Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I sit down to write this letter, my heart is filled with gratitude to the Lord for his goodness to me and to all of us here at Renewal Ministries. We’ve been blessed with loyal friends and generous supporters, with dedicated team members who are ready to serve, and blessed with gifted Country Coordinators who are bearing amazing fruit in their missions around the world. We are also blessed to be able to know and serve extraordinary leaders in the Church throughout the world—clergy and laity alike—with whom we share a common passion in the Holy Spirit for the mission of the Church.

We’ve been blessed as well with anointed leadership, from our Board Members in the United States and Canada, and in particular from our brother Ralph Martin. They say absence makes the heart grow fonder. As you know, Ralph and Anne left for Rome in January and will be there until the end of June. For many reasons I’ve come to appreciate Ralph and Anne’s impact on my life and my family, and the lives of multitudes of people around the world. We have thousands of very loyal brothers and sisters who stand with us in our work together in Renewal Ministries. That deep loyalty is a gift from the Lord and is a sign of Ralph’s faithfulness to the Lord and to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Another great grace for us these many years has been the teaching, leadership and vision of Pope John Paul II. Since 1989 when Ralph, Sr. Ann Shields and I began working together as Renewal Ministries, we felt a very deep connection in the Spirit to the Holy Father. When the Lord brought the three of us together we had a deep sense that the Lord was telling us to prepare ourselves for mission—that He was about to open doors for us all around the world and that He had prepared the ground for us to take up our place in the New Evangelization. We believed the Lord was telling us that He was doing something new, knitting together peoples and nations, and if we took His word to heart we would have a small part to play in that move of the Spirit.

I remember at the time how encouraged I was when I read the words of Pope John Paul II describing what he sensed the Spirit was saying to the Church. He spoke like a great prophet: “I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bear-

continued on pg 2
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

...we were convinced that the mission of the New Evangelization could not happen without the experience of a personal Pentecost, including the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the outpouring of charisms.

Anne and Ralph outside their new parish church. For periodic updates from the Martins in Rome go to www.renewalministries.net and click on Bulletin Board and then “News from Rome.”
to create “schools of prayer,” and a fresh understanding of the essential link between holiness and mission was emerging among us.

When it was announced some time ago that Pope John Paul II will be beatified on May 1st, 2011, I was filled with joy. Although I never met him personally (Ralph did on many occasions), I continue to feel a deep bond of unity with him in the Holy Spirit. He has been a good shepherd for us, an elder brother, and one who has truly helped us, understood us, and worked to make a way for us.

Recently, on a personal retreat, I took some time to pray about the beatification. I felt the Lord show me that He is raising up the Holy Father for the Church’s benefit and for the Father’s glory, and that He wants us to hear the following: “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.”

When I read those words, I said, “Yes, that’s exactly what has happened to us. We’ve been seized by the Holy Spirit and thrust into mission!”

The Holy Father John Paul II’s work is not completed. I believe the Lord has given him the assignment to continue the work he began here on earth. The “new missionary age” that is to become a “radiant day” in this millennium leading to a “new springtime of Christian life,” is something God has planned and which He will bring about. I believe our soon to be blessed John Paul II is the patron of all those who live with this vision and promise in their hearts.

May the Lord bless you abundantly as you walk with our Lord through His passion, death and resurrection in the celebration of Holy Week and Easter.

Shalom,

Peter J. Herbeck

We are pleased to welcome Kathleen Kittle as the new missions and conference administrator for Renewal Ministries. Kathleen has been married for 30 years and lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan with her husband Vic and their two children, ages 16 and 12. She graduated with a business degree from Michigan State University and has an MBA from Boston University. She brings many years of experience in health care & human services to her work at Renewal Ministries.

Please Pray...

+ for those who attend Mass occasionally or yearly; may this Lenten and Easter season be a time of deeper conversion and renewal.
+ for the annual Lift Jesus Higher Rally this month. May God’s word go forth in power and touch the lives of thousands of adults and youth.
+ for the safety and empowerment of mission teams as they travel to Guatemala, Mexico, Poland, and Ireland this month.
+ 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.

“ ’When I read those words, I said, “Yes, that’s exactly what has happened to us. We’ve been seized by the Holy Spirit and thrust into mission!” The Holy Father named and affirmed our experience and for that I will be forever grateful to him.”
From the Heart

Praying From the Heart

Recently, I became increasingly aware of how easily distracted I was, especially in prayer. My mind seemed to have a life of its own, flitting from one project or conversation or pending decision—landing only for seconds on a topic—and then off to another. I would realize where I was, supposedly praying the Divine Office, at personal prayer time or worse, during Mass. What should I do?

I began to meditate on Matthew 6:5–8: “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

As we prepare for Easter, the Great Feast of All Feasts, as we ponder His love for us in giving us His ONLY Son to die upon that horrendous cross for you and for me, as we reflect on the eternal life won for us by Christ’s act of love, let us learn to pray as Jesus taught us.

Over the last number of months, I have begun to pray the Lord’s Prayer like this:

• **Our Father**— My papa, OUR papa.
• **Hallowed be your name**—May your name be held holy today in my thoughts and words, and actions.
• **Thy kingdom come**—YOUR kingdom, not mine!
• **Thy will be done**—not mine, O Lord. I want your will to be lived out in my life, on earth as it is in heaven.
• **Give us this day our daily bread**—Papa, give me today what I need to love you and serve you; please give me the food for today that I need to follow you.
• **Forgive us our trespasses**—give me, Papa, the grace and strength to come to you quickly with my sins and ask pardon.
• **As we forgive those who sin against us**—today help me to forgive anyone who hurts me that I might receive your forgiveness and help me to remember your presence in every person whether they know it or not. If I don’t forgive, I cannot expect to be forgiven—give me grace to forgive generously and quickly, as you do for me.

• **And lead us not into temptation**—give me grace to recognize the temptations in daily life and to ask for your saving grace to triumph over them.

• **But deliver us from evil**—help me to recognize evil, reject it and turn to you for the power of your grace to save me. Amen.

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry ‘Abba, Father!’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Romans 8:15–17).

All my prayer, both personal and communal has undergone what I think is the beginning of significant change. It is more heartfelt, more intimate and at the same time, there is a sense of deeper participation in the prayer of all of us together before the Father. Only the Holy Spirit can make such change and make it permanent.

“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).
Christ came among us to show us the way to the Father. In fact, we learned by his life that he is the way (Jn 14:6). This truth from revelation evokes awe and wonder in those who allow the mystery of Christ to reach their hearts. The normal setting for such an encounter with Christ is deep within the heart but in the context of parish sacramental life. The possibility of such an encounter in its simple accessibility to all persons could not be greater proof of God’s love for us. And yet, the intimacy Christ offers is oftentimes only partially accepted. Why are some Catholics seemingly satisfied with only a superficial relationship with Christ?

The Culture of Distraction

The answer to this question is a deep mystery, one wrapped in our fallen nature, in our penchant toward negating the spiritual in favor of the “worldly,” the immediate, and the distracting. We live in a culture of distraction—addiction to technological entertainment, impatience with all manner of suffering or limit, a thirst for immediacy, an obsession with lust, a craving for speed, a decadent voracity for food. In receiving this culture within our minds and affect we receive only anxiety. Due to our sophistication in technology we have more leisure, but unfortunately, no rest. Why? Simply put, when the culture of distraction defines us we become more filled with the self, the ego. Everything becomes measured on the scale of usefulness to and entertainment for the self. The culture of distraction bequeaths to us a profound loneliness, which is the scent of dead and dying things. What is most pathetic, however, is that we think we are living meaningful lives simply because we are busy, a busy-ness that is in truth only our distracted egos avoiding spiritual substance.

If intimacy with Christ is ever to define our lives and form our characters then we must accept this antidote to this culture of distraction. At the core of the life of the parish is the simple yet frequently resisted key to ending our feverish cultural pace: prayer. Rest is found only in communion with God and others.

Prayer is one of the most longed for realities and therefore, perhaps, one of the most romanticized realities. In truth prayer is a commitment of the will as is any act of love. We commit ourselves to prayer when we desire to know him who is its object. When we receive prayer as the gift that it is we welcome its fruit which is peace, an interior life in regular, if not constant, communion with the divine. To enter prayer then is to begin a life of hope.

The Priest as Spiritual Teacher

The priest is to be our spiritual master, the one who teaches us that life is a prayer. As John Paul II encouraged, “Your first duty as pastors is not projects and organizations but to lead your people to a deep intimacy with the Trinity.”

While acknowledging the demands of contemporary parish life, a challenging question for pastors still arises: Who is going to transform the parish into a school of prayer if he does not? Prayer life, to emphasize what was said above, is NOT natural to us. We need grace to enter the struggle to commune with God and leave distraction and sin behind. “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, not of what is on earth” (Col 3:1–2). Such thinking does not alight upon us as an easy habit and so the urgency to find teachers of prayer becomes self-evident. If the priest is to become a teacher of prayer what might he begin to ponder to assist him or his delegates in taking the parish in the direction of becoming a school of prayer?

Initiating a School of Prayer

First, the pastor ought to make the call to his parish to enter a life of prayer from out of his own spiritual conversion, one that has marked his identity and ministry. At minimum the call ought to emerge from his own desire to deepen whatever level of intimacy his prayer life has achieved thus far in his priestly life. He draws his passion to teach about the saints’ prayer or liturgical prayer or lectio divina from the power of his own conversion. He draws attention not to himself but to the interior life and its fruits.

Second, understanding the parish as a school of prayer comes forth from the mystery of Christ himself whose very presence ignited a rush of desire in the apostles, “Lord, continued on pg 4
teach us to pray” (Lk 11:1). In our day Pope John Paul II encouraged parishes to become schools of prayer.

Yes...our Christian communities must become genuine “schools” of prayer where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly “falls in love.”

Keeping Prayer Simple
Most believers would rather do most anything else than pray. This is our pathetic state: to disdain that which is the fount of our joy. Therefore, it is best to follow a simple approach to prayer, one that is teachable to all. St. Peter Eymard, parish priest, lays the groundwork for such an approach.

In your prayer, seek to nourish yourself on God, rather than...humbling yourself. To do this: nourish your mind with the truth personified in God’s goodness towards you...his personal love; here is the secret of true prayer. See the action and mind of God IN HIS LOVE FOR YOU! Then, in wonder, your soul will cry out... “How good you are my God. What can I do for you? What will please you?”

Eymard evokes a familiar pattern within his simple form of prayer, that of call and response. God comes to us first and calls to us, inviting us to attend to his loving presence. We respond to God in prayer in and through Christ, who is the Open Door through which all of God’s children can walk to encounter the Father’s love. In coming to the Father in prayer we not only receive his presence but we receive our mission in life.

And so the parish is called to school its people in three movements of prayer.

1. Parish members are to learn how to receive spiritual nourishment from God’s love.
2. Parish members are to learn how to discern the mission that such a love gives to each member.
3. Having fully received a mission, parish members now allow their prayers to arise from within their fidelity to it.

A Simple Blueprint for Prayer
God will do most of the work in developing our character into one that is constituted by prayer. Prayer itself will humble us, its demand for time, its internal sufferings in the early stages of our commitment to it, its various graces that instruct us in our own weaknesses and God’s generosity. Primarily we are called to feed off of prayer; time with God is to become our food. This food is simply the reality of God as he presents himself to our minds as truth and our wills as goodness itself. In receiving such our intellect is enlightened and our desires purified and inflamed anew by the Spirit, who is the divine encounter. Eymard counsels that this is the “secret” of prayer: to receive the love of God. With this “secret” we are near the heart of what ignites a parish to become a spiritual community.

St. John Vianney, once noted, “There will come a time when many will be so tired of men that they will not be able to hear about God without crying.” The feeling of being “tired of men” can itself be the stirring of the Holy Spirit in us. The Spirit already is moving us to find little meaning in the superficialities of our age and look for sturdier fare in communion with himself. Sometimes, then, prayer begins when the weight of human folly presses upon our consciousness: so much political division, rationalizing of sin, fear and tepidity toward witnessing for the faith. Such dead weight presses upon us and we cry out, we are “tired of men.” Sometimes we are so caught up in the current age that we don’t even know why we are saddened, depressed, lethargic.

Ultimately, being “tired of men” does not mean a retreat from culture; it means something more demanding: a dedication to Christ IN CULTURE. By way of the laity and their secular character, new dispositions can fill the culture with hope, joy, justice, and love, dispositions born of intimacy with God rather than those born of affection for this passing age.

From out of the power of receiving his love in contrast to the anemia of popular culture and the fare it offers, the heart realizes that it has found true food, something to really give nourishment to the soul. From out of the power of receiving his love in contrast to the anemia of popular culture and the fare it offers, the heart realizes that it has found true food, something to really give nourishment to the soul.
When the parish becomes a school of prayer its members notice a shift in consciousness wherein prayer becomes as real as other activities. Prayer is not a dream or a “waste of time” or something for “introverts.” Prayer is who we are becoming as we actively seek to have the Eucharist, the very mystery of Jesus’ self offering upon the cross, define our lives. God is only interested in his relationship with us: “I want not what is yours but YOU.”

Finally, we look to Mary, the Mother of God, prototype of the church at prayer. Her life indicates what God is able to do in and through us when we are totally docile to the life of the Spirit within. Practically, we look to Mary as she led the small group of apostles into prayer at Pentecost as they awaited the coming of her spouse upon them and the whole church. Any transformation of the parish into a school of prayer will begin in small cells of praying men and women and then, in time, flame out to larger venues.

The parish when fully established as itself is a school of prayer. It is a sacramental community open to being affected by the movements of God in love toward each and every member. +

Editor’s Note: This article is adapted from a longer article by the same title. To read in its entirety go to www.renewalministries.net and click on Free Literature or go to Bookstore to purchase CDs by Deacon Keating.

Deacon James Keating, Ph.D., is director of theological formation at the Institute for Priestly Formation, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska.

(Endnotes)
1. Pope John Paul II, address to the Austrian bishops.
2. NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE 2001, n. 33.
4. See also, Jean Corborn, The Wellspring of Worship (San Francisco, Ignatius, 2005) p. 37. “The most fruitful activity of the human person is to be able to receive the love of God.”

Join Us for the 2011 Annual Renewal Ministries Gathering
“You Have Been Anointed by the Holy One”
Friday, May 13th–Sunday, May 15th
Eagle Crest Marriott Hotel
(www.eaglecrestresort.com)
In Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti
just minutes from Detroit Metro Airport

Keynote Speaker: Fr. John Riccardo was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit in 1996. He studied theology at the Gregorian University in Rome and received a License in Sacred Theology (STL) from The Pope John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family. Fr. John is currently the pastor at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Plymouth, MI, as well as a powerful speaker and host for the daily radio show, Christ is the Answer.

Special Guest: Archbishop Alapati Lui Mataeliga, from the archdiocese of Samoa Apia. Renewal Ministries has worked closely with the Archbishop over the past number of years in the dynamic work of evangelization he has spearheaded in his diocese and throughout the country of Samoa.

For more information or to register
contact Kathleen Kittle at: 734-662-1730 x132
or kittle@renewalministries.net
or go to www.renewalministries.net
He would not urge us to ask, unless He was willing to give.
St. Augustine

# On the Road

<table>
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| *Mission to Guatemala, Fr. Gabriel Richard High School Trip*  
April 1–10  
Jim Murphy  
| Mission to Poland  
March 23–April 4  
Don and Pat Turbitt and Team  
| Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
Annual Lift Jesus Higher Rally  
*Saturday, April 9*  
Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, Deacon Alex Jones, Debbie Herbeck  
Contact: 416-251-4255  
or pdkromer@rogers.com  
or www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org  
| Mission to Mexico  
April 11–17  
Jim Murphy and Team  
Contact Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext 132  
or kkittle@renewalministries.net  
| *DeWitt, MI, Diocese of Lansing Staff Day*  
*Thursday, April 14*  
Sr. Ann Shields  
| Mission to Ireland  
April 28–May 4  
Don and Pat Turbitt and Team  
Contact Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext 132  
or kkittle@renewalministries.net  
| Helena, MT, Diocesan Conference  
April 29–May 1  
Peter Herbeck  
Contact Mark Frei at 1-800-584-8914  
or mfrei@diocesehelena.org  
| May 2011 |
| *Denver, CO, Legatus Meeting*  
*Thursday, May 5*  
Debbie Herbeck  
| Ypsilanti, MI  
Renewal Ministries Annual Gathering  
May 13–15  
Contact Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net  
| Mission to Slovenia  
May 25–June 6  
Don and Pat Turbitt and Team  
Contact Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext 132 or kkittle@renewalministries.net  
| Plymouth, MI, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Basic Christian Maturity Series  
*Friday, May 27, 7 pm*  
Sr. Ann Shields, SGL  
Contact: www.olgcparish.net or 734-453-0326  
| *Events not open to the public*  

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It’s Not Too Late!

The annual **Lift Jesus Higher Rally** is right around the corner  
**Saturday, April 9, 2011**

For more information or to register, go to  
[www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org](http://www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org) or call **416-251-4255**

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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.

**Editor**
Debra Herbeck  
**Design**
Anne Martin

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