Dear Partners in Evangelization,

May His name be praised, and you be blessed!

Each year we have a “Gathering” for those who support the work of Renewal Ministries by praying for us, giving financially, or participating in mission trips. It is held at a beautiful retreat center about 20 minutes from Ann Arbor. This year we had over 200 of you with us and I would have to say it was perhaps our most blessed time yet. (If you haven’t had the chance to attend one I’d strongly encourage you to put next year’s dates in your calendar: May 29-31, 2009).

There were a few things that were particularly special about this year’s gathering. We have worked closely with Cardinal Peter Turkson of Cape Coast, Ghana for a number of years and it was a joy for him to be with us for the whole weekend. He gave an inspiring talk on Hope, and a wonderful homily, but perhaps most inspiring of all was his loving and humble presence with us. During the Saturday evening prayer meeting he knelt down as we prayed with him and our other guests from Ghana, asking God’s blessing, and our prayers, for the Church in Ghana. He had to return to Ghana the day after the Gathering at the request of the President of Ghana to help make peace in the northern part of the country where strife is breaking out.

It was an unexpected joy also to be able to welcome Cardinal Adam Maida, the Archbishop of Detroit. He very graciously came out to the retreat center (which is in the Archdiocese of Detroit) to visit with Cardinal Turkson and while there extended a warm welcome and some very encouraging words to all of us gathered there. He also graciously offered Cardinal Turkson scholarships for any priests from Ghana who the Cardinal would recommend to do their studies in the evangelization programs at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit.

...perhaps most inspiring of all was his loving and humble presence with us. During the Saturday evening prayer meeting he knelt down as we prayed with him and our other guests from Ghana, asking God’s blessing, and our prayers, for the Church in Ghana.
Dear Partners...

...it was even more inspiring to hear first hand from these holy priests how much the Lord has done for them personally and how much he is now doing for many hundreds in Istanbul.

During the Saturday evening prayer meeting at the Gathering we had the privilege of praying over Cardinal Turkson and our other guests from Ghana. Like all of you, these dear brothers are also part of the Renewal Ministries “family”.

studies in the evangelization programs that I am involved with at the Detroit seminary. It was almost like the worlds of the seminary and of Renewal Ministries, of Michigan and of Ghana were coming together! Of course, they are together in the eyes of the Lord, as one Spirit is at work in them all.

Another special highlight of the Gathering was the great privilege of having with us two Armenian Orthodox priests from Istanbul, Turkey, who have become very connected to some of our Renewal Ministries missionaries over the past several years. It has been amazing to see how much the Lord has done in Turkey, from our first visit there in 1999 with just three of us, to the present. You’ve read previously in our newsletter about the work in Turkey but it was even more inspiring to hear first hand from these holy priests how much the Lord has done for them personally and how much he is now doing for many hundreds in Istanbul. There are great dangers and much opposition that is being encountered, so let’s pray for this special work of God and these dear priests and their people.

Besides that there were the “ordinary” wonderful blessings of seeing each other from all over the world and renewing friendships or making new friends who share with us a common commitment to our dear Lord Jesus.

There were the inspiring workshops and talks, the opportunity to give and receive prayer, the meal time conversations where the wonderful works of the Lord were told and celebrated and we got to know each other better or “caught up.”

There really is a Renewal Ministries “family”, whether we have met each other in person or not, linked together all over the world, in this work to which He has called us.

The pressure to no longer “speak the truth in love” is increasing all over the world. A brave Christian Pastor in Alberta, Canada has just been fined $7,000 and told not to communicate the truth of God’s Word concerning homosexual behavior publicly, and not to criticize the “gay indoctrination” that is pervasive in Alberta schools. The President of Brazil just warmly welcomed an international homosexual congress and vowed to enact into law “homosexual unions” and to eradicate the “perverse disease” of opposition to homosexuality.

We just got an email from a pro-life advocate in Canada saying how much they have been strengthened by Peter Herbeck’s valuable teachings in this area. Peter’s talk outlines are posted on our website. If you click on the link Free Resources at the top of our home page (www.renewalministries.net) you can find these talk outlines by scrolling down to Peter Herbeck’s name. The CD version of these talks is entitled Why Not Same-Sex Marriage and it is available for sale by clicking on the Bookstore link. God’s Word keeps going out in so many ways.

“I travel approximately 50 miles to work as a firefighter in the Northwest and always listen to Peter Herbeck and Sr. Ann Shields on KBVM in Portland, Oregon. And now that you podcast the programs through your website I can always catch up if I miss one. Thank you!”

“You were my table leader at the Cursillo held in Brooklyn when you were a student at Princeton in the 60’s. I just wanted you to know that I’m still persevering!” (A University Professor in New York)

And news just in that Sr. Ann Shields’ radio program is now available in the Philippines!

“I went to my eye doctor today and she showed me a book that was highly recommended to her by her friend. It was yours,
“The Fulfillment of All Desire has impacted me so much I am now reading it for the second time. I recommend it wherever I go. This book is going to have a massive impact on the Catholic Church. It is just what we need. There is a tremendous hunger for this teaching.” (A man in England)

“I saw your book mentioned on an EWTN program and got a copy for myself and one of my daughters for her birthday. She is a practicing Catholic with three children but reading your book for her was like a ‘conversion experience’. We both are loving the book and telling our friends about it. Thank you.” (A woman from England)

“I regularly watch The Choices We Face through the internet. There is so much junk on television this is a breath of fresh air. I call the program now: The Faces I Choose!” (A priest in Holland)

“What a delight to find Fr. George Kosicki’s books posted on your website!” (A priest in Morocco)

“I want to say thanks again for helping us out last September with our Parish Spiritual Festival. We are still reaping some of the fruits. Our young people are being touched by the Lord, especially through Eucharistic Adoration. And men’s and women’s groups have formed as well. Praise the Lord!” (A priest in Michigan)

From Dave Nodar at Christlife (www.christlife.org): “Thank you for having me on your TV program. It has been really quite amazing to see the number of responses we received as a result of it, both here in the States as well as from other countries.”

And an email I received today…

“I just want to say thank you for being a beacon of hope for so many people. Back in 1991 my mom was in the midst of a deep depression. She is a devout Catholic and even spent a year in a convent discerning if she was called to be a nun. But she had almost lost even her faith. She started flipping through the channels and found The Choices We Face. She heard about a deeper relationship with Jesus, and she started to feel hope again. She got the name and address of a prayer meeting and she went sometimes and we also watched your show. Things started to change in my mom. Also my life had begun to change as well, and I moved back home. I could see good changes happening in her, and she asked me to go with her, and I agreed to go once. Within a year we had both been baptized in the Holy Spirit, and were radically changed. I also went to a powerful conference here in Calgary that Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck were leading. I received some messages that weekend that I see the fruits of to this day. We are still involved in our community; in fact I am now one of the leaders of the same prayer group. I just wanted you to know that your show DOES make a difference in a lot of lives.” (A woman from Calgary)

The Lord is truly with us, with all of us. Thank you for all you do to make this mission possible.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

Fr. Durtad (right) and Monsignor Zakeos from Istanbul, Turkey, shown here during a time of worship at the Gathering, shared their personal stories of being touched by the power of the Holy Spirit. Many of us were moved to tears as they related the miraculous ways the Lord is at work in both the Catholic and Armenian Churches in Turkey.
From the Heart

Light in the Darkness

Over the last few weeks I have had some marvelous opportunities to gather with brothers and sisters for worship and intercession. Some common threads have emerged and I would like to share them with you for your own prayer and reflection.

The first “thread” was our own Renewal Ministries’ Gathering which occurred in early June. Two words from the Lord were significant. First, in summary was this: “Listen you nations of the earth, listen you people who inhabit the nations. Listen to my voice. I reprove the nations who flaunt my word, who negate my commandments, who oppress the poor and murder the righteous…My voice thunders across the lands…I will judge the nations and bring down the proud and haughty…I look for a people who will remain faithful, holding fast to my word…Stand fast and remain firm even though you see the lands shudder and nations crumble…I call now to each one of you…Listen…place all your trust in Me.”

The second thread at the same Gathering: “I call you to martyrdom. For some, it will be a martyrdom of the flesh, the loss of life itself. For others, it will be a martyrdom of silent suffering as you join with my cross. Do not be afraid. I call you into my glory; into intimacy with me. I AM! I am with you always. I will bring forth a bountiful harvest—as you willingly die, die to self, die to your agenda, die to all, that I might breathe new life into you, that I may flow through you in power that will shatter the darkness and bring many souls into my kingdom. I love you, my precious ones. Be a living sacrifice. Be a living sacrifice unto my Heart! I call you by name. I send you—GO! I AM with you.”

Later in June, I was asked to speak at the Charismatic Conference held at Franciscan University in Steubenville, OH. There the third thread began to emerge. At that conference through a number of speakers the Lord urged us to say “Yes” to Him, to say no, a resounding “No”, to sin and selfishness. The Lord has called us to generosity and promised us the power of His Holy Spirit through many years of conferences, retreats and prayer meetings. Yet, we are often content to stay in our own sinful habits. The world around us is getting more immersed in patterns of sin that lead to violence, hopelessness, anger and fear. When are we going to say “Yes” to Him that we might be the Light he calls us to be in the growing darkness?

The fourth thread became evident at the annual conference for priests, seminarians and deacons at Franciscan University. Especially through Father Francis Martin, those attending were challenged to take up more strongly
As that conference ended a young priest from Nigeria came to me, asking for prayer. He told me, “I live in a heavily populated Muslim area and four attempts have been made on my life. Unless God wishes otherwise, I believe I will be martyred soon. Pray for me and for all of us that we may be faithful!” A young priest from the U.S. was standing close by and heard this priest’s prayer request. “What am I complaining about?” he said to me, shaking his head. It is true—in North America we have been so blessed because we have not yet had to face the level of violence and poverty and starvation that many of our brothers and sisters have to face daily in so many parts of the world. Yes, we have had disasters here and in floods and tornados. But even then, as awful as they can be, and as unprepared as we are to deal with them, there are still people to help and an infrastructure to provide help for rebuilding. What about our brothers and sisters in different parts of the world who have nothing...no home, no job, no way to help their children dying of starvation?

It seems clear to me that God is calling us to respond to the Lord NOW, to deal with sin, and reform our lives where that is needed. In other words, let us grow strong in the Lord so that we who have been given so much may not be lulled into complacency and indifference but rather be strengthened to be a spiritual light of virtue and hope and encouragement for those who live right now in the darkness of sin, or despair or destitution.

“He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

May each of us be able, in our own personal circumstances, to say “No” to sin and “Yes” to deeper life in Him!

“...I live in a heavily populated Muslim area and four attempts have been made on my life. Unless God wishes otherwise, I believe I will be martyred soon. Pray for me and for all of us that we may be faithful!”
Our small team, pictured here with Fr. Artur and Fr. Tomas, led a parish mission in the ancient church in Fulnek. Fr. Artur has already invited us back for a follow-up visit! (l to r: translator Jirina Mullerova, Margaret MacDonald of Nova Scotia, Canada, Mary Shaw of Gainsville, Florida, and Tom Edwards.)

Suddenly the train came to a dead stop in the middle of nowhere. A delay of forty-five minutes was filled with lively conversation in response to Peter’s many questions about God and religion. Mary Shaw presented Peter with a card containing a prayer for salvation. We asked Peter if he wanted us to pray with him right then and without hesitation he agreed. As we prayed, the Holy Spirit filled Peter with a tangible manifestation of his presence and heat filled his body. We rejoiced in Peter’s decision to follow Christ, but he was now concerned that the long delay would cause him to miss his important business appointment. We uttered a quick prayer that he would not be late and as we pronounced “amen” the train began to roll. Peter was shocked! Since our meeting, Bara Zajcaova, a young lady who has been a participant in three of our discipleship events in the past two years has established some contact with this new Christian and will present him with a Bible and follow up with information about fellowship.

Our visit to Ostrava marked the fourth time a Renewal Ministries team had presented a mission at Immaculate Conception parish, pastored by Fr. Bogdan Stepian, a missionary priest from Poland. We began on Saturday evening with limited attendance, however by the third evening the word was out that good things were happening at the church and the third evening the word was out that good things were happening at the church and on the final night, the church was full. Each evening service lasted 3 to 4 hours with prayer ministry. The weather was wet, cold, and windy and the old church with no provision for heat was like a refrigerator. The ministry was physically grueling for both the team members and the translators who despite wearing several layers of clothing were often left shivering with cold and aching bones.

On the fourth night of the mission a memorial mass was offered for unborn babies—

Witness

Mission to Czech Republic

According to Bishop Frantisek Radkowsky, less than 7% of those counted as Catholic in his diocese of Pilsen, would be in any way active in their faith. We began our month long mission in this university town of Pilsen, the fourth largest city in the Czech Republic. Our Discipleship School was held at the same Dominican church where we conducted a one night event last year at the invitation of Fr. Jan Rajlich, a pastor who has a heart for evangelization. The Lord really blessed our efforts through the one night of ministry last year, so Fr. Jan eagerly promoted a four day event this year. Our selected topics for the Discipleship School included Amazing Love, The Power of Forgiveness, The Grace of Salvation, The Power of the Word, Persevering Prayer, A Touch of Love, Faith that Pleases God, Walking in Holiness, and Baptism in the Spirit.

The church itself was big, dark and very cold at night. The room comfortably seated 50 and even on the first night, we had an overflow crowd with people from all areas of the city. Each evening brought more people with many standing down the hallway straining to hear the teachings. We marveled at the hunger and commitment of an elderly woman who returned to her village each night on the 10:45 train. She then made a connection with another train and after she disembarked, she walked three kilometers through the forest to her village.

The final night of the Discipleship School was dedicated to teaching on the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, followed by empowerment prayer. Eighty-five people were filled with the Spirit and entered a period of sustained praise and worship.

On Friday our train journey from Pilsen to Ostrava took most of the day and the train was packed with businessmen and students. As we transferred trains in Prague we squeezed into a compartment with our abundance of luggage and a young businessman. This encounter was soon revealed as a “divine appointment” with a young man named Peter, who spent two years in California training as a financial consultant and was fluent in English. As the conversation unfolded Peter was full of questions and he marveled that we came to the Czech Republic to tell others about God. It seems that while in California he was befriended by his landlord who often fed him and talked to him about God. His appetite was thoroughly whetted and he was all ears as we shared our personal experiences with Jesus. However, he was scheduled for a business meeting and needed to disembark the train very soon. Suddenly the train came to a dead stop in the middle of nowhere. A delay of forty-five minutes was filled with lively conversation in response to Peter’s many questions about God and religion. Mary Shaw presented Peter with a card containing a prayer for salvation. We asked Peter if he wanted us to pray with him right then and without hesitation he agreed. As we prayed, the Holy Spirit filled Peter with a tangible manifestation of his presence and heat filled his body. We rejoiced in Peter’s decision to follow Christ, but he was now concerned that the long delay would cause him to miss his important business appointment. We uttered a quick prayer that he would not be late and as we pronounced “amen” the train began to roll. Peter was shocked! Since our meeting, Bara Zajcaova, a young lady who has been a participant in three of our discipleship events in the past two years has established some contact with this new Christian and will present him with a Bible and follow up with information about fellowship.

Our visit to Ostrava marked the fourth time a Renewal Ministries team had presented a mission at Immaculate Conception parish, pastored by Fr. Bogdan Stepian, a missionary priest from Poland. We began on Saturday evening with limited attendance, however by the third evening the word was out that good things were happening at the church and on the final night, the church was full. Each evening service lasted 3 to 4 hours with prayer ministry. The weather was wet, cold, and windy and the old church with no provision for heat was like a refrigerator. The ministry was physically grueling for both the team members and the translators who despite wearing several layers of clothing were often left shivering with cold and aching bones.

On the fourth night of the mission a memorial mass was offered for unborn babies—
those miscarried, aborted, or still-born. A special book was on hand for people to name the lost babies and a candle was lit for each one. The response was overwhelming and a great surprise to Fr. Bogdan. People came from around the region; one hundred and twenty names were recorded in the book, and the book and the candles were placed on the altar as the liturgy proceeded. This ushered in a powerful move of the Holy Spirit which continued to flow as we moved into healing prayer. People throughout the church were sobbing; apparently this service was a healing ointment for many who had been carrying pent-up pain and grief for years.

Our third week of mission took us to the village of Fulnek where our team had presented a parish mission in the Spring of 2007. Fr. Artur prepared the parish for our visit and bused in the villagers from surrounding churches each night. He arranged a full schedule and even compiled a list of people to be scheduled for private prayer ministry during the days. Over the next few days we conducted nightly sessions followed by prayer ministry and then a time of fellowship in the parish hall. Arrangements were made for a Memorial Mass for unborn babies, a Generational Healing Mass, several teaching sessions, as well as special ministry sessions with the very vibrant “young adult” group, youth, elderly, moms & children, and more. Our small team and translators were stretched but the Lord enabled us to meet the challenge.

Once again the response to the liturgy for unborn babies far surpassed expectations. One hundred sixty eight babies were named and a candle was lit for each. The generational healing mass filled the ancient church. We had learned on our former visit that many people in this area feel that their town and families are under a curse because of the actions taken by the Czech government after World War II. Many German families who had lived in the town for generations were unmercifully uprooted and driven out of the country. The special liturgy contained prayers targeted toward the healing of those painful times. Fr. Artur was very pleased with the mission and has great expectations for the continued renewal of his parish. Thanks be to God who continues to open doors of service and bless our small efforts at building up the Kingdom in this part of the world.

Conducting our fourth parish mission at Immaculate Conception parish in Ostrava, we were able to see the fruit of our labors. More young people have brought new life to the parish through music and youth ministry and while in Ostrava we had the opportunity to share our faith with high school English students.

 Please Pray…

+ for the continued work of evangelization in Turkey and for the safety of all those laboring for the gospel there.
+ for Cardinal Peter Turkson and all our brothers and sisters in Ghana as they proclaim God’s word and bring renewal to the Church in Africa.
+ that God’s word would continue to bear fruit in all those who attended the Renewal Ministries Institute Schools this summer.
+ 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.
On the Road

There are very few people who realize what God would make of them if they abandoned themselves into his hands, and let themselves be formed by his grace.

St. Ignatius of Loyola

August 2008
Moncton, New Brunswick
Atlantic Renewal Conference
August 1–3
Ralph Martin
Contact: 902-667-7179 or asc@ccrsatlantic.ca

Mexico City Mission
August 3–9
Jim Murphy and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Tignish, Prince Edward Island, Canada, St. Simon and St. Jude Parish Evening of Renewal
August 5
Ralph Martin
Contact number: 902-854-2667

Summerside, Prince Edward Island
St. Paul Parish Evening of Renewal
August 6
Ralph Martin
Contact number: 902-854-2667

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
St. Dunstan’s Basilica Evening of Renewal
August 8
Ralph Martin
Contact number: 902-854-2667

Oceanside, CA, Catholic Men’s Fellowship
August 8–9
Peter Herbeck
Contact Jeff Blake at 949-212-0770 or geblake@cox.net

Royal Oak, MI
Young Adult Conference on Scripture
August 16
Debbie Herbeck
Contact: mccormickt@macomb.edu

Houma, Louisiana
Renewal Ministries School of Evangelization
August 21–24
Peter Herbeck, Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw
Contact Deacon Doug at doug@houma.com

September 2008
Cleveland, OH
Family Renewal Ministry Meeting
September 4
Peter Herbeck
Contact number: 440-667-9467

Toledo, OH
Magnificat Women’s Breakfast
September 6
Debra Herbeck
Contact Diane at 419-602-0627 or dudenho@aol.com

New Boston, MI
The Choices We Face Taping
September 9–11, 15–17
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck

Czestochowa, Poland, Conference
September 25–28
Ralph Martin
Contact Maria Kantor at: maria_kantor@hotmail.com or www.nowaewangelizacja.pl