Dear Friends,

Well it’s hard to believe but this month we’re launching the 24th year of The Choices We Face. Pretty amazing. Who would have thought?

As we reported in the January newsletter, we have another lineup of inspiring guests and topics and hope you’ll be as inspired watching the programs as we were in producing them. There are many ways to get the program. Our main distributor is EWTN which is widely available in Canada and the US, as well as most of the rest of the world. But thanks to the communications revolution the program is also available any time—day or night, any day of the week through our website, www.renewalministries.net. If any of you don’t have a nearby teenager to help you to access the program on our website feel free to call our office and talk to Peter Bacik, who will help you. (734-662-1730 ext. 23) A listing of the major stations where the TV program is available is at the bottom of page 3. Wherever I go so many people take the trouble to tell me how much they enjoy the program. Just this week I received a letter from a woman in the Bronx, NY (where I was born) about the program: “I am delighted with the work of Renewal Ministries. Whenever I watch your program I feel as if I am in Heaven. Please send me your booklet.”

The booklet she is referring to is Peter Herbeck’s booklet “To Walk by the Spirit.” Again, just this week a man from Delaware wrote to tell us: “I’m not a Catholic but I can’t stop rereading Peter’s booklet. This booklet speaks to everything that runs through me and more. Thank you.”

And from a woman in Tennessee: “I’ve been going through a conversion process since last Easter. Your CD album on St. John of the Cross has helped me so much. I watch The Choices We Face every week and so does my godmother in Pennsylvania. And just recently my spiritual director gave me a copy of The Fulfillment of All Desire which I look forward to reading very much.”

I continue to be amazed and deeply grateful as I hear from people from all walks of life how...

continued on page 2

A letter from Ralph Martin

We joined our friends (l to r) Geraldine, George, Grace and Gdoriel in Nairobi, Kenya for a week-long series of events celebrating the 40th anniversary of the world-wide Catholic Charismatic Renewal.
Dear Friends

helpful they are finding The Fulfillment of All Desire. Having spent ten years working on it, this feedback is really encouraging!

A priest who works at the Vatican in Rome writes: “This book is really a gem, perhaps your finest. I am impressed by its comprehensiveness and practical insights into spirituality. You have given the Church a real treasure.”

A man from Cleveland writes: “I love it, I love it. I’m keeping it permanently on my table along with the Bible and the Catechism. I’ll be reading it and rereading it.”

A woman from Delaware writes: “The book is exactly what I need. Thank you so much. I’m ordering copies for the three priests and two deacons in our parish and praying that they’ll take the time to read them. How helpful they would find them.”

One of the highlights for me was running into the man who had mowed my mom’s lawn for many years and he told me that someone had given him a copy of the book and he is finding it immensely helpful, is underlining much of it, and sharing it with some of his fellow workers. Praise the Lord! I had hoped that people from all and no educational backgrounds would find it helpful and it is a joy to know that they are.

This past year we’ve been celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Catholic charismatic renewal which has touched more than 100 million of our fellow Catholics’ lives. And we still keep doing Life in the Spirit Seminars which have helped so many to come into a deeper relationship with Christ and His Spirit. Just recently several of us traveled to a Detroit area parish where we helped put on such a seminar for about 40 people. One participant writes: “My wife and I attended the recent Life in the Spirit Seminar. The presentations were so full of the Spirit, so full of goodness, so full of God’s love. Thank you for saying yes and for continuing to say yes daily.”

It’s hard to believe sometimes as I receive letters like this and look at our “Events” calendar in the newsletter or on our website that our relatively “small band” of brothers and sisters, with the significant help of supporters like you, is being used by the Lord in so many different ways.

Oh yes, the newsletter. From Dayton, Ohio: “Please keep sending the newsletter. I enjoy it immensely. I’ve been going through some really tough times and I am so encouraged when I read it.”

You’ll read elsewhere in this issue of the inspiring things that are happening in our mission work, now in more than 27 different countries. This month we are reporting on the work in Turkey and Kenya. You’ll be inspired. I am.

I want to close this month with something that just happened yesterday that is both sad yet deeply touching.

A relatively young single woman from Canada who had been a supporter of Renewal Ministries for a number of years, and who had attended our annual Gathering a few times died of a sudden and aggressive form of cancer. We didn’t even know she was ill but received a letter from her aunt yesterday informing us of her death. She also told us that as her young niece was dying she downloaded Sr. Ann Shields’ radio programs and listened to them even when she couldn’t speak and they brought her great comfort. She named Renewal Ministries of Canada as one of the five beneficiaries of her will and a check with her bequest has arrived in our Canadian office. We wished we had known she was ill but are consoled to know that she was able to be comforted and strengthened in her final illness by listening to Food for the Journey. We are also deeply touched and grateful that she remembered us in her will so that Sr. Ann’s programs and all the other work we are doing can continue. We are having a Mass said for the repose of her soul just as we do for every Renewal Ministries’ supporter whose death we are informed of.

We know that the love that was in her heart for Renewal Ministries is in many of your hearts too. We know it by letters you write, the prayers you say, and the gifts you so generously keep giving, month in and month out, so that hundreds of thousands can continue to be reached with the amazingly good news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are deeply grateful to you and to the Lord who inspires you in your support.

Your brother in Christ,

She also told us that as her young niece was dying she downloaded Sr. Ann Shields’ radio programs and listened to them even when she couldn’t speak and they brought her great comfort."
Getting the Word Out

In 2001 Deacon Tom Hawksworth from Aurora, Illinois agreed to “get the word out” about The Choices We Face television show. He took the program tapes down to Aurora Community Television and asked them to run the shows throughout the year on the public access channel. Looking for the opportunity to both advertise the program, and evangelize within his parish, Deacon Tom decided to write a short column in the Holy Angels’ Church bulletin entitled “The Choices We Face”. Seven years and 359 columns later, both the television show and his column have become familiar and effective means of “getting the Word out” to the folks in Aurora, Illinois.

Excerpt from Holy Angels Church Bulletin
December 16, 2007

“THE CHOICES WE FACE”

Saint James tells us in the second reading for this Sunday to: “Be patient brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord” and to this instruction many of us might respond, “Easier said than done.” I believe most of us would agree we live in a culture in which patience is not really one of our strong points. Instant messaging and news, microwave cooking, highways with no stop signs and all the other improvements of our modern times seem to have taken their toll on our challenge to “be patient.” For those of us who pray for the conversion of sinners, for peace, an end of wars, violence, terrorism and abortions, our patience, our trust in God, is truly tested. We hear in today’s Gospel of Matthew that even John the Baptist, while in prison, wanted answers for his efforts as “he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?’” This need to know, and to know quickly, seems to part of our human condition.

During this Advent time, may we ask the Holy Spirit to help us to persevere in prayer and strengthen our trust in God’s mercy and love.

And as always, I invite those of you who live in Aurora and have cable TV to watch the TV show, The Choices We Face. The show is hosted by Ralph Martin of Renewal Ministries and is carried by Aurora Community Television on their public access Channel 10, Mondays at 9:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. The show to be telecast this week is entitled, Encounter in Rome, presented by Catholic evangelist Patti Mansfield. This is the type of media the Holy Spirit can use to form our conscience and provide direction for our faith journey. I hope you’ll watch and be inspired.

—Deacon Tom Hawksworth

If you would like to join us (and Deacon Tom!) in our effort to bring The Choices We Face to more homes in 2008, please contact Debbie Herbeck at 734-662-1730 x27 or dherbeck@renewalministries.net.

Broadcast Times for The Choices We Face —All are Eastern Standard Time

EWTN: Tues 6:00 p.m & Fri 6:30 a.m

Familyland Television Network
(on satellite):
Mon 9:30 a.m
Tues 1:30 p.m & 11:30 p.m
Thurs 2:00 p.m
Sat 5:00 a.m

Salt + Light (In Canada) on:
ROGERS Digital Cable System, Channel 395
Bell ExpressVu, Channel 654
Cogeco Digital Cable, Channel 185
Videotron, Channel 242
Thurs 8:00 a.m
Fri 10:30 a.m
Sat 5:30 a.m
Sun 8:00 a.m, 4:30 p.m

*For a complete program schedule for other stations go to www.renewalministries.net and click on TV/Radio then The Choices We Face: TV Schedule.
Extraordinary Grace in Ordinary Times

I have written a new book entitled **Deeper Conversion: Extraordinary Grace in Ordinary Times**. The longer I live the more I see how true it is that God showers us with extraordinary grace in very ordinary moments of our lives. Often though, those graces slip past us because:

1. We haven’t learned to discipline ourselves to be internally quiet in order to “hear” God’s small, still voice. We have let external busyness invade our hearts and our spirits. The tyranny of the urgent in our lives is exactly that—a tyrant and it always urges us to go faster and do more.

2. We have not made a regular practice of reading God’s word slowly and reflectively, “squeezing the juice out of it” as Pope Benedict urges us to do.

3. We are so caught up in the world’s priorities that we fail to remember that God often wishes to speak to us while we drive, scrub a floor, repair a car, teach a child, lead a board meeting, talk to a friend, play sports, share a good meal, etc. In other words, in the midst of daily, very ordinary, and very often repetitive activities, God is always near wanting to love us, teach us, direct us, counsel and console us. But do we listen?

The purpose of my new book is to show you how to reflect on God’s word, to experience the power of the living Word to speak to you, right where you are. I hope that it convicts you where you need it and comforts you in the difficult moments of life.

In this newsletter article I have chosen to reflect with you on the Gospel reading in John 9:1-41 for the 4th Sunday of Lent. Right here in the middle of Lent, take time to open your bible to this chapter and read through it. Now, let me make just four points (for the sake of this short article).

1. Jesus tells us “I am the light of the world.” Do I believe that? Do my actions really show that I believe it? When I am in the darkness of sin or confusion, or perhaps a kind of hopelessness—to whom do I turn? If I really believe He is the light of the world, I will turn first to the Source of all light. Yes, there are all kinds of helps and aids that are offered to get us out of darkness but often they are temporary substitutes that don’t generate long term benefits. If you really believe that Jesus is the light of the world, turn to Him first when you are in darkness of any kind. What do I need to change in my everyday life to acknowledge that Jesus is truly the Light for my path?

2. Oftentimes we miss the works of God because they come through people or circumstances that don’t fit our “categories”. They make us uncomfortable and so we make excuses. Look at the excuses of the people present when Jesus healed the man and the reasons why they cannot believe. Look especially at John 9:13-29. Have you ever been confronted by a definite act of God and your first thoughts are about how to discredit it rather than to listen and think and pray for the truth? That’s a form of pride at work. It is very different from discernment where we prayerfully weigh “the pros and cons.” What steps can you take to be responsive to the active working of the Holy Spirit in your world today?

3. Look at verses 34-41. Do you see the pride in the Pharisees? The formerly blind man was speaking the truth to them but it would shake up their whole world to admit that maybe he was right. So, they “hide” under their titles and authority and reject the work of God. Also, notice how their pride deafened them—they are unable to be “taught” by someone so insignificant.

4. Finally, look at what Jesus says to the proud in verse 41. If you were physically blind (not caused by self) you would have no sin. But because in your arrogance, you say you see, you say you understand, you are guilty of contributing to your spiritual blindness. Where does your pride contribute to your spiritual blindness? Are you blind to the truth in some areas because of arrogance or fear or anger? What do you think the Lord is asking of you?

This gives you a sample of what I’m trying to do in my new book. The meditations are based on the Sunday readings for Ordinary Time of this current calendar year. Take one chapter per week and wrestle with the scriptures. Let God’s Spirit do its work in you and you will never regret it.
Please Pray...

- for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the upcoming Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Toronto, Ontario next month.

- for the new season of *The Choices We Face* as it begins airing throughout the world this month.

- for the mission team of high school students who will be ministering to the poor in Mexico City during their Easter break.

- 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.*
Mission to Kenya
By Peter Thompson

Our small but effective team from North America included me, Fr. Scott McCaig, Superior of the Companions of the Cross based in Ottawa, Ontario, and Eugene Seavers, who undertook the arduous journey from Illinois at 72 years of age. We arrived in Nairobi to join a week-long event celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Teaching each morning and conducting rallies each afternoon kept us busy and we were grateful for the input of some very gifted speakers from Kenya and Tanzania. Those who attended the event were mainly from the renewal in the Nairobi region, although as the day progressed people who heard the music were drawn to stop and attend. By evening more than 1000 had gathered. Each day we concluded with prayers for healing, deliverance, and commitment to Jesus.

The theme for the event was “Pressing on to what is Ahead” (Phil. 3:12-15). St. Paul’s words are a challenge to all of us in the renewal to persevere in running the race and to cooperate with the inexhaustible graces God is pouring out across the world. To help people respond to this message, our presentations focused on the call to radical holiness, the call to faithfulness to the Magisterium and the teaching of the Catholic Church in all things, and the call to mission. There is a hunger for apologetics in Africa as the Church is assaulted by a flood of quasi Christian sects that consistently attack the teaching of the Church. Sadly, due to lack of knowledge many choose to leave the Church and this has affected even the leadership of the CCR in many regions. Fr. Scott McCaig, himself a convert to the Catholic faith, was able to speak effectively and he touched the hearts of many as they listened to him unfold the glorious mysteries of the faith.

In Kenya there is still resistance to the renewal even after many years of renewal activity within the country. People have often become discouraged due to opposition and it was a breath of fresh air to hear Fr. Scott quoting the recent Popes in their unquestionable support for the work of the Holy Spirit. There were a number of testimonies from individuals who had been challenged through the teaching and experienced repentance and a recommitment to Christ and his Church.

A sobering event was our visit to the Prison in Nairobi. We were allowed to minister to about 150 of the inmates in remand and it was disturbing to learn that many waited months or even years before their cases came to court. During that time they experience the deprivations of life in prison with no access to the most basic of human comforts.
The second week we flew to Mombassa and then drove to the highlands of Taita, over 6,000 feet above sea level. The landscape and roads are difficult to traverse and many of the participants walked two hours each day from their small farms to attend the rallies. Fr Armogast who was born in Taita, arranged our visit to this region. In 2001 he attended the Renewal Ministries outreach in Kenya and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit there. By the afternoons more than 1000 would gather on the soccer field, the only level area in the region, and on the final day the crowds swelled to almost 3,000. We were amazed by their hunger for God’s word—sitting in the heat and taking notes, they fasted all day and returned home at night for the evening meal.

We returned to the stifling heat and humidity of Mombassa for our last series of rallies. In spite of torrential rain and heat, almost 3,000 people gathered each afternoon to hear the Gospel proclaimed with power, and each evening we ministered to the crowds asking for God’s healing love and mercy. On the last day almost 6,000 filled the area, the event culminating with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after Mass and a solemn blessing through which many experienced the merciful love of God.

Mission to Turkey
By John Kazanjian

The Lord is doing so many wonderful things in Turkey that I hardly know where to begin. This past fall I made my third trip there in ten months. When the Lord is acting and bringing renewal to the Church it’s hard to stay away. Our priest friends and a religious sister are leading Life in the Spirit Seminars in three Istanbul parishes, one on the Asian side of the Bosporus and two in the European part of the city. There are in all over 100 people attending. In addition they have a leadership team meeting once a week with ten of the folks who completed a seminar last year, and a prayer meeting once a week with all those who have completed the course and their invited guests (about 85 in all).

These friends are experiencing wonderful support from the Church hierarchy as well. One of the priests told me that the auxiliary bishop recently asked him if he could take care of a task. Father said that with meetings scheduled every night of the week it would be difficult to accomplish, but that he would still do it. The bishop said, “No, no, I’ll find someone else. That work you’re doing is the most important thing going on right now. Please don’t take your attention away from it.”

God is good!

During my visit the priests would find opportunities for me to preach every day. Their welcome was so warm that on a couple of occasions I said, “Stop loving me so much, you’re spoiling me.” What a great pleasure and blessing to be able to speak the word of God, especially as a lay person, to people who are hungry to hear it.

There is one other highlight to report. Three priests and I went to visit Pastor Levent of the Istanbul Vineyard Church. Levent a convert from Islam, was our team translator the first few times I was in Turkey (’99–01). While in college he met some American students from Campus Crusade at an Istanbul bus stop. They gave him a copy of the New Testament and invited him to a “party.” He says he went out of a desire to practice English. He was intrigued by the people he met, so he started reading the Bible when he went home. Every time he’d read the words of Jesus he would cry, which led to his conversion.

Levent’s young congregation meets in a vacated Armenian Church. They have 80 members now, mostly Turkish converts, a few Kurds and a couple of Armenians. I hadn’t seen him since 2001. We talked for about an hour and then the five of us prayed together for a good long time and interceded for Turkey. What a great experience!

The three Life in the Spirit Seminars are scheduled to conclude in mid-February and there will most likely be more than 100 people to pray with for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Our team is planning to be there to help pray over them. We’re also scheduled to go back again in October.

We invite any interested Renewal Ministries supporters to join our team—come and see what genuine grass roots renewal in the Holy Spirit looks like!
March 2008

Darren, 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
Contact: 201-837-3354

Grand Rapids, MI, Men’s Conference
March 8
Peter Herbeck
Contact Jim Dirkes at 616-450-8653

Ann Arbor, MI
St. Thomas the Apostles Lenten Series
March 12
Peter Herbeck
Contact: 734-761-8606 or www.stthomasannarbor.catholicweb.com

Cleveland, OH, Evening of Reflection
March 13
Ralph Martin
Contact: 440-442-7538

Bowling Green, OH
St. Thomas More University Parish Mission
March 14–15
Ralph Martin
Contact: 419-352-7555

Mexico City Mission with Fr. Gabriel Richard
High School
March 24–30
Jim Murphy and Debbie Herbeck

Omaha, NE, Day of Recollection at St.
Robert’s Parish Sponsored by The Institute
for Priestly Formation
March 29
Ralph Martin
Contact: 402-546-6384

April 2008

Czech Republic Mission
April 3–27
Tom Edwards
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 x32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Brooklyn, NY, Mercy Conference
April 5
Ralph Martin, Sr. Ann Shields
Contact Josephine Cachia at 718-859-7065

Akron, OH, St. Hillary’s Parish
April 11–12
Ralph Martin
Contact: 330-283-8748

Pittsburgh, PA, Duquesne University, Gathering of Catholic Men
April 12
Peter Herbeck
Contact: www.cmfpitt.org or Pat@cmfpitt.org

“
This is the Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world; this is the Lion, who has conquered the kingdoms of the world.”

St. Augustine