Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I don’t often conduct parish missions these days so that I can focus on clergy and deacon events. However, I’ve recently completed three missions, each one special in its own way. First it was a special privilege to be asked to speak on all four nights of the Lenten mission at my own parish, Christ the King in Ann Arbor, MI. The turnout was excellent and it was a joy to share with my own parish what I’ve been sharing all over the world. The warm response was very moving.

Second, I spoke along with Sr. Ann and Peter Herbeck at a five-night parish mission at Holy Family in Novi, MI. The pastor is a long-time friend who was part of the charismatic community in Ann Arbor, years ago. It is inspiring to see him persevering all these years in parish after parish zealously leading his people to God.

Finally, I conducted a three-night parish mission at St. Gertrude in Madeira, OH, a suburb of Cincinnati. I was invited by a young priest I met when he was a seminarian and I was finishing up my STL degree at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

The time at St. Gertrude was a “surprise of the Holy Spirit!” Besides being a large parish it is the residence for the novitiates of the Dominican Fathers of the Province of St. Joseph (East Coast). I stayed at the Priory with seven priests and 16 novices and was privileged to participate in their prayers and silent meals. It was a great atmosphere in which to prepare for the evening talks. The turnout was amazing with more than 400 each night. After my talk each night all seven priests heard confessions and hundreds availed themselves of the opportunity. On the final night, the priests spent more than two hours hearing confessions.

The Holy Spirit surprised me with requests to meet with other groups and individuals while I was there. I had the privilege of spending more than an hour with all the novices in a great conversation about the New Evangelization. I was able to enjoy visiting with long-time friends and supporters of Renewal Ministries and meet some new friends. I was also able to visit the Archdiocesan seminary.

Perhaps the highlight of the whole trip was a visit with the eighth grade class of St. Gertrude School, a K-8 school attached to the parish and run by the Nashville Dominican Sisters. Last summer, I had the opportunity to speak at the Sisters’ annual community gathering. Just before leaving for the parish mission, I received the following e-mail message from Sr. Veronica, an eighth grade teacher:

*continued on pg 2*
Dear Dr. Martin,

We are very excited about your visit to St. Gertrude. The sisters and I are listening to your retreat on St. Catherine of Siena at table, and it has been very renewing. Thank you for all you are doing for the Lord. The Congregation is still talking about the wonderful retreat you gave us this past summer. It has definitely helped my focus going back into the classroom.

Some incredible things have been happening in our junior high this year, especially with our 8th grade. It had been building up all year, but since a couple of them went on the March for Life with the high school youth group and came back on fire for their faith, the Holy Spirit has been moving in incredible ways. The students who went gave testimonies on experiences they had in adoration to their classmates and encouraged them to seek Christ in the Eucharist. Their witness inspired many of their classmates to take prayer seriously. Students opt to spend their recess time in the chapel regularly. They pray for and with each other. They go to adoration after school together. When they were offered an opportunity the Friday before their Confirmation to go on retreat, 30 out of 45 attended. Now they are regularly giving their testimonies before school Masses and other gatherings.

I'm telling you all of this not to brag on anything great we are doing at St. Gertrude (it is the Holy Spirit who is the source of all this), but to give you some background on what the Lord is doing in these students’ lives. It is truly exciting. They were Confirmed last Wednesday, and now many of them are trying to find different avenues to evangelize.

My hope in bringing you in to speak to them is that you could affirm their desire to evangelize, especially as they are about to disperse to different high schools. Perhaps your topic could be “After Confirmation: Where do we go from here?” Some students have also witnessed the charismatic gifts of tongues, tears, etc. One of my students was reportedly “slain in the Spirit” at the retreat before his Confirmation. They might ask questions about this during a question/answer time.

Now, I apologize because I’ve written you an essay.

Something like a visitation of the Holy Spirit has happened to these students – both boys and girls – and it is very inspiring to see them pray and sing. I was warmly welcomed to the school by signs that the students had made. After speaking to them for a while they asked some really great questions. Then we made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and sang more great songs of worship. Very inspiring. The next day the students sent some of their meditations on the Gospel of John. We have included a few excerpts in this newsletter (see page 3: “Reflections on the Gospel of John”).

The Holy Spirit is at work even as the power of evil seems to be growing. We need to remember that where sin abounds, grace abounds still more. As you read this I’ll be in Rome for the June 1-2 encounter with Pope Francis in the Olympic Stadium where I also will be speaking. Please pray for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit at this event so it will impact the whole world.

I want to end with a special message for those who are sick and perhaps elderly and poor. Your suffering, tears, love, and prayers, are not in vain. Unite your suffering to that of Jesus and turn it into intercessory prayer for the salvation of souls. Your contribution is important! Keep on.

“To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness which touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light. In Christ, God himself wishes to share this path with us and to offer us his gaze so that we might see the light within it.” (Pope Francis, Lumen Fidei, 57)

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin
The following are excerpts from reflections by eighth grade students at St. Gertrude School in Madeira, OH.

“[W]hen you follow the Lord, the devil gains nothing. When you follow the Lord you will gain everything. However, you can still fall away, just like Judas and others did. So that’s why you should pray and give thanks every day, so you can stay close to the Lord and not fall away.”

“Satan is always on the prowl; in fact, every second he’s trying to devour us by feeding us lies about God. Just like he lied to Adam and Eve, he’s trying to show us a confused lie. When this happens, we must not turn away from God, but rather turn as fast as we can towards him. I think sometimes we find ourselves caught up in our prideful thoughts, and sometimes we don’t even realize it. This is why we need the Spirit of truth! We must keep up a very healthy prayer life or else we will be devoured by Satan just like that, and sometimes we don’t realize it in the moment. We are in dire need of the grace of God poured out to us through the Spirit of truth every day. We gain this by praying and practicing charity…I want to try to live out my life the way God wants me to, by loving God with my whole heart, mind, strength, and soul, and love my neighbor as Jesus loves.”

“God is a true friend. We don’t choose Him to be our friend all the time, but He constantly chooses us. He is constantly knocking at the door to our hearts, we just have to open that door and let Him into our hearts, so we may have eternal life.”

“I think we can all agree that there are times in our lives when we question what God is doing. But we must remember that we are finite and that God is infinite, we can’t fully comprehend why God is doing these things in our lives. As human beings, we have a very limited point of view, but looking back we can see the many ways God has graced us and slowly led us to him…Sometimes the quickest way to our hearts is the longest route. That route may involve grieving and pain, but God knows exactly what he is doing. Do you think he would have died for you on a tree if he hadn’t? As God’s children, we need to trust in him and know that while things may hurt now and not make sense, it will cause an abundance of grace in the end.”

“God ‘prunes’ us by giving opportunities to grow in our relationship with him. These opportunities cleanse us of our impurities that sin has placed within us. He loves us so much that he wants us to make him a better person. The only thing we have to do is accept him fully. Virtuous people who follow Christ fully are given more opportunities to grow even more virtuous. He wants all of us to have his grace and accept it so that we can have even more grace. Hearing this, we should want to be receptive to his gifts and grace because he is our true loving Father.”

“How can you not love God? He died on the cross for us! God saved us and the least we can do is follow His commandments…We can’t just say we ‘love’ God. If we truly love God we will want to make Him happy. That happiness will come from Him knowing that we are following His commandments. If you are looking for ways to grow closer to God, spend some time in silent prayer and listen. Let God tell you His plan and then live it out as a strong Catholic. This will help you get to the best place when it is time. That place we call Heaven, where we will come face to face with the one who saved us…Christ the King!”
Receive the Gifts of Wisdom and Understanding

THIS MONTH, WE CELEBRATE the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the first apostles. Do we realize, though, that we do not celebrate a past historical event? When we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, we are celebrating a present reality, not commemorating an event in history! God did not pour out His Spirit on the first apostles just to “get the church started.” He continuously pours out His Spirit upon the Church AND upon each one of us, that we might be more and more conformed to His image and likeness. Pentecost is a divine reality. God continually gives, pours out, lavishes His Spirit on us that we might live in Him; that we might live, not for ourselves, but for Him and for His people. He pours out His Spirit that we may gradually be freed from sin and reflect more and more in our weak, fragile flesh His presence and His glory.

When I was confirmed at eight years of age, I did not understand how much God loved me. How He wanted to give me His Holy Spirit, to draw little, sinful me into His embrace and conform me, by grace, into His image and likeness. I did not understand then. But now, I begin to realize that God IS love and desires to enfold me into union with Him! He desires to enfold each of us.

The grace of Pentecost is available to you right at this moment as you read this article. Make room in your heart and mind to be awed by His personal love for you, let yourself be challenged to allow Him to conform you to Himself. Surrender again! Give the reins of your life over to Him once more or for the first time. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray to the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him or knows Him; you know him for He dwells with you and will be in you” (Jn 14: 13-17).

In 1989, during the Angelus addresses, Pope John Paul II (now St. John Paul II) gave a series of teachings on the gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed in Isaiah 11:1: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. These are the gifts that conform us to His image and likeness! These are the gifts that make us more and more like Him! Let us focus on wisdom and understanding, the first two gifts as explained by St. John Paul II:

Wisdom...is a light which we receive from on high; it is a special sharing in that mysterious and higher knowledge which is that of God Himself...This higher wisdom is the root
Wisdom

Understanding

of a new awareness, a knowledge permeated by charity, by means of which the soul becomes familiar, so to say, with divine things and tastes them. St. Thomas speaks precisely of a certain taste of God, through which the truly wise person is not simply one who knows the things of God but rather the one who experiences and lives them... [It] further gives us a special ability to judge human things according to God’s standard, in God’s light. (Regina Caeli Address, April 9, 1989)

Understanding... The gift of wisdom, leads us in a certain way to the gift of understanding, “which communicates to the believer a glint of such penetrating capacity, opening the heart to the joyous understanding of God’s loving plan” (Regina Caeli Address, April 16, 1989). It enables us to begin to comprehend and share, so to speak, in the Divine mind and heart, to actually begin to hunger and thirst for God’s priorities and so, in a certain sense, begin to live life from God’s perspective. It requires a certain death to our own will, our own agenda for life. But such a death leads us more and more into union with God Himself—the fullness of life.

I honestly think we could spend the rest of our lives just contemplating these two gifts and never plumb the depths of who God is and how deeply He loves us. Yet, according to Isaiah there are five more gifts that God gives! In addition, there are seven gifts for ministry as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14.

There is so much to learn, brothers and sisters. It is Divine knowledge that God offers us, Divine knowledge that does not lead us just to information/knowledge about God but leads us into union with God Himself!! Let us thank Him this Pentecost season for all the gifts He literally showers on us; gifts that lead us into union with the Source of all Wisdom and All love and gifts which enable us to radiate His presence to a world growing so dark and so cold. Servants of God: claim and live your heritage while there is still light!+

By Deacon Steve Thomasheski

opportunities for Holy Mass, prayer, worship, free time, teaching, and recreation. The recreation events, main teachings, and the prayer ministry, were sponsored by Renewal Ministries.

Túlél tábor Survival Camp
Vadu Crisului, Romania

Tibi developed this unique camp that combines survival training with evangelization. Located in a beautiful natural area near the Carpathian Mountains, the camp includes sports and games, as well as short talks, testimonies and Holy Mass. On the last night campers had the opportunity to give their life to Jesus. And they responded.

Eszter Kunszabó who has attended Lelkes Napok Camp for the past five years had this to say: “For the first time in my life, I got to see Him, and during a prayer time I could feel Him physically. I made some important commitments regarding my prayer life and purity.”

continued on pg 6
Inci is one of many people who has benefited from the work of Renewal Ministries in Romania. Her life was changed 15 years ago when she participated in a retreat led by Deacon Steve. During the retreat, she renounced Reiki and said she felt “white and pure like the snow…reborn in a way.”

Pictured above with Deacon Steve and Lucia are Inci, her husband and two children.

The Survival campsite is replete with caves, rivers, and forests that provide opportunities for adventure. Here campers learn to navigate a cave.

**Erdélyi Rio**
**Archdiocese of Alba Youth Festival**

Erdélyi Rio was a week-long camp planned to coincide with World Youth Day in Rio. It had the same theme: Go, and Make Disciples of All Nations. The daily schedule consisted of Holy Mass, talks on discipleship and evangelization, small group discussion, quiet time, recreation and workshops.

**Szent Pál Közösség Community Nagyvárad**

At the Community of St. Paul, I believe the LORD wanted me to speak on the topic of weakness. So I shared about the effects of the stroke that I had the previous year and how “being less” allows the Lord to use us more. I focused on 1 Corinthians 1:27 “God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.”

**Új Jeruzsálem Katolikus Közösség Community Gathering**

This Community Gathering was attended by approximately 60 people. The day consisted of praise and worship, two talks on the meaning of Catholic sacramental marriage, lunch, a talk on evangelization, and prayer by Deacon Zoli. The day closed with the celebration of Holy Mass.

**Kaposvár Catholic High School Evangelization**

The Kaposvár Catholic High School Evangelization lasted two days. The first day we spoke to seniors. For the most part they did not want to be there and the results were mixed at best. The second day we spoke to juniors and they were wide open to us and to the Holy Spirit.

**Nagybajom Town Mission**

The Nagybajom Town Mission attracted a mixture of young, married, elderly, Hungarian and Gypsies. Those who attended seemed to be profoundly discouraged, maybe even hopeless. By the end of the event their countenance had lightened noticeably. We have been invited back to both the Catholic High School in Kaposvár and to do another mission in Nagybajom.
The primary purpose of our four-day trip was to visit and encourage the Hungarian-speaking mission communities in the middle region of northern Serbia. Some of these communities formed as a result of our earlier mission trips and they were our first co-workers in Serbia.

We had also received an invitation from Bishop Német László to participate in an Advent retreat day for children in Nagybecskerek in the eastern region.

Our base for the entire mission was the city of Ada. Here we met with the local charismatic community and shared our experiences of community life. We encouraged them to be totally sincere and faithful to each other. We also celebrated Holy Mass in the main church of the city. Laci led the music ministry and I had the opportunity to preach about the ongoing work of God in the life of every human being and throughout history.

In Szabadka, the local charismatic community was celebrating their 10th anniversary. We were pleased to celebrate with them by participating in a FIRE rally and celebrating Holy Mass. During the rally, I preached the basic Gospel, strongly emphasizing God’s unconditional love: He offered Himself as a bloody sacrifice for us while we were still sinners. I also led them in a prayer for repentance and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Our next stop was Zenta. Here we led a holy hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament and celebrated Holy Mass. After Mass, I gave a teaching on allowing the Holy Spirit to draw us into the eternal. The response to this message was dramatic. Virtually all of the 120 people present came forward to receive prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In some cases we led deliverance prayers. This evening was really anointed!

The last stop was in Nagybecskerek. Each Advent, Bishop Német invites children from all the parishes to a retreat at the Cathedral. In addition to children’s plays and short programs, the day included nearly 400 children joyfully singing and dancing to Laci’s music. The bishop delighted in seeing the joy of his little lambs.
### On the Road

"May the divine Spirit deign to answer in a most comforting manner the prayer that everyday rises to him from every corner of the world: 'Renew your wonders in our time, as though in a new Pentecost.'"

—St. John XXIII

#### June 2014

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<td>Mission to Hungary</td>
<td>Ellicott City, MD</td>
<td>May 26-September 24</td>
<td>Ralph Martin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jwhite@shrineofstanthony.org">jwhite@shrineofstanthony.org</a></td>
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<td>XXXVII Convocation of Renewal with Pope Francis</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>June 1-2</td>
<td>Ralph Martin</td>
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<td>i.d.916 Disciples’ Night</td>
<td>Ypsilanti, MI</td>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>Peter Herbeck</td>
<td><a href="mailto:intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com">intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Mission to Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Ypsilanti, MI</td>
<td>June 9-22</td>
<td>Bohumir Zivcak, PhD and Team</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kkittle@renewalministries.net">kkittle@renewalministries.net</a></td>
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#### July 2014

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<td>Irish National Charismatic Conference</td>
<td>Dublin, Ireland</td>
<td>June 27-29</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:bridgetdunne@eircom.net">bridgetdunne@eircom.net</a></td>
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* * Not open to the public

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**Renewal Ministries**

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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.

- **Editor**: Rose Wingfield
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