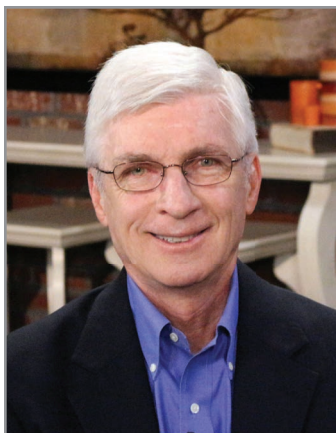




# Renewal Ministries

Proclaiming Jesus through Catholic Renewal and Evangelization



## *Dear Partners in the Mission,*

### A letter from Ralph Martin

I want to share about a remarkable 10-day trip I took to Poland this past November. The story is not just about Poland, it is about us and the challenges we are facing and will face in the days ahead.

The trip started in Warsaw where I was picked up at the airport by Jacek Weigl, a young father of five. He leads an ecumenical community that has been asked by Kazimierz Cardinal Nycz to assist the Archdiocese of Warsaw in the work of the New Evangelization. We had breakfast with the Cardinal the next morning and indeed he was very, very emphatic about the importance of the New Evangelization.

On the first afternoon I addressed some of the members of the Archdiocesan Curia and other key leaders in evangelization from various renewal movements. The Cardinal and others in Poland expressed grave concern about Putin's annexation of the Crimea and incursions into Eastern Ukraine on the pretext of protecting the Russian speakers living there. This was the same pretext Hitler gave for his annexations and incursions that preceded the outbreak of World War II.

The next day, I gave three talks at an all-day conference for a wider group of leaders and participants in the New Evangelization. My last morning in Warsaw was devoted to a meeting and Mass with the small community that is real leaven in the Archdiocese.

One of the most moving experiences was a visit to the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising. This museum uses actual video footage from the time and many poignant exhibits to memorialize the heroic 1944 uprising to throw off the Nazi occupation of Poland. The effort ended tragically when the Russian army which was camped on the East side of the Vistula river — which runs through Warsaw — refused to cross the river to assist the uprising despite previous promises to do so. What a story of heroism and cowardice, of loyalty and betrayal, of self-sacrificial love and gross selfishness!



*(far left) Ralph was invited to have breakfast with Cardinal Nycz of Warsaw. They discussed the importance of the New Evangelization and the Cardinal asked Ralph to speak to members of the Curia and other leaders in the Archdiocese.*

*(left) Ralph's last day in Warsaw was spent giving three talks to leaders in evangelization in the Archdiocese.*



*While in Lublin, Ralph attended a special Mass in the Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity in the royal palace. The Mass commemorated the 75th anniversary of the mass arrest of Polish leaders by the Nazis in an attempt to eradicate Polish identity. A tragic and evil moment in Polish history.*

It was a spiritual experience to walk through this museum with Jacek. It provided a glimpse of the great spirit of evil which had woven its way into the cultures of Europe and prepared the way for truly demonically-inspired tyrants to lead whole peoples to wickedness and ultimately death and disaster. The slaughter and wickedness was so great it was almost as if I was seeing a vision of hell. In retaliation for the uprising, the German air force saturated the city with bombs. So complete was the devastation that the central areas were left with scarcely a stone standing upon a stone. The surrounding areas were filled with hollowed-out buildings. When the Russians finally entered, they arrested the leaders of the underground Polish government and uprising leaders and either killed them in the horrible slaughter at Katyn Forest or banished them to hard labor in prison camps.

Later in Lublin, I attended a special Mass in the Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity in the former palace of the rulers of Lublin, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the mass arrests of the Polish leadership. In an attempt to eradicate Polish identity, professors, priests, doctors, lawyers, government officials — the whole leadership of Poland — was systematically rounded up by the Nazis and killed, sent to concentration camps or exiled to hard labor.

Again, I experienced in a vivid way the depth of evil that had marched unrestrained through vast parts of Europe. It was almost as if I was seeing a vision of hell, so wicked and evil was the destruction and death being wrought. The gratuitous and sadistic violence was revealed in an especially terrifying manner at nearby Madan, the second largest concentration camp after Auschwitz in Poland. Here 60,000 Jews and 20,000 others— men, women and children — were killed in an attempt to exterminate the Jews and those who resisted the evil. Their ashes are now preserved in a monument.

What was most terrifying was to see how many were willing to do evil — to kill their fellow citizens, sometimes members of their own family — in order to save their own lives. I had often wondered why the Book of Revelation (see 21:8) included “cowards” among those who were consigned to the lake of fire and the second death after the final judgment. When I saw those who were willing to do great deeds of evil out of cowardice, I understood.

I resolved to be as clear as I could in my own mind and to admonish others, that disciples of Christ must never do evil even to save their own lives. It is much, much better to die than to do evil! For courage like this we need to humbly ask God and trust that when the hour of trial and decision confronts us, He will give us the grace needed. We don’t have to “feel” the grace or courage today, but we need to trust that it will be there in our hour of need, which can be the hour of great glory, the great privilege of dying for love of Christ and our fellow man.

## *Please Pray...*

- ✦ *that all Catholics will respond to the call of the New Evangelization and share their faith with courage and confidence.*
- ✦ *for continued opportunities to support the leadership of the Catholic Church.*
- ✦ *for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.*



But here's some good news! There is definitely a ferment in Poland of genuine renewal and evangelization. The day of teaching in Warsaw was sponsored by both Cardinal Nycz of Warsaw and Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, Archbishop of Krakow. Cardinal Dziwisz is the former secretary of Pope St. John Paul II. Many times he opened the doors of the Apostolic Palace for us to have Mass with the Pope in his private chapel.

Our time in Lublin began with an extraordinary welcome dinner at the invitation of Archbishop Stanislaw Budzik. He warmly greeted us at the door of the Archbishop's Palace and hosted a truly exceptional dinner for me, Jacek, the two priests who were hosting me in Lublin, and his priest-secretary. During a very leisurely, warm conversation, the Archbishop made clear that he was very committed to the New Evangelization and expressed particular interest in the evangelization programs offered at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit where I teach. He also expressed interest in the work of Renewal Ministries. He is establishing about 21 evangelization teams composed of a priest and several lay people who will give missions in each of the approximately 270 parishes of the Archdiocese. He was leaving the next morning for the annual meeting of all the Polish bishops at the famous shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa and asked if he could bring our greetings to them.



*In Lublin, Ralph spoke at a three-day retreat attended by 220 Polish priests.*



*Lublin Archbishop Budzik hosted a small welcome dinner for Ralph. The Archbishop shared his plans for evangelization and asked Ralph to share his thoughts and experiences.*

The next day, we began a retreat for 220 Polish priests. About half were from the Archdiocese of Lublin and half were from the rest of Poland and beyond. It was truly a privilege to “wash the feet of the saints” with the Word and Spirit of God. I gave six talks, answered questions and led a time of prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which happened in a wonderful way. The testimonies at the end of the retreat were very striking:

- One young priest openly testified that he had fallen into some of the sins I talked about and was grateful to go to confession. After he heard the teaching from St. Francis de Sales on the problem of nurturing an “affection for sin” in our hearts, he went to confession again. He said, he felt as if nails had been taken out of his heart and the healing love of God flooded in.
- Another priest testified that this was the first time he had ever experienced the personal love of God for him. A third priest testified that he was able to forgive his pastor for harsh treatment. The testimonies continued in a beautiful way.

There were so many priests we couldn't pray for them individually so I asked them to ask each other for prayer and they did. Many said it was the first time they had ever prayed for each other in this way and it opened up for them an experience of brotherly love that many had never before experienced:

- One priest said he was looking forward to being with his fellow priests on the retreat but now something better had happened. He knew he was with not only fellow priests, but with brothers.
- Another priest said he was totally shocked and never expected anything this life changing!

Praise God for His great love for priests – and all of us – and for the outpouring of His Spirit and the power of His Word!

The retreat was organized by a small group of Polish priests who meet together regularly for prayer and support. They did an excellent job and are another sign of hope.





The next day I gave a lecture at the Catholic University of Lublin (above) which was recently renamed the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. It is the leading Polish Catholic University and the place where Pope St. John Paul II lectured as a priest for more than 24 years.

This was really special as I have heard of the University for many years. I was greeted by the vice-rector and the dean of the faculty of theology attended the lecture which was sponsored by one of the theology departments at the University.

I felt rather inspired during the lecture and felt led to refer to the weeping crucifix and the weeping image of Our Lady of Częstochowa which have played key roles in the life of Lublin. The image of Our Lady began weeping tears in the late 1940s when the communists were consolidating control. Even though roads were blocked to prevent people from coming to see the image, thousands and thousands came through fields. Many miracles, conversions and healings occurred.



About 300 years ago, this crucifix (above) wept for a period of time and drew many people to a more fervent practice of their faith. In the late 1940s, this icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa (left) wept for a period of time. The communists set up roadblocks to prevent people from reaching the Church in which it was located. But thousands of Poles walked across fields and streams to reach the icon. Thousands of conversions and miracles were reported.



Fulfillment of All Desire



Hungry for God

One of the unexpected delights of the trip was discovering that The Fulfillment of All Desire had been translated and published in Polish. There were 220 copies available at the events where I spoke. All of them were instantly purchased and many more could have been sold if they had been in stock. Also, a new edition of Hungry for God had just been published in Polish. Again, all of the available copies sold out.



Among the many who asked Ralph to sign books was the priest pictured above. He attended the first events that Ralph, along with Peter Herbeck and John Wimber conducted in Poland in 1991 and again in 1993. He now leads a university ministry in Warsaw and has about 2,000 students meeting in 160 small groups. He has also led Alpha evangelization courses for the students for more than 10 years.

continued on pg 5



“ *These days life lacks people who can come through the final shakings — as well as through these present shakings — with the knowledge and the consciousness: those who are watching for the Lord will not be affected, in the eternal sense, even if they are hunted off the face of the earth.* ”  
— Fr. Alfred Delp, SJ executed by the Nazis near the end of World War II.

That evening I was asked to give a talk to all the seminarians and faculty of the Archdiocesan seminary. They have about 90 seminarians. As recently as the 1980s they had as many as 300. Even though the number of seminarians is decreasing rapidly it will be quite a while before a priest shortage is felt in Poland. For example, in the Archdiocese of Lublin there are about 900 priests and they are able to send about 100 out as missionaries. In addition, many priests are available to staff the parishes, as well as teach religion in the public schools.

On my last day in Poland, I gave three talks and led prayer for an outpouring of the Spirit at an all-day conference for more than a thousand evangelization leaders in the Archdiocese. It was held in one of the largest churches and included Mass celebrated by the Archbishop. Afterwards, the Archbishop asked me to come back often. The spiritual director of the seminary also invited me to come back!

It was a very blessed trip even though the Lord chose it as a time to give me a deeper vision of the power of evil than ever before. I never had to take a nap and slept well every night experiencing very little in the way of jet lag – a definite gift. I experienced the Lord giving me joy, energy and insight in all the things I had to do and was very appreciative at being able to labor side by side with so many noble Polish brothers and sisters.

Many people came up to me during the various events to recall how they first heard me — and John Wimber and Peter Herbeck — during our visits to Warsaw in 1991 and 1993 or with Sr. Ann Shields at the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in 1996. It was very encouraging to see how many lives were touched and real conversions happened during these previous visits to Poland. May the fruit of this most recent trip endure and multiply as well.

Thank you for your prayers these many years and for your support of all the wonderful work of Renewal Ministries.

In Jesus, Our Sure Hope,

*Ralph Martin*

Ralph Martin



*At the major seminary in the Archdiocese of Lublin, Ralph spoke to the seminarians and faculty about the New Evangelization. Above, they presented him with some mementos.*



*On his last day in Poland, Ralph spoke to 1,000 leaders in evangelization at a large Church in Lublin. The day concluded with a Mass celebrated by the Archbishop. Ralph was asked to lead a prayer after Communion for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit.*

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## The Gathering

May 29-31, 2015

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For more information or to register  
Call Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132  
or visit [www.RenewalMinistries.net](http://www.RenewalMinistries.net)



*Jesus, I Trust in You*

## *Will you help us save souls?*

Speak to souls about this great mercy while it is still the time for granting mercy. *Diary of St. Faustina #635*

Now is the time when mercy is being extended to the world. But this time will come to an end and the Lord will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. Souls are perishing. Time is of the essence. Laborers and resources are very limited.

You can help save souls when you include Renewal Ministries in your will. A bequest made to Renewal Ministries will make it possible for us to reach more souls with the Gospel through radio, television and missionary service.

Please consider making an investment with eternal rewards.

For more information or sample language, please contact Gary Seromik at [gseromik@renewalministries.net](mailto:gseromik@renewalministries.net) or 734-662-1730 ext. 21.

# On the Road

## February 2015 ENGAGEMENTS

**Ann Arbor, MI**  
**i.d.9:16 Disciples' Night**  
*February 5*  
RSVP on i.d.9:16 Facebook page or  
pete@id916.com

**Wichita, KS**  
**Diocesan Study Days\***  
*February 6-7*  
Ralph Martin

**Ann Arbor, MI**  
**Heart to Heart Women's Apostolate**  
*February 11*  
Sr. Ann Shields, SGL  
Contact: cwa@rc.net or 734-930-7497

**Columbus, OH**  
**St. Charles Preparatory School**  
*February 12*  
Sr. Ann Shields  
Contact: Bethesdahealing.org

**Montreal, QC**  
**Concordia University**  
*February 13*  
Ralph Martin

**Ann Arbor, MI**  
**Legatus\***  
*February 19*  
Ralph Martin

**Huntington, WV**  
**Lent Event, St Joseph Church**  
*February 20-21*  
Ralph Martin  
Contact: stjoes huntington.org or 304-525-5202

**Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, LA**  
**Men's and Women's Conference**  
*February 27-28*  
Debbie Herbeck  
Contact: HTConferences.org or 985-850-3174

**Clare, MI**  
**Our Lady of Hope Parish Staff Retreat\***  
*February 27*  
Sr. Ann Shields, SGL

**Columbus, OH**  
**18th Annual Men's Conference**  
*February 28*  
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck  
Contact: ColumbusCatholicMen.com

## March 2015 ENGAGEMENTS

**Toronto, ON**  
**Lift Jesus Higher Rally**  
*March 7*  
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, SGL  
Contact: lift-jesus-higher-rally.org

\* Not open to the public

## MISSIONS

**Ukraine**  
*February 22*  
Dcn. Zoli Kunszabó and Team

**St. Lucia**  
*February 22-March 1*  
John Kazanjian and Team

For more information about missions contact:  
Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or  
kkittle@renewalministries.net

“*The Lord has always revealed to mortals the treasures of his wisdom and his spirit, but now that the face of evil bares itself more and more, so does the Lord bare his treasures more.*”

— *St. John of the Cross*

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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, conferences, retreats and other international evangelistic events.*

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