# + RENEWAL H MINISTRIES

# CATHOLIC RENEWAL & EVANGELIZATION

**MARCH 2021** 

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



A LETTER >

The Church of Tomorrow PAGE 3

The Choices We Face 2021 Highlights PAGE 4

Renewal Ministries' Impact on Evangelization in Uganda PAGE 6

Save the Dates! PAGE 8

We can't expect to make progress in the spiritual journey without courage, strong determination, or strong desire. St. Teresa of Avila tells us that if we lack these essential qualities we should ask God for them and He will give them to us. Not all at once but gradually over time if we persevere in asking."

//RALPH MARTIN

### Dear Fellow Disciples,

It's hard to say what the situation will be when this newsletter arrives. Those who use violence should be prosecuted no matter what their cause. As I write this, however, an aggressive purge, shaming, and proposed prosecution of all those who in any way questioned the integrity of the recent election or who engaged in peaceful protest concerning it is proceeding with remarkable ruthlessness and boldness.

Almost every powerful segment of our society has come together in censoring, cancelling, and intimidating alternate viewpoints—huge corporations whose products we all use, all the major social media companies, much of professional sports, the dominant entertainment industry, all the mainstream media companies, virtually all the major universities, and now all governmental agencies in both the US and Canada. People are being fired from their jobs if there is any hint of using freedom of speech or association that those in power now deem as "treasonous." It's hard to believe all this is happening, but it is. I knew we were moving in this direction, but I wasn't expecting the suddenness and comprehensiveness of the totalitarian control being imposed almost overnight.

The aggressive support of killing babies in the womb, suffocating religious freedom, denying conscience exemptions for Catholic medical providers, and once again trying to force the Little Sisters of the Poor and other entities like them to provide contraceptive insurance coverage that is against their conscience proceeds apace. Free speech and freedom of religion are under grave and powerful attack, and the wickedness and foolishness of it all is ignored by those who don't want to be confused about the facts—departing from God's ways will be the end of civil society as we know it, and possibly the end of this country. A strange, demonically inspired hysteria is demanding that everyone get on the "right side of history" or be shunted aside or worse. It's

what a secular author recently described as "the madness of crowds." Those who continually invoke the magical phrase "follow the science" never do that when it conflicts with their totalitarian, ideological goals. Fr. Michael Scanlan's prophesies that I've commented on in our YouTube Channel speak directly to these tragic outcomes. (You can find my videos on Fr. Scanlan's prophecies at this link: www.renewalministries.net/ prophetic-messages.) The Sexual Revolution of the 1960s is now barreling towards its illogical and disastrous conclusion, as it now denies biological reality and any significant link between sexuality and the holiness of marriage between a man and a woman, open to the gift of children.

This has all happened so fast and with such viciousness that I don't think it can be explained without acknowledging significant involvement by demonic "powers and principalities" (see Eph 6:12). The "nations" are arraying together against Christ and his people (Acts 4:26). The spirit of the antichrist is rising in the world. (Both Peter and I have tried to give some biblical clarity about the spirit of the antichrist in recent videos found on our YouTube channel, at www.youtube.com/renewalministriesrm.)

Many of us are fighting discouragement, depression, sadness, anger, and frustration. The continual suffocating presence of Covid-19 and its escalating variants puts a pall over everything. Many are discouraged that intense prayer and intercession didn't

block all this from happening. Many are distressed that many of our bishops didn't and don't speak clearly or give real leadership, and that some bishops are even sympathetic to the powers oppressing us. Many are tempted to doubt the efficacy of prayer or the goodness of God.

#### **BUT DON'T!**

St. Ignatius of Loyola teaches that discouragement is never from the Lord and should always be immediately and aggressively rejected and resisted. If we give in to discouragement, it takes away our faith, our hope, even our love. We need faith, for it overcomes the world and gives us both hope and joy, even now, for the great gift that will be bestowed on us when Christ Jesus appears (1 Pt 1:13). As Scripture says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Js 4:7). So, let's all join the resistance against the oppression and lies of the evil one!

It is absolutely true that God heard all our prayers and valued all our sacrifices and will answer them in a way we weren't anticipating but in a way that will fully satisfy us when we see it unfold. There's nothing happening that isn't happening under the powerful and wise providence of God. He is permitting evil to manifest itself so people can more clearly choose. Are you with Christ or against Him?

Pope Benedict XVI prophesied this many years ago when he was a young priest. He saw it coming and knew it had hardly yet begun. He saw that the Church would lose its power and influence in society, would lose many of its buildings and institutions, that many of its adherents would go over to the world, and that in the end only a remnant of faithful disciples would remain. But out of that remnant will come a purified, more powerful Church, in which men lost in technological loneliness can find the true home they have always been seeking. We have included Pope Benedict XVI's startling words on page three of this newsletter. You also

can find additional prophetic perspective on what we are currently experiencing in chapter ten of my new book, *A Church in Crisis: Pathways Forward.* 

# False optimism has been exposed. What remains is true and real hope.

Hope is not wishful thinking; hope is that certain knowledge that Christ has and will triumph. After thousands of years of hopeful expectation through many dark centuries filled with pain, the Messiah finally appeared and did all that was necessary to rescue us from this present darkness of sin, death, and evil. And just as certain as his first coming was, so too will be his second coming. When we meet Him—whether that be through our death or his return—He will wipe away every tear; right every injustice; heal every wound; perfect every godly love; and save, magnify, and make eternal every moment of love, tenderness, mercy, and compassion we have ever experienced.

Such a great reward awaits us after such a short time of exile on a fallen planet. Take courage—our hope is both sure and unbelievably glorious. Jesus truly is the Lord! Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Your fellow disciple,

Rolph Martin

Ralph

**P.S.** As we journey through these challenging times, let's come together to seek the wisdom of the saints and grow in holiness. I am leading a free online Lenten Mission that draws from my book *The Fulfillment of All Desire*, on Feb. 28 and March 7, 14, and 21, from 8-9 p.m. ET. Visit www.renewalministries. net/lentmission for more details and to register.

The Lord has enabled us to encourage so many people this year, thanks to your help! I want to conclude with a few of the hundreds of responses we've received to the outreach you have helped make possible!

"We just finished a retreat day with your Advent Mission videos. It was a blessing. I appreciated your great grasp of the material and ability to explain it in a very understandable way! Your personal examples were appreciated too. The book has just blown me away. Just past the halfway mark, I came to realize something I had been completely blind to all my life. In Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's words: 'There is no way for grace to enter if a sense of merit has taken residence in the soul. A full acknowledgement of grace is a sign of the fullness of grace.' Even our merits are a gift from God—a result of grace. I actually wept when this dawned on me. My relationship with God just took a giant leap forward. Thank you."

"This year with and all of its unexpected twists and turns has profoundly confirmed for us the blessing of Renewal Ministries. I believe that all of your work, prayer, ministry, and service to the Lord prepared you to speak the truth in this time of great confusion in the Church and the world. Perhaps it was for this very time that God called you into His service. We are grateful to journey with you."

"I had no idea of the number of false identities that I carry with me on a daily basis. To know that my identity is first and foremost a son of the King changes the way I view myself and my relationship with God." (from a young adult taking id's Spirit-Filled Leadership Intensive Training Course)

"I would like to express my deepest thanks for *Fire On the Earth*. You cut to the truth and deliver it with such love. This week's content is very sobering, but something we all need to hear."

"I wept as I viewed this. That fire you speak of is in you and all at Renewal Ministries. I am passing this on to our bishop. We all need to be set ablaze. So many souls to minister to."

"Thank you for a truly powerful and Holy Spirit-inspired video. I was moved to a greater confidence, peace, and trust in our Lord to help us in these troubled times. God bless you."

"The Hour podcast refreshes my soul. Each episode I have listened to has provided moments of insight and consolation. The conversational style makes the material accessible. I leave The Hour feeling like I have met the Lord."

"Pete Burak does a great job on *The Hour*. Great guests. It's helpful in starting prayer. I always hear God say, 'This is what I wanted you to hear today.' The seeds you are planting are blooming here in Oregon. Thank you!"

"I want to say a very big 'Thank You' for your faithfulness, sacrifice, and courage over many years."

"I've been reading your new book, A Church in Crisis: Pathways Forward. Wow, what a blessing it has been! It has given me such clarity—reading it is like looking at a clear snapshot of the Church. And now that the problems have been 'named,' I have so much more peace in my heart. Now I know what we're dealing with! Before it was an amorphous cloud of confusion, but with your book, there is a new light, praise God!"

"When I saw your new book, A Church in Crisis: Pathways Forward, I knew I could read it with assurance of solid Church teaching. I cannot tell you how reassuring that is. We have started a small group studying your book and it has been such a comfort to know we are not alone in what we have been seeing for many years. You have helped fill in many of the puzzle pieces that I just could not pull together. Thank you for your courage in releasing this book."



From the crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge—a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so will she lose many of her social privileges. In contrast to an earlier age, she will be seen much more as a voluntary society, entered only by free decision. . . .

But in all of the changes at which one might guess, the Church will find her essence afresh and with full conviction in that which was always at her center: faith in the triune God, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, in the presence of the Spirit until the end of the world. In faith and prayer, she will again recognize her true center and experience the sacraments again as the worship of God and not as a subject for liturgical scholarship.

The Church will be a more spiritual Church, not presuming upon a political mandate, flirting as little with the Left as with the Right. It will be hard going for the Church, for the process of crystalization and clarification will cost her much valuable energy. It will make her poor and cause her to become the Church of the meek.

The process will be all the more arduous, for sectarian narrow-mindedness as well as pompous self-will will have to be shed. One may predict that all of this will take time. The process will be long and wearisome as was the road

from the false progressivism of the eve of the French Revolution—when a bishop might be thought smart if he made fun of dogmas and even insinuated that the existence of God was by no means certain—to the renewal of the nineteenth century.

#### But when the trial of this sifting is past, a great power will flow from a more spiritualized and simplified Church.

Men in a totally planned world will find themselves unspeakably lonely. If they have completely lost sight of God, they will feel the whole horror of their poverty. Then they will discover the little flock of believers as something wholly new. They will discover it as a hope that is meant for them, an answer for which they have always been searching in secret.

And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already . . . but the Church of faith. She may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but she will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as man's home, where he will find life and hope beyond death.

(Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future,* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010], Kindle, 116-118.)

## THE CHOICES WE FACE 2021

This month, EWTN will begin airing the thirty-seventh season of *The Choices We Face*. This widely acclaimed program is the longest-running Catholic television show in history! Each week, hosts Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck explore important topics concerning the faith. This season's interviews are our strongest yet, and include guests from various callings, including a bishop, priests, evangelists, parents, and theologians.







#### Marcus Peter · Seeing the Truth

Marcus Peter shares his journey from break dancer, Malaysian hip hop artist, and militant atheist to biblical scholar and theology teacher.

#### Dan Burke · The Paradigm of Ascent

Dan Burke discusses his new book, *Spiritual Warfare and the Discernment of Spirits*, and the treasure of St. Ignatius' teaching.

#### Dan Burke · Surrendering to Mercy

Dan Burke shares about transitioning from EWTN to the Avila Foundation, miraculously surviving Covid-19, and the powerful deathbed conversion of his father.



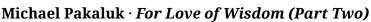


#### Kelly Hernandez · Coming Home Again

Kelly shares how God's Word has guided her to a full and wonderful life, embracing his plan for her as a wife, mother, student, and director of Adult Faith Formation and RCIA.

#### Michael Pakaluk · For Love of Wisdom (Part One)

Dr. Michael Pakaluk shares his remarkable journey from atheism to Catholicism and the magnificent way God worked amid suffering, loss, and the sincere pursuit of wisdom.



Continuing the conversation with Dr. Michael Pakaluk on natural law, the nature of marriage and gender, and how education is a key to cultural restoration.





#### Bart Schuchts · A Return to the Father

▶ Bart shares his incredible story, from his father walking out on their family, to the NFL, to deep restoration and healing for his whole family.

#### Patti Mansfield · Walk by Faith With Mary

Patti Mansfield invites us to borrow the faith of the Blessed Virgin Mary in times of difficulty, uncertainty, confusion, and darkness.





#### Msgr. Charles Pope · In Pursuit of Courage

Msgr. Pope speaks with Peter about the cardinal virtue of fortitude/courage, a sorely needed virtue in today's world.

#### Msgr. Charles Pope · Come to the Wedding Feast

Msgr. Pope shares his insights on the parables of Jesus and the light and truth they convey about the Kingdom of God and our destiny.



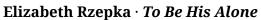
Ron Huntley shares about his journey to full-time ministry with Fr. James Mallon and bringing the three keys of divine renovation into parishes for dynamic renewal.





#### Fr. Mathias Thelen · Unleashing Transforming Power

Fr. Mathias Thelen, President of Encounter Ministries, discusses the need to unleash the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in the world.



Renewal Ministries' Radio and TV Producer shares her testimony and how the Lord captivated her heart, inviting her to consecrated life.





#### Bishop Andrew Cozzens · Saved for A Purpose

Bishop Cozzens shares his journey, from his mother being told he wouldn't survive birth, to being named a bishop and embracing this difficult call with the help of God's grace.



Michelle and Tom share the amazing story of how Michelle's daughter Angela was saved from death by nudges of the Holy Spirit.





#### Jonathan Reyes · A Force for Renewal

Jonathan Reyes, Senior Vice President of Evangelization and Faith Formation for the Knights of Columbus, shares his dynamic vision for the Knights: men in fraternity, committed to the faith, leading and caring for their families.



### PLEASE PRAY

- That, like Samuel, we will hear the Lord speaking and not permit "any word of his to be without effect" (1 Sm 3:19).
- That the uncertainty in the world would lead more people to seek the certainty of God's truth and love.
- For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.



Renewal Ministries recently received the following letters (which have been abridged to fit space restrictions) and photos from Catholic leaders in Uganda. According to Bishop Joseph Ecirn Oliach, they were sent as a "vivid expression of our heartfelt gratitude to you." We hope you are as encouraged by what the Lord has been able to accomplish through your support as we are! The bishop also asked for prayers for his "priests, who are now involved in the evangelization ministry during the Coronavirus pandemic." He wrote, "Pastoral work in this context is risky and challenging, yet our people need our attention and care."

#### FROM JOSEPH AONU OKIROR

I learned about Renewal Ministries in 1980 from a local Catholic Charismatic Renewal leader, Eric Okiror, who had encountered a missionary priest on fire for Jesus. The priest laid his hands on Eric and prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon him. That experience was revolutionary in Eric's life, as he resigned from his job to spread the renewal throughout eastern Uganda. Providentially, the priest continued to send useful books, newsletters, and magazines, such as *New Covenant Magazine*, which was edited by Ralph Martin.

The materials sent by that priest were our tutorials. We asked permission to translate some of them, especially the *Life in the Spirit Seminar Manual*, into our local language so that we could teach it at prayer groups. As a result, we saw many people give their lives to Jesus and live radically transformed lives.

Renewal Ministries offered muchneeded direction for the renewal. Some of us wanted to see as many Catholics as possible experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so we made many sacrifices in order to devote ourselves to full-time evangelization. We started working and sharing our limited resources to live community life, which eventually led to the founding of Emmaus Centre.

#### AN EVANGELIZATION ALLY

As a ministry, we faced a lot of opposition and yet remained obedient and faithful to the leadership of the Catholic Church. Renewal Ministries, through its writings and teachings, kept us motivated. Later on, when books like *A Crisis of Truth* came, they confirmed what we believed was also happening in Africa—syncretism and lukewarmness in matters concerning faith.

Our deepest desire was to form lay people for evangelization with full support from the priests. To achieve this, we felt inspired by the Holy Spirit to start a special ministry to help priests better understand the Renewal. The most effective tool we found for this was exposure to Life in the Spirit Seminars and other Charismatic retreats.

In 1993, we organized the first Life in the Spirit Seminar for priests, which was very successful. We began hosting the seminar annually.

In 1999, we wanted to honor priests as our "fathers" representing God the Father. We invited Renewal Ministries to facilitate two events: our first retreat for 125 priests from all over Uganda, and a few priests from Kenya and Tanzania, at our Emmaus Centre Katikamu; and a National Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, which drew over ten-thousand participants. We were so happy to host Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, and other

seasoned leaders like Sr. Ann Shields, Sr. Sarah Burdick, Fr. Tom Forrest, and many others.

#### PRIESTS' FRATERNITY

As a result of the priests' retreats at Emmaus Centre, the priests in Uganda formed what is called the "priests' fraternity" in 2002.

In 2003, Renewal Ministries again sponsored a large priests' retreat, bringing together 350 priests from seven African countries for one week. Since then, Renewal Ministries has helped us sponsor six international priests' retreats, which are organized by the priests' fraternity together with Emmaus Centre. Between 350 to 450 cardinals, archbishops, bishops, monsignors, and priests from up to ten countries typically attend these retreats. Renewal Ministries invites the best preachers or facilitators from around the globe, including very gifted cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons, sisters, and lay leaders to share with the priests from their wealth of experiences.

Many positive fruits have come out of these special retreats, including but not limited to: a renewed vigor to preach the Gospel with power and authority, rediscovery of Charismatic gifts, deeper prayer life among priests, improved community and collaborative ministry among priests, and much more. Today more than ever, many priests are open

to the work of the Spirit through the Charismatic Renewal throughout the country.

#### **POLITICAL LEADERS**

Renewal Ministries also helped sponsor two retreats for political leaders, which included government ministers and Parliament members and staff. The joy and excitement were the same. One minister commented that it was the first time someone thought about organizing Spirit-filled retreats for politicians. In one of them, Deacon Larry Oney and Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw kindled in the political leaders a deep sense of Christian discipleship.

#### **MAJOR SEMINARIANS**

The major seminarians requested that they also be exposed to radical missionary discipleship before being ordained priests, so that they could become priests who are strong in their relationship with Jesus. In 2007, Renewal Ministries started supporting this initiative. Since then, at the end of each academic year, major seminarians come to Emmaus Centre for Life in the Spirit Seminars and other leadership training courses, which have helped deepen their relationship with God. With Renewal Ministries' support, we host between 120 and 150 major seminarians from the five major seminaries of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania every year.

# SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP AND EVANGELIZATION

Renewal Ministries has also supported the running costs of the School of Discipleship and Evangelization. These schools, so far twenty-four in number, have trained over four-hundred pastoral workers since 1991. Each training school runs between one to three years.

The students come from all over Africa: Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, DR Congo, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, and Ghana. After their training, participants are sent to many other countries to evangelize. Some of them have formed similar communities in their respective countries that continue to bear fruit.

#### **SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES**

In 2019, Renewal Ministries sent missionaries and financial support through the Emmaus Centre team to

reach out to the suffering communities of South Sudanese Refugees in Arua, after the bishop of Tambura Yambio in South Sudan and the Bishop of Arua Catholic Diocese in Uganda invited lay pastoral workers from Emmaus Centre to serve in the refugee camps. This was probably the most touching and meaningful of our ministries, as a lot of emotional and psychological healing was experienced by the suffering Church in those camps. Unbound helped many people to forgive their enemies. With Renewal Ministries' support, we also were able to provide participants with Bibles—rare commodities in the camp!

#### **DIOCESAN PRIESTS' RETREATS**

Not all priests can travel to Ggaba to attend the International Priests' Retreats, so we have collaborated with local bishops to organize diocesan priests' retreats. In 2019, Renewal Ministries helped us pioneer such a retreat for Soroti Catholic Diocese. This retreat was very successful, as all seventy-five priests from the diocese attended. We hope this creative method of evangelization will continue, in order to reach many more priests who may not be able to attend the general retreat.

# CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL GATHERINGS

Over the years, Renewal Ministries also has financially supported several national conferences of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, attended by close to 30,000 people. In this way, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Uganda has received tremendous growth both in numbers and quality of Christian life. The bishops increasingly appreciate our contribution to the Church, as many Catholics have rediscovered their first love and started serving the Church with great commitment and generosity.

#### **UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

Since 1994, Renewal Ministries also has invested in the formation and training of young Catholic university student leaders. As a result, most of the strong leaders of the Renewal today were formed with support from Renewal Ministries. From Uganda, these young Catholic evangelists have gone out into the whole world to evangelize.

We send our deepest appreciation to all Renewal Ministries' donors. Your generosity has touched hearts and populated heaven in ways only known to God.

#### FROM RT. REV. DR. JOSEPH ECIRN OLIACH, BISHOP OF SOROTI CATHOLIC DIOCESE

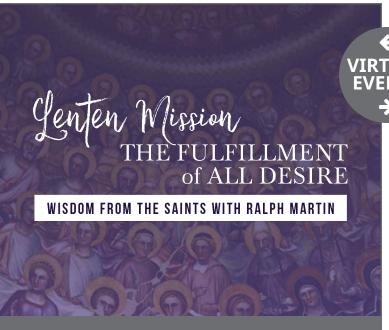
Cordial greetings from the Catholic Diocese of Soroti, in Uganda.... I have always wanted to write to you to express our sincere appreciation for all the great work you do for our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy Catholic Church around the world. I particularly want to thank you for the efforts you have invested in financially supporting the renewal of the priestly ministry. If a priest is strong in faith, so will the whole parish be brought to Jesus, but if he is weak, the consequences can be fatal.

I am very happy to report that I am one of the happy beneficiaries of Renewal Ministries' generosity in sponsoring the International Priests' Retreats in Ggaba National Major Seminary in Uganda. I still have great memories of the last retreat in 2018, just before my appointment to the episcopate. So enriching were the teachings and homilies that many of my brother priests yearn for the next one hopefully soon, God willing. . . .

In Uganda, priests often travel great distances—even through rivers to baptize and provide the sacraments.



Please visit www.RenewalMinistries.net/events for the most up-to-date calendar.



LENTEN MISSION WITH RALPH MARTIN

FEB 28, & MAR 7, 14, & 21

Join Ralph Martin for a LIVE online Lenten Mission from **8-9 p.m. ET** on four consecutive Sundays in Lent! Ralph will draw from his book *The Fulfillment of All Desire* to help you build a solid foundation for the spiritual journey and grow in holiness through the wisdom of the saints. The Lenten Mission will build on content from the Advent Mission, but earlier participation is not necessary.

For details and registration, visit: RenewalMinistries.net/lentmission



RENEWAL MINISTRIES'
ANNUAL GATHERING

APRIL 17, 2021

Join us for inspiring talks from Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck, praise and worship, prayer for healing, and more at our LIVE online Gathering on April 17 from **7-9:30 p.m. ET.** The theme, "Seek First the Kingdom," is a command with a promise from the Lord. This event is aimed at helping us internalize those words of Jesus so we can be not afraid and bear fruit in today's world.

For details and registration, visit: RenewalMinistries.net/gathering

# + + RENEWAL MINISTRIES

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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