Dear Partners in the Gospel,

This past year was one of the busiest we’ve ever had – both personally and in all our missions. We’re reaching more people than ever and are asked more frequently than ever before to serve leadership at the highest levels of the Church.

Towards the end of 2012, in one month we had the most new visitors to our website ever— more than 4,000 —from 122 different countries, the most ever! We also had a record number (123,538) of downloads of Sr. Ann’s radio program Food for the Journey. We also had an overall record number of downloads across all our media offerings and an overall record for total response to our offerings of free booklets, etc. Sr. Ann’s new booklet Faith More Precious Than Gold is flying out of our offices – more than 2,000 sold in one month and many are ordering multiple copies to give to friends and parishioners for the Year of Faith. My own new book, Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization, is already in its fourth printing and is getting a lot of serious attention in reviews of various kinds and in the new social media and blogs.

Personally I already had a fully scheduled year in 2012 and on top of it the invitation to participate in the Synod of Bishops for the New Evangelization in Rome for almost the whole month of October, and then a flurry of requests to assist bishops in the continuing education of their priests and other ways as well. Plus teaching at the seminary! A few things had to be cancelled but the Lord provided in amazing ways to make more possible than I ever imagined.

We are especially grateful to have the opportunity to help strengthen and equip our shepherds – the bishops and priests – in forming their response to the New Evangelization. It was a special privilege for me to give a week-long retreat for the priests of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT) in Corpus Christi, Texas. This relatively new order is now sending all their North American seminarians to Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit where I teach, and it was a joy to spend time with those already ordained. It was also a privilege to speak to the bishops and priests of Kalamazoo, MI, Colorado Springs, CO, Beaumont, TX, Metuchen, NJ, and Worcester, MA; for Peter Herbeck to speak to the bishops and priests of Green Bay, WI and Ottawa, Canada and for Sr. Ann Shields to give the annual retreat to the Companions of the Cross, the new order in Canada which is also sending their seminarians to Sacred Heart Seminary.

Ralph had the privilege of giving a week long retreat to the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity priests in Corpus Christi, TX. This relatively new order in the Church has sent 16 of their seminarians to the seminary in Detroit where Ralph teaches.

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Dear Partners in the Gospel,

As I write this I’m preparing to leave for Steubenville, OH to tape 13 new TV programs for EWTN with Scott Hahn on the New Evangelization. If we have your email address I’ll let you know when they start to air as soon as we find out.

Incidentally, we send out occasional emails – about once a month – alerting our supporters to upcoming events, giving first hand reports about special things that are happening, like my reports from the Synod in Rome and alerting folks in cities where we are speaking, when that is the case. If you would like to be added to these “email alerts” just send us back the enclosed reply card with your email address filled in—no need to buy anything or make an online donation unless you want to!

Your support is touching the lives of many. From various letters and emails we receive:

- “We’ve been following you since way back in the early 70’s and the Holy Spirit is still working! Isn’t He something!”
- “My DVD recorder is set to always record The Choices We Face so I’ll never miss it. I love it and your newsletters which I read from cover to cover.”
- “Ralph’s new book is phenomenal!”
- “We listened to your talk on the More Than Conquerors CD album 7 or 8 times on a recent long auto trip. Four times on the way there and three or four on the way back. We’re taking detailed notes and plan to share this with many.”
- “Thanks for the email notification about your upcoming speaking engagement in Colorado Springs. I’ve forwarded it on to 30 other people. I’m really excited that you’ll be here.”
- “Sr. Ann, today’s radio talk was great! Just what I needed to hear and the world needs to hear.”
- “Ralph’s new book is exactly what’s needed. It’s about time someone challenged the ‘everyone’s going to heaven’ myth in an authoritative and concise way. Your book and the timing of your doctoral work upon which it is based were obviously part of Divine Providence for our times.”
- “Please send me 100 copies each of these three booklets…”
- “I recently finished your book Will Many Be Saved? and I finally grasped why you have preached this message for so many years. The light bulb finally went on. I attended a Catholic high school and now only about 5 of 180 of my fellow classmates still attend Mass. The Rahner/Balthasar theologies were being incorporated into homilies in our religion classes. I knew that what the priests taught made attending mass and not fornicating and pretty much everything else no longer dangerous to our souls. If it wasn’t for the second talk of the Life in the Spirit Seminar on repentance I never would have returned to the Church. Sin and its consequences are no longer taught. I’ve written to our Bishop about this important message.”
- “Sr. Ann, if I only had the message from today’s program it would be enough for the rest of my life! Thank you.”
- “Peter, I’ve been listening to Fire on the Earth for four years and it’s been a priceless source of encouragement for me. You speak with such clarity. I share these truths with others.”
- “Your new book is a triumph. It is wonderfully balanced and not polemical and manages to achieve its goal gently, truthfully and in the spirit of serving the truth.”
- “I’ve listened to Food for the Journey every day since I moved to Oregon two years ago. I am experiencing a rebirth in purity and focus. You are making a huge and everlasting difference in my life and in my relationship with God.”

These are only a few of the literally hundreds of encouraging letters and emails we get attesting to the difference that the work of Renewal Ministries is making in the lives of so many. Without your support in prayer and financial giving this can’t continue to happen! Thank you for standing with us as the battle intensifies. As the darkness increases, the light grows brighter.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin
Give God Permission

"YOU HAVE HEARD that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

(Matthew 5:43-48)

The word perfect (in Greek teleios) is derived from telos, meaning end, goal, or limit. It therefore signifies: “attaining to the end, complete, mature.” But here in the above verse the comparison is made between God and His children and so the word must mean more than “mature.” From the context we can deduce that the God-like quality which must characterize a true believer is the quality of self-disinterested love and kindness for others, even for those who deserve no kindness. This kind of “perfection” consists in the basic intention or attitude of the believer rather than in absolute sinlessness. This is perfectly possible for believers who, by faith, draw from Him the grace to maintain that attitude of kindly benevolence and sincere desire for the good of others.

(Footnote from Harper Study Bible, Revised Standard Version, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1946, p. 1445)

In this call to the New Evangelization, in this Year of Faith, in this season of Lent, many graces are offered to us if we are willing to receive them. To benefit from the graces God wishes to bestow on us does require a change of heart, a conversion, a willingness to become “more like Christ.”

Deep down at the crux of most peoples’ problems in the world today is a fear of not being loved—by God and by others. So we seek human and natural solutions for a spiritual problem. We drown ourselves in alcohol, drugs, sex; we distract ourselves through sports and the media, we lock ourselves away from God and others through bitterness, resentment, anger, envy, jealousy, despair.

You see, we were created by God, created ultimately to live with Him forever—the source of all love. We were made for union with God—all Beauty, all Truth, all Goodness, all Love. Nothing less will satisfy even though the world promises it can meet our needs. It is a lie; the world and its solutions will promise much but it cannot deliver; the world cannot satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. “Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” (St. Augustine)

So how do we open ourselves to receive the grace God wants to give us? How do we invite Him into the secret recesses of our hearts where we harbor (even though perhaps, buried deeply) smoldering resentment or jealousy, or anger; self-pity, fear, profound discouragement? How do we cry out to God to help us so that we can be free and loving—even when not loved in return?

Recognizing our deep seated sinful tendencies, Mother Mary
Francis, a Poor Clare Sister, said this in a retreat given to her sisters:

“Come!”...it is the expression of desire and permission. When we say to a person, “Come!” it is a desire. We do not honestly say, “Come!” to a person or thing that we do not desire…we have to let the person in. This is what we mean by “Come!”: desire and permission. We must desire our Lord to come into our lives, and that “Come!” must be wholehearted. “Come. Come! I want you!” But then we have to permit Him to come as He is…We do not say to Jesus, “I desire you to come, but I do not permit you to come as you are. Don’t come with your wounds. Don’t come with your suffering, don’t come as you are.”

We have to open wide the gates and permit Him to come…This IS the kind of thing He comes with, and we cannot have that element of desire, unless the element of permission is there…If we open wide, He will come in; He will grow within us, in each of our lives…and we will be able to respond with joy to everything that His coming asks of us, expected, unexpected; ordinary or extraordinary, predictable or unpredictable…” (Come, Lord Jesus: On the Art of Waiting, Ignatius Press, 2010)

Most of us reading this newsletter have been following the Lord for years. But whether we are old or new, the key to discipleship and hence the key to the New Evangelization is that we give God full permission to dwell in us and by His Holy Spirit be radiated through us to those—and there are very many—stumbling in the darkness, bewildered and sometimes very lost. It will be the light of Christ shining through you that will light their path back to God.

The cost is that we permit God to act in us as He chooses, when He chooses, through whatever means He chooses—and that may sometimes require of us a willingness to suffer, to feel the pain of rejection and denial, to continue to seek out the lost even when that costs us a great deal—more than we think we can pay. Jesus did it for us.

He calls us to love as He loves. In a particular way, it means that we continue to love even when we are rejected and attacked and disdained. We do not return the attack, the rejection, the disdain. We continue to be faithful and loving. If we do, we will know the blessing of a profound relationship with Christ that will bear fruit by bringing many back to the Lord.

“Lord, increase my faith in you. Give me a hunger and a thirst for souls—like Yours. Let me be willing to pay any price, endure any embarrassment, any ridicule or rejection. Let me love others as you have loved me. Amen.”

Follow Sr. Ann on Twitter: @srannshieldssgl

2013 Renewal Ministries Gathering
Friday, April 26 through Sunday, April 28
Marriot at Eagle Crest, Ypsilanti, Michigan

Join Us as We Draw Near to the Lord in this Year of Faith
For more information or to register go to:
www.renewalministries.net or call Kathleen at 734-277-2095 x127

Renewal Ministries & Come and See ~ Catholic Bible Study
present
The School of Catholic Bible Study
“The Voice of the Bridegroom”
Featuring Bishop Jan Liesen, SSD
June 27-30, 2013
Our Lady of Florida Spiritual Center
North Palm Beach, FL
For more information or to register:
Call 772.321.4034 or go to www.renewalministries.net
“WOE TO ME if I do not preach the Gospel.” Paul’s exclamation from I Corinthians 9:16 has become the rallying cry for i.d.916, Renewal Ministries’ outreach to young adults. i.d.916 is dedicated to helping young adults discover their deepest identity as disciples of Jesus Christ. We began in October of 2011 by gathering at a small retreat to seek the Lord together for His direction and inspiration. Fifteen months later, I am very pleased to report that we have made great strides in promoting and teaching the vision of intentional discipleship to young adults.

We meet in Ann Arbor, Michigan on the first Thursday of the month with about 70-95 young adults. These monthly meetings serve to build community through the holy sacrifice of the mass and a delicious catered dinner. In addition, a young adult gives a brief personal sharing, and a guest speaker teaches on one of the four pillars of discipleship: Conversion, Communion, Orthodoxy, and Mission. We have been blessed to welcome Peter Herbeck, Dr. Peter Williamson, Sr. Ann Shields, Fr. Simon Lobo, and we are eagerly anticipating Dr. Dan Keating, Dr. Ralph Martin, Debbie Herbeck, Craig Pohl and Fr. John Riccardo in 2013. The talks are live streamed via the Internet and we currently have young adults from other locations in Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and New Hampshire who are watching and want to participate in i.d.916.

Another expression of i.d.916 are the small groups for men and women that serve as opportunities for a deeper sharing of our lives while working through more in-depth teaching on discipleship. We currently have three men’s groups and three women’s groups with plans to develop more. Each i.d.916 participant also expresses his/her desire to live as a disciple by taking one personal hour of Eucharistic Adoration each month to pray for a zeal for the salvation of souls and for the Lord to raise up a generation of intentional disciples.

From i.d.916 we have a strong core team of people who are ready to go out and engage in the new evangelization. As I write this, we are preparing for various opportunities: a mission team of twenty-three young adults to Mexico City to serve the poor in the garbage...
As I write this, we are preparing for various opportunities:

- a mission team of twenty-three young adults to Mexico City to serve the poor in the garbage dump, days of renewal, parish and confirmation retreats for junior high, high school, university students, a Lift Jesus Higher Rally in both Toronto and Toledo, Ohio, and week-long junior high summer camps.

**i.d.916** began with the recognition of a need within the Church to reach Catholics in their 20’s and 30’s, not only with the proclamation of the Gospel message, but with an invitation to live as serious and fruitful disciples of Christ. We are encouraged and excited as we sense the wind at our back—the Holy Spirit is leading and empowering us to respond to Christ’s challenge to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”

For more information about i.d.916 visit our website, www.id916.com or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

 Twice a year, Pete Burak (above) helps lead a team of young adults and high school students on a mission trip to serve the impoverished families who live and work in the garbage dump in Mexico City.

Engaging in the mission of the Church looks like this on mission trips—great joy, confidence, and a deeper sense of God’s call and purpose!
Please Pray…

that the Lord will work powerfully to bring deeper conversion and faith through all the parish missions, retreats, and conferences during Lent.

that Renewal Ministries’ opportunities to strengthen and equip the leadership of the Church will bear much fruit for the kingdom of God.

that the Lord will raise up a new generation of intentional disciples with a zeal for the salvation of souls.

for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.
We must never turn back, even if it should seem to you that the light of Christ is fading. On the contrary, continue seeking with renewed faith and greater generosity.

–Blessed Pope John Paul II

February 2013

St. Louis, MO, Catholic Men for Christ
February 1-3
Peter Herbeck
Contact Joe Bestgen at mizzoubestgen@yahoo.com or 314-620-7628

Lexington, KY, Morning of Renewal
February 2
Ralph Martin
Contact: (859) 253-1993 x221 or rstearn@cdlex.org

Bowling Green, OH, Bowling Green State University Empowerment Night
Wednesday, February 6
Debbie Herbeck, Pete Burak and i.d.916 team
Contact: intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com

Ann Arbor, MI, i.d.916 Young Adult Monthly Meeting
Thursday, February 7 from 6:15-9:00 PM
Ralph Martin
RSVP: intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com or pburak10@gmail.com

Dickinson, TX, Ministry Leaders’ Conference
February 15-17
Peter Herbeck
Contact Pat Allison at: 713-236-9977 x16

Fort Worth, TX, St. Paul the Apostle Parish Mission
February 15-16
Ralph Martin
Contact: denise@stpaulfw.org

*Ennis, TX, St. John Parish Staff Retreat
February 17-18
Ralph Martin
Contact: www.stjohncc.net

Jackson, MI, St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish Mission
Sunday, February 17
Sr. Ann Shields
Monday, February 18
Peter Herbeck
Tuesday, February 19
Ralph Martin
Contact Fr. Tim Nelson at 517-784-7184

Weslaco, TX, Catholic Men’s Conference
February 23
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck
Contact Carlos Gonzalez at: 956-212-8560

Bloomfield, MI, St. Hugo of the Hills Parish Day of Reflection
Saturday, February 23
Sr. Ann Shields
Contact Tom Scholler at 313-883-8771

*Birmingham, AL, Crossing the Goal Taping
February 25-28
Peter Herbeck and Crossing the Goal Team

March 2013

Toronto, Canada, Lift Jesus Higher Rally
Saturday, March 2, 9AM-5:30PM
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, Debbie Herbeck
Contact: www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org

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*Events not open to the public

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, conferences, retreats and other international evangelistic events.

Editor
Debra Herbeck

Design
Cynthia Rutherford

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