Dear Co-Workers in the Vineyard,

A letter from Ralph Martin

For those of us in the Northern climate April is the month where Spring really starts to kick in and the hope of reasonably warmer weather is realized. But I think we’re all looking forward to the perfect climate of Heaven, where it’s always true that “love is in the air.” Come Lord Jesus!

“In the world you will have troubles, but take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) These words of Jesus should reassure us that no matter what happens in the world—and troubles will continue—if we stay united to Jesus we will not be conquered by the troubles, but overcome them in the hope of Jesus’ resurrection. Lately at Mass after receiving communion I’ve just been very strongly aware of the truth of this. If we have Jesus we literally have everything that we need. If we don’t have Jesus, no matter what else we have, we don’t have what we need. What great mercy has been shown to us who believe!

And the words of the apostles come to mind: “It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22) Somehow, it’s in the Providence of God, to permit the troubles and hardships of life on earth—for our good and the good of the Church—as challenging as it may be to understand at times. We know by faith, if not always by our feelings, that the words of James are true:

“Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2–4)

So, hang in there, dear brothers and sisters, because “the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us.” (Rom. 8:18)

And be encouraged by what your prayer and sacrifice for the work of Renewal Ministries is doing to spread faith, hope and love in the world.

In this issue you’ll read the wonderful account of how God is bringing healing and reconciliation to the profoundly traumatized people of African nations who have endured unspeakable brutality in what can only be called demonically instigated “civil wars.”

And closer to home God continues to touch hearts and bring healing as well.

“My aunt had this book The Fulfillment of all Desire and she treasured it very continued on pg 2

Renewal Ministries is truly an international ministry. This photo shows the new edition of Hungry for God by Ralph Martin that has just been published in the Ukraine.
Dear Co-Workers in the Vineyard

“...My aunt had this book The Fulfillment of all Desire and she treasured it very much. You had autographed the inside page. Well I have had a very destructive and hard life! I had become spiritually dead due to drugs, crime, etc. She gave me the book and it has changed my life completely! I would like to purchase a new book and have you autograph it the same way, I cherish this book very much!!!! I have lots of gratitude for you writing such a great book, and I know that God works through many people, and in mysterious ways and you and my aunt are his instruments that has helped me!”

“I watch The Choices We Face whenever I can and marvel at what God has continued to do through people whose main purpose in life is to sit at the feet of Jesus and then go out and minister.”

“I listen to Fire on the Earth on the commute home from work. I wish more Catholics would speak so plainly, openly, emphatically, and proudly about the ‘pearl of great price, our Catholic faith.’ Your radio show has provided me with hope and inspiration in my life that is too often filled with doubt, loneliness, and isolation. I must admit that I enjoy the path of least resistance as much as the next guy, but the truth you share in your show, even though it is challenging, really helps me on the right path.”

“When you speak on your program (Food for the Journey) your words pierce my soul more surely than a two edged sword...you have motivated me to do better with my life...”

Those who endure to the end will be saved. Endure in joy!

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin
It had been just one year since we were here in Liberia and as we landed we could see and sense a slight change in the physical, spiritual, and emotional atmosphere for the better.

We were met at the airport by Monsignor Karnley, who has been the acting bishop for the last 4 ½ years. He is filling in for Bishop Francis Michael who lost his health trying to protect the Catholics and the physical buildings of the Church during the war. The bishop stood against the roving bands of government assassins, rebels, teens and young men drunk with alcohol, drugs and blood. They had been given permission by their commanders to raid the countryside, kill, maim, rape and destroy. This bishop held the line against the senseless violence and he is greatly admired by all the priests. After the war he experienced a stroke and there was no bishop to take his place, so Msgr. Karnley was appointed to be his spokesman. As a young priest, Msgr. Karnley has done a fabulous job with this young church. More than fighting one another, the warring factors mainly inflicted brutality on the innocent men, women and children of Liberia. Subsequently thousands, including older priests, never came back.

Our team for this mission included Brent Heiser, who lives in North Carolina and is the county coordinator of Ghana for Renewal Ministries, and his two close associates from Ghana. Emmanuel Tamakloe is the National Worship Leader of Ghana, in charge of formation at the National Charismatic Renewal Center. Jerry John Kponyo is the National Youth Coordinator for the Charismatic Renewal in Ghana. We went from the airport to meet the newly appointed Archbishop of Monrovia, Coadjutor Archbishop Lewis Zeigler and some of the other priests that came for the Priests’ Retreat. The Ghanaians shared with the new bishop the great things God is doing in the Charismatic Renewal and the youth in Ghana. They provide formation and training in leadership and evangelization for about 1000 persons yearly, including prayer group and ministry leaders, tertiary students, seminarians, clergy, etc. God is increasing the number and strength of the prayer groups in Ghana. They present Evangelization schools for formation with programs like Course Paul, Alpha and Parish Missions. They also provide training in teaching, healing, intersession, worship music, marriage and family life, hospitality and media.

They are making a huge impact on the Catholic Church in Ghana. Jerry spoke of all of the teens and young people who have had the direction of their lives changed forever, away from sin and towards holiness.

“The seminar for the priests of Liberia was only the second time that all the priests had been able to gather together for prayer and fellowship since before the war. They really seemed to enjoy their time together.”
Mission to Liberia

Msgr. Karnley, Lloyd Greenhaw, Archbishop Lewis Ziegler of Monrovia, Brent Heiser, and Msgr. Nyantí Gaye

of the teens and young people who have had the direction of their lives changed forever, away from sin and towards holiness. Now these kids can see Ghanaian role models like Jerry, who have made the choice to live chastely and are now happily married. Jerry was influenced at one of Renewal Ministries’ Evangelization schools we facilitated in the early 2000s. He also went through a program that encourages chastity and now he is the National Coordinator for Youth Inter-Tertiary Institutions National Coordinating Team (ITINCT). The Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Ghana is targeting the Tertiary Schools and influencing the leaders of tomorrow. These two leaders stressed obedience and adherence to Catholic values. The bishop was as impressed as the rest of us were. We immediately wanted to bring them back to the United States with us!

On Sunday we drove 1½ hours to St. Christopher’s, a small parish church in Kakata. The people were beautiful. Lloyd gave an excellent talk after the Gospel and did a healing service at the end of Mass. He stressed forgiveness and the people really seemed to respond. After lunch with the parish priest we traveled back to the Pastoral Center where we were staying and would be teaching for the remainder of the week.

On the first day of the seminar for the priests we discovered that this was only the second time in everyone’s memory that all the priests had been able to be together to fellowship since before the war. They seemed to love it. We began the first day teaching on healing prayer and deliverance; we continued this topic for the next five sessions and the priests were really focused. There were several lively discus-

sions on forgiveness and one priest related some particularly horrible stories to highlight the difficulty of forgiving. Although our hearts went out to the priests and other victims of violence, we continued to tell them that forgiveness is not an option. Every day when the Bishop got a chance, he prayed for the horrific Haiti tragedy. We were privileged to have Mass each day with these fine priests.

The priests were a very young crowd; most around 30–42 years old and they really seemed to enjoy being together. Some of them came from parishes that are inaccessible except by small airplane because the roads that were built twenty years ago were not maintained due to the war. The war has changed everything. There are now only three dioceses in Liberia. The percentage of Catholics is very low, but is steadily growing. After we taught the priests we prayed with a few of them.

The Bishop was at every teaching session. Many of these men really want to be holy and are willing to walk the walk to get there. Emmanuel and Jerry gave their presentations to all 40 or so priests and they were definitely working under the anointing of the Holy Spirit! They talked with passion about being dedicated Charismatic Catholics. Emmanuel is committed to forming Catholics to evangelize within prayer groups, parishes and beyond. He talked about their journey within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Ghana. The Diocese of Kumasi gave them property over ten years ago to build the Adom Fie Center for Church renewal. It is still under construction, and yet is now too small. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal enjoys the great collaboration of the Bishops of Ghana. It is really amazing how far Ghana has come in these last ten years. They will be a great resource for Liberia and beyond. Both of the men from Ghana knew many of the priests and some of the people in Liberia because during the war Liberia sent many of its seminarians to Ghana because the seminaries in Liberia were destroyed.

On the last evening of the Priests’ Seminar, we wanted these priests to be able to have a dinner/party together. So in the planning of this meal the Monsignor also invited Archbishop George Antonyasmy, Apostolic Nuncio to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Gambia. He was delighted to be able to come to be with the priests and with us. The food was delicious: one whole huge fish, okra stew, baked chicken,
steamed bananas, potato salad, rice, and fruit. Every main dish was hot with peppers and some of us had to add lots of rice to be able to eat it. The priests really enjoyed the meal since they don’t know when they will be able to get together again. The Papal Nuncio wanted to know how we got started and about Renewal Ministries. He asked for our business card so that he could give the bishops of Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Gambia our information. He also asked for Neal Lozano’s book *Unbound* and the companion guide, which we supplied.

We only had two days with the catechists, some of whom came from long distances and others who live close by. There were also at least ten seminarians who joined us and the Bishop attended to show his solidarity. In the first two sessions we gave very short teachings on the Unbound model of deliverance prayer. The afternoon was devoted to teaching Apologetics. Catholics are a minority here in Liberia and the catechists and their people are often challenged about their faith. The catechists play an integral part in teaching Church doctrine to the lay faithful. They labor quietly without material recompense. We are so thankful for all these men and women who work silently and steadily for the Church.

The Ghanaians shared with the catechists and it was a big hit. No one could walk away from this week and not be totally convinced that the Holy Spirit has stirred up the Catholic Church in Africa and that it has come through many movements in the Church. Each day we talked much later than the schedule called for; these catechists were hungry for knowledge and just wanted more. We ended by praying for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and new gifts to serve the Church more effectively.

On our last day in Liberia the team departed in two cars for Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Msgr Karnley was driving us, and Brent, Emmanuel and Jerry were in the other car. The short version of a much longer story is that our cars were separated from each other and the 2nd car stopped at the wrong church. Brent and the Ghanaian brothers walked in the church, expecting to see us there. The priest at the offertory saw the trio and was delighted. He had been to the priests’ retreat and he thought that they had come to speak at his church. So all three preached and the people were thrilled. At the other church, Lloyd spoke and ended by calling on everyone to make a decision to make Jesus the Lord of their lives. The three lost men arrived during the offertory and were welcomed warmly by the priest. After Mass we had a small Procession of the Blessed Sacrament and asked Jesus to heal. Then we were invited to the priests’ house for a delicious meal of fried chicken, rice, and fruit.

Before our departure we met with the Archbishop and the Apostolic Administrators from the other two dioceses. The Archbishop was very happy and he couldn’t thank us enough. He seemed amazed by the generosity of Renewal Ministries who not only paid to bring his priests together, but even covered the gas expense to get them home. When we left for home we felt the trip had borne much fruit; all the dioceses want us back next year to prepare hearts before the national elections the following year.

The catechists play an integral part in teaching the faith to the people, working steadily and sacrificially for the Church with no material recompense.

No one could walk away from this week and not be totally convinced that the Holy Spirit has stirred up the Catholic Church in Africa and that it has come through many movements in the Church.
From the Heart

True Friendship

“And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him and lead him away safely.’ And when he came, he went up to him at once, and said, ‘Master!’ And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, ‘Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching and you did not seize me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.’ And they all forsook him and fled.” (Mark 14:43–50)

One of the greatest crosses to carry is to be betrayed, falsely accused, or rejected by those who are co-workers, friends of many years, family—the people we counted on and with whom we felt secure in sharing life.

In Jesus’ case, it was in his hour of greatest need that he was rejected by those to whom he had poured out his life, his heart. When his own life was in jeopardy, one of his closest companions, one among the twelve, betrayed him. Judas betrayed Jesus by means of a sign of affection—how painful, how tragic this was.

That action was immediately followed by ALL the disciples abandoning Jesus until he was left alone with his accusers. Jesus had poured out his life for each of those men who had followed him for three years (and by extension for each of us), and every one of those men, fearing for his life, ran and left Jesus utterly alone.

Many of us have found ourselves on one or the other side of that experience. We have betrayed or been betrayed or both. We have been stunned or shocked to find no one to stand by us in difficult circumstances. We have found ourselves lacking the courage or strength of character to stand by another in their time of need.

In this Easter season, by the power of Christ’s resurrection, that life giving power is extended to us to change and grow. Just as Jesus rose from the dead by the power given Him, we too can rise to new life, repenting of our sins in this area and finding new life and strength to begin again. When we ask for healing, repent of our bad choices and decisions that hurt others, and extend and receive forgiveness, we are able to experience in our very flesh a taste of the power of the Resurrection.

It is in circumstances like these, in those hard moments of life that we are most desperately in need of a friend. When we seem to be abandoned, know that Jesus has experienced it all; that he understands the shock, the anger, the fear, and the pain. He is there by the power of the Resurrection to stand as your true friend who will NEVER betray, the one who knows most clearly what you are enduring and who promises you by His Resurrection that death is not the last word. He will bring life out of your death if you are willing to put your trust in Him!

Jesus also understands that our most common reaction is pain or anger and sometimes we cling to those emotional reactions for years! We seem to have gotten stuck at a traumatic moment and can’t extricate ourselves and move forward. But look, look at what Jesus did. He was willing to offer forgiveness to Judas, but Judas despaired. So don’t close yourself off from Jesus. If you have done something wrong in the circumstances, know that Jesus forgives! Have the humility to accept His forgiveness so you can live again.
If you have a hard time forgiving others for their betrayal of you, look at what Jesus did. He forgave them, went fishing with them, cooked them breakfast, and gave them authority to forgive others. Only when we have been broken in such a way that Jesus can shine through our weakness are we fit vessels to be used for others. If you find you cannot forgive, ask Jesus to give you the grace to be able to love as He loved. Look how Jesus did it! In one marvelous, magnanimous gesture Jesus took Peter, the coward, the betrayer and the denier, and transformed his weak and sinful flesh to the rock on which the Church is built! Peter repented and then put his trust in Jesus to supply what Peter did not have.

He can and will do great things in you, sinful though you are, if you rely not on yourself but on Him who raises the dead!

“It’s not too late!
The Lift Jesus Higher Rally—Joy for Tough Times
Toronto Metro Centre—Toronto, Ontario CANADA
Saturday April 24, 2010, 8:00 AM—6:00 PM
Call 416-251-4255 or Sadie at 905-270-2510
www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org

Please Pray...

+ for the continued healing and reconciliation of the people of African nations who have endured unspeakable brutality and violence in civil wars.
+ for the physical, emotional, and spiritual rebuilding and healing of the nation of Haiti.
+ that many people will attend the upcoming Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Toronto on April 24th and encounter the power and presence of the living God.
+ 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.
“Now let the heavens be joyful;
let earth her song begin;
Let the round world keep triumph, and all that is therein!
Let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord has risen, our Joy that has no end!”

St. John of Damascus

On the Road

April 2010

Mexico City Mission with Fr. Gabriel Richard High School  
Monday, April 5–Monday, April 12  
Jim Murphy, Debbie Herbeck & Mission Team

Bowling Green, OH  
St. Thomas More University Parish  
Thursday, April 8, 8:00 PM  
Ralph Martin  
Contact Robert Hohler at rhohler@bgnet.bgsu.edu  
or www.veritascatholics.com

Pittsburgh, PA  
Crossing the Goal Men’s Conference  
Saturday, April 10, 9:00 AM  
Peter Herbeck  
Contact: dave@crossingthegoal.com  
or info@cmfpitt.org

Crafton, PA  
St. Paul Seminary Adult Lecture Series  
Thursday, April 15, 7:30–9:00 PM  
Ralph Martin  
Contact Maureen Wood at 412-456-3160  
or mwood@diopit.org

Ventnor, NJ, Parish Renewal  
Friday, April 16–Saturday, April 17  
Ralph Martin  
Contact number: 609-822-2176

Saginaw, MI, Diocesan Retreat  
Friday, April 16–Sunday, April 18  
Sr. Ann Shields  
Contact Dr. Ed Hogan at 989-797-6662

Boston, MA  
Crossing the Goal Men’s Conference  
Saturday, April 17, 9:00 AM  
Peter Herbeck  
Contact: www.catholicboston.com

Toronto, ONT, Canada  
Saturday, April 24  
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, Debbie Herbeck, Teresa Tomeo, Marcus Grodi  
Contact: 416-252-4255  
or www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org

May 2010

Jacksonville, FL  
Crossing the Goal Men’s Conference  
Saturday, May 1  
Peter Herbeck  
Contact: dave@crossingthegoal.com  
or www.crossingthegoal.com

Albany, New York, Diocesan Day of Renewal  
Saturday, May 1  
Sr. Ann Shields  
Contact Dcn Jerry and Marie Gregaitis at 518-542-4497

Orchard Lake, Michigan  
Our Lady of Refuge Parish Talk  
Wednesday, May 5, 7:30–8:30 PM  
Ralph Martin  
Contact number: 248-688-0920

Ypsilanti, Michigan  
Renewal Ministries Annual Gathering  
Friday, May 14–Sunday, May 16  
Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 x32  
or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Fowler, Michigan, Most Holy Trinity Parish Encounter Series  
Tuesday, May 18  
Sr. Ann Shields  
Contact Fr. Dennis Howard at 989-593-2162

Ottawa, Canada  
“New Evangelization in Canada”  
Wednesday, May 19–Friday, May 21  
Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck

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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.

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