Dear Faithful Friends,

A letter from Ralph Martin

This month I just want to share with you some of the many letters, emails, telephone calls and personal comments we receive from people touched by the ministry you make possible. Almost every month we report on the many people who are touched by our overseas mission work but this month I want to tell you about all those who are impacted through the TV and radio programs, books and CDs that are also an important part of the mission. It’s been a difficult year for the world and the Church, but Christ has been active and we have a lot to be grateful for in terms of the many thousands of lives touched.

“We at American Forces Network are so blessed to have Crossing the Goal in our arsenal. These challenges to men to become all that they can be in Christ are ‘on time, on target.’ The football game plans are timeless and biblical—completely relevant for young warriors facing daily struggles common to men.’

Renewal Ministries’ country coordinators gathered in Michigan this fall for three days of prayer, teaching, and planning for future mission endeavors. (Top row l to r) Deacon Steve Thomashefski, Peter Herbeck, Viktor Laszlo, Deacon Zoltán Kuniszabó, Dr. Peter Williamson, Don Turbitt, Peter Thompson. (Middle row l to r) Lucia Thomashefski, Ellen Holian Mykrantz (RM Board member), Brent Heiser, Pat Turbitt, Tom Edwards. (Bottom row l to r) Nancy Greenhaw, John Kazanjian, Lloyd Greenhaw, Bohus Zivcak.

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Dear Faithful Friends,

“We are sending a copy of Why Everyone Needs to be Baptized in the Spirit to the leaders of my order as they prepare for their General Chapter. What our order most needs is the Holy Spirit.”

“A Bishop in India”

I have been able to watch the EWTN series on your book The Fulfillment of All Desire and The Choices We Face online here in the Czech Republic. They are helping me on my journey to grow as a Catholic.”

“A man in the Czech Republic”

“I’ve never been able to come to your annual Gathering but I ordered the CDs from the last Gathering, I Am with you Always. I have already listened to Ralph’s talk three times today, Persevering through Trials, and I can’t tell you how much it has moved me. He has a great sense of humor, is so enthusiastic and yet simple, like one of us. And I’ve already started listening to Sr. Ann’s Bearing Fruit in Suffering and it’s moved me so much already. Thank you!”

“A woman in Canada”

“I was diagnosed with cervical cancer on April 6th. At the Lift Jesus Higher Rally as the monstrance with the Body of Christ passed by I touched Him! On April 28 I went to my female Moslem doctor and she told me I was healed and even asked me more about Jesus!”

“A woman in the Toronto area”

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“Thirty years ago I attended your FIRE Rally in Boston. Since then I have read all your books and listened to your CD albums on the teachings of the saints and have been greatly helped. I have been able to work for 25 years as a nurse/counselor working with drug and alcohol addicts. None of this would have been possible without your teachings and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now that I am retired I continue to help others as I have always done. Like so many others my retirement savings were lost in the economic crash and I can’t support Renewal Ministries like I did, but I will always be grateful for saving my eternal life and giving me the encouragement I needed to share it with others.”

“A woman in New England”

“During my lunch break, go to a park and listen to your program each day. I consider you one of the best teachers I have ever heard.”

“A woman in Oregon”

“The setting for these sessions has the wow factor to capture and hold the attention and interest of our troops. The game plans are timeless and biblical—completely relevant for young warriors facing daily struggles common to men.”

“A message from the American Armed Forces TV Network”

“I was diagnosed with cervical cancer on April 6th. At the Lift Jesus Higher Rally as the monstrance with the Body of Christ passed by I touched Him! On April 28 I went to my female Moslem doctor and she told me I was healed and even asked me more about Jesus!”

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“A woman in the Toronto area”
in the Purgative Way but have hopes of moving forward.” (A married man in Texas)

“I LOVE the book (Fulfillment of All Desire). I am trying to walk our Moms’ Group through it. I have dog-eared nearly every page and underlined every other sentence. Thank you so much.” (A Director of Religious Education in Michigan)

“I can say that I was not exaggerating when I told my brother that your talk was the best, most concise description of what following Jesus is, what it looks like, why we need it, etc. that I’ve ever heard. I think, most of the time that idea gets totally skipped over in most churches because we all get baptized as babies in the Catholic Church. I often ask myself, how is it that I attended church for 25 years and never got it?! I received the sacraments. I could even say I took my faith pretty seriously especially once I left college. But, in hindsight, I didn’t ‘get it’ until about 2 ½ years ago, Halloween 2006 to be exact, when after a night of heavy drinking, I finally surrendered my whole life (as best as I understood how at that point) to the Lord.” (Email to Peter from Men’s Conference)

It goes on and on. God is good. Thank you for all you do to make it possible for hundreds of thousands to be touched each year, including this most difficult of years. Please remember us as you think about your end of the year Christmas giving.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

Renewal Ministries is blessed to have a wonderful US Board of Directors who continue to help us in our mission of evangelization. (Left to right) Ellen Holian Mykrantz, Tom O’Brien, Nancy Timmis, Joe Brennan, Ralph Martin, Tim Patton, Bishop Sam Jacobs, Fr. Dave Pivonka, T.O.R., Laurie Manhardt, Deacon Dan Foley, and Bob Van Norden.

Please Pray...

+ that all those who attend church and gather with family during this holiday season would be drawn more deeply to God’s heart of love and mercy.

+ that the Lord will continue to touch many lives as the Gospel is proclaimed through all the various outreaches of Renewal Ministries.

+ 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.
Embracing the Heart of Advent

I would like to begin my article this month with a prayer by Abbot Columban; it expresses the very heart of Advent—the very disposition that our hearts need to embrace for the Holy Spirit to do His work!

How blessed, how fortunate, are those servants whom the Lord will find watchful when he comes. Blessed is the time of waiting when we stay awake for the Lord, the Creator of the universe, who fills all things and transcends all things.

How I would wish he would awaken me, his humble servant, from the sleep of slothfulness, even though I am of little worth. How I wish he would enkindle me with that fire of divine love. The flames of his love burn beyond the stars; the longing for his overwhelming delights and the divine fire ever burn within me!

How I wish I might deserve to have my lantern always burning at night in the temple of my Lord, to give light to all who enter the house of my God. Give me, I pray you, Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ your Son and my God, that love that does not fail so that my lantern, burning within me and giving light to others, may be always lighted and never extinguished.

Jesus, our most loving Savior, be pleased to light our lanterns, so that they may burn forever in your temple, receiving eternal light from you, the eternal light, to lighten our darkness and to ward off from us the darkness of the world.

Give your light to my lantern, I beg you, my Jesus, so that by its light I may see that the holy of holies which receives you as the eternal priest, entering among the columns of your great temple. May I ever see you only, look on you, long for you; may I gaze with love on you alone, and have my lantern shining and burning always in your presence.

Loving Savior, be pleased to show yourself to us who knock, so that in knowing you we may love only you, love you alone, desire you alone, contemplate only you day and night, and always think of you. Inspire in us the depth of love that is fitting for you to receive as God. So may your love pervade our whole being, possess us completely, and fill all our senses, that we may know no other love but love for you who are everlasting. May our love be so great that the waters of sky, land and sea cannot extinguish it in us: many waters could not extinguish love.

May this saying be fulfilled in us also, at least in part by your gift, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen. (“Give me, I pray you, Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ your Son and my God, that love that does not fail so that my lantern, burning within me and giving light to others, may be always lighted and never extinguished.”)
By Sr. Ann Shields, SGL

Year after year, we bemoan the fact that Advent is too short; that there is so much to do in this month of shopping and gifts and parties that we hardly have time to eat and sleep, let alone pray. What a sad state of affairs! The season in which Our Lord and Savior knocks on the door of our hearts seeking a deeper entrance, a more significant place in our lives; a season in which he reveals the extent to which he will go to win our trust and love is the very season in which we are, so often, most vulnerable to distraction.

Jesus gave up everything to become like us in all things but sin—He became like us so that we could learn to trust the love of God who would go to any lengths to save us.

“Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”(Phil. 2:5–7)

Has this truth really penetrated our minds and hearts? If so, it would seem that a response this Advent would be to make daily time with Him as important as eating or sleeping. That is, give Him first place. Please understand me—if sick children or personal illness or long work hours to avoid financial ruin are necessary right now, God will hear your cry. Call out to Him right in the midst of all you have to handle and juggle. But if your schedule is such that you simply need some increase in personal discipline to put first things first, then choose daily to sit before Him and receive what He has come in the flesh to give you!

One way to focus your prayer this Advent would be to pray this prayer of Saint Columba daily. Let the truths it conveys fan your love for Christ into a flame. Let God’s word to you be a lamp unto your feet (Ps 119:105) so that God may lighten your darkness (2 Sam 22:29). May you become more light in the growing darkness around us and may you know the unspeakable joy of your Savior’s delight in you as He comes to us this Christmas!

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“The season in which Our Lord and Savior knocks on the door of our hearts seeking a deeper entrance, a more significant place in our lives; a season in which he reveals the extent to which he will go to win our trust and love is the very season in which we are, so often, most vulnerable to distraction.”

Giving Through Your Will

Residents of the United States and Canada are well-known for their generosity. Each year their charitable giving sustains thousands of charitable organizations—like Renewal Ministries—that are doing a tremendous work around the world.

There are different ways you can make a bequest to Renewal Ministries. If you live in the United States, one of these formulas will easily work:

“I give and bequeath to Renewal Ministries Inc., 230 Collingwood, Suite 250, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, Tax ID 38-2385975, the sum of $_______for its general uses and purposes.”

“I give, devise, and bequeath to Renewal Ministries, 230 Collingwood, Suite 250, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, Tax ID 38-2385975, the _____% of the rest, remainder and residue of my estate.”

If you reside in Canada, use the following name, address, and registration number in the above formulas: Catholic Renewal Ministries Inc., 331 Evans Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M8Z 1K2, Registration No. 12374-0243-RR0001.

If you have any questions, please call Gary Seromik at 734-662-1730 ext. 21, who is administrator for Renewal Ministries. He will be happy to answer any questions you might have and send you helpful information on bequests and other charitable giving vehicles such as charitable gift annuities.
Mission to Samoa

Samoan World Youth Day opened with a procession and gathering of more than 4000 Samoan youth from Samoa, Australia, New Zealand, and California. The colorful and exuberant youth set the tone for a week filled with teaching, prayer, and programs of dancing and sharing the Samoan culture.

On our first visit several years ago we gave Archbishop Alapati a copy of Peter Herbeck’s book, *When the Spirit Comes in Power*. The Archbishop stayed up and read the whole book that night and the next day when we came to his office he knelt down in front of us and said, “I want more of the power of the Holy Spirit for me and my people. Will you pray for me?” Seeing that kind of humility and desire for holiness was a rare experience for us.

Since that time we have held Fire Rallies, priests’ retreats, and youth seminars at several venues on the big island of Upolo and the island of Savaii. A fire has been lit that seems to keep growing! It is easy to see a change from the early skepticism of the priests and deacons. They now seem to be embracing the move of the Spirit in an ever growing way. At one of the events of Samoan World Youth Day the Archbishop commissioned 12 new lay missionaries to go to Trinidad, at the request of the local bishop there. He has also sent priests to Trinidad and every country around the world where there is a sizable population of Samoans. He has priests in Australia, New Zealand, and the US. His seminaries are overflowing. He is an eloquent spokesman of the New Evangelization and frequently says that “there can be no New Evangelization unless there is first a New Pentecost!”

Last year the Archbishop sent 700 young people to Sydney for World Youth Day. More than 1400 had applied to go, but many people in Samoa are very poor. He told us that most of his people had never been out of Samoa or even eaten a McDonald’s hamburger! Incredibly, to raise money for the 700 teens, the Archbishop auctioned off some Church land. He is totally committed to the youth as the future of Samoa and puts his money where his mouth is! His great sorrow was for the others who were not able to go, and so he organized the Samoan World Youth Day 2009. He personally flew to Australia, New Zealand, and California to invite other Samoan youth to come. We were told that over 700 youth from outside Samoa joined over 4000 in Samoa for all the events. Each group from outside Samoa also brought at least one priest with them. It was a glorious response and another Samoan World Youth Day is scheduled for August 2012!

All 4000 youth were spread out in six parishes where they were fed and housed. They were then transported each morning to several venues for Mass, catechesis, training on evangelization, Divine Mercy, and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Each afternoon the youth went out on the streets to share the Gospel and each evening there was Adoration and sharing.

Samoan Youth Day opened with a glorious procession down the main street of Apia, past the government building to a large park named Mulinuu, which is beside the Parliament Building. Leading the procession was the huge cross from Australia World Youth Day and flags from different countries, followed by many youth groups from various countries and parishes, along with their banners and songs. The procession went for over two miles and was a joyful explosion of color and youthful exuberance. At the park there were dances by the Mother of Divine Mercy Youth, Auckland-Safotufai Youth, Youth from Los Angeles, and US style music by the Archdiocesan Youth Choir. The opening talk was by His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, the Head of State, a Catholic who attended all the functions.

Each day we had two hours to teach evangelization. We had the opportunity to move from venue to venue so that we could talk to all the 4000 plus youth. Despite much youthful enthusiasm there was not much knowledge of the basic Gospel message or evangelization. We decided to keep it very simple and talk about the person of Jesus and lead them in a prayer of commitment to Him. Nancy shared on removing obstacles to receiving more of Jesus and led the youth in prayers of forgiveness. We did several skits to demonstrate the Gospel and it seemed the youth responded well. Many came up to us afterwards and thanked us.
We taught them a simplified method of sharing the basic Gospel message and had several youth come forward to share the God, Man, Jesus, You model with the whole group. It was great fun and hopefully some of it stuck! Obviously we couldn’t be with all the youth on the street outreaches, and it seemed like most just gathered in public places and praised the Lord, but it was a beginning! For most of Samoa it was the first time Catholics ever went to the streets to share their faith.

Each evening, in addition to Adoration and Confession, there were programs of dancing and sharing the Samoan culture in different parishes. The Archbishop feels that Christ must be incarnated in the culture of all peoples. The youth really love to dance and sing!

On Saturday all the groups came together once more at Mulinuu and we had the privilege to again share the Gospel. I feel fairly certain that it is the first time many have ever given their lives to Jesus publicly. Incidentally, this day as well as all the catechesis and evangelization training, was broadcast on national TV. After a two mile procession, the youth performed a drama on the Stations of the Cross in front of the government building. They did a great job and I know many passersby were touched. That evening we were part of a large program at the Shrine of the Three Hearts where many youth shared their testimonies and again there was much dance and song.

On Sunday during the closing Mass it rained buckets during Archbishop’s talk. A tent with open sides was finally put up over the Archbishop and the altar and the crowd stayed in their seats, soaked and cold because of the high wind that came with the rain. The weather didn’t dampen the spirits of the youth and they were as ready to dance and sing as ever when the Mass was over. It was a grand day and a fitting end to Samoan Youth Day.

On Monday, prior to our departure in the evening, the Archbishop invited us to see a Carmelite nun take her final vows. It was a beautiful and moving Mass. Her entire family was there and everyone brought a lei of flowers to put around her neck. We asked her and the Mother Superior to pray for the work of Renewal Ministries. Afterwards we were able to talk with the Archbishop about the fruit of our visit and about the future. He said that all the comments about the evangelization training had been very positive and the thing he heard most often was “how Catholic” the teaching was. The Archbishop said he really appreciated that because he has been working hard to bring the charismatic dimension into the life of the Church. He asked us to come back again for more in depth training on evangelization and to work with the youth.

Despite much youthful enthusiasm there was not much knowledge of the basic Gospel message. Each day Lloyd and Nancy had two hours to teach about the person of Jesus and lead the youth in making a personal commitment to the Lord.

Another Samoan World Youth Day is scheduled for August 2012!
On the Road

Advent Prayer
to be Freed from Sin and Death

God our Father, you loved the world so much you gave your only Son to free us from the ancient power of sin and death. Help us who wait for his coming and lead us to true liberty. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen

December 2009

Lexington, KY
Magnificat Women’s Breakfast
December 5
Sr. Ann Shields, SGL
Contact Sue Sopala at: 859-224-4908 or lexington.omgr@championfactorydirect.com

Delphos, OH, Advent by Candlelight
December 6
Debbie Herbeck
Contact Mary Lou Pohlman at: mlpohlman424@yahoo.com

Toronto, Ontario
Renewal Ministries Canadian Board Meeting
December 6–7
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, Gary Seromik

January 2010

Mission to Mexico
January 17–23
Jim Murphy and Team
Contact Jessica Sherwood at 734-662-1730 x32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Palm Beach Gardens, FL, Men’s Conference
January 23
Peter Herbeck
Contact Jim Manhardt at 772-321-3886

February 2010

Lincoln, NE, Parish Mission
February 4–8
Sr. Ann Shields
Contact Al Zach at: 402-786-2705

San Diego, CA, Catholic Retreat
Feb. 5–7
Ralph Martin

Phoenix, AZ, Catholic’s Men’s Conference
February 20
Peter Herbeck
Contact: www.cmfp.org or 602-740-0485

Manchester, NH, Parish Mission
February 21–24
Sr. Ann Shields
Contact: Karen Hetrick or karen.hetrick@comcast.net

Port Huron, MI, Parish Event
February 25
Ralph Martin
Contact: 810-984-2689

Livonia, MI
St. Michael the Archangel Parish Mission
February 28–March 2
Ralph Martin
Contact: 734-261-1455 x207 or swilliams@livoniastmichael.org

March 2010

Vero Beach, FL, Day of Renewal
March 4
Peter and Debra Herbeck
Contact Ken or Phyllis Shearn 772-567-5165

Crossing the Goal Taping
March 8–11
Peter Herbeck

St. Paul, MN, St. Paul Seminary
IPF Symposium
March 11–14
Ralph Martin

Renewal Ministries is a Catholic ministry committed to renewal and evangelization in the Church. It seeks to proclaim Jesus Christ through its TV and radio outreaches, as well as through books, tapes, conferences, retreats and other international evangelistic events.

Editor
Debra Herbeck

Design
Anne Martin

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www.renewalministries.net

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