Dear Companions on the Journey!

We’ve just finished our annual Gathering, where we invite everyone who has been supporting Renewal Ministries in any way to join us for a “renewal weekend.” We met from Friday evening to Sunday early afternoon at the Marriott hotel near Ann Arbor in Ypsilanti, Michigan. It was wonderful! It always is, but this year’s weekend seemed even more wonderful than ever.

It is so inspiring to see about 350 brothers and sisters from all over the US and Canada, and an occasional visitor from further away (this year, Brazil), come together hungry for God and desirous of drawing closer to Him and embracing His mission more fully.

I gave a talk on Mary’s mission and our participation in it, which considered the biblical basis for Mary’s role in God’s plan and the contemporary mission that the Lord entrusted to her at Guadalupe, Lourdes, and Fatima, as well as her appeal for us to participate with her. A number of people said it was the best talk they’ve ever heard, or the best talk on Mary they’ve ever heard, which is pretty wonderful.

This year, besides our own wonderful Sr. Ann, we had two great women of God join us and give talks. Sr. Miriam James Heidland is a member of the Society of Our Lady of the Trinity (SOLT), based in Texas. (All of the men in this order who are preparing for priesthood attend Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit, where a number of our Renewal Ministries’ leaders teach.) Sr. Miriam shared the riveting story of her own life and how, from deep wounds that include sexual abuse, alcoholism, and other challenges, the grace of God and her cooperation with that grace has given her a joy, freedom, and radiance that, as we listened to her, quickly passed from our heads to our hearts!

We also had the joy of listening to Barbara Heil, who previously ministered in the most well-known and powerful Pentecostal circles, before she became a Catholic and married her husband Jeff, an Iowa farmer and longtime supporter of Renewal Ministries. Barbara’s conversion to Catholicism is deep and real, and yet she brings with her the gifts and freedom she developed as a Pentecostal preacher. Her talk led into a wonderful time of prayer, during which we all prayed for each other in small groups and the Spirit worked in wonderful ways.

Peter Herbeck and Sr. Ann Shields also both gave talks that were as powerful and anointed as always.

One special feature this year was that we invited many of the i.d.9:16 young adults to join us. The mixture of generations was truly beautiful, as they were introduced to the wider Renewal Ministries’ family, and we warmly welcomed them. God is doing some really wonderful things!

continued on page 2
The tapestry that God is weaving is awesome! There are so many hidden connections and hidden actions of God happening in so many peoples’ lives, so many hidden saints, and so many lives of real holiness.

A number of people shared how they are “launching out into the deep” and doing Life in the Spirit Seminars using our DVD series As by a New Pentecost. Others shared how they are using our booklets to evangelize.

We also live streamed the Gathering this year so people who couldn’t attend could participate as well, by watching it via the Internet. We received messages from all over the world from those able to join us in that way. A couple in Michigan who were watching the live stream were so inspired, they drove over to join us “live.” A couple coming from Canada had to drive through heavy snow (yes, we still had snowstorms—and do today as I write this—well into springtime) and got here late Friday night, but were able to listen to my talk on their phone while they were driving! You’ll find some photos and other news from the Gathering on pages three through five of this newsletter.

I’m getting ready now to leave for Argentina to do a national priests’ retreat and general conference, so I’ve got to go! More next month.

Grateful to be part of the Renewal Ministries’ Family!

Ralph

P.S.

One very special part of the Gathering was the opportunity we had to recognize a quiet, unsung hero—Gary Seromik, our main administrator and office manager, who has been working with me now for forty-five years! I met him when I gave a talk in his high school in Flint, Michigan, and he was just getting involved in the Charismatic Renewal. When he came to the University of Michigan for college, he began to help us with the letters we were receiving from all over the world asking what was happening in the Renewal and how they could experience it in their countries. Gary has an amazing linguistic ability—he speaks Italian, Spanish, French, Russian, and Polish! He even moved to Belgium with my family and members of our Ann Arbor community at the request of Cardinal Suenens, in order to establish an international office for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal there. He was the main administrator of the big international conference held in Rome in 1975 and has just been an all-around faithful brother in Christ. He still is! He married a wonderful Mexican woman, Anilu, who also helps in the Renewal Ministries’ office and in other ways on a part-time basis, after she finishes teaching her Spanish classes at a local Catholic school. They have four children, three of whom are married, and six grandchildren, four of whom are adopted from Ethiopia and Africa!

Thank you, Gary, for all these wonderful years; we pray they may continue for many more!
Tom Hornacek explained. One day, while attending Mass after drinking too much the night before, he began to feel very hot and stifled, and a voice in his head encouraged him to walk out of Mass in order to feel better. The next weekend, he didn’t drink before Mass, but the feeling of being stifled and the voices telling him to “walk out those doors; you’ll feel great” continued.

At that point, “the hearts on the page began to light the room,” said Tom. “I got my daughter Sarah, and she saw it too. It was a radiant light from heaven. Then we brought in my oldest daughter, Mindy, to look at the book—and she saw it. The three of us turned off every light and it literally lit the house up.”

“She was there,” Tom said. “Praise the Lord, He gave us this gift.”

Nevertheless, Tom still struggled. He said he would “cry all the way into work, be strong all day, and then cry all the way home.”

After one particularly difficult day a month later, he came home and opened the book for a second time. “It happened again,” he said. “And I never opened the book again.”

“I saw a pinprick of heaven,” Tom explained. “Heaven is real—and it’s a million times better than we think it is.”

The Lord eventually put another woman on Tom’s heart, and Marion is now his wife. Her own testimony includes losing her young son to cancer. Together, they listened to the Lord’s call to attend a Life in the Spirit Seminar. And then, eight years ago, they attended the Gathering for the first time.

Since then, they have served on numerous mission trips to St. Lucia and feel especially blessed to do prison ministry there. Tom went from working in a family grocery business, to serving as president of Baraga Radio for six years, to now working as a community outreach director with Ave Maria Radio. He and Marion also have gotten involved in Unbound Ministry.

“Whatever we’ve endured in our lives, let us turn that suffering around, help other people, and save souls,” Tom concluded. “Luke 12:49 says, ‘I’ve come to set the world on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing.’ Be the spark that sets the blaze.”

I learned something,” he said. “I had no clue about the depth and beauty of our faith.”

Sadly, Tom’s wife, who had supported him on his journey of rediscovering his faith, died a few years later of a brain aneurysm. “Through that entire time, I never once said, ‘Lord, why did you take her?’” Tom explained. “I knew that at that point every moment was a gift from God, and I was just thankful for every moment we’d had together.”

One night, while looking at a book he had received from the Gift of Life called The Next Place, he read, “Though I will know the joy of solitude, I will never be alone.”
MARY’S MISSION, OUR PARTICIPATION  Ralph Martin

Ralph Martin spoke about the message shared by our Blessed Mother in Mexico, at Lourdes, and in Fatima. He said, “In recent centuries, it seems God has given Mary a more active part of the mission.”

In Fatima, Mary taught the children to pray and asked them to “make of everything you can a sacrifice, and accept and bear with submission the sufferings the Lord will send you.” Doing so, she said, would help save souls from hell.

Ralph urged listeners to “behold this heart of Mary that loves Jesus more than anyone’s ever loved Him. Behold a heart totally surrendered and responsive; that’s the heart we need to learn from.”

“It’s significant that in the last century the Lord has sent special messages to remind us of hell,” Ralph said, referring to the children at Fatima and St. Faustina. “I think we are in great danger right now. Hatred of human life, of men and women, is back. And thankfully, Mary is back, and God wants to use her.”

“The children at Fatima believed the word spoken to them,” he added. “They let it shape the rest of their lives. Life is short and only one thing is required—that people end up in the love of the Lord forever.

“I’ve been really helped by the example of these children—they’ve helped me to see what kind of a response I should be making.”

Recently, 350 people united for a weekend of renewal, faith, and community at the annual Renewal Ministries’ Gathering. It included praise and worship, prayers for healing and empowerment, talks by well-known speakers, Mass, Adoration, and fellowship.

For the first time ever, the entire event was live streamed, bringing it into the homes of hundreds of people around the world!
ARISE! ▶ Sr. Miriam James Heidland, SOLT

Sr. Miriam James Heidland, SOLT, shared that her past included alcoholism, childhood sexual abuse, being conceived out of wedlock, and feeling unwanted. Now, she is “on an epic mission of healing.”

“I remember saying, ‘How could God love something like me?’” said Sr. Miriam. “But many years before, God had sent a Catholic priest into my life who loved me enough to tell me the whole truth—whether I wanted it or not. That man was radiant! I’ve never seen anyone so sold out for Christ. I said, ‘I don’t know what you have, but I want it!’ It was authentic love. It was Christ, and I’d been searching my whole life for it and didn’t know it.”

Sr. Miriam (pictured below) joined a religious order, but discovered she needed additional healing from the wounds of her past. She discovered that “suffering that is not transformed is transmitted.”

THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD NEVER CEASES ▶ Sr. Ann Shields, SGL

Sr. Ann Shields, SGL, spoke about the power of forgiveness and repentance. She said, “When we acknowledge before Christ that we’ve sinned, the light of Christ begins to shine more fully in our lives and will shine into the hearts of others.”

She shared a story from the book Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko: Truth Versus Totalitarianism (Brien 2018). Blessed Jerzy was a Polish priest who supported steel workers imprisoned by the Communist government. When he was brutally murdered in 1984, his mother reminded the more than 250,000 people who attended his funeral of the message Fr. Jerzy had taught throughout his life: Forgiveness.

“His mother stood up,” said Sr. Ann. “She held a crucifix in one hand and his rosary in another. She said, ‘I forgive. It is what God asked us to do.’ And then more and more people did the same, and they prayed the Lord’s Prayer together.”

“Is our faith alive? How does it flourish?” Sr. Ann asked. “This is a time when we’ve got to be very clear about who we are and where we stand.”

“What people want more than anything: Christ,” added Sr. Miriam. “They want to know God is alive and well. We have to be willing to remove the veil from our hearts so they can see.” ✨

THE GLORY OF THE LORD ▶ Peter Herbeck

Peter Herbeck described the biggest thing in our lives: Jesus cleansed us so God could live in us. We are saved from hell for heaven. We are made holy and set apart. We are beloved and chosen from the beginning for a purpose.

“Let that truth obliterate your idols, your depression, and all that crippling stuff,” said Peter. “How do we glorify God on earth? We accomplish the work He gave us to do. You’ve been anointed by God to get a work done in this hour—to be a light that shines in the darkness.”

Peter discussed some dangers of our time: “Human beings—which God made in His image—are being deconstructed. Humanity is saying, ‘We’re going to bring about our own glory.’ It’s the denial of reality itself. This is spiritual warfare on a major level. It’s succeeding because I get to decide. I want to be God. The only answer to that is repentance. It’s profoundly offensive to God, and the wrath of God is coming to the world if we don’t repent.”

Peter said we need to consider what we love: “Reputations? Self? Possessions? Am I gripped by a fear of men? If you’re reproached and suffer in the name of Jesus, you’re blessed because the spirit of Glory has come upon you. This slight, momentary affliction we call life will give way to eternal glory.” ✨

SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR’S GATHERING: APRIL 5-7, 2019

She explained: “I was depressed; something wasn’t right. The things that had happened in my life were robbing me of the Holy Spirit. He was trying to arise, but I was in hiding. We desire greater intimacy, but we have veils, and like the temple veils, they are six-inches thick and sixty-feet high. Jesus cares, and sometimes that’s too painful. When we hear we’re very good, it bounces off a part of our hearts that’s hard. Your average person is carrying so much pain.”

She asked, “Where is God wishing to speak to us? Where would you like to grow in greater intimacy with Him today? What part of your heart would you like Him to soften?”

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Spreading the \textbf{GOSPEL} in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, Catholics are less than one percent of the population and are very persecuted. Nevertheless, the bishop of Bahir Dar, Bishop Lesanu, gathered nearly one hundred eager college students for our first set of workshops, which will be the focus of this report. Bishop Scott McCaig and Companions of the Cross seminarian Marcus Schonnop, who has finished six years of seminary, joined our team.

One day, Bishop Lesanu and Lloyd taught as a team on apologetics. It was a great mixture; you could witness both men getting more excited to be Catholic as they preached! The students had many questions, and Bishop Scott stepped in to give clear, concise answers that prompted more questions. These young people were hungry for the truth of their faith!

On another day, Bishop Scott talked to the students about the importance of Mass and how we enter into holiness through sacraments and prayer, especially the rosary. He stressed that we will not grow without a personal prayer life. He said the best way to grow in faith is to pray with Scriptures every day.

Marcus then taught on Lectio Divina. He said to ask the Holy Spirit, “What is going on?”—and then we can talk honestly, and Scripture will speak to our hearts. He told a personal story about asking the Lord how to obtain more holiness. The Lord took him to the story of David and Goliath, in which David had five smooth stones. In meditation, God said to Marcus that the five stones were:

- PRAYER
- SACRAMENTS
- THE ROSARY
- FASTING
- COMMUNITY

The kids loved it!

Our next talks were with “One Year for Jesus” missionaries—a group that included seven seminarians. Last year, Bishop Lesanu had only one seminarian! Before my talk on the Five Keys to spiritual freedom, Bishop Scott gave a testimony about how, during his time as an exorcist, he only had to use the ritual of exorcism very rarely, because by taking people through Unbound’s Five Keys, almost everybody was set free. He explained:

It was impressive to see Bishop Scott wear his black long clerics to match Bishop Lesanu, who interpreted for him and also gave teachings. Bishop Scott told them,

“Jesus is still concerned for the poor, saving souls, and healing the sick, but He only has your hands, your feet, and your voice.”

Marcus also riveted the students with his testimony. This young priest-to-be shocked them by saying he had been an atheist! His roommate in college was an informed, serious, and joyful Catholic. During the three years that Marcus tried to prove his friend wrong, Marcus came to know and understand the truth of Jesus and the Catholic Church. He was in Adoration one evening, and after seeking the Lord with his head for all that time, Marcus came to know Jesus in his heart. Marcus challenged the students to be strong witnesses of their faith to all they meet at the university, because like him, many are searching for the truth.

We later realized that Bishop Scott, Marcus, and Lloyd were all converts to the faith and originally the only Catholics in their own families! Now Marcus’ parents are Catholic as well.
It was only in the most severe cases that I had to use the ritual of exorcism. Unbound ministry’s Five Keys are basic biblical principles, and by applying them to people who have been demonized, it is remarkable how powerful they are. I encourage you to really internalize what you’re hearing and learn how to lead someone to faith and how to make a good repentance.

Learn what it means to forgive from the heart and how to teach that to others. Learn what it means to renounce evil by name, to understand your authority that you have received from Jesus to tell demons to go, and to pray blessings into people’s lives—to restore and heal what has been broken and distorted. You will discover, as I have, that it does wonders in people’s lives. It sets them free and gives them tools to set others free. Even when we had to use the ritual of exorcism, all we did was weaken the demon to the point that the person could cooperate with Unbound; then we were able to close the entry points and push the enemy away.

“This is not just a tool for ministry or deliverance. This is a way of living out your own life, because we are called by the Lord to live with faith, repent of our sins, forgive our enemies, renounce evil, destroy the works of the enemy and live under the blessing of the Holy Spirit. I use these principles in my own life very often.

If somebody treats me poorly, attacks me, or says bad words about me, and I feel anger rising up inside of me, I stop and walk through the Five Keys. In faith, I declare,

‘I’m here to work for You, Jesus. I’m here for Your favor, Jesus, not theirs. I repent of the anger and the hatred that’s going through my heart right now.’

‘I forgive this man, and I pray Your blessings upon him. I release him to You. I forgive him with all my heart. I renounce the evil and anger and all of the evil spirits behind it. I renounce the spirit of vengeance and all evil spirits associated with them. I renounce the spirit of self-hatred and all evil spirits associated with it, in the name of Jesus Christ. I command all those spirits that I have renounced to get out of here now.’

‘In Jesus name, I pray for a blessing: “Lord give me the grace to love this person, give me the grace to love my enemy like You command in the Gospel. Help me to be humble, kind, and gentle. Help me to treat them fairly, to be long-suffering, and to win them over with love.”

I cannot recommend the Five Keys strongly enough.

We departed for home feeling that the Lord had been with us throughout our trip, accomplishing His will and plan. I think the Lord is opening doors in Ethiopia! 

FROM MARCUS SCHONNOP:

In Ethiopia, I felt like we were not just feeding people for a day, but giving them spiritual food that could be multiplied and shared. We were teaching and equipping leaders with the tools for their own spiritual life, and also showing them how to bring renewal to their local churches and dioceses. There are many pressures occurring from all sides against their Catholic faith. You could see the thirst in the people for solid Catholic material. I hope and pray that the seeds that have been planted years ago when Nancy and Lloyd first arrived, and have been watered since, will continue to grow and flourish.

I thank you for the spiritual contribution that this mission trip has been toward my priestly formation. I learned much from Lloyd, Nancy, and Bishop Scott. I also felt that the Lord expanded my heart in a desire to do further missions. May the Lord continue to bless you with the resources you need to go forth and share the Good News!
On the Road

June 2018 ENGAGEMENTS

Vancouver, BC*
Deacons’ Retreat
June 1-3
Ralph Martin

Warren, MI
St. Louise de Marillac Parish Mission
June 3-4
Peter Herbeck
Details: www.saintlouisedm.org

Ann Arbor, MI
i.d.9:16 Disciples’ Night
June 7
Martin Doman
Contact: Katie@id916.com

Steubenville, OH
Power and Purpose Conference
June 8-10
Peter Herbeck & Pete Burak
Details: www.steubenvilleconferences.com

Campinas, Brazil
Catholic Charismatic Conference
June 15-17
Ralph Martin
Contact: fernando.nascimento@rs21.com.br

Dąbrowa Górnicza, Poland
Strefa Zero Conference
June 16-17
Dr. Mary Healy
Details: strefa-zero.com

Steubenville, OH
Retreat for Priests, Deacons, & Seminarians *
June 18-20
Dr. Mary Healy

Baltimore, MD
ChristLife National Training Conference
June 20-21
Dr. Mary Healy
Details: www.christlifeconference.org

Toronto, ON
CCR Conference
June 23-24
Dr. Mary Healy
Details: ccrctor.com

Mundelein, IL
Summer Scripture Seminar
June 25-26
Dr. Mary Healy
Details: usml.edu/event/summer-scripture-2017

Augusta, GA
Catholic Fraternity Conference*
June 28 - July 1
Dr. Mary Healy

Malvern, PA
Charismatics Healing Retreat
June 29 - July 1
Sr. Ann Shields, SGL
Details: malvernretreat.com/events/charismatics/

Uganda
National Priests’ Retreat*
June 30 - July 6
Ralph Martin

* Not open to the public.
For a complete listing, visit: RenewalMinistries.net/Events

A peaceful spirit with oneself and others is one of the greatest gifts of God. Follow the spirit and all his inspirations; he will work wonders in your neighbor and yourself. When one has learned how to remain in peace in one’s soul, God holds his divine school in the soul where he teaches everything without words to attentive, peaceful, and docile souls in such a way that directors have nothing to say but: Listen attentively to the voice of God’s spirit, or better still, follow faithfully the interior impulse of his grace.

Father John-Pierre De Caussade, SJ

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, conferences, retreats, and other international evangelistic events.

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Editor
Heather Schultz
Design
Emily Bachelor
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