Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Well, Praise the Lord. I’m home!

For those of you who have recently started getting our newsletter, I’ve been living and studying in Washington, DC since early January in order to complete a STL degree (a Licentiate in Sacred Theology), a degree granted by the Vatican which is a “license to teach” in Catholic institutions of higher education. Sacred Heart Major Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit where I teach part-time, asked me if I’d consider doing it and after prayer and consultation I said “yes.” It was one of the most challenging times of my life (I’ve had several, like most of us) but knowing it was God’s will helped me persevere. It was one of the most sustained times of constant study and writing that I’ve known but I think it will bear good fruit for the Kingdom. I wrote my thesis (170 pages) on the “culture of universalism” that is choking off evangelization and the truth of God’s Word and Church teaching. Many of you have heard me speak on this theme over the years but I think the Lord wanted me to do a more in-depth, scholarly treatment on this topic as a contribution to the wider Church. Please pray that it bear the fruit that I believe the Lord intends for it.

My wife Anne was very supportive during this time—and we did manage to see each other here and there over the months. It was a delight to be able to spend time with my two youngest daughters who are both married and living in the DC area with their husbands and three children among them. It was also good to be able to meet with various theologians and church leaders that I would not normally get a chance to visit with in Michigan.

I must say that the ‘Renewal Ministries family’ is pretty special and I get the definite sense that the whole network of us are continuing on in our walk with the Lord and, by His grace, will not stop until we see Him face to face.

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These are the Redemptorist priests, brothers and seminarians with whom Ralph lived for five months. It was just a short walk from Holy Redeemer College to the Dominican House of Studies where he did his studies.
Dear Brothers and Sisters, 

I would also like to thank the dedicated, competent staff of our “home office” in Ann Arbor who did such a fine job of carrying on with our mission during this time, although frequent email and cell-phone contact with occasional home visits made this a lot more possible than it used to be.

I continue to be amazed at the great generosity of all those who work with us through intercession, financial giving, and participation in actual missions. I must say that the “Renewal Ministries family” is pretty special and I get the definite sense that the whole network of us are continuing on in our walk with the Lord and, by His grace, will not stop until we see Him face to face.

I missed being in Toronto this past spring for our annual Lift Jesus Higher Rally but you can read about it in the article in this newsletter. During my time away I continued to get reports from our country coordinators “in the field” and sometimes I felt this great wave of gratitude to God and to these faithful men and women and those they minister to and with, in difficult circumstances around the world.

The three television programs we are involved with on EWTN continue to bear fruit, as well as the two radio programs. It’s also amazing to see that last month almost 5,000 distinct visitors from 89 countries visited our website! (www.renewalministries.net) They were from China, Kuwait, the Palestinian Territories, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, the Isle of Man, Mauritius, Vietnam, Hong Kong, the Solomon Islands, Serbia, Egypt, Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Russia, Sri Lanka, and many, many more. May the Lord continue to pour out His Holy Spirit on the whole world!

Financially, it’s hard to tell quite yet what’s really going on. At times it’s looked like there was a significant shortfall, at other times, like maybe it was evening out. We’ll keep you posted. But remember, your support is making so much fruitful work possible. It’s a privilege to be serving the Lord with you and with all the Renewal Ministries family.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin
The Gift of Generosity

By Pat Ferragamo

In the early 1990s the Lord began to draw us closer to Himself. Although my husband Carmine was a good provider and from a material standpoint we had everything we wanted, there seemed to be something deep within us that was missing. Through the ministry of the late Fr. Jim Ferry we realized that it was a personal relationship with God. We knew about God, we were even active in our church, but we didn’t know Him in an intimate way. As adults we learned that we needed to surrender our lives to God and invite Him into every area of our lives. So we did that, and knelt down to receive prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, asking for more of the Spirit and the gifts to serve the Lord and His Church better.

Early on we learned about what it meant to say that Jesus is the Lord of our lives. We began to ask ourselves if we would be comfortable if Jesus walked into each room and sat down with us? Was He the Lord of our appetites, our entertainment, our sexuality, and our finances? When we sat down to pay our bills or make our donations, did He get paid first? How generous were we in our finances? These questions really hit a chord within us because at that time, for the first time, we were self employed and struggling with our finances. We were having trouble paying our bills and we were eating pancakes four times a week just to make ends meet.

I went before the Lord and cried out to Him in my frustration, and I learned an important principle. It is through the everyday pressures of life that God forms and teaches us. After studying the Scriptures, I felt strongly that we should be tithing, even though it seemed like a crazy idea since we barely had enough money to put food on the table. My husband agreed to the principle of tithing—once we got our bills paid. Yet the Lord was stretching us beyond our own reason and understanding and moving us outside our comfort zone. Tithing was His way to teach us to trust Him and grow deeper in our faith. As we prayed about this we realized that tithing was not the goal to strive for but the biblical starting point in Christian financial giving. Yes, it had a promise attached to it, but exercising obedient faith was the primary reason for doing it.

Shortly after that Carmine was offered a job that seemed like a good opportunity, yet when he went before the Lord in prayer about it, he felt he was not to take the job but God would provide another way. God was also teaching us about how our time was also a tithe to Him. Learning to surrender in all areas of our life began to bear much fruit. We saw God providing for our financial needs; He was teaching us that we cannot outdo Him in generosity with our time, treasure, or talents.

After closing on some property sales, we now found ourselves debt free with extra cash. God began teaching us about living debt free and not spending more money than we made. Shortly after that other business offers began to come in and through hard work our financial situation turned around dramatically. We developed a Christian gift manufacturing business and worked in that for ten years until we heard the Lord tell us to simplify our lives and get ready. Through the pressures of life—ailing parents, and a two year discernment process, we put both our business and home on the market in an effort to simplify our life.

Within three months we had sold both and the Lord blessed our obedience to Him. We were able to be mentally and physically present to my dying parents, and we were then able to do mission trips with Renewal Ministries and financially support their work throughout the world.

In 2000 the Lord gave me a vision for a ministry to help others, and although we were not looking for it, we developed a home business which provided us with a sizeable income. This unexpected blessing enabled us to help grown children with financial needs, and instead of decreasing our tithe in retirement, we were able to give more. God is the greatest economist!

As we look back over these past 39 years we are so grateful for the ways the Lord has led us. By His grace we invited Him to be the Lord of our lives, we allowed the Church and the Scriptures to form us and stretch us. We sought His will for us through daily prayer and received from Him the desire to walk in obedience, and we made tithing a consistent part of our lives—no matter what the circumstances. When we write out our donation check it is a joy to give. In reality, it is God who owns it all.

When we sat down to pay our bills or make our donations, did He get paid first? How generous were we in our finances?

In August 2000, Carmine and Pat Ferragamo (on left) were part of a mission team to Slovakia and Poland.
From the Heart

God Speaks to Listening Hearts

As I write this article, I have just completed recording 4,000 radio programs for Food for the Journey. As I read through the many emails and letters I receive, I am struck by the infinite greatness of God’s grace which can work miracles in people’s hearts right there in their cars or kitchens or bedrooms or on their ipods. God does not need a world stage to be heard—only listening hearts that are open to truth.

So often I am inclined to think like the world—a 15 minute program is so small, so insignificant—what good can come from such a little voice in the midst of powerful, influential people? From dominating media voices, from voices that command the world’s attention? But God does not think as we do. His truth, His love, His grace can reach anyone, anywhere, anytime as long as they are open to hear. If we are obedient and plant the mustard seed of our lives and our talent, God will water and tend and harvest—far beyond what we could ask for or imagine.

Let me share with you some recent emails that show this miraculous work of grace in the hearts of many brothers and sisters—and in the hearts of those who perhaps have really heard the good news for the first time and responded with generosity (I have edited their comments to protect their privacy.)

“…you have helped me to open my heart, helped me to pray more and to ask God to take control of my life…In particular, in the last three weeks, it is like I am looking at the world through different eyes…thank you for helping prepare me to be receptive to the Lord’s call.”

“Thank you so much for the hope and inspiration you provide through your radio program Food for the Journey. I listen almost every morning on my way to daily Mass…you put me in the right frame of mind before I arrive for Mass. I have decided to start the process of becoming a deacon…it all started about five years ago when I decided to make drastic changes in my life to be the husband and father I needed to be and wanted to be…thank you for all your efforts and may our heavenly Father bless you eternally.”

“Thank you for your Food for the Journey series. I listen to it every morning on the way to work. They have had such an impact that I record it also so in case I miss it on the radio I can really absorb what you are saying. Your series has really helped me to become a better Catholic. I am a cradle Catholic but until listening to you and Father Corapi daily, I have never been so proud to be or to say ‘I am CATHOLIC.’”

“Your wisdom and insight on the living Word of God has carried me through many a day.”

“I just wanted to let you know that I love your show. In fact, it has become one of the anchors of my prayer life.”

“Your program airs just before the 7:00 am hour…you speak truth and edify God in all that you outline for your listeners. What joy it brings to my ears at a time in the day when the wheel of duty is quickly pulling my attention off the Lord and into the workload. Blessings on you along with my earnest prayer for God to continue to give you the spirit of revelation and truth…even us web designers need more of God. Hourly!”

“I can’t begin to measure the impact (your program) has had on my life.”

“I listen to Catholic radio most mornings on my way to work—particularly your 15 minute program. Several days ago, I was having

From the Heart

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“I can’t begin to measure the impact (your program) has had on my life.”

“I listen to Catholic radio most mornings on my way to work—particularly your 15 minute program. Several days ago, I was having
a difficult morning and was very down. I tuned into your program and you were talking, very passionately, about the mandate we have to forgive. That forgiveness is not optional and to whatever degree we forgive, we will be forgiven...you spoke of how even if the offense against us, by another, was great, we still have to forgive or could not rightly expect forgiveness from God for our own sins and offenses...there could be no vengeance or malice in our hearts. That moment (of truth) was a moment of grace and healing for me in a powerful way...God spoke to my heart that morning through you. It changed my heart and my attitude. I have been able to forgive...I still may carry some scars but the wounds are healing."

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It is wonderful, is it not, to read of God’s grace actively working in peoples’ hearts. It is wonderful, too, to see their response to those graces.

Many of you are working in ministries that are small, and may not be well known, but in heaven the harvest stories will be told of the seeds you planted, in kindness and compassion, in teaching and patient ministry, in service that leaves you wearied, in jails and soup kitchens, homes for the elderly, in schools and hospitals, in corporate offices, in families, in interces-
sory prayer, and in financial giving. All of your witness—by word and deed and the offering of your suffering—is touching people’s hearts and many are saying yes to God even when you are not aware. Be faithful and persevere for “they shall see his face and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light and they shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 22:4–5)

If you missed one of Sr. Ann’s radio shows, check out our archives at:

www.renewalministries.net/audio_clips_archive.php

Please Pray...

+ for all our international missions this summer to Tanzania, Slovenia, Zimbabwe, Mexico, Poland, France, Kenya, Ghana, and Samoa. May the name of Jesus be lifted up and may many know the joy and freedom of life in Christ.

+ that the Lord would continue to reach many people through the ministry of Catholic television and radio.

+ that the Lord will continue to provide the opportunities and the financial resources for the ongoing mission work of Renewal Ministries throughout the world.

+ for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

Thank you for your continued support through prayer as we labor together for the Gospel and the renewal of the Church.
Divine Mercy came in power to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on April 16, 2009 when more than 4,500 adults gathered for the seventeenth annual Lift Jesus Higher Rally. Crowds began gathering in the early morning hours and the adults were greeted with uplifting music led by Susan Hookong-Taylor and Ana Da Costa. The day began with a procession and crowning of Our Lady by the Heralds of the Gospel followed by the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. In the first talk, Peter Herbeck began by highlighting the triumph of the Lord’s victory over death. He talked about the weakened state of the Church in the world today and contrasted it with the Apostles, who had been full of fright until they beheld the glory of Christ and became fearless and unable to stop talking about Jesus. He challenged listeners in the words of Pope John Paul to be “total and radical” in their faith.

In the next talk, Catholic apologist Tim Staples immediately grabbed the audience’s attention by saying that too many Christians are “fat, dumb, happy, and spoiled” and that it is time to act as real Catholics. In the midst of chaos and confusion, there needs to be a grassroots renewal in Catholic pews among those who want “the real deal.” Tim challenged the crowd to make a radical commitment to Jesus and the teachings of the Catholic Church and to be faithful to the biblical Jesus, not the Jesus of popular culture.

In the afternoon session, Sr. Ann Shields invited people to take an inventory of their spiritual health by posing some challenging questions like: “What takes you away from the Lord? Do you know God as Father? Do you know Jesus as Redeemer, Savior, and Shepherd? Are you confident that He is your Advocate and Comforter? Is daily prayer with Scripture part of your life? If the Lord were coming tomorrow, what regret would you have? Do you regularly confess sin? Have you grown in faith, hope, and love? What do you really stand for?” Her final words reinforced the day’s theme of Divine Mercy: “We are all precious in God’s eyes. God forgives; God forgets. Trust Him will all your hearts for the grace for the next moment, no matter how heavy the burden.”

As the day drew to a close, Fr. Tom Rosica led a powerful Eucharistic Procession and Divine Mercy Hour followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass concelebrated by Archbishop Thomas Collins and Bishop Pearse Lacey, along with many other priests.

At the end of a day filled with God’s presence and power, more than 4,500 adults left the Toronto Convention Centre with renewed faith and vision for their lives as Catholics. After seventeen years, the Lift Jesus Higher Rally continues to be one of the largest annual conferences for Catholics in Canada. In cooperation with the grace of God, Paul and Dorle Kromer and their dedicated team of volunteers make this wonderful event possible each year.
By Debra Herbeck

Just getting 1500 youth out of bed on an early Saturday morning to worship God might be considered a miracle! The whole day was filled with God’s presence and grace as young people learned more about what it means to “Answer God’s Call” in their lives.

Those in attendance were buoyed by the Archbishop’s challenge to radiate the energy of God’s love to those around them and many left thankful for a day filled with enthusiasm for their life as Catholics and inspired to work hard for the coming of God’s Kingdom.

Youth Gather to Lift Jesus Higher

On an early Saturday morning when most teens aren’t even out of bed, let alone thinking about God, an enthusiastic and attentive crowd of 1500 youth gathered to worship, sing, listen, and learn more about their Catholic faith. The theme of the day was focused on “Answering God’s Call” and the message was presented to them through talks, skits, youth testimonies, and the lively music of the Mustard Seeds.

The day culminated with an opportunity for the youth to publically express their desire to commit their whole lives to Jesus. As a sign of this commitment, more than 800 young people came forward to place their names upon a large wooden cross and receive prayer for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This was followed by a time of Eucharistic Adoration, as the Lord walked among the youth bringing healing, blessing and a profound sense of his love and mercy. The day ended with the celebration of the Mass by Fr. Graham Keep who reminded the youth to allow the Holy Spirit to live in and through them as they walk through the challenges of daily life.

The youth session culminated with an opportunity for the young people to publically express their desire to commit their whole lives to Jesus. As a sign of this commitment, more than 800 young people came forward to place their names on the cross.

Our youth team from Renewal Ministries in Ann Arbor witnessed to the reality of God in their own lives through testimonies, skits, and talks. Helping facilitate the day for their Catholic peers in Canada also strengthened their own convictions and their desire to serve the Lord and his Church. (l to r: Kelsie Norton, Caitlin Anderson, Sarah Loveland, Ruth Dirkes, Debbie Herbeck, Rachel Herbeck, Pete Burak, Joey McCoy, Josh Herbeck, James Kresta, Craig Pohl)
On the Road

“On the Road
He will never permit anything to happen to us that is not for our greater good. He knows who we are and He will hold out His paternal hand to us during difficulties, so that nothing prevents us from running to Him swiftly.”

St. Padre Pio

July 2009
Mission to Tanzania
July 1–17
Tom Edwards and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Mission to Slovenia
July 8–13
Don and Pat Turbitt and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Mission to Zimbabwe
July 13–23
Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Steubenville, OH, Religious Sisters Conference
July 14–16
Ralph Martin
Contact: 1-800-437-8368 or www.franciscanconferences.com

Mission to Mexico City
July 19–25
Jim Murphy and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Lafayette, LA, Catholic Charismatic Renewal “Lighting the Way in the Darkness”
July 24–26
Peter Herbeck
Contact: Marilyn DeMahy at 337-265-3773 or Lafccr@bellsouth.net

Steubenville, OH, St. John Bosco Conference
July 25–26
Ralph Martin
Contact: 1-800-437-8368 or www.franciscanconferences.com

Mission to Poland
July 30–Aug 10
Don and Pat Turbitt and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

August 2009
Paray-le-Monial, France, Conference
August 1–6
Ralph Martin
Contact www.paray.org (French) or www.emmanuel.info (English)

Mission to Kenya
August 4–21
Peter Thompson and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Birmingham, AL, EWTN Family Conference
August 8–9
Peter Herbeck

Mission to Ghana
August 10–21
Brent Heiser and Team
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Seattle, WA, Catholic Charismatic Renewal Day of Reflection
August 15
Peter Herbeck
Contact Tammie at 206-364-2272 or www.wwccr.org

Portland, OR, KBVM Radio Event
August 16
Peter Herbeck
Contact Dina Marie Hale at 503-285-5200 or dmarie@kbvm.fm

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