. Louis website: http://archstl.org/pastoral-letter.

For a good analysis of the current situation we are facing take another look at Peter Herbeck’s excellent analysis in the November issue of our newsletter which you can also read by going to our website (renewalministries.net) and clicking on Newsletter on the homepage. We have gotten a lot of positive feedback on his article. As we begin a new year we do so with hope and determination. As a ministry we have never seen so many openings for our contribution at such high levels of leadership. We are regularly getting opportunities to share with Church leadership and help strengthen priests, deacons and others in their ministry. My new book Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization is already in its fourth printing only a few months after its first publication. Also, as more and more people sense the tremendous challenges we are up against there is a greater openness than we have ever seen before to a clearer proclamation of the Gospel, and a deeper reliance on the power of God.

I should mention that after 18 years my wife Anne is retiring from working for Renewal Ministries in order to devote more time to caring for the growing number of grandchildren (number 13 is on the way!) and other needs. I am very grateful to her for all she has done over the years for the mission. She has probably done more different jobs at Renewal than anyone. She served in data entry, as TV producer for several years, and for many years as the one responsible for the design and layout of the monthly newsletter and many of our products, ads, as well as overseeing our website. We will miss her here in the office but I’ll still see her at home! Thank you, Anne.

Thank you for your ongoing support which makes so much possible.  
Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin
Christ and His Church Are All About Salvation

By Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan

We spent a lot of time at the Synod on the New Evangelization in Rome talking about salvation. On the one hand, I guess this should not shock us, since Jesus came as our Savior, offering us the “good news” of eternal salvation. However, on the other hand, this is a surprise, because, as some Synod participants have chillingly observed, the Church rarely, if ever, speaks of salvation these days, since most of us today presume it, or don’t think we even need it!

Think about that; why do we need this New Evangelization at all? I suppose because our own faith has grown listless; or because we lost it altogether! Why has it grown lax, or been lost? Because we don’t think we need it! We don’t need Jesus or His Church because we don’t need what He has come to give: life everlasting or salvation. “I came that they may have life, and life to the fullest.”

Jesus and his Church are all about salvation, the salvation of souls. Why in the world would anybody not want the eternal life offered by Jesus and His Church? Either because we think we can get it on our own—in other words, that we can save ourselves (which is the ancient heresy of Pelagianism)—or because it’s so cheap that we think we’re already assured of it, and hardly need any help from Jesus or His Church.

I bring all this up not only because it was a hot topic on the floor of the Synod, but because the month of November invites us to think about eternal salvation. God wants us all to be saved, so passionately that He sent His only begotten Son to be our savior, sharing with us eternal life, earning our salvation by His death and resurrection. However, when Jesus was asked if only a few would be saved, he didn’t reassure us that, don’t worry, almost everyone would make it, but rather: “Try your hardest to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.” (Lk 13:23-24)

On another occasion he made it clear: “Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to destruction is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life and only a few find it.” (Mt 7:13-14)

We know Jesus wasn’t happy about this situation. We know he wept when he considered the destiny of those who persisted on the wide road. (Lk 19:41) He is so eager to show us mercy, but first we need to recognize our need for mercy, and humble ourselves to receive it, asking forgiveness, and dedicating ourselves to following Him in His Church.

So, we need to recover this somber reality, because we act today like everyone automatically and immediately goes right to heaven. No, we don’t. God our Father forces His salvation on nobody. We can turn Him down. I’m afraid a lot of us do. To accept His invitation to salvation means…guess what? Accepting Jesus in and through His Church.

Yes, it’s true that Vatican II teaches that it’s possible, under certain conditions, to be saved without hearing the gospel, but it also clearly teaches (Lumen Gentium, 16) that these conditions are not often met, and that “very often” human beings close their hearts to the grace of God, influenced by the culture, its lies, and our own sin.

A couple of months ago, when I was consulting people about this whole concept of the New Evangelization, a shrewd and successful marketing specialist commented, “You got to decide what your product is! You in the Church are supposed to be salesmen! Well, just what are you selling? If people need your ‘product,’ they’ll come!” The Church’s “product”—pardon the marketing vocabulary!—is a Person, Jesus, who is our Savior, who offers us eternal life! The evangelical churches sure know this! The growing, vibrant parts of the Catholic Church in Africa and Asia certainly realize this! That’s why their churches are jammed.

But we here don’t! We shrug, no thanks! Who needs a savior? I don’t. I can save myself, thank you! Nor do I need the Church, the sacraments, or the mercy of...
Christ and His Church Are All About Salvation

We ignore the clear, cogent teaching of Jesus and His Church at our everlasting peril: at the moment of our death, we will stand before our eternal Judge, and heaven is not assured.

Jesus, since I’m automatically assured of heaven. So, leave me alone…

November reminds us of the faithful departed: all the Saints in heaven (November 1); the souls in purgatory awaiting God’s final act of mercy (November 2); and those of us here on earth preparing for eternity. And eternity is not a “sure thing”! It is a “sure thing” if we admit we need Jesus as our Savior, and live faithfully in His family, the Church.

We ignore the clear, cogent teaching of Jesus and His Church at our everlasting peril: at the moment of our death, we will stand before our eternal Judge, and heaven is not assured. This awesome experience will happen again when He comes again in glory at the end of time, the last judgment. That’s the message of the Gospel, like it or not. As St. Francis observed, “Sometimes the Gospel makes me smile, but other times it makes me shiver.” That’s driven home this month of November, as we pray for the faithful departed and contemplate our own mortality.

All I know is this: I want to live forever! I want eternal life! I want to be saved! I want to get to heaven! I can’t do it by myself! I need a Savior! God the Father sent me one: his name is Jesus! How do I meet Jesus? How do I share in His gift of eternal life? In and through the Church! That’s the message of the Gospel; that’s the New Evangelization; that’s the invitation of November.

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21st Annual Renewal Ministries
Lift Jesus Higher Rally
Faith on Fire

When?
Saturday, March 2, 2013
9:00 AM - 5:30 PM

Where?
Metro Toronto Convention Center
North Building, 255 Front Street West

Faith on Fire

Calling All Youth!
(Ages 13-20)
Don't miss the annual youth rally featuring CMA award winning musical artist Chris Bray, powerful worship, skits, testimonies, videos, and inspiring talks to help you grow in faith and engage you in the mission of Christ!
Located in the North Building,
John W.H. Bassett Theatre.

Special Guests
Fr. James Malon & Cardinal Collins

For More Information
416.251.4255 or pdkromer@rogers.com
Catholic Renewal Ministries,
1 Chartrell Rd, Box CRM7,
Toronto, ON, M2N 7H6

www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org

Tickets at the door: Adult Rally $20—Youth Rally $10
WHEN I WAS INFORMED that I’d been chosen to take part in the work of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization, I was sure that it would change my life. Participating in the Synod was a profound experience of the contemporary Church and of the work of the Holy Spirit in me and around me. I felt that all the participants of the Synod were actively involved with the movement of the Spirit. The Spirit can really use anybody to give voice to the Gospel message. The Synod was for me, a workshop of the Holy Spirit.

Through the speeches of the Pope, the interventions of the Synod Fathers and the Auditors, the proposals of the Experts, the conversations in the small groups, and the countless personal encounters and witnessing, the participants evangelized each other. It was very inspiring for me to hear the incredible testimonies of the lay auditors—most of them founders or leaders of very powerful evangelistic movements. Chiara Amirante spoke about her concern for the lost and helpless youth in the spiritually polluted Western society. In 1994 she went out on weekend nights to evangelize them in the big cities of Italy. Since that time, she and members of the Community Nuovi Orizzonti (New Horizons Community) have helped lead more than 2500 youngsters to conversion and have founded more than 170 centers of evangelization for them. I was also impressed by the witness of Curtis Martin, head of FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students), and Jose Prado Flores, the founder of the St. Andrew’s International School of Evangelization.

The final document of the Synod placed a strong emphasis on the laity as the most important actor on the mission fields of the New Evangelization. It also spoke about the role of the new movements and the importance of the charismatic gifts in mission, under the pastoral care of the local bishop. As the final document reports: “...bishops spoke of the need for renewal in holiness in their own lives...” The New Evangelization guides us to an authentic pastoral conversion which moves us to attitudes and initiatives which lead to evaluations and changes in the dynamics of pastoral structures which no longer respond to the evangelical demands of the current time.” (Proposal 22)

In the afternoon of October 17th, a miracle happened for me! I was called to speak at the General assembly for all of the Synod participants in the presence of the Holy Father, 55 cardinals and more than 200 bishops. Only five of the auditors could speak in the presence of the Pope and I was one of them.

My speech focused on the irreplaceable role of the first proclamation of the basic Gospel, the Kerygma, as the foundation and heart of every mission. The Kerygma reveals the Father’s love for everyone, but also the sinful condition of human beings, the need for salvation and God’s forgiveness. It points to the person of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, who in His resurrection offers us the gift of a new life through faith and repentance. As I stated in my speech that day: “We must make it clear that this is a salvific message. Sin separates men from God just as much today as it did in the time of the Apostles. In this sense nothing has changed. If we do not talk about sin, if we do not talk about the final consequences of sin, and the necessity of repentance and conversion, then most people will not be interested in what we have to say. People’s attention is caught only by a message of salvation for eternity!”

I enjoyed the opportunity to communicate this message and the sense of the common work with bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and our brothers and sisters from all over the world. I had great conversations with Cardinal Schönborn of Vienna, Archbishop Kurtz from the Archdiocese of Louisville, and with my Archbishop, Cardinal Erdő, and the two other Hungarian speaking bishops. It was a great joy for me to analyze the current developments with Ralph Martin, who was my main mentor and ally there. The final document reflects what we—as evangelizers in the field—find really fundamental to the New Evangelization. At the same time, some points must be deepened and clarified in Catholic thinking in the future.

Ralph and I were appointed to serve at the closing Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica. Ralph was the first reader, sharing the great words of the prophet Jeremiah. I was one of the four main deacons and the closest assistant to the Pope during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. During the grand Elevation, when the Pope lifted up the Body of Christ and I held the Chalice with the Precious Blood, I felt that I was at the paramount of my life. After the Mass I greeted the Pope in the sacristy, introduced myself with a few words and asked for His blessing, which I received on my knees.

To all the dear members of the Renewal Ministries family, thank you for all your prayers and great support during our presence in Rome.

*Deacon Zoli from Hungary is a country coordinator for Renewal Ministries. To read a full version of Zoli’s presentation to the Synod go to www.renewalministries.net and click on Bulletins on the Homepage.*
One of the unexpected aspects of the Synod was the invitation to work closely with Cardinal Wuerl in the translation and editing of the initial set of propositions that were proposed to the Synod Fathers for possible amendment.

Ralph and Cardinal Wuerl discussing the draft of a proposition together.

Photos from the XIII Ordinary Synod on the

Here Ralph and some of the other “experts” listen to simultaneous translations of speeches at the Synod.

262 Bishops and Cardinals, 44 experts and 49 observers were present at the Synod. The Pope attended a number of the sessions.

After the closing Synod Mass, Zoli had an opportunity to visit briefly with Pope Benedict XVI and receive his blessing.
There were a lot of meetings “on the side” all during the Synod. Ralph was asked by the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization to meet with this priest from Poland who wanted to discuss his doctoral dissertation on the new evangelization with Ralph.

The “small groups” were where the propositions were formed that would later be proposed to the whole Synod. Here Ralph is working with Archbishop Slattery, of Pretoria, South Africa.

A highlight for Zoli, a country coordinator for Renewal Ministries from Hungary, was assisting the Pope at the closing liturgy of the Synod.

Please Pray...

+ that the Church can give a unified and coherent witness to what faith in Christ really means.
+ that the recent Synod will result in a new evangelization that is directed toward helping Catholics come to deeper conversion and a life of discipleship.
+ for all those who are laboring for the Gospel throughout the world, that they would be strengthened, encouraged and protected as they bring God’s truth to others.
+ for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.
Let us carry bravely the shield of faith, so that with its protection we may be able to parry whatever the enemy hurls at us.

-Saint Cyprian of Carthage