Although you may have heard or seen something of the wonderful meeting of Pope Francis with the charismatic renewal in Rome this past June, I want to share what I see as its significance for us.

There were indeed 52,000 people from 55 different nations in the Olympic Stadium. The available seats sold out in 45 days (Because of the large stage and video screens only 52,000 of the 80,000 seats were available.) It was a big and fervent crowd with full participation in singing and praise.

There were four main talks during the two-day event. On Sunday, Cardinal Comastri spoke on conversion and Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa spoke on faith. On Monday, a national holiday in Italy – although I couldn’t find anyone who knew why it was a holiday – I spoke on the gift of the Spirit and Salvatore Martinez, the leader of the Italian renewal gave a talk on evangelization. I felt that the Lord helped me a good deal with my talk. The organizers asked me to lead a repentance session and then pray for a greater outpouring of the Spirit. My interpreter was excellent and the talk really flowed. Thanks be to God!

Of course, the high point of the event was Pope Francis’ visit to the stadium. When the local organizers informed him about the convocation, he replied, “I’ll come!” He came not just to give a talk but to participate in the praise and worship. It was very moving to see the Pope walking into the stadium warmly greeting people and then to see him with arms upraised fervently singing a song that he requested. He knew the song from his visits with the renewal while he was Archbishop of Buenos Aries, Argentina and served as Episcopal Advisor to the renewal there.

Another very moving moment was when he knelt down on the stage to receive prayer. He remained kneeling for a long time while everyone in the stadium stretched out their hands to pray for him, singing in the Spirit.

As representatives of different groups – young people, priests, families, the handicapped – greeted him, the Pope interjected, “You’re forgetting an important group – grandparents!” He has often spoken of the important role his own grandmother played in his life. He then gave a short impromptu meditation on how Simeon and Anna were moved by the Holy Spirit to recognize the baby Jesus and prophesy about him. He joked about how Anna “canonized” gossip by speaking to everyone about the child! He spoke about the freedom in the Spirit that can be characteristic of grandparents and the wisdom they hold for the Church.
He shared how when he first met the renewal in Argentina it seemed to him to be something like a Samba dance school but as he got to know it he saw what a great gift it was for the Church. He acknowledged that organization was necessary but cautioned the renewal not to over organize and try to put the Holy Spirit in a cage! Most significantly he said: “I expect that you share with all in the Church the grace of Baptism in the Holy Spirit (the expression that is read in the Acts of the Apostles).”

May we do so!!

Pope Francis also remarked how he used to see us carrying small pocket bibles in the early days of the Renewal but he doesn’t see that very much anymore. He urged us to again carry Bibles in our purses, bags and pockets!

As he began to leave the stadium he greeted a number of us and while there was no time for any real conversation it was a great blessing to speak briefly with him and shake his hand. It was a joy to do so next to Patti Mansfield – one of the students on that Duquesne weekend which began the renewal and a regular guest on The Choices We Face – and Sr. Briege McKenna who, at various times during the convocation, led prayer for repentance, conversion, blessing and healing.

A small highlight for me was actually seeing the Pope get into his small Ford Focus to drive back to the Vatican. I had heard that he drives a Focus and was delighted to actually see it!

During the convocation, I often recalled the memorable meeting of the renewal with Pope Paul VI in St. Peter’s Basilica in 1975 when the Pope declared that the renewal was a “chance” for the Church. I think with Pope Francis the Church is being given a “second chance” to avail ourselves of the power of the Holy Spirit. This is so vitally necessary if we are to successfully confront the international pagan culture’s growing hostility to Christ and the Church.

I also thought back to 1967 when a small group of Duquesne University students rediscovered the power of the Holy Spirit. That experience birthed the charismatic renewal which has impacted more than 120 million Catholics around the world.

Finally, I thought of what happened in 1968, a turning point in our culture, when the sexual revolution powerfully manifested itself, attacks on the teaching of the Church — from within and without — gained in force, and the rejection of our Judeo-Christian heritage accelerated. May this “second chance” of 2014 be received by the worldwide Church so we will be better prepared for the challenges ahead.

It was a delight to return from Rome just in time to share this experience at our annual gathering of friends and supporters. More than 280 of you joined us for an inspiring and informative weekend. For a recap, turn to page 6. We hope you can join us for next year’s Gathering on May 29-31, 2015 when we will be celebrating 35 years of doing the Lord’s work. Mark your calendar!

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

P.S. The full text of the Pope’s remarks is posted on the home page of our website. Visit www.RenewalMinistries.net and click on the relevant link under “Bulletin” in the right side bar.
Pope Francis waved as he departed from the Olympic Stadium in his Ford Focus.

After Ralph gave a talk on the Gift of the Spirit, the organizers asked him to lead a time of repentance to prepare for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

After prayer for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit it was a time for joy, gratitude and solidarity. From left to right: Patti Mansfield, Salvatore Martinez (President of the Italian Renewal), Michelle Moran (Chairperson of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services), Ralph and Anne Martin, Charles Whitehead (England), Sr. Nancy Kellar (United States) and Shayne Bennett (Australia) – all friends in the Lord.

Everyone in the Olympic Stadium prayed fervently for Pope Francis as he remained kneeling for a long time, receiving the prayer.

Pope Francis waved as he departed from the Olympic Stadium in his Ford Focus.

Ralph, Sr. Briege McKenna and Patti Mansfield were together for the encounter with Pope Francis.
You Cannot Give What You Do Not Have

FOR THE LAST three years, I have returned again and again to the passage in the Gospel of Mark which reads: “And he went up into the hills and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons” (Mk 3:13-15).

Read those verses over a few times and note that Christ called those men not, first of all to equip them for apostolic service, but to be with Him!

In these days when the New Evangelization is being so emphatically stressed—and necessarily so—let us not make the mistake of putting “the cart before the horse.” When the evangelist Mark wrote, he wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and it is obvious from these verses that Christ wanted a personal relationship with each one. Then he would give them gifts for ministry.

Today we are so action-oriented and goal-centered that we often approach evangelization in the same way, organizing committees and meetings as the first steps in planning whether it is for a parish, a school, a diocese, etc. I firmly believe that such an approach will not bear good fruit!

God wants a relationship with each one of us; a relationship sustained by daily prayer, regular reading of the Scriptures, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I urge you to read St. John Paul II’s apostolic exhortation regarding the Jubilee Year, 2000, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. In sections 16-28 and sections 29-41, the Pope outlines the call to holiness for all of us in the Church and in a particular way for those who serve the Church in some capacity and for our parishes. He marks out a clear path to follow so that our work of evangelization may be fruitful. In many ways this document has been foundational for my own prayer life and a great aid to growth in the spiritual life during the last 15 years. Take the time to read the whole letter. In addition to finding practical help, you will be inspired. (You can find the document online at www.vatican.va.)

The whole goal of evangelization is to point to the path by which each and every person may come to know and love Christ and encourage others to open themselves to the transforming power of Christ’s love. The old saying “you cannot give what you do not have” is certainly true! God is waiting to draw each of us closer to Himself so that we may know and experience the love of Christ and thus be a light to all those “stumbling in the darkness.” If that doesn’t happen in our personal lives, what do we have to offer to others? Obviously, I am not saying that we need to be saints before we can evangelize. What I am saying is that we need to live our daily lives drawing grace from the merciful heart of Christ so that we have something to give—not just our ideas, or programs or events—but the life of Christ growing within us.

If, in the planning that awaits us, we commit ourselves more confidently to a pastoral activity that gives personal and communal prayer its proper place, we shall be observing an essential principle of the Christian view of life: the primacy of grace. There is a temptation which perennially besets every spiritual journey and pastoral work: that of thinking that the results depend on our ability to act and to plan. God of course asks us to really cooperate with his grace and therefore invites us to invest all our resources of intelligence and energy in serving the cause of the Kingdom. But it is fatal to forget that “without Christ we can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

It is prayer which roots us in this truth. It constantly reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in union with him, the primacy of the interior life and holiness. When this principle is not respected, is it any wonder that pastoral plans come to nothing and leave us with a disheartening sense of frustration? (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 38).

May our ongoing “yes” to the Lord in prayer and service bear much fruit for the Kingdom of God. +
The Choices We Face is distributed by national and local cable networks, independent broadcast stations and international satellites. To find out when the program airs in your area, please visit www.RenewalMinistries.net and click on TV Shows.

Each week, Ralph and Peter explore important and inspiring topics surrounding faith and life in the Catholic Church.

This month their guests will include:

- **Mary Bielski**: All4Him
- **Dcn. Bob Ervin**: New Leaven
- **Fr. John Riccardo**: Encountering Jesus
- **Dcn. Mike Thoennes and Mary Hagar**: Maintenance to Mission

Please Pray...

- for our evangelization opportunities this month in Romania, Gambia, Rwanda and Slovenia.
- that Christians in every nation in the world may joyfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

Remember to Watch

**The CHOICES We face**

Save the Date

2nd Annual U.S. Lift Jesus Higher Rally

Toledo, OH
November 8th 2014

www.LJHRToledo.com
The annual Renewal Ministries Gathering was designed to encourage participants to grow in holiness and equip them for mission. The event, which drew 282 people from 22 states and four countries, included inspiring talks and evangelization workshops.

The talks were recorded and are available on CD. For more information or to order, please visit: www.Renewal Ministries.net.

Mark your calendar and make plans to attend the Gathering next year on May 29-31, 2015. We will be celebrating the 35th anniversary of Renewal Ministries.

**Speakers**

Ralph Martin provided highlights of the Pope’s remarks on June 1 at the Charismatic Convocation in Rome. He also encouraged participants to be open to all the dimensions of the Spirit’s working, the contemplative graces which come from Pentecost.

“The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to us to draw us into intimacy with God,” said Sr. Ann Shields, SGL. “These gifts enable us to see as He sees, to hear what He hears and to have the grace and the courage to judge as He judges and act as He acts.”

To challenge participants to evangelize, Lavinia Spirito borrowed the popular phrase “just do it.”

Pete Burak reported that there are now seven fledgling chapters of i.d. 9:16.

**Workshops**

Dr. Peter Williamson presented the historical evidence to answer those who question the existence of Jesus.

Chris Burak conducted a hands-on workshop to help attendees develop the skills to engage in loving, respectful, rational conversations regarding the faith.
“God is pouring out his Spirit in a new and special way,” said Lloyd Greenhaw. “We are seeing tremendous conversions and revival in Africa.” Recently, the Greenhaws had the opportunity to pray with the members of the Ugandan parliament.

Tom Edwards provided a glimpse of Renewal Ministries’ missionary work in Tanzania where there is a strong influence of witchcraft.

Everyone was deeply moved when a sister from Asia sang “Hail Mary” in her native language.

John Kazanjian shared about the joy and privilege of being a Country Coordinator. He also shared the experience of praying for a blind man whose sight was restored.

On Pentecost, the Renewal Ministries staff surprised Ralph by celebrating the anniversary of his baptism in the Holy Spirit. Everyone prayed over him for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Enjoying the Sunday morning session are Ralph and Anne, along with Sr. Ann Shields, SGL and Sr. Mary Boersen, SGL.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the Gathering was celebrating the Pentecost Vigil at Christ the King. To read the prophecies that were given visit our website, www.RenewalMinistries.net.
On the Road

“To convert somebody go and take them by the hand and guide them.”

—St. Thomas Aquinas

August 2014

North Little Rock, AR
Arkansas Catholic Charismatic Conference
August 1-3
Ralph Martin
www.arkcc.org/conference

Mission to Slovenia
Don and Pat Turbitt and Team
August 6-20
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

Ann Arbor, MI
i.d.9:16 Disciples’ Night
August 7
Speaker: Heidi Bratton
RSVP on i.d.9:16 Facebook page or intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com

Mission to Romania
Tiberius “Tibi” Majoros and Team
August 8-16
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

Washington, DC
Gathering of Movements and New Communities in the Church Conference
August 9
Ralph Martin
conference@nsccchariscenter.org

Grass Lake, MI
Pine Hills Girls Camp
August 10-16
Debbie Herbeck and Camp Staff
Contact: dherbs24@gmail.com

Mission to Gambia
Emmanuel Tamakloe and Team
August 25-31
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

Mission to Rwanda
Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw and Team
August 15-26
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

September 2014

Ann Arbor, MI
i.d.9:16 Disciples’ Night
September 4
Speaker: Michael Timmis
RSVP on i.d.9:16 Facebook page or intentionaldisciples916@gmail.com

Mission to Romania
Tiberius “Tibi” Majoros and Team
August 8-16
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net

Washington, DC
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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

Design
Cynthia Rutherford

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@id916

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