Where to begin? Literally every day we are receiving reports about how people are being touched by our mission. A few minutes ago a report came in via email from our team that just returned from Zambia, a country in South/Central Africa where we were on mission for the first time. Because of various problems in this country “outsiders” have generally not been welcomed to serve in Catholic circles, but an exception was made for us because of our solid track record and wide support from many bishops. Our country coordinators report that this is one of the most promising situations they have been involved in and were able to provide intensive training in Christian discipleship, apologetics and ministry tools. They have already been invited back to continue the training next year. It seems that all over Africa, Catholics are being aggressively challenged by non-Catholic groups to defend the biblical basis of Catholic teaching and our teams are increasingly being called on to help with this, and they do.

Personally, after a very welcome travel lull, and with the seminary semester over, I am back “on the road” again. Unfortunately, I have to decline many requests to do parish missions in order to respond to an unprecedented number of invitations to provide teaching and formation for priests, deacons and religious sisters. Fortunately, I am able to recommend many others who will do a good job for these parishes.

A highlight of this last month was giving eight talks to the clergy of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, just after the tornados struck. The Catholic pastor of Moore, where the greatest damage was done, took me on a tour and the damage was certainly great. At the same time, I was struck by how “normal” life goes on despite the great destruction. From the TV coverage I had the impression that the whole state was devastated, which it wasn’t. That said, the response of people all over the country to the disaster was really impressive and the help was very visible.

Another highlight was being back at Franciscan University of Steubenville for the Catholic Charismatic Conference, the Priests, Deacons and Seminarians Conference, and the Defending the Faith Conference. I had never before been there for three conferences in one summer and I continue to be impressed by how God has used Franciscan to bring so much spiritual life, encouragement and strength to so many over the years. This year again they are expecting to reach 40,000 high school students in those conferences alone, now held at various locations all over the country. It has been a joy reconnecting with many of you at these conferences whom I have met over the years at various events. Your perseverance is inspiring and important! Keep on!
I think the Lord has also been giving me a lot of encouragement that the painful task of writing continues to bear much fruit. More than ever, I am hearing from people who testify that one of my books has been significant in their conversion or ongoing walk with the Lord. At one of the conferences I was at, a well-known priest testified in his talk that he was caught up in the confusion that followed Vatican II and that it was reading *Unless the Lord Builds the House*, my very first, short book that saved him from the confusion and pointed him in the right direction. Thanks be to God. At the same conference someone came up and told me that he had been working for a well-known Protestant ministry but when he read *The Fulfillment of All Desire* he knew he needed to become a Catholic, and now he is! Here are some inspiring emails:

"Years ago when I was desperately searching I came upon your book, *Hungry for God*, and it led me to an experiential encounter with God that I really needed. And now I’ve just seen Fr. Mitch Pacwa’s interview with you that you’ve posted on your website and again, I am blessed. Thanks for helping this Protestant pastor’s wife!"

"I would like to encourage you to know that you have been a powerful force in my work, my life and my efforts to save souls. Your words in your lectures on the saints and in your books have kept me going in saying yes to God."

I also just received this message from someone in Italy who is translating a book about John Wimber and his extraordinary healing ministry:

"Did you know that at the origin of John Wimber’s healing ministry was your book *Hungry for God*? It had changed his wife’s life, and she gently brought him to the point of deciding whole submission to God’s will. I discovered it this morning, and I am sending you the first part of Chapter 3 of his book *Power Healing*."

After the meeting Carol and I went out for a hamburger. I was already in an irritable mood (because of the meeting) when Carol started telling me how her life was changing. The main source of her change came from Ralph C. Martin’s book *Hungry for God*. She said that what he wrote about the close nature of our relationship with Christ had been a vehicle for her opening her life more fully to the power the Holy Spirit. I said, “I suppose next you’re going to tell me that you speak in tongues.”

“Yep,” she said. I was too shocked to respond.”

This fruitfulness in ministry is also being experienced by Sr. Ann, Peter Herbeck, and in all the work of the Country Coordinators and members of the mission teams. Just recently a priest in NY ordered 250 copies of Sr. Ann’s booklet *Faith More Precious Than Gold*. Multiple copies of Peter Herbeck’s booklet *Welcome the Spiritual Gifts* are being ordered.

The TV and radio continue to reach many. There’s a very strong response to *The New Evangelization*, the series I am doing with Scott Hahn now playing on EWTN. From an email:

"I am getting so much from the new series. I am getting so inspired to reach out and evangelize. Your series is very effective. Thanks for being there. You are much needed."

And response to the radio programs is strong:

"I’m waking up to hear Sr. Ann’s program before my four little ones wake up and I can’t thank you enough for the joy and hope and peace those 15 minutes bring to the start of my day!"

Of course, all of this is not possible without your faithful and generous support. Listen to this letter from a death row prisoner: “I’m an indigent death row prisoner. Thank you for sending me the newsletter. I pass it on to another prisoner who then mails it to his mother. I will send a few dollars to help when I can. Thank you.”

Thank you, truly, for being comrades in the mission with us.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

P.S. We now have available *You Have Need of Endurance*, the DVD and CD albums from our annual Gathering. Many who were there said they were the best talks they’ve ever heard! May it be so! You’ll find a way to order them on the enclosed reply card.
Captured by Mercy

FOR CENTURIES we have heard of God’s mercy and found comfort in it. But a new twist, so to speak, has occurred in the years since Pope John Paul II instituted the Feast of Divine Mercy, based on the revelations to Sister Maria Faustina.

It seems as though the concept of mercy has more or less devolved simply into a popular devotion that somehow assuages fear among Catholics and brings a kind of comfort. Blessed be God if it does! But, the main reason God revealed the depth of His mercy to St. Faustina was to urge us to respond by accepting the life changing call to repentance and conversion. To do so is to experience the full mercy of God! That is why God spoke to St. Faustina—to urge us to turn from our wickedness and/or our cold indifference, to acknowledge our sins—as sin—not just as mistakes, and to take responsibility for our failures and return to the Lord. God will forgive us—yes! But we need to take responsibility for what we have done wrong and convert—that is, turn from the way we are going, adjust our course—whether it is one degree, or five or ninety or 180. When we are not on course toward God, we are moving away from Him and even being slightly off course can have serious consequences. The Lord promises forgiveness and reconciliation but it is given to those who admit their sins and errors, who repent, who at least try, by His grace, to change course.

“My heart overflows with great mercy for souls and especially for poor sinners. If only they could understand that I am the best of Fathers to them and that it is for them that the Blood and Water flowed from My Heart as from a fount overflowing with mercy. For them I dwell in the tabernacle as King of mercy. I desire to bestow my graces upon souls, but they do not want to accept them. You, at least, come to Me and take these graces they do not want to accept. In this way you will console My Heart. Oh how indifferent are souls to so much goodness, to so many proofs of love! My heart drinks only of the ingratitude and forgetfulness of souls living in the world. They have time for everything but they have no time to come to Me for graces.” (Divine Mercy in My Soul, #367)

Have We Faced our Sin?

When we face our sin and admit how much we stand in need of a Savior AND experience the mercy of God, when we know the freedom of the sons and daughters of God, then we can become vessels of mercy for others. In other words, when we have opened ourselves in honesty and humility to receive God’s forgiveness and have experienced the joy and freedom of that mercy THEN God tells us, “Love one another as I have loved you!” We can give because we have first received.

As we daily pray the Lord’s Prayer and say these words: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others! Do you really pay attention to what you are saying? Do you really understand that you are asking God to forgive you in the same way and to the same measure that you forgive others? Do you want God to treat you as you have treated those who offended you?

You do want to know the forgiveness of God especially if that sin is grievous. You need to experience the joy and the unparalleled peace that such forgiveness brings. Then you need to go and do likewise. When you are willing to receive that level of mercy from God and from others, it humbles you in the best sense. The facades fall and we see ourselves as we truly are—constantly in need of the mercy of God.
We will experience a new desire to be captured by that same merciful love not only for ourselves, but for the sake of freeing others from the deathlike grip of sin...

But God will never force it on us. He waits for us to come to Him and honestly admit the weight of past sin that we carry—that we hope no one ever finds out about—and, as a result, that unforgiven sin is like a cancer that eats away at our hope, our joy and our peace. But it doesn’t have to!

Once, we are willing to confess our sin and receive the mercy of God, life becomes very different. A new compassion for others fills us, a willingness to bring others out of the darkness of sin and into the light of mercy and truth. We can become captured by mercy—become like Christ! He bore the horror of our sin and died upon the cross to win for us the possibility of forgiveness—if we confess and ask for it. Once we begin to understand the depths of God’s love for us by His willingness to take our sins upon Himself and die to break the power of sin and eternal death THEN we can find ourselves on our knees, weeping for joy at the new life that is ours. We will experience a new desire to be captured by that same merciful love not only for ourselves, but for the sake of freeing others from the deathlike grip of sin.

Pope Francis puts it bluntly: “We are all sinners, but the problem is not that we are sinners but that we don’t repent. The problem is being corrupt. The problem is not being ashamed of what we have done.” (Morning Mass at Domus Sanctae Marthae, 5/17/13)

When we face our sin we are not only set free, but we are now open to a new grace. I have heard some remarkable stories of the miracles wrought because someone was able to forgive another. One of the most powerful stories was told by Philip Yancey in his book, The Skeptics Guide to Faith. I think this story summarizes the hope that lies in our willingness to forgive—hope for our lives, for others, for the future. God is never outdone in generosity. Yancey relates the story as follows:

Back in the 1980’s a Dutchman in South Africa was on trial for murdering a woman’s husband and then two years later her eighteen year old son. She witnessed the horror of their tortured deaths—all this during the apartheid struggle in South Africa. The anger, hatred and bitterness raged in that country for years until Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela proposed an incredible agreement which the government, in desperation, finally accepted. In short, the agreement was this: that the victim could set the penalty for the criminal. On this particular day, Yancey recounts an eighty some year old widow who meets the murderer of her husband and son. When she is asked what the punishment is to be for this man who stood before her, in the dock, awaiting sentence, she answered, and I summarize, “I have so much love in my heart still but my husband and son are gone. I would ask that John come to my home and visit me twice a month in the ghetto that I might give him the mother’s love he did not have.” The astonished jury began to sing Amazing Grace…the man in the dock fainted…and Nelson Mandela said that from that day on the back of evil in that country’s racial struggle was broken.

That woman had been captured by mercy! That grace is available to us. “Love one another as I have loved you.” God never commands without imparting the grace to carry out His will!

Pope John Paul II taught us that mercy is not the opposite of justice but it is the opposite of resentment and revenge. Where in my life do I need to allow myself to be captured by mercy?
Mission to Zambia

by Lloyd Greenhaw

OUR FIRST EVER mission trip to Zambia was very fruitful. The week-long training program for 50 lay leaders and about 10 religious sisters was hosted by the Kekako Community of Lusaka at the Mt. Zion Retreat Center. The overall leader is a man named Fanwell Chilondela, an evangelist and a musician who has made a number of musical albums that fund his ministry. He has a great working relationship with all the bishops of Zambia and the community is similar to the Emmaus Community in Uganda, where all the leaders of Kekako have been formed. They do outreaches all over Zambia as well as in Malawi, Namibia, and Botswana. They are solidly Catholic and enjoy a strong relationship with the bishops and are committed to the work of evangelization in Africa.

The retreat center is owned and run by the Daughters of the Redeemer Sisters who work closely with the Kekako Community and offer them reduced prices for food and lodging, which really helps. One of these sisters came the first day of the Unbound prayer session, but she was taken to the hospital later that night for chronic asthma, and stayed there several days. On our last evening Nancy prayed over her and she received a visible and immediate healing in her lungs. She had a sort of startled look on her face, took several deep breaths, began to laugh and said, “I am healed.”

Fr. Collins Moonga is the chaplain of the community. He went to the university and graduated with a degree in engineering and was the national champion in high jump. He went into business and became very successful, but felt the call of the Lord in his life. He finally decided to leave his work and went into the seminary; he persevered and was ordained last year. He attended all our sessions and couldn’t thank us enough for what we brought to his people.

At the opening session I spoke on the Year of Faith and the historic opportunity we have to receive more of the gift of faith. We closed with an invitation to accept Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. The music was way beyond good! These people know how to praise the Lord! The richness of their voices and their ability to express their love of God was very special, and we were richly blessed.

Each day we had the same schedule: breakfast at 8:00 am, sessions from 9:00 until 12:30, then lunch, the afternoon session from 2:00-4:30 and then Mass and dinner. Each evening we had different sessions. The first night we showed videos of Renewal Ministries’ outreaches. A few nights we had praise and worship sessions. One night was an empowerment in the Holy Spirit and another a night of healing centered on the Blessed Sacrament.

During the day Nancy taught on the Five Keys to Freedom through Unbound Prayer and I taught on Catholic Apologetics and the New Evangelization. The participants were so happy to have strong biblical answers to the many challenges that confront them from non-Catholics. After the talks we divided the class into small groups where they discussed how to apply the teaching to their lives and ministry.

After each session we allowed questions and as usual the session on forgiveness resulted in the most discussion. Nancy always teaches that forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling, and that Jesus showed us that forgiveness is possible, even in our pain. During the discussion one participant finally shouted, “It is not an option!” There was a lot of soul searching after that talk and several people shared that they had forgiven for the first time in their lives!

We conducted a fruitful week-long training program for lay leaders and sisters, focusing on Apologetics, the New Evangelization and Unbound prayer and deliverance.

“Day by day you could see the Lord healing them of so much hurt and many found a depth of freedom they never knew was possible.”

continued on pg 6
When the participants were told of the total delight that the Father has for them, it seemed like a light went on in their hearts. Many shared that they knew God loved them but had never really thought that He actually delighted in them. Some shared that they had thought of the Father as “a big policeman in the sky”, but now felt the real love of God for the first time.

This group has a strong foundation and is really committed to the New Evangelization. Several came from as far away as 600 kilometers to get our training. They said they came to learn more about deliverance, but found the sessions more like a personal retreat. Day by day you could see the Lord healing them of so much hurt and many found a depth of freedom they never knew was possible. They were so excited and have asked us to return for a regional conference next August when leaders from several countries will eagerly come.

Here are excerpts from a few testimonies.

“Though I have been preaching to other people about God’s love, deep down in my heart something was there which did not actually give me the true picture of being a child of God.” – Fanwell Chi- londela From Zambia

“I am privileged to have attended this workshop because it opened up and has defined the reasons why I should evangelize. I feel empowered because it is my very personal experience that I am going to share and that testimony is going to transform others. You have given us a conviction that we matter, that I matter as a sister; I matter in my parish and in my family and everywhere even in my place of work. I want to make my life the Gospel for other people. Thank you very much.” – Sr. Mau- reen from the Archdiocese of Kasama

“I did the Unbound in Uganda last year and it really helped to get everything out that I was hiding in that shell. Most of all I started to use the Unbound Model in my ministry. Two weeks ago I returned from Namibia, another neighboring country. We prayed over 15 people and we used this Unbound Model and what it did was tremendous. One lady was in bed for 18 years; she had suffered from a stroke. We counseled her and she decided to forgive and when we led her in the Miracle Prayer to give her life to Jesus, she got on her feet and was able to walk!” – Angela from Zambia

Worship throughout the week was exceptionally rich and the music was a beautiful expression of their love for the Lord.
"You have given us a conviction that we matter, that I matter as a sister; I matter in my parish and in my family and everywhere even in my place of work. I want to make my life the Gospel for other people."

First Annual U.S. Lift Jesus Higher Rally!
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Seagate Convention Centre
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Presented by Renewal Ministries
On the Road

“All of us can attain to Christian virtue and holiness, no matter in what condition of life we live and no matter what our life work may be.”

–Saint Francis de Sales

August 2013

*Detroit, MI, Archdiocesan Deacons’ Retreat
August 2
Sr. Ann Shields

Wynnewood, PA, St. Charles Seminary, Seminar on Preaching for Priests, Deacons & Seminarians
August 5-8
Ralph Martin
info@thewordproclaimed.org

*San Angelo, TX, Diocesan Deacons and Wives Retreat
August 9-10
Ralph Martin

*Birmingham, AL, Crossing the Goal Taping
August 11-14
Peter Herbeck & Crossing the Goal Team

Grass Lake, MI, Pine Hills Girls’ Camp
August 11-17
Debbie Herbeck & Team

Mission to Latvia
August 14-26
Don Turbitt and Team

Mission to Uganda
August 15-27
Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw & Team
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

*Wixom, MI, St. Catherine’s Academy Faculty Retreat
August 21
Sr. Ann Shields

Fortaleza, Brazil, Conference for Catholic Preachers
August 23-25
Ralph Martin
Contact: elvisroliveira@hotmail.com

September 2013

Ann Arbor, MI, The Choices We Face Taping
September 4-6, 9-13, 16-20
Ralph Martin & Peter Herbeck

Mission to Rwanda
September 6-16
Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw & Team
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

Mission to Serbia
September 10-12
Deacon Zoltán Kunszabó & Team

Brooklyn, MI, i.d.916 Young Adult Summit 2013
September 13-14
Peter & Debbie Herbeck, Pete Burak
Contact: intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com

Great Falls, MT, Evening of Renewal
September 15
Ralph Martin
More information: www.dioceseofgfb.org

*Great Falls, MT, Annual Clergy Assembly
September 16-17
Ralph Martin

*Events not open to the public

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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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