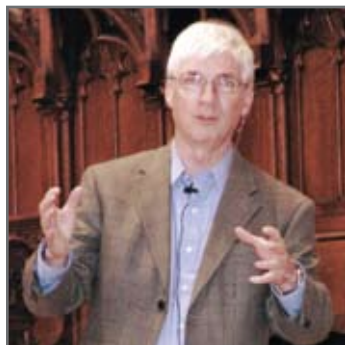


Renewal Ministries

May 2008

Proclaiming Jesus through Catholic Renewal and Evangelization



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A letter from Ralph Martin

Greetings in the Lord! For those of us who live in the North it sure was a long winter but spring has sprung! For those of us who live in a climate with “seasons” it’s always special to see the “death” of winter turn into the “life” of spring. It is truly an image of the seed that falls into the ground and dies but then brings forth new life; an image of the death and resurrection of Jesus and our own participation in his saving death and resurrection.

From time to time some of our supporters in North America mention that they appreciate what we are doing all over the world but they wish we could do more in North America. These comments come from the acute pain of living in a North American culture that has so many elements that have turned away from Christ and to gross immorality and mockery of God. I have never actually “counted” how much we are doing overseas versus what we are doing in North America but we are doing a truly amazing amount all over the world, including North America. If you just look at our listing of events that we are participating in each month in this newsletter, or check it out on our website (www.renewalministries.net) you will see how much is being done both “here” and “there.”

For 24 years now we have been broadcasting the gospel multiple times each week over EWTN television (and now radio) through *The Choices We Face*, which is now as far as we know, the longest running Catholic television program. In addition to *The Choices We Face* radio pro-

continued on page 2



About 350 people showed up each Wednesday in Lent for the parish mission held at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Ann Arbor, MI. where Renewal Ministries is located. Sr. Ann Shields, Peter Herbeck, Craig Pohl and Ralph Martin all gave talks at the mission.

“In addition to The Choices We Face radio program which is being transmitted through 80 stations in North America, we also are transmitting two 5 day a week programs hosted by Sr. Ann Shields and Peter Herbeck which are broadcast on 39 stations throughout North America.”

Inside this Issue

The Wonderful Works of the Lord in France

Page 4

Historic Happenings in Turkey

Page 6

On the Road

Page 8

Dear Friends

“Praying in the church there brought back very moving memories of standing next to my dad at Benediction, perhaps even after a parish mission many years ago, and hearing him sing with his whole heart ‘Holy God We Praise Thy Name’...”

gram which is being transmitted through 80 stations in North America, we also are transmitting two 5 day a week programs hosted by Sr. Ann Shields and Peter Herbeck which are broadcast on 39 stations throughout North America. Both the television and radio programs are also available any time day or night through our website.

We are also conducting an amazing number of parish missions, men’s and women’s conferences, seminars, institutes, lectures, and evangelization conferences all over North America. Not to mention the privilege we have of contributing to the formation of future priests, deacons and lay leaders through our work at Sacred Heart Seminary in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Even though our advanced degree program in the New Evangelization is international in scope we have a good number of American and Canadian priests enrolled in it as well.

I want to tell you though about just a few of the parish missions I was recently involved in and how special they were to me, and to those who participated.

Fr. Frank McGrath, who served with us in Belgium for a few years, and who then became the pastor of a parish in Ann Arbor was recalled to his own Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut several years back. He was given important but challenging assignments of working with his bishop in caring for the well-being of the priests in the diocese and then handling some difficult special situations. He is now the pastor of St. John’s Church in Darien, CT and it was a joy to do a parish mission there this past Lent. How inspiring to see a priest who is persevering, growing in holiness, and leading his people to Jesus. It was a busy weekend where I spoke at the parish men’s breakfast, gave three talks, met with parish leaders, and spoke at five of the Masses (after Fr. Frank gave a short homily I offered some reflections).



“It was a special joy to do a parish mission at St. Anastasia’s Parish in Teaneck, New Jersey. This is the parish where I grew up and received First Communion and Confirmation.”

I also had the joy of doing a parish mission for three nights at St. Joseph’s Parish in Wakefield, MA, where Fr. Ron Barker is the pastor, in the Archdiocese of Boston. There used to be three priests in the parish but now Fr. Ron is the only one, caring for the people and overseeing the parish elementary school. He is another inspiring priest who has persevered through the trauma of what has happened in the Archdiocese regarding the clergy scandals and is leading his people with joy. He is supported by a great parish staff of lay people who serve with him. One of the highlights of my three days in the parish was saying a few words to all the grade school children whom Fr. Ron gathers in the church each Monday morning to lead them in song and prayer, as they dedicate their week and lives to Jesus. How blessed are the children to be in a school with such a wonderful pastor. The parish also has extensive hours of adoration and there are many prayers in this parish.

Another special joy this past Lent was contributing to a parish mission that St. Thomas the Apostle, one of our local parishes, conducted during six Wednesdays of Lent. The pastor, Fr. Jeff Njus, and his associate, Fr. Chas Canoy (who is in my classes at the seminary), are wonderful young priests that are lovingly and wisely leading the parish further on into an encounter with Jesus. Perhaps 350 parishioners attended each night of the mission and demonstrated great openness to the Word and the Spirit of the Lord.

Perhaps the most special joy of all though was being asked to do a series of talks for the parish in Teaneck, New Jersey where I grew up, only seven miles across the George Washington Bridge from Manhattan, New York City. It was there at St. Anastasia parish, run by the Carmelite fathers

(O.Carm) that I made my first confession, first communion and received the sacrament of confirmation. I attended eight years of grade school there with the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station, NJ. It was there that I learned the faith and began to love the Lord and desire to follow Him. St. Anastasia is celebrating their 100th anniversary as a parish this year and it was really special to be asked to contribute to the celebration. One of the parishioners was watching EWTN and heard me mention on one of the programs that I grew up in St. Anastasia parish. He told the pastor, who then asked me to return for the anniversary celebration. Perhaps 250 parishioners turned out for the three talks that I gave, including classmates from both grade school and high school, and even one of the Irish Christian Brothers who taught me in high school.

Praying in the church there brought back very moving memories of standing next to my dad at Benediction, perhaps even after a parish mission many years ago, and hearing him sing with his whole heart “Holy God We Praise Thy Name” and turning to me afterwards and asking me why everyone didn’t feel what he was feeling, in terms of fervent love for God. It made me think of my mom (who died just a few months ago on December 14, the feast of St. John of the Cross) and dad (who died a day after the traumatic events of 9/11) writing out tuition checks for St. Anastasia Grade School



All over the country Catholic men are awakening to their call to be disciples. Here Ralph addresses a Catholic Men’s Breakfast in Darien, Connecticut.

and then Bergen Catholic and St. Cecilia high schools, sacrificing so that my five sisters and I could be formed in the faith. We will have so, so many people to thank in heaven if, God willing, (and He does!) we get there!

In all four of these parishes there was a great hunger for God that bodes well for what the Lord will be able to do in and through these parishioners as they continue to walk with Him.

Once again, there was more to report on than the space to do it! What a wonderful problem to have.

Thanks for all your support, prayers, and financial giving that makes all this possible.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

Ralph Martin

Please Pray...

- + for the continued outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Catholic and Armenian Churches in Turkey.
- + that the upcoming Renewal Ministries Gathering at the end of May would be a time of refreshment and renewal for all.
- + for preparations for all the Renewal Ministries’ Institute schools this summer. May they be places of spiritual growth and equipping for all who attend.
- + 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.

From the Heart



Sr. Ann Shields, SGL and Sr. Dorcee Clarey, SGL visited the childhood home of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

The Wonderful Works of the Lord in France

Several months ago I was invited to lead a retreat for 160 people from different parts of France. The Community of the Beatitudes, one of the new communities in the Church, sponsored the retreat at a large conference center

they have in Nouan-le-Fuzillier, a town about 1½ hours outside Paris.

The setting is lovely and peaceful. The church built by the community there is so large yet so simple. It is so beautiful and so artistically centered on the Eucharist that even with the language barrier you know you are immediately AT HOME!

In that setting I gave seven talks on God's Love, the power of His word, the purpose of suffering, and our relationship with Him through all the vicissitudes of life. I had an excellent translator, a woman from that community whom I had met several years before at a conference sponsored by the Vatican and the International Office for the Charismatic Renewal in Rome. Cathy Brenti was able to translate my words in such a way that people quickly captured not only the message, but the grace God desired to pour upon them. (Such translators who can transmit not only your words but your heart and the work of the Holy Spirit are true treasures).

On Saturday evening the community opened the retreat to anyone to hear my talk, for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and for ministry. Because it was the weekend prior to the great feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the 150th anniversary of her appearance to Bernadette, many sick came to the event. Hundreds attended and it was as though I could see the suffering of the world represented there: those sick in body and in spirit, the hopeless, the angry, the bitter, and those full of faith and trust. All I could do was cry out to God with them, to show them the privileged place that they had before God's throne, to join with them in their tears as the Blessed Sacrament was

processed through the church. God did many works of grace and healing that night but two examples stand out for me.

Two young men, each in different parts of the church but both paralyzed and in wheel chairs approached me after the service. Paul could hardly speak but he shared how he now understood his purpose in life, that I had given him hope. With tears streaming down his face, he broke into a big smile and I thought how tenderly God the Father must look at him. The other, Andre, came up to me and simply said, "Thank you. You have given me much to think about. May I write to you?" All of this was through a mixture of English and French on the part of all of us but I knew God had blessed them.

Before this event, the community gathered to pray over me. The Blessed Mother was so present for me in that prayer that I had confidence she would watch over each of those who participated. People commented on the profound peace that pervaded the whole evening. One day in heaven we will be able to share together about all the graces that Jesus poured out that night through his mother. One older man quietly wept aloud through my entire talk and then slipped away. Will you please pray for him?

After the retreat some generous people drove Sr. Dorcee (who is the new Superior of the Servants of God's Love) and I to Lisieux—a four and a half hour journey. There we stayed overnight in another house of the Community of the Beatitudes. The hospitality was warm and simple and prayerful. One new experience for me was praying the rosary with the community alternating among English, French and Hebrew. It really made me feel part of the universal Church! (One of the original founders of the community is a Jewish Catholic—or a completed Jew, as some express it.)

During our stay we were encouraged to meet a Jewish sister who took the religious name of Sr. Edith Stein. Sister told us that her family had not practiced their Jewish faith for three generations but as a small child, through both Protestant and Catholic events, she finally accepted Jesus as her Lord and Messiah and was baptized while in college. But the story doesn't end there. Her brother, her only sib-

“Hundreds attended and it was as though I could see the suffering of the world represented there: those sick in body and in spirit, the hopeless, the angry, the bitter, and those full of faith and trust.”

“The chalice he used at his ordination was the Shabbat Cup used by his great-great uncle who had been a rabbi!”

ling, was furious with her for her conversion and so she began to pray for him. Today her brother is a priest in Emmanuel Community in Paris. The chalice he used at his ordination was the Shabbat Cup used by his great-great uncle who had been a rabbi!

We listened to all these inspiring stories while in Lisieux and from my window there I could see the Basilica of St. Thérèse—the saint of the little, the ordinary. God’s wonders and the ways He performs these works of grace are beyond counting.

We had a day to pray in the Basilica, and to visit Thérèse’s parents’ graves on the same grounds. Thérèse, the saint of the Little Way, also desired to be a missionary—such was her love for souls. In the Basilica you can give alms for Thérèse’s mission work all over the world. She never left her convent, but her heart was so generous that she gladly and completely offered her ordinary daily prayer and sacrifices. As a result, miracles happened, and continue to occur all over the world. In the midst of our daily and very ordinary routine we also can offer our small sacrifices to God that He may be glorified through our simple lives.

In the afternoon of that day we went to Les Buissonnets, the home of Thérèse, her father and sisters. Walking through the house, seeing the place of so many milestones in Thérèse’s life caused me to offer all our missionary work from Renewal Ministries, asking her intercession for us.

The following day, back in Paris, we visited Sacre Coeur, the great Basilica dedicated to the Sacred Heart. From the Basilica, built atop a high hill, you can see all over Paris. In the church there is perpetual adoration. It began in 1885, as daily intercession for the whole world and ten years later they began having perpetual adoration, night and day. This has gone on unceasingly for 113 years! Thank God for such prayer—may we see the fruit even in our lifetime for Paris and the world!

While in Paris we stayed with the Dominican Sisters whom I had visited several years ago. They live very simply—a few rooms in an enormous old building that is being reconstructed around them. The sisters choose to live there so that they are within a few blocks walking

distance from the church where they serve, in the heart of the red light district of Paris. The church has large bullet proof glass doors at the entrance and there is frequent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Directly across the street from those glass doors is a XXXX adult video and entertainment store. I stood for a time just pondering the position of the Blessed Sacrament and what the Lord faced a few feet from the Church!

The Sisters lead parishioners in the daily prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours. Adoration and Mass are there daily. They told me their work is not to provide for the poor although at times they have community meals. But the work of the priests and the sisters is to be available to those enmeshed in pornography and other addictions through teaching, ministry and prayer. And many do come to them, broken and in pain. May God be blessed and praised for their daily presence at the pit of hell!

Thank you for all of you who prayed for this trip. I came back more deeply convinced that only a daily yes to holiness of life will make the way for Christ to be visible in the ever increasing darkness of sin and suffering. +

“*But the work of the priests and the sisters is to be available to those enmeshed in pornography and other addictions through teaching, ministry and prayer.*”



Many sick came to the retreat on the weekend prior to the great feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and the 150th Anniversary of her appearance to Bernadette.

“*Now, to see crowds of over 400 people coming for several nights of meetings on healing, forgiveness, empowerment, and thanksgiving was breathtaking.*”

Mission to Turkey

We traveled to Istanbul with our small but experienced ministry team from the U.S. Our main purpose was to pray for the baptism in the Holy Spirit for members of the Armenian Church. We encountered many amazing works of the Lord.

Renewal Ministries first sent a team to Turkey in 1999. Four years ago, we considered a “large” meeting to be perhaps twenty persons. The clergy of the Armenian Church wasn’t quite sure what they thought of the charismatic renewal, and improvements in their perception seemed a long way off. So to see crowds of over 400 people coming for consecutive nights of meetings for healing, forgiveness, empowerment, and thanksgiving is breathtaking. Here are some of the highlights of an historic movement of God in the Armenian Church in Turkey.

One of the most important activities is the regular meeting of more than 17 women’s prayer groups around the city. House churches are against the law in Turkey and since some of these groups have fifty attendees, they can attract unwanted attention. In 2006 the secret police followed us after one of these home meetings. These women have great courage! We had the opportunity to visit three different groups and join these faith-filled, strong women, mostly from ages 25-55, who crowd into tiny apartments and tirelessly pray for each other, their families, and the church.

One evening we had the amazing privilege of participating in the first charismatic healing gathering ever for the Armenian Church in Turkey. There was great excitement in the air. We could see it on the faces of more than

430 people as they waited for their turn to be prayed over. A woman from the church who owns buses, filled them free of charge to bring in the sick, the dying, the faithful, and the curious from all over the city. People were not disappointed! Every single person who wanted it received prayer; the Spirit was moving and many reported healings. You could see the joy of some of these faithful Armenians who had gone to other “Pentecostal type” gatherings, had experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but were made to feel uncomfortable expressing these gifts in their very traditional church. Now they were free to sing in the Spirit, praise in tongues, and raise their hands in the Armenian Church. This was historic. Very late into the night long after the meeting was over, the janitor began to lock up and turn the lights out, but many didn’t want to leave. This was something new! What a delight to have to make people leave church.

Every event seemed to build to the next, and we realized we were being swept along by a rising tide of the Holy Spirit. The night of Forgiveness was an important step in greater freedom for the Armenians in Turkey. Because of past wrongs, most find it very hard to forgive and hatred is passed down to each generation. It is a common topic of conversation at all of their meetings. Our Renewal Ministries team trained a local team and together we prayed for more than 300 people. One woman said that she had been depressed for years and couldn’t forgive. After hearing again that it is a decision and not a feeling, she began to forgive those that held her in bondage for years. Her face was transformed from being drawn and sad to relaxed and peaceful. We saw her at least three more times in the week and each time she was more animated. All over the room people were set free from years of bondage to unforgiveness, and they were released and healed.

Another miracle occurred for a man named Jacob, the brother of Garo, our translator. At the forgiveness night Jacob forgave his cousin that he hadn’t spoken to for seven years, and hadn’t seen for at least five. The next day as Garo and Jacob were transferring trains to attend a meeting, they missed three of their usual trains. Suddenly, in the crowded terminal of this immense city of 17 million, a Divine Appointment—they stood face to face with their cousin! They just looked at each other for a moment, and on the spot they were reconciled!

Another important night was the culmination of several Life in the Spirit seminars. Three groups were eagerly awaiting the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We were expecting 150



The chapel in Fr. Durtad’s church overflowed with hundreds of people from all over the city who wanted prayer to receive more of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the church, people were singing in tongues and crying, laughing, and being healed.

By Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw

people. The chapel overflowed with over three hundred people who wanted prayer. They had seen God at work at our previous meetings, they saw that He had gifts, and they wanted more. All around us people were singing in tongues, crying, laughing, and being healed. The joy of the Lord was upon us.

On Sunday afternoon we had a program for Fr. Bruno at St. Stephen's Catholic Church. In past years only a few Catholics came for these meetings, but this Sunday the church basement was full with mostly Catholics, but also Armenians, Orthodox Syrians and Protestants. After two hours of talks we had a question and answer period. When the program officially ended, we invited those who wanted to stay for prayer; at least half the people stayed. Fr. Bruno was very happy.

The next night all the groups came together at the Armenian Church for a night of Thanksgiving. We wanted them to get up and witness to the power of God. We initially thought it would be hard to get them started because they hadn't experienced this before. But they jumped right in. There were many stories of healing, reconciliation, and receiving various gifts of the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere



(From l to r) His wife Tanya, Fr. Durtad, Fr. Zakeos, and Sr. Gayaneh (the only nun of the Armenian Church), are filled with gratitude, amazement, and the joy of the Holy Spirit as they witness the Lord at work in powerful ways in the Armenian Church in Turkey. It is a privilege to work with these dedicated and holy men and women of God.

was electric! Many said they had never expected to be a part of something so wonderful. Person after person stood up to give thanks to Jesus until after 11:00 PM!

"Extraordinary!" was the word everyone used to describe this trip to Turkey. Fr. Durtad says they are planning more Life in the Spirit seminars immediately and he fully expects 1500 or more persons will be ready for the baptism in the Holy Spirit when we come back next October. His dream is to have 50,000 people baptized in the Holy Spirit in the next five years. +

It's a Small World!



Recently Sebastian Seromik, son of Renewal Ministries' administrator, Gary Seromik, and a recent graduate of the University of Michigan's business school who is serving with the Peace Corps in Benin, recounted an unexpected encounter. Sebastian is stationed in a small town in the interior of Benin, a small French-speaking country in West Africa, where he is working with small business owners and teaching business courses at the local high school. In his free time, he has become active in the local Catholic church, working with the music ministry and assisting the pastor in leading a bible study group.

A Nigerian friend from the town invited Sebastian to join him for a drink. They hopped on his friend's motor bike and rode six kilometers further into the bush, where there was a small bar. "There we were," Sebastian said, "thirty miles from the nearest source of electricity and running water."

In the course of the conversation, Sebastian asked his friend why he wasn't married—an unusual situation for a 29 year old African man. His friend went on to describe his sad childhood: his father was an abusive man with several wives; his own mother died when he was four; and for many years he was forced to set aside his own

aspirations in order to earn money to put his many half-brothers and sisters through school. He was determined not to be like his father, he said, and found the answer one day while serving as an apprentice.

"My boss was a strong Catholic man whose own life had been turned around by something called the Catholic charismatic renewal that was started by four young men in America," he told Sebastian. "Eventually I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Do you know what that is?" Although his friend was mixing up the origins of the Catholic charismatic renewal with the history of the Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Sebastian was immediately able to identify with his friend's experience. "I know all about that," he told his friend. "In fact, I grew up in a charismatic community and a charismatic parish and my father has worked for many years for one of those four men!"

"It's amazing to see how widespread the renewal has grown over the years," Sebastian noted, "and how you run into it where you least expect it!" +

On the Road

“*God passes
through the thicket
of the world,
and wherever
His glance falls
He turns all things
to beauty.*”

St. John of the Cross

May 2008

Moodus, CT, My Father's House Retreat

May 2-4

Ralph Martin

Contact number: 860-873-1906

Gaithersburg, MD

Contemplative Prayer Conference

May 24

Ralph Martin

Contact Betsey Swan at 301-258-7432 or

betseyswan@aol.com

Mission to Serbia

May 30-June 1

Zoltán Kunzabó

Plymouth, MI, Renewal Ministries Gathering

May 30-June 1

Contact Jessica Sherwood at 734-662-1730

ext 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

June 2008

Loretto, PA

Men's Conference at St. Francis University

June 7

Peter Herbeck

Contact: www.thecallpa.org or

thefellowship@thecallpa.org

Reno, NV

Catholic Business Professionals Breakfast

June 12

Peter Herbeck

Contact: www.catholicprofessionals.org

Plymouth, MI

Renewal Ministries School of Spirituality

June 20-22

Ralph Martin, Sr. Ann Shields

Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext 32

or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

St. Paul, MN

Renewal Ministries School of Evangelization

June 25-29

Peter Herbeck, Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw

Contact jsherwood@renewalministries.net or

deaconmike@core-ministries.org

Manassas, VA, All Saints Parish Renewal

June 27-28

Ralph Martin

Contact Jim or Jean Mosimann at

703-743-1430

It's not too late to register for

- the Renewal Ministries Gathering, May 30-June 1, 2008
- the School of Spirituality, June 20-22, 2008
- the School of Catholic Bible Study, July 24-27, 2008.

For more information contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 ext. 32 or jsherwood@renewalministries.net or check our website at www.renewalministries.net

Renewal Ministries

Chairman of the Board

Bishop Sam Jacobs, Houma-Thibodaux, LA

President

Ralph Martin

In Canada

President of the Board

Bishop Faber MacDonald, Ret. Saint John, New Brunswick

Episcopal Advisors

Archbishop Thomas Collins, Toronto

Bishop M. Pearse Lacey, Ret. Auxillary, Toronto

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

© 2008 by Renewal Ministries

www.renewalministries.net