



A LETTER ▶ FROM RALPH MARTIN

Lift Jesus Higher Rally
Content from:

P2 Bishop Scott McCaig
& Fr. Mark Goring

P3 Christy DuPuis

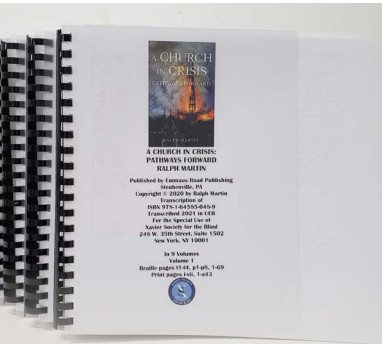
P4 Ralph Martin

P5 André & Angèle Regnier

P6 Peter Herbeck

P7 Fr. Mathias Thelen

P8 Cardinal Thomas Collins



▶ A TRANSLATION IN BRAILLE!

It was such a joy to hear that the Xavier Society for the Blind requested to translate Ralph's new book, *A Church in Crisis: Pathways Forward*, into braille! It's also being translated into Polish!

Dear Faithful Friends,

I continue to read almost all of the letters we receive, and to personally thank as many of our donors as I can, but the increased response we have been getting from around the world is making it difficult for me to continue doing this. This is actually wonderful news, however, since it means we are reaching more and more people with the message the Lord has asked us to share.

One unusual recent opportunity was to pre-record five talks for the priests and sisters of the Archdiocese of Bangalore, India, and then answer questions live from midnight to 12:30 a.m. one night, and from 1:15-1:50 a.m. another night, which concluded with the organizers presenting a copy of my new book, *A Church in Crisis: Pathways Forward*, to Archbishop Peter Machado, who then thanked me from thousands of miles away!

Another example of the unusual increase in response to what we are doing happened early one Saturday morning, when I was praying during Adoration at a local parish. A woman I didn't know approached me and gave me a note. The note said, "I praise God for you. I listened to your Advent Series and my life has changed. One thing that stuck with me most was when you said: 'Do nothing to offend God.' I have been given great grace to make changes in my life to not offend Him."

A common theme running through everything we do—be it TV, radio, our YouTube channel, our mission work, or our outreaches to young people—is that Jesus is the Lord, his revealed Word is true, and that despite all the problems the Catholic Church is having these days, everything is happening under the providential hand of God, the faith remains clearly articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and we should go forward with confidence. Amen!

Sometimes the number of requests, responses, and opportunities almost feels

overwhelming, so I was very grateful for an opportunity to take a five-day silent retreat under the auspices of the Institute for Priestly Formation in South Dakota, in the dead of winter, where the temperature barely got above zero the days that I was there. It was a really important time that allowed me to get my bearings about how to handle the big upsurge and remain united to the Lord in the midst of it.

Some live events have resumed, and all of us have started to travel again, although as of this writing, international travel is still very limited due to Covid. We still can't even drive forty-five miles from our offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to cross the border into Canada. This meant that we had to hold this year's Lift Jesus Higher Rally (an annual event typically hosted in Toronto, Ontario) at Christ the King Parish in Ann Arbor, and share the livestream via our YouTube channel to our friends and supporters in Canada and around the world. Thanks to the wonders of technology, we were able to hear from brothers and sisters across Canada, including our Canadian Episcopal Advisor Cardinal Thomas Collins and Board Member Bishop Scott McCaig, as well as Fr. Mark Goring, Christy DuPuis, and André and Angèle Regnier.

I am very impressed at how the Lord is able to work even though travel is so limited. About three-thousand people at any one time joined the Lift Jesus Higher Rally's livestream, and 38,000 people viewed at least parts of it in the two weeks after it was

posted on our YouTube Channel (where it's still available, at www.youtube.com/renewalministriesrm).

Besides the regular weekly YouTube videos that Peter and I do, which continue to get a remarkable number of views—a few are approaching 300,000!—we have started to do some special, short-term “series” on various topics. During Advent, I did a four-Sunday series on the early stages of the spiritual journey based on my book *The Fulfillment of All Desire*. I thought maybe a few hundred people would sign up but was “blown away” when over five-thousand people signed up from all over the world. Not everyone who signed up attended the live session

with question-and-answer opportunities, but when we posted it on YouTube the following day, an amazing number of people watched it. The viewership of the four videos combined is over 100,000!

Then, we did a four-week Lenten series that continued with stages of the spiritual journey based on the same book. Over four-thousand people registered, and again, many thousands more viewed it on our YouTube channel. Both the Advent series and the Lenten series remain on our YouTube channel's home page and can be accessed anytime for your own private retreat or when you feel the need for some spiritual refreshment. They also can be listened to as podcasts. (Search “Right Now Ralph Martin” on Spotify or Apple podcasts.)

I also am happy to announce that we are going to do another four-week series for Pentecost, beginning on Sunday, May 23, from 8-9 p.m. ET. In this series, we will focus on how we can yield

more fully to the graces of Pentecost and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I will do the first session on what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Pete Burak will do the May 30 session on how the Holy Spirit is a “Game Changer” giving us spiritual energy for fulfilling our mission. Peter Herbeck will do the June 6 session, focusing on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And Dr. Mary Healy will do the June 13 session on the gift of healing. We will not just be teaching, but we will be praying at the end of each session for a greater activation of the workings of the Holy Spirit in all our lives.

Some people have told us that they think God has prepared us to help God's people for such a time as this. More than ever, we need your fervent prayer and financial support.

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

Ralph



RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT!

Join us via Livestream 8-9 p.m. (ET)
for talks with live Q&A:

MAY 23

Baptism in the Spirit – Ralph Martin

MAY 30

Holy Spirit the Game Changer:
Mission – Pete Burak

JUNE 6

Spiritual Gifts – Peter Herbeck

JUNE 13

Healing – Dr. Mary Healy

For more details, please visit:
renewalministries.net/
pentecostmission



NOTEABLE QUOTES FROM THE RALLY

“One of my favorite quotes comes from St. Catherine of Siena,

*‘You have no need of me whatsoever,
but You treat me like you can’t live
without me.’*

“Isn’t that beautiful? That’s the heart of God for you personally. That’s the heart of God for each and every person on the face of the earth. It’s an all-consuming love that burns in his chest, that wounds Him, so deeply in love is He with each and every one of us. His love for us compels us, inspires us, and gives us the grace to share that love with others through good works and evangelization, telling others about the infinite love of God for each and every one of them.” // BISHOP SCOTT MCCAIG, CC *Military Ordinary of Canada and member of the Board of Directors for Catholic Renewal Ministries.*

(Consider) the Hebrew people in the desert. There wasn’t food, but God provided manna from heaven so they could continue their journey. During this time of restrictions and shutdowns, the Lord is still providing bread for his people. He’s still sustaining his people and working miracles.

“Consider the prayer, ‘We adore You, oh most holy Lord, Jesus Christ, here and in all your churches throughout the world, and we praise You, because by your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.’ We can adore the Lord from a distance, we can adore his presence in all the tabernacles in the world from a distance. And guess what? He can heal from a distance—we know this from Scripture. He can work mightily from a distance!” // FR. MARK GORING, CC *Pastor of St. Mary’s Parish in Ottawa, Ontario*



LIFT
JESUS
HIGHER

Renewal Ministries recently hosted the twenty-ninth annual Lift Jesus Higher Rally. The event typically is held in Toronto, Ontario, but due to Covid travel restrictions was held at Christ the King Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The event's theme was *Consuming Fire*. Speakers included Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Fr. Mathias Thelen, Cardinal Thomas Collins, Bishop Scott McCaig, Fr. Mark Goring, André and Angèle Regnier, and Christy DuPuis. Excerpts from these talks are included throughout this newsletter.

In addition to our online audience, we had an in-person audience of about 140 people. The day included praise and worship, Adoration, and prayers for healing. One participant wrote, "Thank you for a beautiful, Spirit-filled day. The fire was there. The presence of God was real. The speakers were great. Worship was alive and it was beautiful and peaceful."

The entire event and individual talks are available on our YouTube Channel, www.youtube.com/renewalministriesrm.

Be Love Revolution member Sharon Jacob led the Divine Mercy Chaplet at the Lift Jesus Higher Rally.



"WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?"

BY CHRISTY DUPUIS

Christy serves as a Catholic Christian Outreach parish missionary in Martinsville, Saskatchewan. She and her husband have four young children.



Recently, I was laying in bed with my one-year-old son, trying to get him to sleep, and he squirmed onto my chest and laid his head against me. I sang, "Jesus, I love You with all my heart and all my soul, and all my mind. Jesus, I love You." I began to imagine how Mary would have held Jesus against her chest, and how she would have sang to Him. I remembered something a spiritual director said to me in my early years of motherhood, when it was a difficult season and I couldn't get to Adoration or the Sacraments often. He said, "Christy, do you not know that Jesus dwells within your child? Will you not meet Him there?"

I was brought to tears, knowing Jesus was with me in that moment. Jesus is not limited by our current circumstances. He is not limited by this pandemic, or anything we are living through right now. Jesus' ability to meet us here and now remains the same. Whatever you are doing and wherever you are at, Jesus wants to meet you. He wants to meet us, whether we can get into a church or not.

This was such a good reminder for me. I think as I've been journeying through this pandemic, there's this feeling of, "Let's just get through this already!" There are slogans out there, "We're all in this together. There will be an end. We'll get to the other side of this."

Yes, that's one way we can look at this time—as a time in history that we just need to push through, that we just need to get through. Or, we can look at this as time that we will never get back again. What does God want to do with you and Him in this time?

I have never experienced vulnerability like I have during this season of the

pandemic. In so many ways, we're being stripped—of good and bad things. Things that were part of our foundation, that were keeping us solid in our relationships and in our way of life, are being stripped away. We can resist that stripping, we can push against it, or we can ask God, "What are You doing?"

Think of this image of being stripped. If a person were being stripped of their clothing, I think there would be two initial gut reactions. You would want to grasp at whatever you could to cover up the parts of you that were being exposed. Or, you would want to run and hide. Two questions came to mind for me:

What am I putting on?

And to whom am I running?

In the midst of this pandemic, what am I putting on over those areas of vulnerability, of fear, of confusion? I often think that I'm grasping at things to cover up those areas where I feel stressed, where I feel fear, where I feel like I don't have control over what is going to happen. But the Lord says to us in Psalm 91, "Those who love me, I will be with them in their trouble, and I will rescue them and honor them."

What if at the end of this pandemic, the Lord honors you for your faith? Not because you were perfect, or because you had it all together, but because every time you felt vulnerable, every time you felt fear or confusion or anxiety, instead of running to things to grasp at, to cover, to numb, you went to Him? What if at the end of this pandemic, the Lord said to you, "My good and faithful servant. You have done well."

I want to encourage you not to push through this time, but to ask the Lord, "What would You have me do with this?"

WHAT IF AT THE END OF THIS PANDEMIC, THE LORD SAID TO YOU, "MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. YOU HAVE DONE WELL."

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

BY RALPH MARTIN

President of Renewal Ministries



Fire is a common theme Scripture uses for Jesus and for God. It has many positive features—it brings light and heat and can be a sign of hope and promise that home and safety are near. There also are the tongues of fire at Pentecost—an outward sign of what was happening to their hearts, which were being set on fire.

The Lord also uses fire to purify—to consume what’s blocking our response to Him, to give us pure hearts and to center them around loving God and our neighbor. When Isaiah got the call from the Lord, he felt unworthy. He felt like he was a man of unclean lips, and he was. The Lord sent an angel with a burning, fiery coal to purify him. Jeremiah was given the commission to speak God’s word even though people would pay no attention to him. We have to do that too. **We have to speak when the Lord inspires us to, even if we don’t see fruit from it.**

In Malachi, the refiner’s fire gets the impurities out of silver and gold. The fire of God’s love in our hearts, the fire of the Holy Spirit, is refining our hearts and our minds, making them pure, and bringing to the surface all that is impure. When St. John of the Cross describes the process of purification, he talks about putting a green log on the fire. It turns black, sputters, and lets off juices and smells, but then at a certain point, the log becomes fire itself, radiating heat and light. John describes that as our process of purification, the removal of what’s keeping us from God.

Fire also can judge. Resisting God’s fire puts us in danger of being separated from Him. One of the most powerful commands in Scripture is, “You must be holy, because I the Lord your God am holy” (1 Pt 1:16). We’ve been created for union with God—and the only way we can achieve this is to undergo the cleansing fire that turns us into love as it burns within our soul.

Resisting the purifying fire defeats the whole purpose of our creation. It rejects the whole reason why we’re alive today—to continue the process of growth, transformation, healing, and deliverance.

We can’t get into the kingdom by proudly marching in. Unless we’re willing to humble ourselves, admit our sin, and repent, we will not enter God’s kingdom. Jesus says,

“If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell” (Mt 5:30). Get your priorities straight. Do whatever you have to do to get free from serious sin.

Listen to Jesus’ Last Supper Discourse:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. . . . Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. . . . If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. (Jn 15:1-6)

Even in these last moments with his disciples, Jesus is talking about two kinds of fire. One is love, abiding in the heart of Jesus. Another regards those at risk of withering—those who don’t abide, don’t draw their strength, don’t pray, and don’t meditate on his Word.

Our theme, *Consuming Fire*, is the last verse of Hebrews 12. I’m going to go through a few things Hebrews 12 tells us:

- 1 We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses (Heb 12:1). We should desire to live a life of transparency before the Lord, so that nothing we say or do privately is different than anything we say or do publicly.
- 2 We must persevere in running the race (Heb 12:1). Run the race to win. You’ve got to put an effort into it; you don’t drift into the kingdom of God. You’ve got to make some choices. You’ve got to leave some things behind and take up some new things.

It’s not enough to get excited about the Lord once a year at a rally. We need that reminder, encouragement, and support, but we also need to be persevering—to not look to repeat certain experiences, but to put one foot in front of the other, day after day, and follow Jesus, love the people in our life, and humble ourselves. How did Jesus do it? For the joy that was set before Him, He was able to endure the cross (Heb 12:2). In order to endure

our crosses, we need to know the joy that's in our future—the overwhelming love, glory, healing, and communion of love amongst those who are in the kingdom.

- 3 We need to pray for others and fast for those who are suffering in so many ways. Like Mary said at Fatima, we must offer sacrifices in reparation for sin and the conversion of sinners. (See Hebrews 12:3.)
- 4 When you're embarrassed, when you fail, or when your sin becomes evident, it's because God loves you. Your Father's trying to help you grow up, and that's why He's revealing your sin and letting you experience your weakness (Heb 12:5-8).
- 5 Be a peacemaker (Heb 12:14). Try to honor people and build unity. It's not always possible. Some people are opposed to the very foundations of the faith, opposed to Jesus. When Jesus says "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48), He is talking in the context of the Father letting his rain fall on the just and the unjust. That's challenging, but Jesus says, if you love those who love you, the pagans do the same, but pray for those who persecute you (Mt 5:46).
- 6 Love your enemies (Heb 12:14). Strive for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord. One way or the other, we have to become holy. We can't possibly become holy by ourselves, because only God is holy. But He wants to heal us and bring peace to our disordered desires; He wants to bring us into union with Him, if we will allow it.
- 7 Those who pray with people for healing and deliverance say that almost always the biggest obstacles to experiencing the freedom and love of Jesus are bitterness and unforgiveness. Don't let the bitterness grow up and defile you and others (Heb 12:15). It doesn't mean that we have to think that what happened wasn't terrible or that justice shouldn't be done. But let go of bitterness and unforgiveness, and release them to the judgment and mercy of God. We've been held captive if we've been nourishing unforgiveness in our heart.
- 8 We're going through a shaking so that what cannot be shaken may remain (Heb 12:27-28). We may become a remnant again, and it looks like that's the direction we're going in. But the remnant has always been in God's plan, heart, and hands. It's out of the faithful remnant that a renewal and new wave of the Holy Spirit comes.

People ask me, aren't you discouraged? Not at all. I'm excited. God's shaking things that need to be shaken so that what's unshakeable will stand out, will be clear, and people can flock to it who have open hearts and open minds.

SEEKING THE LOST

BY ANDRÉ & ANGÈLE REGNIER

André and Angèle founded Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) in Saskatoon in 1988. CCO calls students to deeper conversion and a Christ-centred life.



ANDRÉ: Growing up, I had a natural love for Jesus. Unfortunately, growing up in the '70s and '80s, it was easy for me to disconnect from what was going on in my heart and walk away from the Church. But in 1982, there was a longing to return to that childlike faith I had as a kid. I wanted God to be real and relevant in my life. I went to Mass, and God's presence descended upon me. His love, mercy, and presence filled every one of my cells, and I began to shake. I was filled with joy and the life of God. I went in to that church lost, but I left found. Jesus was searching for me, as He searches for all lost souls.

ANGÈLE: Jesus entrusted the mission of seeking and saving the lost to the Church when He gave his apostles the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations.

We want to communicate this great love, this desire to see every heart come to know Jesus. In January 2018, St. Francis Xavier's relic arm came to Canada on a cross-country tour, and Andre and I were privileged to take it across the country. We truly saw St. Francis Xavier on mission that month—with conversions, missionary zeal raised up, and healings. I shared this quote that stirred up people to want to engage in the mission of seeking and saving the lost:

Many, many people hereabouts are not becoming Christians for one reason only: There's no one to make them Christians. Again and again, I've thought of going around the universities of Europe, especially Paris, and everywhere crying out like a madman, riveting the attention of those who have more learning than charity: "What a tragedy! How many souls are being shut out of heaven and falling into hell thanks to you?" This thought would certainly stir most of them to listen actively to what God is saying to them. They would forget their own desires, their human affairs and give themselves over entirely to God's will and his choice. They would cry out with all their heart, "Lord, I'm here. What do you want me to do? Send me anywhere you like, even to India."

St. Francis Xavier and Jesus are inviting all of us to have an open heart:

"Send me anywhere You like. I will go and do and say anything You need me to."

ANDRÉ: In 1980, John Paul II said the number who did not know Jesus well had doubled since the Vatican Council. Fifty years later, these numbers have skyrocketed. He said we should have great concern. For us to bring people back, we have to be a Church that is crying out to God, saying, "Father, give us what breaks your heart—a heart for the lost. Give us the grace and courage to go and speak to them, the boldness and the conviction."

POWER TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY

BY PETER HERBECK

Renewal Ministries' Vice-President and Director of Missions



God's shaking the Church to awaken the Church to his glorious, beloved Son. When the Church is captivated by Jesus, many things we worry about, the angst we walk around with each day, shrink, and He increases.

The Church is a bride, and the Lord is the bridegroom. Human history is about the Father working in the Spirit to present his Son a prepared bride.

This moment is a time not just to get through, but to go deeper into Him. This is a great grace that the Lord is ready to give, and He's giving it in many places. At the Last Supper, when Jesus was preparing them for what was about to happen, He said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled, but believe in God and believe also in me" (Jn 14:1).

Living faith—radical trust in Jesus and His promises—is the solution for a troubled heart. In John 14, He knows difficulty is on the horizon. He's not pretending there's not trouble, and He's not scolding them because they shouldn't be worried about it. **He's saying, I want you to believe in Me, trust in Me, abandon yourself to Me. If you do that, I'm going to be able to give you something to replace that troubled heart.**

Then He says, "I'm going to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:3).

Part of faith is living with the realization, conviction, and confidence that the King is going to specifically prepare a place for you. He's beginning to teach the apostles that circumstances in this life can be difficult—but you don't have to worry about them. We're human be-

ings—we're anxious about everything most of the time. Jesus is saying,

"I'm going to bring you out of that condition that's under the dominion of fear of death and sin. I'm going to bring you to my life. You're going to be in this world but not of this world."

St. Francis described the beginning of his ministry by saying, "The Lord brought me to the lepers, and they made me sick. Then, Jesus made them sweet for me." At first, St. Francis was totally repulsed by the smell, the stench, the sin, everything—but then Jesus said,

"Let me show you how I love them."

Francis went and lived among them and kissed them, and loved them, and washed their feet. Isn't that amazing?

We can have so much more in this world than we know, and it begins with us laying hold of it in faith and declaring it. How much do we declare what isn't working, and our troubles and difficulties, instead of being like Psalm 107:2: "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!"

We are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb! It's important to speak it, because that is the truth. We often speak about circumstances and difficulties, but they're just circumstantial. They're not the fundamental truth.

At the end of John 14, Jesus says: "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you."

He's given us something that will enable us to live through troubled times—power to live differently. We can bear his yoke when we know who we are and what He's done for us.

I've been on a real journey during Covid. The Lord showed me how troubled my own heart was—how much of a burden I was carrying and how much He wanted to help me. He says,

"Abide in Me, draw near to Me, let Me be close."

The angst and the weight of Covid during our serious lockdown was a hard burden to carry. I struggled, and for a number of months, I couldn't sleep well. My mind would start going. I felt the weight. I felt my anxiety.

I asked the Lord, "Why am I experiencing this?" He said,

"Peter, because so much of your life is still in your hands, and you don't yet fully love Me. I know you love Me, and I love the little baby steps you make in that direction, because I remember them all. Even when you give a cup of cold water to someone, it touches my heart. But I'm dead serious about you and my bride. I want her to be free, I want her to be radiant, so the world can be saved. A frightened, troubled, anxious, angry, confused Church is not going to reach the lost."

And Jesus' heart is broken for the lost. That's why in this Covid year, Jesus said,

"Come closer to Me. I need you to pay attention to Me: be on alert, come to Me, and let Me mature and purify you."

This time of trial for the Church and the world will lead to a time of grace for the Church and glory and an outpouring of the Spirit for millions of souls. He needs us to be prepared. He needs us to trust Him—to receive this moment of grace and believe.

SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF PURIFICATION

BY FR. MATHIAS THELEN

President of Encounter Ministries and pastor of St. Patrick Church in Brighton, Michigan



The mighty power of God's love broke into my life and changed me forever. When that happens, you cannot help but want to lift Jesus higher. I was in high school, I was a self-centered, narcissistic kid, and God's power came upon me in Adoration, and He showed me I was loved by Him. That love transformed me, and I wanted to help other people encounter Him. This love He has for us is so consuming, He's willing to die so we might come back to Him. Let us constantly keep that before our eyes.

I never get bored seeing God break into people's lives in big and small ways. A number of years ago, we were praying with people, and a man came over. I felt like I was praying over a brick wall. I said in my insecurity, "God do something; I can't do anything." Let me encourage you: **God wants you in that place of powerlessness so He can be power in you. The more we try to do it ourselves, the less power we see in our lives.**

I thought, "I've never met this guy before. Lord, what are You doing right now?"

Suddenly, I heard this voice: "Tell him Andrew is going to be fine." I thought, "I'm not going to say that." Nothing was happening, and it came again: "Tell him Andrew is going to be just fine." I felt like I was between a rock and God. I could choose the nothing-happening option, or I could choose God actually maybe speaking to this person. He had his hands clenched, and I said, "I keep hearing what I think is the Father's voice saying that Andrew is going to be fine. Does that mean anything to you?"

He grabbed my hands and said, "My son Andrew is in the hospital! I came

to this service to pray to make sure that he was going to be OK." He ran out of the church screaming, "My son's going to be fine!"

Why do I share that? The consuming love of God knows everything about us. He wants to come to us in the midst of our suffering. He wants to minister to us. Consider all He wants to do through us. It's powerful when we come to understand our identity and our mission as Christians.

There's so much chaos going on around us that we can forget who we are and about his burning love. Everything Jesus does comes from love. When Jesus overturned the money changers, for instance, what looks like violence was actually love (Mt 21:12). People had turned a place of prayer and encounter, a place for offering sacrifice, into a place of self-gain—and He drove them out from righteous anger.

This is happening in the Church right now. Jesus, out of his holy love, is driving out evil and those not interested in the true worship of God. He, in his consuming fire, is purifying the body of Christ—because He loves us. God wants to burn up anything that comes between us.

He makes us his temples, places where He dwells and we can encounter Him. The purification—while a sign of judgment—is done for the sake of relationship. **If we want to have a heart for the lost and compassion for those who don't know Jesus, if we want the consuming fire of God to live within us, we must allow Jesus to purify us.**

After Jesus purifies the temple, "The blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them" (Mt 21:14).

He's in the temple. He drives out those who are not interested in relationship with God—and immediately, the sick and the lame begin to come to Him, and He heals them. He must purify his Church, because it is the place for his healing and mercy to come into the world. Notice that after He does this is precisely when people experience his healing love. The more the Lord purifies the Church, the more the purity and power of the Gospel can flow through you.

We have a choice in the midst of our suffering. Do we see Jesus' love at work, or do we just see something that causes us to be angry? Jesus wants the Church to be a place of encounter—to be his bride. That has to happen first in each of us.

The good news is that He's not weak. He's not a coward. He will go to the end to fight for us. That's the burning heart of Jesus. He broke the power of death so we might be fully alive. A lot of us are suffering right now. The world needs the heart of Jesus. It needs his love and healing, and if we don't allow that love and that power of compassion to flow in us, it will never flow through us.

Let's pray that as He's loved us, He can love through us. If we are willing to do anything it takes for Jesus to love in us and through us—if we give Him that yes and we persevere, not by ourselves but with a community, with people around you, He will be able to consume us. And in consuming us, He will be able to consume the world through us.

GETTING BEYOND THE NONSENSE

BY CARDINAL THOMAS COLLINS

Archbishop of Toronto, Ontario, and the Episcopal Advisor for Catholic Renewal Ministries



“Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:29). This passage encourages and challenges us in our lives as disciples of

the Lord to not be caught up in things that are not of Him.

We are in this world that is so often turning away from the Lord. And yet the presence of the living God who comes in fire must be in our hearts, and He asks of us everything.

We look to that image of fire to speak to our souls in this dark and cold world. We look to it for our call. We see it in the burning bush where Moses received his vocation, and where the Lord also calls each of us by name. We’re called out of this fire of majesty, where we recognize something beyond this mortal world, which struts about and seems powerful, and yet is a world of illusion.

Our God asks of us everything. Think of the fire of sacrifice, offered up completely. We could not cling to it; we needed to let it go before the Lord. Similarly, we’re called to give our heart, our mind, our soul, everything to the Lord. We need to be purified by our sacrificial love of the Lord. We need

to be ready to witness to Him. Even in these days of pandemic, people come every day and pray before the Lord in the Holy Eucharist. The fire in the sanctuary lamp symbolizes the majesty of God, which must always touch our hearts and lead us forward.

We must not lead petty lives—lives constricted by the values of this world—for our God is a consuming fire! We must not live in a world of illusion. We must burn through all of that with the vision of God. In a profound book called *Live Not by Lies*, author Ron Dreher talks of Christians during the Communist times of the last century who were faithful in the midst of a world of lies, who could see the fire of God, and who could speak the truth.

As John the Baptist spoke the truth to Herod, we must speak the truth and witness to Christ in the midst of illusion, darkness, and fog. Those Christians in Communist regimes often suffered imprisonment and death for their fidelity, for deep in their hearts was the consuming fire of faith in the God of Majesty, who leads us forward to the heavenly city of Jerusalem.

We in our world facing a not-so-different challenge, for our world is often

caught up in a web of lies about the nature of marriage. It’s so fundamental—but John the Baptist also had to deal with that. These are basic realities: Marriage as a basic covenant between a man and a woman, faithful in love, open to the gift of life. There is the fire of God in that, for it is true and real. We must get beyond all this nonsense and see the light, the heavenly glory that guides us. Let that be our life, let that be our light in this world of fog and illusion.



PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ For all those suffering in any way as a result of the coronavirus, that the Lord would bring healing and peace.
- ▶ That the fire of Christ’s love would burn more brightly in our hearts and lives.
- ▶ For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.



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