Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Renewal Ministries “family” is very real. Although many of us have never met or have met only briefly, I continue to be humbled by the bonds of love and trust and common values that the Lord has forged among us. As my duties at the Renewal Ministries home office and the seminary in Detroit permit, I do travel a good bit and have the chance to meet many of our supporters.

Recently, I taught at the Deacon Formation Summer Institute in the Diocese of Syracuse, New York. Deacons and their wives came up to say hello after my talks or grabbed me in the hallways or in the lunch line (which was long!) to say that they had heard me speak at a FIRE Rally in 1988, or at a Notre Dame Conference, or on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, or any number of other places. Many said how much my talks and writing had helped them stay on the right path and keep growing in the Lord. Many also mentioned how much they appreciated the talks and writings of Sr. Ann Shields and Peter Herbeck. Many mentioned how they appreciate The Choices We Face and our other media outreaches.

I am unable to accept all the speaking invitations that I receive. Because the strengthening of our leadership is a very high priority, I try to give priority to requests to speak to deacons, priests and bishops. This is why I agreed to teach two intensive summer courses for Sacred Heart Major Seminary’s first Online STL. We recently received permission from Rome to do this Pontifical Degree Program that is available exclusively online and during summer sessions. This enables priests to remain in their assignments while deepening their knowledge of the New Evangelization. We have a capacity for 15 new priest students each year and 12 signed up this summer.

Each morning I leave for Detroit at 7:15 a.m. and get home very late in the afternoon. I teach a three-and-a-half-hour class each morning on the Theology of the New Evangelization and a two-and-a-half-hour course in the afternoon on the Stages of Spiritual Growth. Although I am tired when I get home, I still attend to all my other work as best I can in the evening. However, I am very grateful to be doing this.

The priests are from all over the U.S. In addition, one is from South Sudan, and two are from India. These men are soaking up the teaching and relish the chance to renew and deepen their spiritual lives. I am inspired, impressed and grateful for them and for what God is doing in their lives. After they complete these two courses, Dr. Janet Smith, my colleague...
Dear Brothers and Sisters, continued from page 1

At the Seminary, will then take them through two courses: Theology of the Body and The Truth about Homosexuality. These courses will help them communicate effectively about the many controversial issues they – and we – face daily in the current culture.

Although my other responsibilities limit international travel, I had an amazing trip to Rome in early June and traveled to Ireland at the end of June to speak at the National Catholic Charismatic Conference. I was in Dublin for four days, gave three talks, visited three bishops, gave two radio interviews, and I hope, contributed to the strengthening of the Irish people in attendance. Ireland is going through very difficult times with the Evil One taking great advantage of various abuse scandals. The crisis is not over. In the midst of it, there are small bands of committed Catholics and other Christians who are continuing to live and witness in hope knowing, as we often say in the Cursillo Movement, “Christ and I are an overwhelming majority.”

Before closing, I have to share something wonderful I heard from a deacon candidate who is a leader in youth ministry in Syracuse. In response to a question about how to bring wayward children back to the faith, I shared some things and then he added something I had never heard before. He shared that it may be our deaths that awaken our wayward children. He said to not lose hope if we don’t see the conversions for which we have been praying and weeping. It may be our deaths themselves, just as it was the death of Jesus, which release the most powerful graces into the hearts of those we love. He also pointed out that after death, if we die in friendship with Christ, our intercession for our children will be even more powerful and effective. Good stuff. Encouraging.

Hang in there dear Brothers and Sisters, the Lord is and will be victorious and those who are faithful to Him through trials will sit at His table in the kingdom.

Thank you for your love and support that has meant so much for many years.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

P.S. Good news! Randy and Therese Cirner, who are longtime friends and collaborators with Renewal Ministries, as well as professional counselors and educators, are launching a ministry to help strengthen marriages. Periodically, they will be offering marriage renewal weekends which I know will be a great help to married couples. For more information send an e-mail message to: MoreForYourMarriage@gmail.com.

Ralph taught more than 100 deacons and their wives at the Deacon Formation Summer Institute in the Diocese of Syracuse, New York.

This summer, Ralph taught two intensive courses at Sacred Heart Major Seminary. The courses are part of the first Online STL program recently approved by Rome. A total of 12 priests from three continents are enrolled in the program.
RECENTLY, Paul and Dorle Kromer received the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross*, the highest award given by the Pope. In presenting the medals, Cardinal Thomas Collins recognized the Kromers for their “remarkable work of service to the Lord and to the Church.”

For 17 years, the Kromers have served as the chief organizers of the *Lift Jesus Higher Rally*, the largest annual gathering of Catholics in Canada. Cardinal Collins acknowledged the Kromers’ apostolic zeal and the impact of the rallies in transforming the lives of so many people.

Paul has been a long time supporter of Renewal Ministries and currently serves on our Canadian Board of Directors. Cardinal Collins serves as Episcopal Advisor for Renewal Ministries in Canada.

**Will you help us save souls?**

Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for granting mercy. *Diary of St. Faustina* #635

Now is the time when mercy is being extended to the world. But this time will come to an end and the Lord will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. Souls are perishing. Time is of the essence. Laborers and resources are very limited.

You can help save souls when you include Renewal Ministries in your will.

A bequest made to Renewal Ministries will make it possible for us to reach more souls with the Gospel through radio, television and missionary service.

Please consider making an investment with eternal rewards.

For more information or sample language, please contact Gary Seromik at gseromik@renewalministries.net or 734-662-1730 ext. 21.
**Made for Relationship**

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation describes how God has designed the human person in His image and likeness precisely to enable us to know Him personally: “The invisible God out of the abundance of his love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that he may invite and take them into fellowship with himself,” (2).

God desires to be in a personal relationship with each one of us. He has given us the capacity to know Him. He wants to speak to us as friends, and to “take us into fellowship with himself.” What an extraordinary gift!

The Second Vatican Council and the recent Popes have urged all the baptized to respond to Jesus’ command to “go make disciples of all nations.”

The Decree on the Mission of the Church says that proclamation and conversion must be, “sufficient to make a man realize that he has been snatched away from sin and led into the mystery of God’s love, who called him to enter into a personal relationship with him in Christ,” (13).

The language here is clear: God seeks a relationship with each one of us that is personal. These same words are echoed by St. Pope John Paul II:

In the complex reality of mission, initial proclamation has a central and irreplaceable role, since it introduces man “into the mystery of the love of God, who invites him to enter into a personal relationship with himself in Christ” and opens the way to conversion. (Redemptoris Missio, 44)

We are reminded that through the words of Scripture God seeks a “personal relationship” with His people: “The word of God is the first source of all Christian spirituality. It gives rise...
to a personal relationship with the living God and with his saving and sanctifying will,” (Vita Consecrata, 94).

The Bible “gives rise to a personal relationship” because Jesus reveals Himself to us on every page. The Holy Spirit, the one who “searches the depths of God,” (1 Cor 2:10) inspires that word in such a way that we actually encounter Christ in the words of Scripture. He speaks directly to our spirit, enabling us to know Him.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI called for a “new season” of the reading of the Word of God by all the baptized, “so that their prayerful and faith-filled reading of the Bible will, with time, deepen their personal relationship with Jesus,” (Verbum Domini, 72).

He also reminds us that the personal relationship we have with Jesus is deepened and shared most profoundly in the Eucharist:

The personal relationship which the individual believer establishes with Jesus present in the Eucharist constantly points beyond itself to the whole communion of the Church and nourishes a fuller sense of membership in the Body of Christ. (Sacramentum Caritatis, 68)

Conclusion
It’s obvious from these texts that the phrase “personal relationship with Jesus” is an important part of the way the Magisterium of the Church refers to our faith in Christ. It’s not a foreign or simply a Protestant imposition. Rather, it expresses an essential element of a deeply Catholic understanding of conversion and discipleship.

Normal Catholic Life
Catholics should not feel as though they are treading on dangerous ground when using this terminology or that they are somehow promoting a Protestant understanding of faith. It’s normal, or it ought to be, a normal part of Catholic life.

To say, “I have a personal relationship with Jesus,” is simply to say that I know, with deep personal conviction, that God knows me and He loves me. I know it because while I was yet a sinner, Christ died for me (Rom 5:8); He poured His love into my heart through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5). Through the Holy Spirit, I have seen what God has prepared for me in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 2:9-10); I have come to understand the gifts bestowed on me by God (1 Cor 2:12). By His mercy I have “tasted the heavenly gift…the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,” (Heb 6:4-5).

I know Him in whom I have believed (2 Tim 1:12). I haven’t come to know him apart from the Catholic Church or despite the Catholic Church, but within the Catholic Church. The Jesus I know personally is the Jesus of the Bible, of the Catechism; the Jesus I meet in the sacraments, and in my neighbor. It is the Jesus who has made Himself known to me not simply with “plausible words of wisdom, but by a demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” (1 Cor 2:4). He did that for me so that my “faith would not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God,” (1 Cor 2:5). And it is that faith, which by His grace, is near to me, on my lips and in my heart, enabling me to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Not only Lord of all, but my Lord and my Savior! (Rom 10:8-13).

He has done all of this for me, a sinner: wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked, (Rev 3:17) a man foolish and weak (1 Cor 1:26-27), who, apart from Christ lived without hope in the world (Eph 2:12).

This great mercy has come to me by grace, “not by my own doing, it is the gift of God,” (Eph 2:8). And now, I gladly boast in my weakness (2 Cor 12:9); I believe and so I speak (2 Cor 4:13). What I say is simple: I know Jesus Christ, in a personal way. I have a relationship with Him. He is my Lord, my Savior and my best friend. Do you know Him in this way? Would you like to? You can. He is here right now, with you, right where you are. He is standing at the door of your heart, knocking. Will you let him in?


Pray…

For the taping of The Choices We Face television series.

that Catholics and Church leaders throughout the world will have the courage and strength to live and speak the truth of God’s ways in love.

for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

There is nothing inherently Protestant about a personal relationship with Jesus.
SINCE 2003, Renewal Ministries has been ministering to the impoverished in Mexico City. This time, we were blessed to have Fr. Gabriel Richard High School students and chaperones on the team. Here are some of the highlights.

**Relationships are growing.** The relationship between the mission teams and the dump residents grows stronger with each visit. Often, we are invited into their sheds...if they have one. In addition, some of the rivalry among dump leaders is diminishing.

**Evangelization efforts increased.** The people living in the dump have begun to take responsibility for some of the prayer and the practice of praying spontaneously with people is growing.

**Medical clinic improvements.** Thanks to the work of so many, we continue to streamline our medical services and increase our ability to see patients more efficiently. Special thanks go to the following:

- **Dr. Sue Burkhart** for longtime service and the identification of an efficient pharmaceutical inventory.
- **Dr. Dave Macari** who has revamped medical testing equipment, and fine tuned our clinic meds and supplies.
- **Dr. Kristen Krieger** who has improved our labeling system to speed up the distribution of meds.

**Mission to Mexico**

By James “Butch” Murphy

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**Upper Room expansion.** Mother Inez continues to open her heart to us as she shares the joys and struggles of running a home for handicapped children. The Upper Room, where the severely disabled children live has been expanded through the generosity of Renewal Ministries’ donors.

**Moments of grace.** The food we distribute at the dump is multiplying at the time of distribution. This has been going on for the past two years!

One day, a terrible rain and wind storm blew up. The wind was tearing the medical tent apart. When I asked my co-worker Rodrigo to get extra people to hold the tent down, he laughed and said, “Why don’t you pray?” We knelt down in a puddle that was forming in the ooze. We prayed for God to calm the storm and within five minutes the storm was gone.

The next day was clear; not a single cloud in the sky. The sun was scorching the people who were standing in a long food line. I asked Roy if he could find a way to provide some shade. He proposed several options, but concluded that we simply couldn’t engineer what we needed. Suddenly, I remembered the previous day and asked Roy to pray with me. We asked God to send a cloud to shade the people. Within 20 minutes three clouds had moved exactly over the food line...and then stopped!

**Conclusion** The mission to Mexico is a significant work of God. It is changing the lives of the people in Mexico and transforming the lives of the people who serve.
POPE FRANCIS challenges youth to go out on mission, to embrace the universal call to holiness and to allow the Spirit to work through us. I had the privilege of taking part in the mission to Mexico in April. God was present and He worked through us and those we served. I can say with confidence that Jesus Himself taught us how to love in Mexico City.

On the first day, we visited an orphanage run by Mother Inez, known as the Mother Teresa of Mexico City. In the midst of the bustling city rests a colorful, peaceful home to 230 handicapped children. It is complete with a beautiful flowered courtyard and birds, as Mother says, singing to God. We had the opportunity to visit the Upper Room, home to the severely handicapped children. Though most could not talk and were confined to bed, many embraced us and reached out to us when we came to them. They soaked in our smiles and our care but surely loved us back with the most genuine love of Christ.

Our next three days were spent in the Neza garbage dump, where several hundred families live amidst the rubble. Through medical care, soccer games, coloring books, a picnic lunch, and Mass, Christ united us with our Mexican brothers and sisters.

On our final day, Butch asked me to translate when he addressed the people. I agreed but was not confident my Spanish could keep up. This experience showed us all that when we go out on mission, when we accept the call to proclaim the Gospel to our brothers and sisters in both word and deed, the Spirit rests upon us. As Butch began preaching about the love, power, and unity of Christ and His Church present there, God spoke through me, giving me the Spanish words and the joy, life, and conviction of His Word. I know that I did not speak in perfect Spanish and there were a few words that just would not come to mind.

God provided by breaking down the language barrier and the anxiety of being called to serve. He provided by multiplying loaves of bread in Walmart and multiplying the tons of packaged food that we brought for distribution. When we prayed for relief from the hot sun, we were given clouds. When we asked for grace to be able to fully engage and love all those we encountered; we were given peace and met people with incredibly open hearts at the orphanage, the dump, and the senior men’s home.

Through our encounters with the people in Mexico, Jesus taught a group of high school students on spring break that we were made to love and to serve in His name. It is in accepting His grace wherever we are in our lives, and in trusting that He is more powerful than any earthly obstacles that we are able to continue our walk of discipleship, the incredible daily mission of proclaiming His Kingdom and witnessing to His love and mercy.

Learning How to Love

By Emily Messiter

Recent mission trips have included celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Sam Tanski gives “Spiderman” a piggyback ride.
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
pete@id916.com

Mission to Ukraine and Belarus
Don Turbitt and Team
September 10-22
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or
kkittle@renewalministries.net

Mission to Romania
Tiberius “Tibi” Majoros and Team
September 12-14
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or
kkittle@renewalministries.net

Mission to Serbia
Dcn. Zoltán Kunszabó and Team
September 17-21
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or
kkittle@renewalministries.net

Mission to Zambia
Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw and Team
September 15-23
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or
kkittle@renewalministries.net

Ann Arbor, MI
New Evangelization Works
September 18
Debbie Herbeck
Contact: Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or
kkittle@renewalministries.net

Waterbury, CT
Morning of Renewal, Cathedral of the
Immaculate Conception
September 20
Ralph Martin
Contact: mariastefanczyk@att.net

Grand Rapids, MI
National Council of Catholic
Women Conference
September 25
Ralph Martin
Contact: carolynmorrison@hotmail.com

Ann Arbor, MI
Country Coordinators Meeting*
September 25-27
Peter Herbeck

Pittsburgh, PA
Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Convention*
September 27-29
Ralph Martin

* Not open to the public

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The nation doesn’t simply need what we have. It needs what we are.

—St. Edith Stein

On the Road

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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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