We’re still in the early months of Pope Francis’ ministry and it certainly seems like he’s a breath of fresh air. Many have asked if he is friendly towards the charismatic renewal and evangelization. He is. Several people have sent me photos of Pope Francis, while he was still Archbishop of Buenos Aires, asking a group of evangelical pastors to pray over him with Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa standing at his side. The first Mass he celebrated in the little Vatican church of St. Anne’s was an occasion for Salvatore Martinez, President of the Italian “Renewal in the Spirit” to greet Pope Francis who told him: “I was the contact person for the Renewal in Argentina!” The Vatican Church of St. Anne’s is the site of a regular weekly prayer meeting especially devoted to praying for the Pope and the Church. Anne and I were blessed to attend when I was in Rome finishing my doctorate in 2011.

Regarding evangelization, you may recall that in his very first remarks from the balcony of St. Peter’s after just being elected he mentioned that he would be “evangelizing Rome” – a bold undertaking. When he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires he regularly exhorted his flock to “go out” and meet people where they are. We are blessed.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch!

There’s been a real upsurge in our media efforts recently. As I write this we are majorly involved in three television series on EWTN as well as an ever expanding number of people responding to our two daily radio programs. We are well into our new batch of programs for The Choices We Face, having launched the new season in March. Peter Herbeck continues to have major involvement with Crossing the Goal and Scott Hahn and I are involved in a 13 week series The New Evangelization. You can find times for live viewing as well as links to archived shows that you may have missed in a box in this newsletter. Years ago, Sr. Ann came to me and told me she had a deep sense that the Lord was calling her to help prepare people for difficult days ahead through a daily radio program. I concurred and Renewal Ministries – with your help – decided to back her new program, Food for the Journey.

Now, 18 years later, with more than 4,800 programs recorded and more than two million downloads of her program from our website, Sr. Ann is going stronger than ever and the need for preparing for difficult times is even more apparent.

Pope Francis, while he was still Archbishop of Buenos Aires, asking a group of evangelical pastors to pray over him with Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, the official Preacher to the Papal Household, standing at his side.

In 2005 Peter Herbeck was inspired to begin a daily radio program devoted to preaching the Gospel and evangelization called Fire on the Earth. And now Peter is fuller of the Word and the
Who would have thought back in the early 80’s (in the last century!) that when someone walked into my office and suggested I start a weekly TV program all this would be going on 30 years later. Amazing. Thanks be to God and thanks be to you, our faithful friends all these years, and our new friends more recently!

Once again we had a really inspiring Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Toronto a little while ago. Our 21st year of lifting Jesus higher! We were in a somewhat smaller venue this year and had about 3300 adults present and about 1100 youth! Fr. Scott McCaig, Moderator of Companions of the Cross from Ottawa and one of our Renewal Ministries of Canada Board members, and Fr. James Mallon from Halifax, another Board Member made major contributions as did the Renewal Ministries regulars. What a privilege to lift Jesus higher, a true light in a world increasingly enveloped in moral decay and darkness.

Paul and Dorle Kromer and their amazing team did a stellar job in preparing for, promoting and organizing the rally. Read all about it and see some of the photos in this issue as well.

Until next month, your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

Ralph and Sr. Ann in Toronto – their 21st year at the recent Lift Jesus Higher Rally.

Viewing and Listening Options for Television and Radio Shows

New Airing Times! The Choices We Face airs on EWTN: Tuesdays at 5:30 pm ET and Fridays at 6:30 am ET. Current Episodes of The Choices We Face and last year’s season archived at: www.renewalministries.net and click on TV.

Fire on the Earth and Food for the Journey Radio Shows: www.renewalministries.net and click on Radio Crossing the Goal video and audio podcasts at: www.crossingthegoal.com. Can also be heard on Sirius Satellite Radio, Channel 130, Sundays at 6:30 am ET & Sundays at 6:30 pm ET.

The New Evangelization airs on EWTN: Sundays at 5:30 pm ET, Mondays at 9:00 pm ET and Fridays at 10:30 pm ET.

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Then Peter Stood Up!

WHAT A WEEK! As I write this article, five days have passed since the election of Pope Francis. The more I see and hear of him, the more I like him. I love his humility and simplicity, his willingness to speak freely from his heart without reference to a written text. I love the fact that he hailed a cab on the streets of Rome to catch a ride to the conclave, he wears regular shoes, he paid his bill at the hotel, and he seems to look for opportunities to be near ordinary folks.

I’ve also been inspired by his words. The day after he was elected he met with the Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel for Mass. In his homily he spoke to his brothers from the heart, without notes. He challenged them to be faithful to their call to proclaim Christ and to take up His cross:

“We can walk all we want, we can build many things, but if we don’t proclaim Jesus Christ, something is wrong. We would become a compassionate NGO and not a Church which is the bride of Christ… When we walk without the cross, when we build without the cross and when we proclaim Christ without the cross, we are not disciples of the Lord. We are worldly…We may be bishops, priests, cardinals, popes, all of this, but we are not disciples of the Lord.”

When I first read these words I thought of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, standing in the streets of Jerusalem declaring the truth about Jesus. The first homily of the first Pope was a direct proclamation that Jesus Christ is Lord:

“This Jesus, God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses…let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.” (Acts 2:32, 36)

Pope Francis, sitting in the Chair of Peter, reminds his closest collaborators, the Cardinals, who along with the Bishops minister as successors to the apostles, that their first, most fundamental and absolutely irreplaceable task is to proclaim Jesus Christ. I hear the words of St. Paul also echoing through the exhortation of Pope Francis:

“When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2) “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (Romans 1:17-18)
A disciple is called to bear witness to the truth, to simply proclaim the truth Jesus proclaimed, to teach what he taught, to speak the truth in love.

Whenever the Church talks about sin, it provokes the world’s wrath. It’s tempting to avoid talking about it, to compromise, to remain silent, or to call evil good.

In 2010, as Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis took a courageous stand against legislation to legalize same-sex marriage. He defended the truth about marriage and was not afraid to identify the spiritual warfare that is at the root of the attempt to redefine marriage:

“Let’s not be naive, we’re not talking about a simple political battle; it is a destructive pretension against the plan of God. We are not talking about a mere bill, but rather a machination of the Father of Lies that seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God.” (CNS News, 3/13/13)

That’s a courageous statement, one motivated by love of neighbor and loyalty to God. It’s not bigoted or hateful, it condemns no one; it is the light of truth exposing the work of the devil. At a time when the political tide on this issue was turning against the Church in Argentina, he simply told the truth, without compromise. That’s a disciple who is willing to take up his cross. That’s a man I want to follow! Let’s pray for the Holy Father, that the Lord’s blessing, protection and power will be upon him.

The Holy Father knows that even those ordained to proclaim the foolishness of the cross of Jesus Christ are tempted at times to accommodate the Lord’s message and his mission to the world. Friendship with the world is tempting. The temptation is to present Jesus and his mission in a way that is acceptable to the world. And that usually means a Jesus without the cross; a Jesus that doesn’t upset our plans or that wouldn’t put demands on us, especially demands that might cause us to look foolish in the eyes of those we are desperately trying to impress.

A bishop is first of all a disciple. A disciple is someone who has entered into a relationship with Jesus, a unique relationship founded on the terms Jesus’ himself has established. Jesus insists, “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26)

The cross is unavoidable. Compromise with the world is impossible for a disciple. Jesus told us what to expect from the world:

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19)

Why does the world hate Jesus? Because he tells the truth about the sin of the world and the world doesn’t want to hear it.

“And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” (John 3:19)

A disciple is called to bear witness to the truth, to simply proclaim the truth Jesus proclaimed, to teach what he taught, to speak the truth in love. Whenever the Church talks about sin, it provokes the world’s wrath. It’s tempting to avoid talking about it, to compromise, to remain silent, or to call evil good.

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Please Pray...

- for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and a new and personal Pentecost in the lives of all Catholics.
- for Pope Francis as he takes up his new responsibilities. May the Lord give him wisdom and courage as he leads the Church.
- that many Catholics would be reached with the proclamation of the Gospel through the use of television, radio, the Internet and social media.
- for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.
AS BY A NEW PENTECOST

This new DVD set is an effective tool for the New Evangelization! At long last, here is a way to invite family and friends to experience a New Pentecost in their lives right in the intimacy of your home or parish hall. As by a New Pentecost is a series of seven talks designed to introduce people to the grace of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Teachings given by leaders in the renewal and the New Evangelization will inspire and challenge you to pray with new fervor, “Come Holy Spirit and renew the face of the earth!”

Patti Mansfield and David Mangan are two of the first “witnesses” of the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Duquesne University in 1967 which was the beginning of the Catholic charismatic renewal. They have been used by the Lord to help many thousands come into a fuller life in the Spirit.

DVD Series Includes:
Introduction: Ralph Martin
Session 1: God’s Love—David Mangan
Session 2: Salvation—Ralph Martin
Session 3: The New Life—Patti Mansfield
Session 4: Receiving God’s Gifts—Peter Herbeck
Session 5: Prayer Session—David Mangan & Patti Mansfield
Session 6: Growth—Ralph Martin
Session 7: Transformation in Christ—Sr. Ann Shields, S.G.L.
Conclusion: Ralph Martin

Order copies of this DVD set by filling out the enclosed reply card or by going to www.renewalministries.net and clicking on Store.

“Without the Holy Spirit—God is far away.
Christ stays in the past, the Gospel is a dead letter, the Church is simply an organization, authority is a matter of domination, mission a matter of propaganda, the liturgy no more than an evocation, and Christian living a slave morality.

But in the Holy Spirit—the cosmos is resurrected and groans with the birth pangs of the Kingdom. The risen Christ is there, the Gospel is the power of life, the Church shows forth the life of the Trinity, authority is a liberating service, mission is a Pentecost, the liturgy is both memorial and anticipation, and human action is deified.”

— Ignatios of Latakia, the Orthodox Theologian Metropolitan
The 21st Annual Lift Jesus Higher Rally

Year after year, Paul and Dorle Kromer (seen here with Sr. Ann) provide the leadership and hands on hard work that make the Rally successful and fruitful.

About 3300 adults gathered together with a genuine attentiveness to hear God’s word and learn more about how to become more effective vessels for God’s grace and the work of evangelization.

Fr. James Mallon from Halifax, Nova Scotia used an interesting and humorous PowerPoint presentation to convey practical teaching on how to evangelize.

Ralph spoke on the saving power and grace of Jesus and the need to put aside human pride and admit our need for a Savior.

“Your talk was a wake-up call to me to renew my faith and stay strong. It really hit home for me.”

The Heralds of the Gospel, an International Association dedicated to Mary, the Eucharist and the Pope, and comprised mainly of young people, began the day by leading the adults in the Rosary.

Some of the Renewal Ministries Team: (bottom row, l to r: Kathleen Kittle, Fr. James Mallon, Ralph Martin, Anilu Seromik, Therese Jones. (Top row, l to r: Cynthia Rutherford and baby Isidore, Sr. Ann Shields, Jan Sauter, Anne Marie Sime, Gary Seromik, Peter Herbeck.)
At the closing Mass, Fr. Scott McCaig of the Companions of the Cross spoke to the youth and challenged them not to settle for mediocrity but to aspire to be saints and to live the great adventure of faith.

More than 1100 youth packed the theatre for a day filled with worship, testimonies, energetic music, skits and Eucharistic Adoration. One teen commented:

“The Renewal Ministries Youth Team was awesome! They were very engaging in terms of the visuals with relevant skits and convicting messages that spoke to the youth at their level.”

The theme for this year’s youth rally was Mission: Impossible. Our theme verse was taken from Luke 18:27: “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

Pete Burak’s talk entitled Operation: Transformation focused on what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus in the world today.

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“The music by Chris Bray was empowering!”

“You inspired a lot of my teens to grow deeper in their faith. I know that many of our teens had an encounter with the living God on Saturday.”

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The Church and the world have need of a new Pentecost, a second Pentecost, a priestly Pentecost, an interior Pentecost.

— Saint Concepción Cabrera de Armida