Dear Brothers and Sisters,

What we’re all about is helping people find the Lord and there are so many encouraging reports that this is indeed what’s happening.

Just yesterday I received a telephone call from a young man who had seen our television program and was struggling against various temptations and wanted some help. I prayed for him over the phone but was also able to refer him to a good support group in the city in which he lives. They have already contacted him and offered him ongoing help. Praise the Lord!

We continue to help men get help in their struggles in living the Christian life through participating in men’s retreats and conferences of various kinds. Peter Herbeck, our Director of Missions, is also part of the national coordinating team for the National Fellowship of Catholic Men (www.catholicmensresources.org). This past fall Peter led a men’s retreat in Idaho and the coordinators received a lot of positive feedback about it.

“This is probably the most influential retreat I have been to. The timing was God’s and I knew I needed to hear the call to cast your nets into deeper waters.”

“This was a wake-up call to not only acknowledge the Lord but to serve Him!”

“I realized that Jesus is alive and the Church is still growing and not dying.”

And our website (www.renewalministries.net) is hopping! The last report I received indicated that in a one month period the amount of material downloaded from our site increased from 50 Gigabytes to 63 Gigabytes, a 26% increase. More and more people are accessing our

continued on pg 2
Dear Brothers and Sisters

radio and television programs at their convenience through the website.

The work at the seminary is bearing fruit as well. I recently received an email from one of the priests in the class telling me that, “this class is life-changing.”

Another priest called me yesterday and told me he was ordering 130 copies of Hungry for God to give to everyone serving in his parish.

A letter arrived in our office recently from a man in Texas telling us he was reading The Fulfillment of All Desire for the third time and he wanted to order three more to give to friends and family members.

And then an email arrived from a seminarian telling us that The Fulfillment of All Desire was being used as a textbook in his spirituality class at the seminary and that this is the first time he has been able to read a book for five hours straight and be fascinated by it. I must admit it is very encouraging to receive feedback like this. And how about this email from a Protestant missionary:

“I watched one of your programs on EWTN that showed some of the work you are doing in Africa. As a Pentecostal missionary evangelist I was thrilled. Even though I have a great affinity and interest in the Catholic Church I have kept away because I never saw any emphasis on public proclamation of the Gospel and evangelism or the power of the Holy Spirit in regards to healing. Thank you for what you are doing. Thank you for further opening my eyes to what God is doing in the Catholic Church. I see God at work. Please send me your newsletter.”

Thank you for being true partners in the Gospel, helping God’s Word to go forth all over the world, and not return without fruit! Your prayer and financial support is essential.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

THE GIFT THAT GIVES BACK THROUGHOUT THE YEARS…

The charitable gift annuity is a unique gift arrangement that can help both you and Renewal Ministries. This type of annuity provides our donors with fixed payments throughout the years, thereby helping them to find a measure of certainty in these uncertain economic times, while supporting Renewal Ministries at the same time.

Two of our longtime donors, John, age 77, and his wife, Jane, age 76 (the names have been changed to protect the donors’ privacy, but the facts remain the same), funded a $100,000 charitable gift annuity for the benefit of Renewal Ministries that guaranteed a rate of 6.7%, or $6,700 annually for both of their lives. John and Jane were pleased to learn that $4,475.60 of their annual annuity income would not be subject to federal income tax. They were also happy to know that they would enjoy the benefit of a $31,535 charitable tax deduction for this donation. Because of these tax benefits, John and Jane realized that their effective rate of return was significantly greater than 6.7%!

Most importantly, John and Jane were thrilled that Renewal Ministries was able to immediately use $28,779.80 of their gift to complete several evangelistic projects that they personally had supported over the years. As John and Jane observed, “This program is a ‘Give and Gain’ situation for everyone!”

For more information on how you can create a “Give and Gain” situation through a charitable gift annuity, contact Gary Seromik at Renewal Ministries, P.O. Box 1426, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, Tel: 734.662.1730 ext 21, Fax: 734.662.4697, E-mail: gseromik@renewalministries.net.
Lift Jesus Higher Rally—April 19, 2008

Toronto, Ontario’s Lift Jesus Higher Rally continues to inspire thousands to a deeper faith. This year’s Rally will feature Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director of Priests for Life.

Come and bring a friend!

For more information on the 2008 Rally go to
www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org
or www.renewalministries.net
or email pdkromer@rogers.com
or contact Sadie at 905-270-2510

“Every year I look forward to the next Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Toronto.
This is a ‘must attend’ on my calendar!”

The Choices We Face can be viewed in Canada on Salt+Light Television.

Check our website for details at www.renewalministries.net and click “TV/Radio”.

Discover Salt + Light Television

Please Pray…

+ that the many Lenten parish missions this month will help people draw closer to the Lord and know His saving power in their lives.

+ for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all clergy and religious.

+ 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.
Teach Us to Pray

Luke’s Gospel tells us that on one occasion, when Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples asked him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” (Lk 11:1) Jesus immediately began teaching them the Lord’s Prayer.

There is much to be learned about Jesus and the disciples in this simple interchange. In asking Jesus to teach them to pray, the disciples were asking the Lord to allow them to enter into his deepest, most intimate thoughts and concerns. They had seen Jesus pray on many occasions, and could see the depth of his devotion and the impact that prayer had on him. Jesus’ prayer was deep, passionate, and focused; it was a defining characteristic and discipline of his life. Jesus was renewed, inspired, empowered, comforted and moved by his time in prayer.

The apostles knew instinctively that to enter into Jesus’ prayer was to touch the heart of this man. In their straightforward request they were asking Jesus to take them to the depths, and to allow them to discover the essence of Jesus’ life and mission. More than anything else, the disciples wanted to be like him in every way—to think his thoughts, and to have their hearts move with the same values and vision that filled Jesus’ whole being.

The Lord’s Prayer

Jesus responded to their request by teaching them the Lord’s Prayer. Through that prayer he opened the door to the depths of his heart, to the foundations of his life and purpose. That is why the Lord’s Prayer is like no other. It is the quintessential prayer of a disciple, of one who seeks above all else to live with Jesus and in Jesus; it’s for the one who desires to inhabit his world and to embrace fully his vision of reality.

I believe the Lord’s Prayer gives us this kind of insight. Jesus is not only teaching his disciples (that includes you and me) how to offer petitions to the Father, he is giving us the pillars or foundation stones to successful living. Jesus is history’s most successful man, its greatest leader and wisest teacher, its most compassionate counselor and most triumphant warrior. Jesus has no equal; every other leader and every other success story pales in comparison. He alone knows the essence of what it means to be human; he knows the truth about man’s origin and his destiny. Above all else, he knows how to reach ultimate fulfillment, eternal success, a life of everlasting happiness.

A Transformed Mind

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus challenges us to radically reorient the way we think. The apostles came to see that in order to follow Jesus they would have to, “be renewed in the spirit of your (their) minds,” (Eph 4:23), to acquire a fresh, new spiritual way of thinking, which meant to, “have the mind of Christ.” (1 Co 2:16)

The Lord’s Prayer reveals the mind of Christ and gives us insight into the habits of mind and heart of Jesus’ own life.

The Father

This fresh, new spiritual way of thinking begins with the Father. Jesus’ words make it clear that the Father, his Father, is now “Our Father.” And if we are to think like Jesus, the Father must become the goal of our lives. Everything begins and ends with the Father. As a disciple, our lives are now defined by our movement toward the Father. Human life is a journey home to the Father.
Jesus died and rose again to make it possible for us to know the Father, to remove all obstacles that stand in the way of our being able to see the Father, to hear his voice, and to love him freely and confidently with all our hearts.

Jesus made himself our way home to the Father. Jesus is telling us that this is the only road to human fulfillment, to a truly successful life, to the experience of everlasting significance. To get there Jesus teaches us to employ one of the most popular principles of contemporary wisdom for highly successful living: “begin with the end in view.” The Father is the end, the goal of our lives. For that reason Jesus makes it clear that the first thing we need to do each day is to turn our gaze and our full attention to the Father. We must remind ourselves why we are living, and where we are going.

If we don’t keep the end in view, we are not going to get there. We will get sidetracked and follow some lesser goal. We’ll invest ourselves in the passionate pursuit of something that by definition cannot satisfy our intrinsic longing for meaning and fulfillment. The Father is infinite in his beauty, love, power, wisdom and goodness. We are created for infinite fulfillment, for eternal satisfaction and happiness. Nothing else will satisfy us. To have some other goal become our consuming concern is to guarantee failure, emptiness, disappointment and despair. It is a pursuit that will literally end in Hell.

It’s Not about You
As Jesus turns our gaze to the Father, he reveals to us how radically different his heart is than our own. His first prayer, his consuming concern, is to see the name of the Father hallowed, that is, to be made holy in his life. He wants his life, and the life of every person to honor the Father, to give God the respect, trust, love, gratitude and full obedience that he deserves.

That’s a radical reorientation of the mind and heart because it’s self-forgetful. Jesus’ first concern is not himself. His first concern is the Father. He understands, and he is teaching each one of us another eternal secret for successful living: “whoever will save his life must lose it.” (Lk 9:24) If you want to be happy, lose your life! Stop the constant self-preoccupation, the obsessive pursuit of personal security, comfort, satisfaction, and pleasure. Forget yourself, seek to please the Father, to bring honor to his name and you will find life. Don’t let your prayer become a daily exercise of “worrying before the Lord.” Remember, your heavenly Father knows what you need!

Seek the Things That Are Above
Let go of the anxiety of mind that comes from self-preoccupation and learn to, “seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of the God. Set your mind on things that are above...” (Col 3:1–2) St. Paul learned this habit from Jesus. The Holy Spirit gave him the power to reorient his interior life, his priorities and values around the Father. Jesus said, “I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” (Jn 5:30) St. Paul is essentially saying the same thing, and that is precisely what Jesus wants to reproduce in us.

Seeking the Father first, above all else gives our life the direction we need to live a life that is genuinely meaningful. To set our course toward the Father, to allow our hearts to be anchored in heaven, is to engage fully, here and now our life’s purpose. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus is training us to set our course toward our true home. He wants nothing more than for each of us to arrive at our eternal destiny.

This brief reflection on the Lord’s Prayer is based on my new booklet entitled, Living the Lord’s Prayer. If you would like a copy of my new booklet you can order it at www.renewalministries.net or by calling 734-662-1730 x27 or through this month’s enclosed reply card.
Mission to Poland
By Don Turbitt

In October I traveled to Poland to conduct a men’s retreat with the combined efforts of Fr. Krzysztof Czerwonka and Andrzej Sionek. Prior to the retreat I was invited to speak to 35 young men in a university chapel hall about what the Lord is doing in the renewal. I spoke extensively about the signs and wonders that are happening around the world and how Catholics are expected to heal the sick and cast out demons. The talk was well received and the question and answer session was stimulating. I invited them to come to the retreat and several who were eager for more did attend.

One hundred and fifty men of various ages attended the retreat. Andrzej and I spoke about the charismatic renewal and the gifts of the Spirit, and then I invited anyone who had not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit to receive prayer. About sixty men came forward and we prayed for each one of them as well as with all the men for their individual needs.

In addition to the retreat, I had other opportunities to speak about the Lord. I joined Andrzej at the Catholic university where he is teaching a course on “Renewal Movements in the Catholic Church” and spoke to his class for two hours about my own experiences in the renewal.

One evening I met with a group of twenty five fire fighters. Being a former fireman myself, I think they were expecting some technical talk on methods of fire fighting. I did share about some of my experiences in the department, but spent half the time with them talking about fighting the fires of hell! Afterwards, Mayor Piotr Sobesto and his wife joined us for supper in the home of the couple that had asked me to give the talk. I spent the next two hours evangelizing the mayor and invited him to our next retreat.

Mission to Slovakia and Czech Republic
By Tom Edwards

Our Renewal Ministries team, comprised of eight members from North America as well as six others from the two countries we visited, continued to break new ground in both Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Our first week was a whirlwind tour of middle Slovakia, beginning Monday night with Mass followed by testimonies, a teaching, and then prayer for individuals. Ondrej Tarana, a Capuchin deacon, did a great job of arranging events in this town and several others. On this first night people came from the surrounding region and filled the church. On the following day our team moved to another Capuchin Friary in Kremnicke Bane and conducted outreaches to a school in the village of Zvolen. This was followed by an afternoon and evening program in the parish of Hrinová with many people coming from the countryside.

On Wednesday, we traveled to the historic town of Bankska Bystrica and began a morning program in the Catholic high school. In the evening we went to the small village of Cerin. The ancient twelfth century parish there had just received a priest after being without one for over 100 years. Never before had the people of the village experienced a renewal program such as this and the village was alive with excitement. Upon our arrival we found that food and pastries aplenty had been prepared by the villagers and tables were set up outside near a cornfield. As the church filled with both the young and old, Deacon Ondrej and the Capuchin music ministry led the congregation into a praise-filled time of worship. After the presentation of our teaching the people responded to the invitation to personal prayer and many poured out their hearts with tears.

On Thursday morning we conducted a morning program in the Catholic high school in Zilina. Here we ministered to a delightful student body that had been brought to an amazing level of spiritual maturity by the Franciscan School Sisters. The students demonstrated a tangible hunger for the teaching we shared and asked many questions. They delighted in sharing with us a favorite song that they had written especially for Pope John Paul II. In the afternoon we traveled west to the town of Dolny-Kubin where we were hosted by the Community for the New Evangelization, made up of a...
number of young families. In past years, many of the leaders and members have attended our FIRE rallies in Presov and they were excited to have our team visit their area for the first time. One of the members of the community, who has an amazing “rags to riches” testimony, has built a large state-of-the-art furniture factory with a view for using it to God’s glory. The showroom, complete with a cross and Christian icons, was used for our meetings. The two nights were well attended, with some people driving in from long distances. Again the response was very positive and many came forth for prayer, some committing their lives to Christ and others renewing their commitment to the Christian life.

We also conducted programs for all of the public school English classes in a town a few miles away. We were also able to serve the leaders of the community in a special prayer and sharing session that addressed some of their struggles and brought them much encouragement at a strategic time. On Saturday morning we made our way across the border to begin our mission in Czech Republic.

Fr. Karol Matlock is a twenty-seven year old pastor of a parish in the town of Brumov-Blynice, Czech Republic. Last August, only three days after he had been assigned as pastor, he traveled 2 ½ hours to see me and to invite Renewal Ministries to conduct a mission for his parish. The parish has conducted only two parish missions in the previous fifty years. Another priest, Fr. Richard Wojciechowski, pastors two parishes in the nearby villages of Nesašov and Štítná. Our schedule for the week included an all encompassing outreach to the region with three nights in Fr. Karol’s parish, two nights in Nesašov, and one night in Štítná.

During the day, our team ministered to two special Senior Citizens Homes. The elderly who were mobile attended an assembly where our team shared testimony, teaching and prayer. Fr. Richard also took some of our members to visit a number of very elderly bedridden patients (most close to 100 years old). Although most of them did not have the strength to sit, or in some cases even to lift a hand or say a word, they were deeply touched by the visit as evidenced by their tears.

Below is a testimony from a Czech woman who attended the parish mission in Brumov-Blynice:

“I thought that some ‘crazy’ Americans have nothing to tell me, and that they live in their big American dream and they have no idea how I live. But it was the other way around; they opened many things, many thoughts, many hidden experiences, often reminding me of things that I knew, because I am Catholic, but I forgot or thought is an unimportant rule. I forgot that faith doesn’t mean to count how many times a week I go to church or how many events in the parish we have, but how do I live my life with God every day! How important it is to remind myself of God’s presence in every second of my day, in every thing, in every word...Also I realized that we don’t know how to truly experience the community in church, how little we share about God, who He is for us, how He speaks to us, how He influences my life, how my relationship with God develops, how I understand God’s plan for my life. How often we live our faith privately. Many things touched me. But some I will keep in my heart only. It was an amazing, touching witness! Beautiful moments in community, feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit, his peace and healing. Especially I would like to thank the couple who prayed for me often. I don’t know how to describe it all, it needs to stay deeply in me in order grow into something even bigger.”

Our team spoke to a lively public school assembly in Slovakia.

We were also asked to minister to two special homes for Senior Citizens in the Czech Republic. Those who were mobile attended a gathering where we shared testimonies, teaching, and prayer.
“Everything is a grace because everything is God’s gift. Whatever be the character of life or its unexpected events—to the heart that loves, all is well.”

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

On the Road

February 2008

Birmingham, AL
February 4–7
Taping of new EWTN series on “The Fulfillment of All Desire”
Ralph Martin

Paris, France
Community of Beatitudes Retreat
February 8–10
Sr. Ann Shields
Contact Fr. Luc Marie at Luc-Marie_valliant@yahoo.fr

Clarksdale, MS, Women’s Conference
February 8–10
Debbie Herbeck
Contact Valerie Britt at 662-627-1823

Kansas City, MO, Men’s Conference
February 9
Peter Herbeck
Contact Dan Spencer dspenceriii@kc.rr.com

Ann Arbor, MI
St. Thomas the Apostles Lenten Series
February 13, 20, 27
Ralph Martin
Contact: 734-761-8606 or www.stthomasannarbor.catholicweb.com

Vero Beach, FL
St. John of the Cross Parish Renewal
February 15–16
Ralph Martin
Contact: 772-563-0057

Brighton, MI
Accepting the Challenge Men’s Conference
February 16
Peter Herbeck
Contact: 810-225-0358 or www.AcceptTheChallenge.org

Mission to Mexico City
February 16–23
Jim Murphy and Team
Contact Jessica at jsherwood@renewalministries.net or 734-662-1730 x32

Pewamo, MI, St. Joseph’s Parish Mission
February 23
Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck
Contact Aaron Epkey at 989-593-3384

Eaton Rapids, MI, St. Peter’s Parish Mission
February 24–27
Ralph Martin and Sr. Ann Shields
Contact Fr. Bennett at 517-663-4735

March 2008

Darien, CT, St. John Parish Day of Renewal
March 1
Ralph Martin
Contact: 203-655-1145

Wakefield, MA
St. Joseph Parish Lenten Mission
March 2–4
Ralph Martin
Contact Merry Nordeen at 781-245-5770 or office@stjosephwakefield.org

Ann Arbor, MI
St. Thomas the Apostles Lenten Series
March 5
Sr. Ann Shields
Contact: 734-761-8606 or www.stthomasannarbor.catholicweb.com

Teaneck, NJ
St. Anastasia Parish Lenten Mission
March 7–8
Ralph Martin

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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
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Design
Anne Martin

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