



Proclaiming Jesus through Catholic Renewal and Evangelization

Dear Family,

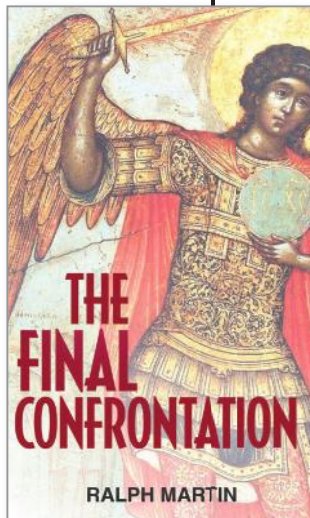
A letter from Ralph Martin



I don't think I've ever referred to you as family before, but we are indeed brothers and sisters in the Lord. Those who do the will of the Father are truly brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers to Jesus. As the demonically-inspired confusion of the world bears down upon us, I really appreciate how precious it is to have brothers and sisters to stand with.

Whether it's the absolutely blood-thirsty terrorism or the secular culture's almost unbelievable hostility to Christ and the Church throughout the world, or the confusion caused by some bishops and Cardinals, we're living in interesting times!

In times like these it's important that we check our foundation to see that we are standing on solid rock, the rock of God's Word, and are actively growing in our faith. As many of the saints have said, to not go forward is to risk going backward.



A few months ago, I was struck by the words of Cardinal Wojtyla shortly before he was elected Pope John Paul II. He said, we are now in "the final confrontation between the gospel and the anti-gospel, between the Church and the anti-church and between Christ and the anti-Christ." I was so struck by these words that I decided to write a booklet entitled, *The Final Confrontation*. It is now available at a very reasonable price. (See the enclosed order form for details.)

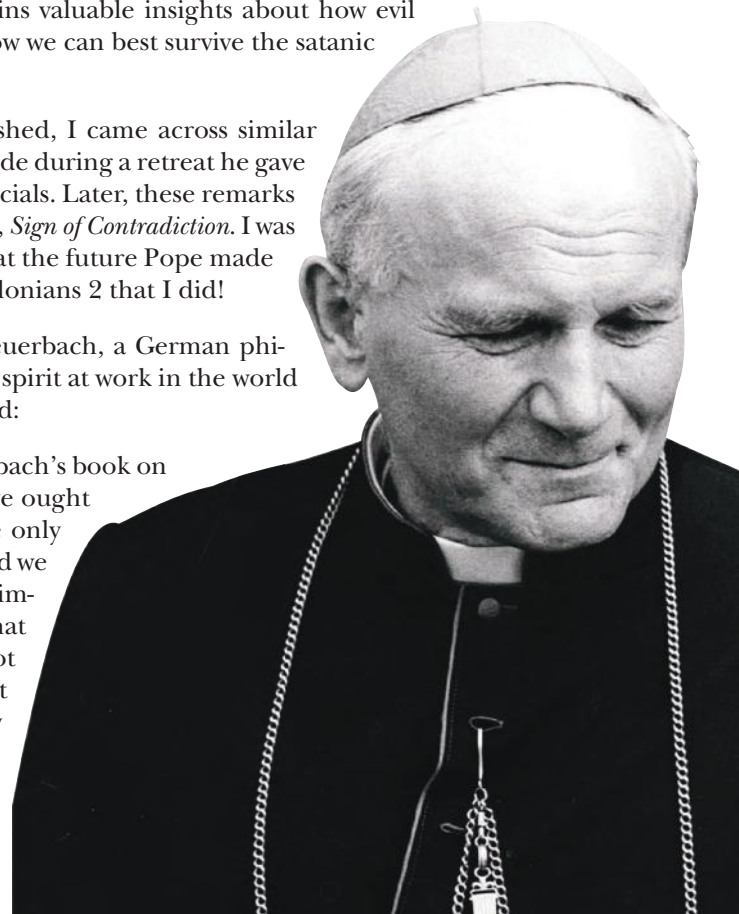
In the booklet, I look closely at 2 Thessalonians 2 which speaks of the final confrontation. It contains valuable insights about how evil will work during this time and how we can best survive the satanic onslaught.

Since the booklet was published, I came across similar remarks that Cardinal Wojtyla made during a retreat he gave to Pope Paul VI and the curia officials. Later, these remarks were published as a book entitled, *Sign of Contradiction*. I was surprised and excited to learn that the future Pope made the same connection to 2 Thessalonians 2 that I did!

Cardinal Wojtyla quotes Ludwig Feuerbach, a German philosopher whom he thinks expresses the spirit at work in the world today, what he describes as the anti-word:

Here is a typical extract from Feuerbach's book on religion: "In place of love of God we ought to acknowledge love of man as the only true religion; in place of belief in God we ought to expand man's belief in himself, in his own strength, the belief that humanity's destiny is dependent not on a being higher than humanity but on humanity itself, that man's only demon is man himself – primitive man, superstitious, egoistic, evil – but that similarly man's only god is man himself."

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Cardinal Wojtyla then writes:

We may be experiencing the highest level of tension between the Word and the anti-word in the whole of human history...We may now be wondering if this is the last lap along that way of denial which started out from around the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. To us, who know the whole of the bible from Genesis to Revelation, no stretch of that route can come as a surprise. We accept with trepidation but also with hope the inspired words of the Apostle Paul, "Let no man deceive you in any way, because first it is necessary for the rebellion to come, and for the man of sin, the son of perdition to reveal himself." 2 Thessalonians 2:2-3

I do think it would be very helpful for you to get *The Final Confrontation* and share it with friends. The second chapter of 2 Thessalonians reveals some amazingly important information that will help us a great deal in the times ahead.

Speaking of uncertain times, don't forget Mary! She has been given an important role in our time. Many times, the Lord has sent Mary to fulfill an evangelistic, intercessory, prophetic role. Her extraordinary role in salvation history is highlighted in a special article written by Deacon Dan Foley, Chairman of our US Board. Mary, pray for us and for the Church and the world!

Hang in there family, Jesus is Lord!!

Your brother,

Ralph Martin

Ralph Martin



Sr. Ann Shields, SGL conducted a parish mission at St. Benedict in Halifax, NS. "The soil had been tilled and was ready for the seeds of faith to be planted," she said. "It was exciting to watch people of all ages – from eight to 80 – commit their life to Christ."

Please Pray...

- ⊕ for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and in the lives of all Catholics.
- ⊕ that Mary, Star of Evangelization, may guide the Church in proclaiming Christ to all nations.
- ⊕ for the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

This month on *The* **CHOICES** *We face*



May 5 & 8 **Special guest Monica Pope**
God Hears the Cry of the Poor

May 12 & 15 **Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck**
Mission: Our Deepest Identity



May 19 & 22 **Special guests Dan and Caroline Dirkes**
Evangelism for Everyone

May 26 & 29 **Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck**
The Final Confrontation

The Choices We Face is distributed by national and local cable networks, independent broadcast stations and international satellites. To find out when the program airs in your area, please visit RenewalMinistries.net/TV.

forming young adults into
intentional disciples
of Jesus Christ.



Watch the Monthly Disciples Night LIVE
Thursday, May 7 at 7:40 p.m. EDT id916.com

Is your parish or diocese looking for a dynamic young adult discipleship and evangelization program? For more information about how you can bring Renewal Ministries' young adult ministry, i.d.9:16 to your parish or diocese contact us at id916.com.

It's not too late to register!

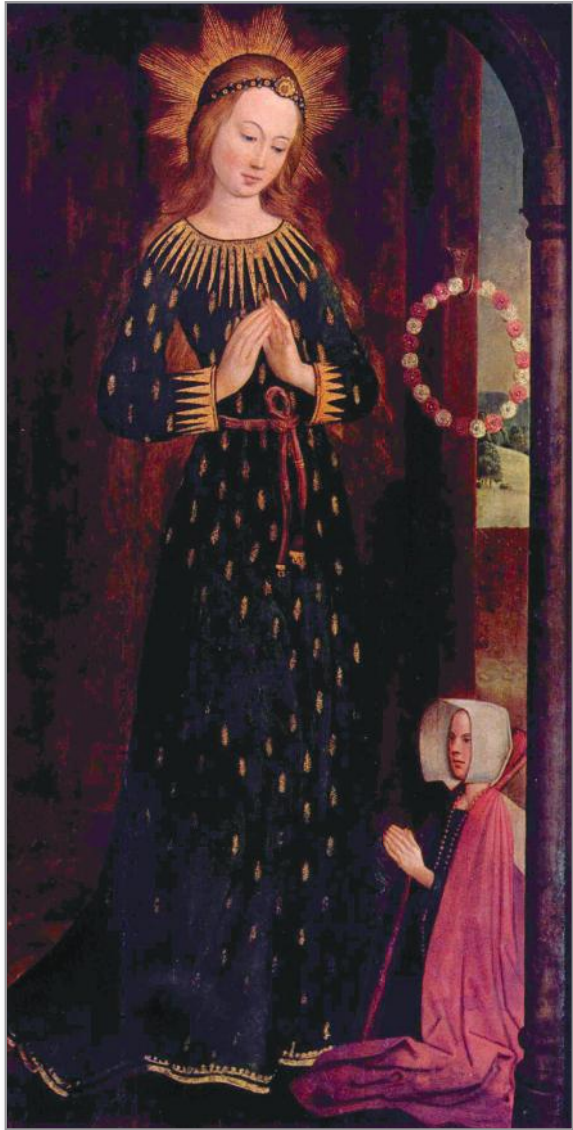
The Gathering
May 29-31, 2015

**UNSHAKABLE
KINGDOM**

**A weekend of empowerment
with Renewal Ministries!**

Eagle Crest Conference Center, Marriot Hotel, Ypsilanti, MI
For more information or to register
call Kathleen at 734-662-1730 ext. 132 or visit RenewalMinistries.net

Mary the Star of Evangelization



The Virgin Mary with Headress by Hinrik Funhof, ca. 1480

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY has been called the “Star of Evangelization” by Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. In addition, the Ordinary Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization in 2012 invoked her maternal protection and intercession. Is this title a mere sentimental tribute or is it prophetic?

Almost all Catholics hold Mary in high esteem but many see her contribution as solely in the distant past. They would argue that she doesn’t have a continuing role in the Church’s mission. Unfortunately, many faithful Catholics don’t fully understand the role that Jesus gave her in the Church throughout the ages.

From the beginning, Mary’s mission is intimately linked to the mission of the Redeemer. He is the New Adam, she is the New Eve. Eve accepted the word of the Evil One. Mary responded, “yes” to the Word of God. Eve brought forth death. Mary brings forth Life itself. Mary is the “woman of faith,” the one who is “blessed” precisely because she believed that “the Lord’s word to her would be fulfilled” (see Lk 1:45).

In 2011, Father Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM, the Capuchin preacher to the papal household gave a series of talks to Pope Benedict XVI and the papal household. In his presentation on the history of the Church’s preaching, he focused on the great historical periods of evangelization and re-evangelization. As he worked his way to the present day, he focused on the interplay between prayer and mission and then concluded on a clearly Marian note:

It is not enough that there be in the Church those who dedicate themselves to contemplation and those who dedicate themselves to mission: there must rather be a synthesis of the two things in the very life of every missionary. Mary is the Star of Evangelization, for she brought the Word, not to this or that people, but to the whole world.¹

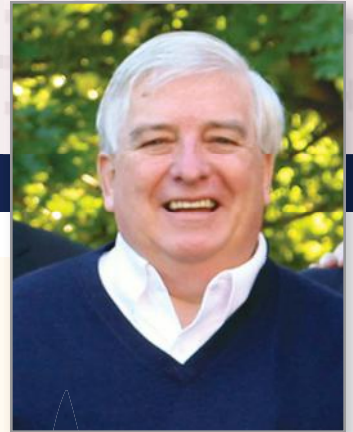
Fr. Cantalamessa went on to point out that Mary did so by carrying the Word “in her womb – not in her mouth or on her lips.” She was filled “even physically, with Christ – and she radiated Him with her very presence.”

Pope St. John Paul II, in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, identifies the reason for Mary’s exalted position – she is the woman of faith. He wrote:

She “advanced in her pilgrimage of faith” and at the same time, in a discreet yet direct and effective way, she made present to humanity the mystery of Christ. And she still continues to do so. (*Redemptoris Mater* §19)

The last words we hear from Mary in Sacred Scripture are at the wedding feast at Cana: “Do whatever He tells you” (Jn 2:5). However, her discipleship never wavered. She accompanied her Son all the way to the Cross and it is there that Jesus gave her to us as “mother.” After the Ascension, she was still there as “mother” to the Apostles and disciples, helping them to be open and ready for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Mary has continued to be active and powerful in the salvific mission of her Son. One example is the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The Christian fleet, arrayed against a vastly superior Ottoman armada, was at a significant disadvantage. Pope St. Pius V asked all Catholics to pray the Rosary for victory.



The Catholic fleet's victory was so decisive that it prevented the Islamic invasion of Europe. It is said that, at the moment of victory, the Pope arose from a meeting in Rome and walked to a window and exclaimed with supernatural knowledge that victory had been achieved.

A more recent example is Mary's intervention as Our Lady of Guadalupe. Because she appeared to Juan Diego – an Aztec convert to the faith – in the guise of one of his own people, Mary bridged the gap between the Church of the distrusted Spanish and the native people. In doing so, she showed herself as the Church's supreme evangelist. It is reported that more than nine million Indians converted to the faith.

History confirms that Mary has and can directly act to bring people to her Son. Yet, when and how she might intervene in the future remains a mystery. It cannot be predicted but it can be prayed for.

Donald Cardinal Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington, DC and a key participant in the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization, wrote this about Mary:

We cannot equal Mary in the wondrous mysteries in which she participated and in the privileges she received. But we can certainly emulate her faith as Mary said, in effect, "Although I do not always understand the unfolding of God's plan and God's providential order, nonetheless, if God calls, I accept. If God challenges, I respond."²

As we seek to bring others to Jesus in these trying times, may our faith, hope, and love be perfected so that we, too, might say: "If God calls, I accept, if God challenges, I respond."

In this month of May, especially dedicated to our Blessed Mother, may we fervently pray both for her intercession and her motherly intervention. ✚

Deacon Dan Foley is chairman of the US Board of Directors for Renewal Ministries.

1. Cantalamessa, Raniero, Advent Retreat, December 9, 2011.

2. <http://cardinalsblog.adw.org/2013/08/mary-star-of-evangelization/>

Prayer to Mary, Star of the New Evangelization

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life
in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own "yes"
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Filled with Christ's presence,
you brought joy to John the Baptist,
making him exult in the womb of his mother.
Brimming over with joy,
you sang of the great things done by God.
Standing at the foot of the cross
with unyielding faith,
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.

Obtain for us now a new ardor born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.

Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.
Virgin of listening and contemplation,
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us.

Amen. Alleluia!

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

Mission to...Toronto!

2015 Lift Jesus Higher Rally: The Happiness Factor



The 23rd annual *Lift Jesus Higher Rally* drew approximately 4,000 people to the Toronto Metro Convention Centre. They came ready to learn how to be happy.

How to be Happy *No Matter What*

Al Kresta, a popular Catholic talk show host and author was the keynote speaker. He said we typically make two mistakes regarding happiness. First, we believe that happiness is a feeling and that we can obtain it. In truth, happiness is the result of pursuing something else.

The second mistake is thinking that happiness is dependent on our circumstances. In actuality, happiness is achievable in even the most difficult circumstances. He then shared about his battle with a flesh-eating bacteria which resulted in the amputation of his left leg. During this illness he discovered purpose in suffering.

Happiness and Joy in the Holy Spirit

“The secret to authentic happiness is allowing the love of Jesus Christ to touch and transform our hearts,” said Peter Herbeck, Vice President of Renewal Ministries.

The problem is we all experience an internal battle; part of us doesn’t trust God. Peter explained that we need a new heart. Jesus came to die on the cross, to put away sin’s power so we can have a new heart and He can pour His love, His Holy Spirit into our hearts. “Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can trust completely in the Father and experience true happiness,” he concluded.

Sr. Ann Shields, SGL reiterated that the key to joy is the Holy Spirit. She explained that when the Holy Spirit dwells in us, joy is like a river that never ceases to flow. Even in our darkest days, we have the utter assurance that God is with us, that He loves us.





When we know the joy of the Lord, we can change the world. To know that joy, we need to know the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The only way to develop that deeply personal relationship is through ongoing communication throughout each day.

Sr. Ann challenged everyone to live one beatitude for a year. “Your life will change. You will become more like Christ,” she said.

Fly to the Heart of Things

The joy-filled day concluded with Mass celebrated by Thomas Cardinal Collins. During his homily he urged participants to “fly to the heart of things.” He explained that we must focus on that which is most important.

The heart of things is found in the Law of God and in the person of Jesus Christ. “Focus on Christ with passion, love, and devotion,” he said. “Live in imitation of Him. Encounter Him. Love like Him. This changes everything.”

Lift Jesus Higher Youth Rally: #RealTalk

The youth rally drew approximately 1,000 tweens and teens. The theme was “#RealTalk.” Hosted by i.d.9:16, the event was designed to help youth be authentic and to connect with Jesus.

The speakers included Caroline Gambale-Dirkes of 2Tim4 Ministries and James Kresta, i.d.9:16 member, law student and son of Al Kresta. The fast-paced program included skits, videos, testimonies, high-powered praise and worship music by Chris Bray, prayer ministry and Eucharistic adoration. Like the adult rally, the youth track concluded with Mass, celebrated by Fr. Simon Lobo of the Companions of the Cross.

Mark your calendars! The 24th annual *Lift Jesus Higher Rally* in Toronto is March 5, 2016!



On the Road

“If you invoke
the Blessed Virgin
when you are tempted,
she will come at once to
your help, and Satan
will leave you.”

— St. John Vianney

May 2015 ENGAGEMENTS

Oakbrook Terrace, IL Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation Conference

May 1
Ralph Martin
Contact: 314-727-6279

Ann Arbor, MI i.d.9:16 Disciples' Night

May 7
Join us via livestream: id916.com/live
Contact: pete@id916.com

Warner, NH Northeast Catholic College Commencement

May 9
Ralph Martin
Contact: www.northeastcatholic.edu

Ave Maria, FL Marian Eucharistic Conference, Ave Maria University

May 15-17
Ralph Martin
Contact: Brian.Scanlan@avemaria.edu

Washington, DC Academy of Catholic Theology*

May 19-21
Ralph Martin

Diocese of Gaylord, MI Baraga Broadcasting Event

May 20
Peter Herbeck
Contact: thornacek@spartannash.com

* Not open to the public

For a complete listing visit RenewalMinistries.net/Events

Washington, DC Georgetown University Theological Symposium

May 21-24
Ralph Martin
Contact: <http://dc2015.ei-research.net>

Santa Clara, CA Northern California 28th Annual Catholic Charismatic Conference

May 22-24
Peter Herbeck
Contact: www.ncrcspirit.org

Ypsilanti, MI Renewal Ministries Gathering

May 29-30
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields,
SGL
Contact: kkittle@renewalministries.net

MISSIONS

Hungary	May 13 - Sept 25
Turkey	May 13-25
Serbia	May 13-17
Haiti	June 7-17
Mexico	June 12-20
Uganda	June 26 - July 10
Romania	June 30 - July 5

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

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Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, St. Louis, MO

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Deacon Dan Foley

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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.

Editor

Rose Wingfield

Design

Cynthia Rutherford

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www.renewalministries.net

P.O. Box 1426 Ann Arbor, MI 48106 phone 734-662-1730

In Canada P.O. Box 400 Station U Toronto, ON M8Z 5Y8 phone 416-251-4255