Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the Lord!

Peter Herbeck has written an inspiring Advent reflection for this issue of our newsletter so I will use my space to catch you up on some of the wonderful things that continue to happen.

Since I’ve last written I’ve been in Budapest, Hungary for the Congress on the New Evangelization sponsored by Cardinal Erdo, Primate Archbishop of Hungary. It was the last of five city-wide congresses that have been held over the past five years in various European capitals. I gave one of the general session talks in St. Stephen’s Basilica on the content of our message, gave a workshop on the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelization, and preached in a tent pitched outside the Basilica to a group of hundreds of mainly young people. Concurrent with these sessions were evangelization events that happened all over the city, including street preaching and music ministry, and events by almost all the Budapest parishes to welcome people to rediscover the faith. I think the event, besides touching those immediately impacted, was greatly encouraging to the Catholic Church in Hungary, and presented a new image of the Church to the society as a whole.

One highlight of the conference was to see our brother Zoltán Kunzabó who has just been ordained a deacon, play such a major role in the organization and leadership of the Congress. Zoli, as we call him, is one of our Country Coordinators responsible for helping with work in Serbia and Croatia. It is encouraging to see God raise up people who have been faithful to Him for many years, often through difficulty, to greater roles of responsibility. Zoli is married and has five children.

On returning from Hungary I traveled to rural New Hampshire where I spoke in two different parishes giving seven talks and speaking at four masses. One of my former Franciscan University of Steubenville students is the Director of Religious Education at a parish there and is putting her “Evangelization and Spirituality” course to good use. It was both inspiring and sobering to see what is happening to the Church in this part of New Hampshire.

The Fulfillment of All Desire conference in Vancouver, Canada was a joyful affair. Here Ralph, Michael Miller, the new archbishop of Vancouver, and Msgr. Gregory Smith, a Renewal Ministries of Canada Board Member participate in the opening praise.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters

Hampshire. It is inspiring to see so many committed priests, deacons and lay people devoted to the work of renewal and evangelization. It is sobering to see how the shortage of clergy is forcing radical “downsizing” including not only the “clustering” of parishes, but their actual closure. I was sobered to hear that when parishes are closed or even clustered many Catholics simply stop attending any Catholic church. In this mountainous region of southwestern NH there are a lot of straying sheep on the hillsides waiting for some “lay shepherds” to seek them out. May God raise them up and give them a vision of sharing in Jesus’ mission of seeking and saving the lost.

This vision is certainly deeply embraced by our Country Coordinators. We had our annual planning meeting with them when I returned from Hungary and as always, it was extremely inspiring to hear them speak of what they’ve seen the Lord do in the past year in the many different countries in which we work. Equally inspiring is the example of their often heroic dedication to the spreading of the gospel, and the great fruit that we are seeing.

I also had the great joy of returning to Vancouver, Canada for a conference that took its theme from the title of my new book, The Fulfillment of All Desire. About 1200 people attended the conference and it was an opportunity to visit with two of our Canadian Board members, Vernon Robertson and Msgr. Gregory Smith (who has just returned from Rome with his doctorate in canon law). I was also able to have dinner with the new Archbishop of Vancouver, Michael Miller, who accompanied Msgr. Smith and me to the first session of the conference in which he joyously participated. It was a joy to be with the “saints” of Vancouver who have been serving the Lord so faithfully for so many years. It was also a shock to have all the books they had on hand sell out after the first talk!

I continue to be greatly encouraged by the response to The Fulfillment of All Desire. I met a theology professor in Vancouver who is using the book as a text in his course on Catholic spirituality. Another professor, Fr. Giles Dimock O.P. who has taught at several universities and is now teaching at Franciscan University sent the following comments.

“Ralph Martin has written a comprehensive guide to the life of prayer. I found this book extremely helpful in a course I teach and have recommended it to my students and others desirable of taking the Christian life seriously. An excellent and accessible book.”

A young pastor, Fr. John Riccardo in Michigan, who has a daily radio program, sent me the following comments:

“This book is a spiritual classic. I have recommended it to so many people, some who are just beginning to look for God, others who have been praying intently for years, and all of them have come back with the same response: ‘Thank you for telling me about this book! I have never read anything like it before.’ Thank you for writing this. I cannot encourage people enough to read this.”

It was also a delight in giving a talk recently at a Detroit parish to have “Yolanda” stand up and tell everybody that Fulfillment was the best book she had ever read and that every time she has a problem or question she opens the book and turns to the page that talks about it and she always is helped!

It was also the last month that we will be offering autographed copies of The Fulfillment of All Desire so if you’re in need of Christmas gift ideas this would be something to consider. We also have wonderful CD albums, books, music

Ralph addressed all the delegates at the Congress on New Evangelization in Budapest at St. Stephen Basilica.
Thank you for all you do to make the work of Renewal Ministries possible. Your year-end contribution given in gratitude for the Word becoming flesh will help us continue!

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

Zoli (bowing before the bishop), a Renewal Ministries’ country coordinator, played a major role, liturgically and organizationally, for the Congress on the New Evangelization in Budapest.

Make a Gift to Renewal Ministries Using an IRA Distribution

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 offers individuals who are at least 70 1/2 years of age and have IRAs a new opportunity to support qualified charitable organizations. If you meet the criteria, you can make a direct transfer from your IRA to Renewal Ministries without having to report the transferred amount as taxable income. Under the previous law, making a gift from an IRA to a charitable organization meant reporting the withdrawal as income. Even though the gift could be deducted as a charitable gift, the net effect was often an increase in taxes to the donor.

As you consider this new opportunity, it is important to make sure this type of transaction is the most effective way for you to support Renewal Ministries. The provisions to consider include:

• The gift must be transferred directly from the IRA manager to the charitable organization.
• The donor must be at least 70 1/2 years old.
• The contribution must be an outright gift.
• There is a $100,000 limit on the IRA transfer.
• Distributions from 401(k) and 403(b) accounts or other employer-sponsored retirement plans do not qualify.
• The provision in the law expires December 31, 2007.

Please consult your IRA custodian about the proper procedures or call your tax advisor for more information.

Please Pray…

that all Catholics attending Mass during this Advent and Christmas season would be touched deeply by the reality of the Incarnation and God’s love for them.

that the Lord would provide shepherds after his own heart, to seek out those Catholics who have stopped attending church.

for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members.

Thank you for your continued support through prayer as we labor together for the Gospel and the renewal of the Church.
From the Field

A Season of Light

“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” (Mt. 4:16)

Advent is the season of light. In it we remember and celebrate the coming of the light. Once we were all in darkness, unable to see the most fundamental realities of our existence—our identity, our purpose, and our destiny. We celebrate because we are now able to see.

The light we celebrate is Jesus Himself who said, “I am the light of the world, he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (Jn 8:12) The light Jesus gives us is entirely unique. It isn’t simply knowledge or understanding, helpful religious information or insight, but the light Jesus gives us is life! All great religious leaders are revered because they pass on information that enlightens the mind to some degree. What we celebrate and proclaim in this season is of a whole different order, an entirely different kind of light. Jesus does not simply transmit information, he gives life!

The prologue of St. John’s Gospel begins with the following words about Jesus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God…in him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” (Jn 1:1, 4-5) John is telling us that the light that was in Jesus, “the true light that enlightens every man” (Jn 1:9), is the life that was in him. His life is the light that enlightens every man. This is an utterly unique reality that Jesus alone can communicate. It is what gave light to the apostles and what ultimately transformed their entire mind and being; it was a life they had never seen before, a truly inconceivable reality:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father was made manifest to us…” (1 Jn 1:1-2)

St. John is telling us what he knows, what he saw in Jesus, what he touched, what it was about Jesus that opened his mind to a reality no one had ever seen before. What the apostles saw and touched was life. Not just a special life, or an enlightened life, but “the eternal life that was with the Father.”

The apostles proclaim to us that the life they touched in Jesus is a life far beyond the life we know. The life we live is mortal and it always ends in death. The life of every man is dominated by what the apostles called “the dominion of darkness.” (Col 1:13) This darkness, the black wall of death, exercises its power over every life.

Life beyond Death

So it was until the “dawn from on high” (Lk 1:78) broke upon us in Jesus! What the apostles saw and touched in Jesus was a life that is stronger than death: “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” (Jn 1:5) The joy of the apostles knew no bounds because they saw in Jesus, God’s ultimate plan for the human race and his final solution to the problem of sin and death. In Jesus, our merciful Father has united eternal life, God’s very own life, to human flesh. He has given the human race a new beginning, an existence beyond death.

Humanity’s horizon has been opened in Jesus. We can now see beyond death into eternal life. Eternal life is in the Son: “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life.” (1 Jn 5:11) This is why St. John says that in Jesus “the true light” has come. The wisdom of men, even wise men, could not overcome the darkness. Only Jesus has obliterated the darkness! He exists for all eternity in light.

The Darkness or the Light?

The question the Church puts before us in this Advent season is: What do you want, darkness or light? Are you living for the here and now, or is your gaze set on eternity? What does your way of life, how you spend your time, money and resources say about what you truly value?

Advent calls us back to the light. The Mass readings for this season direct us to reflect on the two comings of Jesus. The first coming is in the Incarnation, when Jesus came in mercy as a Lamb who shed his blood to make it possible...
for us to receive the eternal life that is in him. In his Second Coming Jesus will “come to judge the living and the dead.” Human history now stands between these two comings. It is a time of trial, a time of preparation and decision for every person. Will we choose the light or the darkness?

Jesus requires real decisiveness from each one of us: “You will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.” (Jn 8:24) We cannot drift into the Kingdom of God, we must decide with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. The indifference and minimalism that characterizes the disposition of so many in the Church today is not enough. We drift because we “love the darkness.” Jesus said: “This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (Jn 3:19)

We need to let these piercing words of Jesus penetrate our hearts. Do we love the darkness more than the light? Is our affection for sin holding us back from a total surrender to Jesus? With urgency, the Church in this season calls out to each one of us to not delay, to come out of the shadows and into the light.

**Eternal Perspective**

The light that shines so brightly in this season allows us to see the truth about our lives. Life is short; it is a passing shadow, here today and gone tomorrow. Before we know it we will be before the judgment seat of Christ. Our lives will be over; our testimony will be sealed. What will be the testimony of your life on that day? Are you ready to meet Jesus?

In his essay, *The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis gives a vivid description of that final day that may provide a helpful Advent meditation:

“In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised.” (pg 13) “In some sense, as dark to the intellect as it is unendurable to the feelings, we can be both banished from the presence of Him who is present everywhere and erased from the knowledge of Him who knows all. We can be left utterly and absolutely outside—repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored. On the other hand, we can be called in, welcomed, received, and acknowledged. We walk every day on the razor edge between these two incredible possibilities.” (pg 15)

Is there anything more important than that day? Nothing is more urgent and in need of our attention. Jesus stands ready to give to each one of us what is his, “the life that is the light of men.” He’s standing now, at the door of your heart, waiting for you to open it to the light.

To hear more of Peter Herbeck’s reflections, listen to his daily radio program *Fire on the Earth at* www.renewalministries.net—click on TV/Radio and “Listen to Radio shows”.

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“**What will be the testimony of your life on that day? Are you ready to meet Jesus?**

“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”
Mission to Papua New Guinea

They say that some of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the least explored territory in the world. Rumors of headhunters and cannibals still give rise to popular folklore. PNG has been a great proving ground for the Unbound model of prayer and deliverance. In a culture rooted in witchcraft and tribalism, there is a great need for this teaching. Both bishops have seen such powerful results from the Unbound model that they want us to come next year to give an in-service training retreat to all 1500 teachers in their dioceses.

This year we went into the bush to the villages of Yangoru and Angoram. It is very rewarding to go into remote places like this as the people are so hungry for the Lord. Many traveled for days to get to our meetings. Militant Protestants have caused much confusion for the Catholics there, and we spent more time on knowing and defending the Catholic Faith than we usually do. It was great to see the priests taking notes at every session.

Our first stop was in the diocese of Bishop Austen in Aitape where we spent four days conducting sessions in the mornings and rallies in the evenings. We spoke at the priests’ retreat and John and Marla Ustick from St. Petersburg, FL taught the lay leaders’ retreat. There seems to be significant hopelessness that permeates this land. The kids don’t have much chance of advancing and relieving the poverty unless they are in the top 5% of the class. Marijuana is grown easily and the ever present Betel nut is chewed. Each evening we walked the quarter mile to the venue (a small stage), not knowing how long the electricity from the small town would remain on to enable us to use the sound system. We began with praise and worship, and then gave various talks focused on how to receive more of God’s love and healing. Again, hundreds reported healing from a variety of problems. Each night the crowds grew to as many as 1000 as news of signs and wonders began to spread.

We were thrilled that the Bishop and all the priests participated in the evening rally, and the people really loved it. After the Mass there was a Eucharistic Healing service. The people’s love for Jesus was evident as they adored Him and touched the Monstrance. They poured out their needs through tears and moaning and many people were healed. Lloyd prayed over a man who had abdominal pains and swollen legs. He told us that the doctors couldn’t find anything wrong with him. Lloyd had a word of knowledge that this man had a curse put on him; he broke the curse and the man said he felt so much better. Lloyd told the priest who had brought this man to the service about the curse, and the priest confirmed that the curse was put there by his sister!

The following morning we taught the rest of the Unbound method and prayed for a few seminarians. These people are very shy and not used to sharing deeply. In their society it is just not done. We are always amazed at...
their courage to reveal their deepest darkest secrets. They reported that they felt “lighter” and one told us he experienced freedom.

The next day we travel to Wewak to pick up Bishop Tony Burgess for the next portion of our journey to Yangoru. Some people spent three days building a stage out of rough cut wood from the forest. During the day we taught on Catholic apologetics, God’s love, and the Unbound Method. The evening sessions which grew rapidly were held on the stage at the grounds of the church. Lloyd preached and many people were healed. Bishop Tony took the Monstrance through the crowd as Lloyd prayed. Walking behind the Bishop, we saw people crying as Jesus was brought to them. Later there were testimonies of God’s healing power.

- An older man’s knees were completely healed and he can now kneel.
- A woman who was numb all down her right side found healing through Jesus.
- A woman who had to use glasses asked Jesus for healing to be able to teach better. She testified that it seemed like a light came on and she can now see perfectly without glasses!
- A woman who was vomiting blood for two weeks walked from her village to the clinic. They told her there was nothing they could do for her, but that they were walking to Yangoru for the healing service and she could walk with them. She was very weak but she made it. She was touched by the Lord and all bleeding has stopped. She feels like she was totally healed. The other small miracle was that before this, she couldn’t speak a bit of English. Now after hearing the Word of God proclaimed, even though she had never been to school, she could speak and understand it!

Upon our arrival in the village of Angoram on the mighty Sepic River, the entire parish turned out to greet us, most in native costumes of shells, grass skirts, feathers, and hogs and dog teeth. Their priest, Fr. Lawrence is a young Indian who remembered us from last year’s priests retreat. He told us that he was so touched by the Unbound model and the teaching on forgiveness that he reconciled with his sisters after many years! Again we presented talks on evangelization and Unbound, and in the evening we had praise and worship and a Eucharistic Procession. At these remote villages people of all faiths attended. The Church was packed, with people standing around outside. After Jesus walked among them, many people reported healing of many types. It was a night of great faith building!

Crowds in Yangoru grew rapidly each day as the news of God’s presence and testimonies of His healing power traveled throughout the village.

The Unbound Method of Prayer and Deliverance

“...deliverance from evil spirits is learning the truth—of who God is, what He has said and who He has made us—resisting temptation, repenting of sin, renouncing the works of the devil, and forgiving those who have harmed us...it is about acknowledging the doors we have opened to the influence of evil spirits and learning how to close them.”

- Neal Lozano, author of Unbound: A Practical Guide to Deliverance. A more detailed account of the Unbound Method can be found in this book which is available at www.renewalministries.net.
December 2007
East Lansing, MI
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Day
December 1
Ralph Martin
Contact Joe Reynolds at 517-351-5460 or jreynolds@stachurch.net

Ypsilanti, MI
Transfiguration Parish Mission
December 2–5
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields
Contact: gwenmayes1@aol.com or 734-482-6240

Atlanta, GA, Day of Renewal
December 8
Ralph Martin
Contact: m_shusta@wsdbw.com

Toronto, CAN
Canadian Board Meeting
December 9–10
Ann Arbor, MI, Legatus Meeting
December 12
Ralph Martin

January 2008
Ann Arbor, MI
Christ the King Men’s Retreat
January 11–13
Ralph Martin
Contact number: 734-665-5040

Panama City, FL
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference
January 11–13
Sr. Ann Shields
Contact July Mikulec at juday@emcst.com

West Palm Beach, FL
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conf.
January 18–19
Ralph Martin
Contact John Dean at JDEANEPH320@earthlink.net

Kalamazoo, MI, Men’s Conference
January 26
Peter Herbeck
Contact Rob Webb at 269-388-3020 or cmckzoo@att.net

Ames, Iowa
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish
January 29–30
Ralph Martin
Contact Bob Horton at rhorton@iastate.edu

“The Word becomes flesh; God dwells among us, the Word of God, Mercy incarnate.”

Saint M. Faustina Kowalska

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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