Proclaiming Jesus through Catholic Renewal and Evangelization

Dear Fellow Disciples,

A letter from Ralph Martin

The great culmination of the awesome deeds of Christ: his sacrificial death, his glorious resurrection, his astounding Ascension all culminate in the abundant gift of the Spirit experienced on the day of Pentecost by the disciples and ever since promised to “all flesh.” That includes us!

Many of us who read this have been blessed with a renewed experience of this gift of the Spirit but there is always more. We can always understand more, love more, and serve more.

One of the amazing things about the gift of the Spirit is that it includes within it a multitude of “gifts” that are given to each one of us as the Holy Spirit sees fit to distribute. Recently I have been reflecting on this truth and would like to share with you some of these reflections from an article I wrote on charisms for Our Sunday Visitor.

Rediscovering the Charismatic Dimension: Recent Magisterial Teaching

Pope John Paul II stated that one of the most significant contributions of the Second Vatican Council was the “rediscovery” of the “charismatic dimension” of the Church. During the feast of Pentecost, in 1998, the Pope asked representatives of all the renewal movements of the Church to join with him to celebrate this feast. Over 500,000 people from more than 50 different movements came. What the Pope did was to gather together the teaching of Scripture and Vatican II, on the charismatic gifts of the Spirit and proclaim them with urgency and passion.

He begins:

“The Church’s self-awareness (is) based on the certainty that Jesus Christ is alive, is working in the present and changes life...With the Second Vatican Council, the Comforter recently gave the Church...a renewed Pentecost, instilling a new and unforeseen dynamism.

Whenever the Spirit intervenes, he leaves people astonished. He brings about events of amazing newness; he radically changes persons and history. This was the unforgettable experience of the Second Vatican Ecu-

much of the break time during conferences at which Ralph, Peter and Sr. Ann speak is devoted to meeting people and signing books. All of us agree that it is a privilege to be able to personally thank people who support the work of Renewal Ministries and are interested in our message.
Dear Fellow Disciples

menical Council during which, under the guidance of the same Spirit, the Church rediscovered the charismatic dimension as one of her constitutive elements: ‘It is not only through the sacraments and the ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the people, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills (cf. 1 Cor 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank...He makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church’ (Lumen gentium, n.12).”

With these words Pope John Paul II honestly acknowledged what many theologians, Scripture scholars and Church historians had demonstrated in their studies, that the charismatic workings of the Holy Spirit are an essential and complementary reality to the working of the Spirit in the sacramental and hierarchical dimensions of the Church’s existence. The Pope also honestly acknowledged that the charismatic dimension, important as it was, was nevertheless in a way forgotten, or overshadowed by perhaps a too exclusive emphasis on the sacramental and hierarchical, and it required a special action of the Holy Spirit in the Second Vatican Council to bring the Church back to an awareness of the importance of this “constitutive” dimension.

The Pope in his speech went on to make this explicit: “The institutional and charismatic aspects are co-essential as it were to the Church’s constitution. They contribute, although differently, to the life, renewal and sanctification of God’s People. It is from this providential rediscovery of the Church’s charismatic dimension that before and after the Council, a remarkable pattern of growth has been established for ecclesial movements and new communities...You present here, are the tangible proof of this ‘outpouring’ of the Spirit.”

Benedict XVI in one of the first initiatives of his pontificate convened a similar gathering of the movements in the Church in 2006 and reaffirmed the teaching of John Paul II, quoting his remarks on this occasion.

John Paul II, as does Benedict XVI, cites the foundational document of Vatican II, the Constitution on the Church, 12 (Lumen gentium) as the basis for this teaching. The background to this particular text is of significance. There was a debate among the Council fathers about whether the Church still needed the “charismatic dimension” and in particular, the charismatic gifts today, or whether they were intended just for the early Church to help her get established. Some argued that these workings of the Spirit were needed to help get the Church going but now that we had sacraments and hierarchy they were no longer necessary. This argument did not carry the day, as there is no basis in Scripture for believing that this important dimension is only needed for a while. In fact the Scripture witnesses to just the opposite; the charismatic gifts are an important accompaniment to the preaching of the gospel and the health of the internal life of the Church. The Council fathers voted overwhelmingly to affirm this truth and accept the text that John Paul II cites.

This Conciliar affirmation of the importance of the charismatic dimension was a way of affirming a dynamic vision of lay participation in the life of the Church and is closely linked to
the important affirmations of the “universal call to holiness” and the “universal call to mission.”

**Biblical Foundations**

While John Paul II quoted the Council text as a basis for his teaching, the Council text itself cites the Bible as the foundation of its teaching in 1 Cor. 12:11:

“But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.”

The “all of these” that this text references are mentioned in the previous verses:

“Now in regard to spiritual gifts (charisms), brothers, I do not want you to be unaware...To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues.” (1 Cor. 12:1, 7–10)

But this isn’t the only list of charisms that we find in the New Testament. There are also lists in, 1 Peter 4, Ephesians 4, and Romans 12.

“For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.” (Rom 12:4–13)

In this text, as in the 1 Cor. 12 text the context for the explanation of the charisms is in understanding the Church as a “body” with different members, all playing different roles, all essential for the overall well being of the body. Sometimes the statement is made that Paul clearly says that love is more important than the charisms, and that is certainly true. The beautiful hymn to love in 1 Cor. 13 is sandwiched between two chapters that contain important teaching on the charisms. But Paul is not presenting a “cafeteria approach to Christianity.” He isn’t pitting charisms and charity against each other. As a matter of fact, he sees the acceptance and exercise of spiritual gifts as, precisely, an important way of loving. He summarizes his teaching like this: “Pursue love, but strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” (1 Cor. 14:1) It’s not a matter of either or, but both and. Love is certainly primary—more important than charisms if you will—but the charisms are given by the Spirit to help us to love and serve in specific ways that are important for the well being of the Church. Paul’s advice is to ‘make love our aim’ and to eagerly pursue the spiritual gifts.”

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Several times a year Ralph travels to Omaha to collaborate with the work of the Institute for Priestly Formation which is dedicated to helping seminarians and priests develop a deeper relationship with the Lord. On a recent trip Ralph met with the leadership team of the IPF. (l to r) Fr. Richard Gabuzda, Deacon James Keating, Fr. John Horn, S.J., Ralph, Kathleen Kanavy.
Church. Paul’s advice is to “make love our aim” and to eagerly pursue the spiritual gifts.

We see the same harmony between love, holiness and the faithful exercise of charisms in the passage from Romans cited above. Charisms aren’t isolated gifts but are interwoven with the life of love, service, and mission which characterizes the very nature of the Church. This is why John Paul II calls the charismatic dimension and the institutional dimension “co-essential” to the Church’s constitution. It’s not either sacraments and hierarchy or charisms; it’s both. Both are essential to the healthy function of Church life and when these elements are not in right relationship with each other the Church is weakened.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reflects the Biblical, Conciliar and Papal teaching in its numerous mentions of charisms.

“Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men and to the needs of the world.” (CCC 799)

“Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them, and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms.” (CCC 800)

Next month I will conclude these reflections. In the meantime the complete article will be posted at: www.renewalministries.net.

Thanks for all you do to help this amazing work of the Spirit continue!

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.
Catholic Way Bible Study (CWBS) provides a wide selection of bible studies suitable for parish, small group, or individual study. The studies break open the richness of God’s Word using patristic and modern critical sources and apply the Word to our daily lives. Each CWBS bible study package contains all materials needed for organizing and implementing a bible study in an easy to use format, including: DVD or CDs of all lectures presented by Lavinia Spirito, a data CD containing weekly homework questions, vocabulary sheets and administrative set up materials useful for parish or large group settings.

- Current studies include: Genesis, Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), Luke, Acts, and Romans
- For more information or to order go to www.cwbs.org.

The Come and See Catholic Bible Study, designed for individual or group use, offers an integrated approach to studying the Scripture with references to the Catechism, the saints, and the early Church Fathers. Co-authored by Laurie Manhardt, PhD, Fr. Joseph Ponessa, SSD, Fr. Jan Liesen, SSD, and Monsignor Jan Majernik, STD, the informative commentary and thoughtful questions are intended to deepen the faith and expand the knowledge of participants.

- Available studies include: The Gospel of John, Genesis, Apostles and Prophets, The Synoptics, and David and the Psalms
- Videos in VHS or DVD format expand, enhance, and deepen each study with additional commentary by the authors, classic Christian art, and photographs of historic Holy Land sites.
- *Come and See Kids* includes bible stories, traditional Catholic prayers, coloring pages, and easy crafts that introduce children ages 3–7 to the richness of Scripture.
- For more information or to order go to www.renewalministries.net or www.catholicbiblestudy.net.

The Simon Peter School Scripture Study Series, written by Tamara Woell, offers *A-Z Memory Verses* for children. This hands-on study introduces 3rd-5th graders to the Bible in a fun and interactive way! With 26 lessons, students will gain a basic understanding of the Bible and learn techniques for memorizing Scripture. Each lesson also includes a picture to color and activity page. The Simon Peter School Scripture Study Series is easy to teach and to learn! Four essential elements make this series so effective: daily personal quiet time and bible study, group sessions, family involvement, and prayer. Also available for children:

- *The A-Z Memory Verse CD*, by Lynn Cooper, sets each verse to music for even easier memorization!
- To order Student Books and Teacher Manuals from the Simon Peter School Scripture Study Series call: Living His Life Abundantly, 1-800-558-5452 or go to www.lhla.org and shop online!

### Please Pray…

+ for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit to renew and empower believers for holiness and the proclamation of the Gospel.
+ for the upcoming Renewal Ministries’ Schools of Spirituality, Evangelization, and Bible Study. May every participant have a genuine and fruitful encounter with the Lord Jesus and His Truth.
+ 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 Mexico

I am a Spanish teacher at Father Gabriel Richard High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Four years ago our school began a partnership with Renewal Ministries to take students in upper level Spanish on a week long mission trip to Mexico City. Not only has the number of students wanting to go on this trip increased tremendously, but so has the support of our entire school community. Every year the amount of donations grow. This year we received an abundance of clothes, toys, shoes, toiletries, and money. For more than ten years, our school has hosted a food fast during Lent; the proceeds have gone to feed the hungry around the world through Catholic Relief Services. However, this year the students wanted all the proceeds to go to the orphanage we visit during the mission trip. Over 130 students participated in this year’s food fast—they solicited sponsors, fasted and prayed together for 30 hours, and together they raised more than $7,000 dollars!

The Divine Providence orphanage is run by Mother Inez, an 84 year old Dominican nun. She has about 233 children under her constant care and protection. She told me stories of how these kids have come to live there—some were left outside her door, others she found abandoned under bridges around the city at night, and still others were homeless, living in the streets. Many of these children were abandoned because they were born with severe deformities and/or mental disabilities. Every time we visit the orphanage we are touched deeply by the amazing faith, zeal, love, and trust that Mother Inez has in God. The Mexican government provides no financial backing to run her orphanage. She says it is through daily prayer and Divine Providence (hence the name) that she receives donations of food, medicine, clothes, and money. In the presence of this woman you know that you are with a very holy person! I almost think of her as the Mother Teresa of Mexico. When we arrive, Mother Inez literally welcomes us with open, outstretched arms. While we are there we interact with the kids by sitting and coloring with them, playing games, singing and praying over them. We usually cry when it’s time to leave and we promise to return and they promise to wait for us!

We also serve the people who live in the Neza garbage dump right outside Mexico City. Here people make their living by sorting through the trash of one of the most populated cities in the world. At the end of the day they might earn the equivalent of one U.S. dollar for their back breaking twelve hour work day. Every time we go, we never quite know what to expect. Will we be turned away at the gate? If we are allowed to enter, how many people will show up?

Our first day in the dump a handful of people approached our simple tent, erected in a small clearing amidst the garbage and we were able to offer them basic medical care, clothing and toiletries, food, and participation in the Mass. Before we left for the day, we walked among the mounds of garbage, extending a personal invitation to those working—fathers, mothers, and children to come tomorrow to be fed and cared for, both physically and spiritually.

That evening when we left the dump we went to Sam’s Club, and in faith we purchased almost $2,000 dollars worth of food and made a care package for each family we hoped would come the next day.
fully waiting for food packages, clothing, and medical care. We had never served so many people in the Neza Dump! We also fed them lunch—a ham sandwich, an orange, and a cup of juice, with enough left over for seconds! Not every person could come and stand in line so we walked deeper into the garbage where others were working, and gave them sandwiches too. I will never forget this experience and this feeling; it was as if Jesus was using my hands to feed His people! I did not want this moment to end. I was so full of joy, a joy I had never experienced before. As I reflect back, I know it was the joy of doing God’s will, of saying Yes to Him, and of loving the least of His people unconditionally, the way He loves each and every one of us despite our weaknesses.

Again, when it was time to leave the dump many of us were crying. One of the students explained her own emotions in leaving, “Being here is a way that God wants to empty us so that He can allow us to experience a little of the pain and suffering His people there experience every day of their lives.”

The third place we serve is at a residential home for elderly men. Interestingly, this is where many of the students say they have the easiest time communicating with the people. It might be because Carlos, one of the residents, speaks perfect English. Carlos was a chemical engineer who had worked in Canada for four years and learned English. The students have come to see him like a grandfather. Many of the men in this nursing home feel very lonely because they have been left there by their families and are never visited. When we arrived, one of the men came up to me and asked when we were leaving. I said, “In about three or four hours.” I then asked, “Why, do you want us to leave now?” To this he responded, “No, I just wanted to know how long you would be staying here because when you all leave I get very sad.” These men look forward and cherish the time we spend with them. Fr. Manuel and members of his parish community in Mexico City joined us to celebrate Mass with the residents. Afterwards, we visited and prayed over them, distributed rosaries, toiletries and clothing. As we left Carlos hugged every one of us. It was as if God Himself was embracing us and saying, “Well done my good and faithful servants!”

Our last hours there were a time of sharing and reflection. It is always very rewarding and refreshing for me to hear from the students and how this week will forever change their lives. Many talked about the numerous ways they experienced the presence of God as never before, how they faced some spiritual warfare but through prayer were able to overcome it, how they are so blessed back home but have taken many things for granted, and about their burning desire to return to Mexico and serve these people.

However, what I love to hear and see most is how the students are able to make a connection between the mission trip and their lives back home. One student reminded everyone that the ways they loved, served, and ministered unconditionally cannot end in Mexico City. He encouraged all of his peers to bring it back to their families, to their circle of friends, and even to the hallways of their school. It is great to hear that these young people want to let their lights shine brightly for Christ. This, I believe, is what a spring break trip should do for young people and this is why I am thankful our school has created this partnership with Renewal Ministries.

May we continue to do many more mission trips, all for the Glory of God! +

Our second day in the dump, almost 200 people who work and live there, (our largest crowd ever!), stood in line to receive medical care, clothing, care packages, and a simple meal.

I know it was the joy of doing God’s will, of saying Yes to Him, and of loving the least of His people unconditionally, the way He loves each and every one of us despite our weaknesses.
## On the Road

May the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Pentecost help you to clarify what is ambiguous, to give warmth to what is indifferent, to enlighten what is obscure, to be before the world true and generous witnesses of Christ’s love, for no one can live without love.

— Pope John Paul II

### June 2008

**Loretto, PA**  
Men’s Conference at St. Francis University  
*June 7*  
Peter Herbeck  
Contact: thomas.l.deskevich@ic-access.com or www.thecallpa.org

**Reno, NV**  
Catholic Business Professionals Breakfast  
*June 12*  
Peter Herbeck  
Contact: www.catholicprofessionals.org

**Plymouth, MI**  
Renewal Ministries School of Spirituality  
*June 20–22*  
Ralph Martin, Sr. Ann Shields  
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

**St. Paul, MN**  
Renewal Ministries School of Evangelization  
*June 25–29*  
Peter Herbeck, Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw  
Contact jsherwood@renewalministries.net or deaconmike@core-ministries.org

**Manassas, VA, All Saints Parish Renewal**  
*June 27–28*  
Ralph Martin  
Contact Parish office, 703-368-4500 or Jean Mossiman at 703-743-1430

### July 2008

**Hong Kong and China Mission**  
*July 2–15*  
Tom Edwards, Sr. Ann Shields, Sr. Sarah Burdick

**Yankton, SD**  
Yahweh Shalom Prayer Group Retreat  
*July 18–19*  
Ralph Martin  
Contact Jane Barz: cottonwoodfrm@santel.net

**Plymouth, MI, Renewal Ministries School of Catholic Bible Study**  
*July 24–27*  
Debbie Herbeck, Laurie Manhardt, Fr. Jan Liesen, Fr. Joseph Ponessa, Lavinia Spirito

**Peoria, IL**  
Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference  
*July 25–27*  
Peter Herbeck  
Contact: lakehausl@verizon.net

### Email Us Your Ideas!

We are in the process of updating our website—[www.renewalministries.net](http://www.renewalministries.net)—to serve you better and get the Word out more effectively. If you have ideas, comments, suggestions please email Craig at cpohl@renewalministries.net.