



“The Magi set out because of a deep desire which prompted them to leave everything and begin a journey. It was as though they had always been waiting for that star.”

// Pope Benedict XVI



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW: ENCOURAGING GROWTH & PERSEVERANCE

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Unexpectedly, this year has become my busiest ever, and this fall particularly so. I try to discern carefully what I can and should do and what I can't and shouldn't do. Sometimes, the calendar itself decides, but often not. And when I'm invited to make a long trip to a distant country, I have to really think and pray twice.

I've been to Australia four or five times over the years, most memorably with Fr. Mike Scanlon giving the original *A Crisis of Truth* series of talks, and a few years later with Fr. Mike and the whole FIRE team doing FIRE rallies in several cities with Sr. Ann Shields and others. It is a long trip—five hours from Detroit to Los Angeles and then fourteen to fifteen hours from Los Angeles to Sydney, Australia.

I was invited by an impressive Charismatic community in Perth, the Disciples of Jesus, to support their community with a series of talks and then give five talks at a city-wide conference. I've been observing for a while now that the Lord is giving me a particular commission to strengthen and encourage priests. For the last several years, I've spoken to about a thousand priests each year from all over North America and the world. When opportunities arose to speak to priests in three cities—Sydney, Hobart (pictured below, with Archbishop Porteous sitting in the first row on the left), and Perth—I felt the Lord gave me the go-ahead for this trip.

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Without a doubt, the highlights of my trip were speaking to priests in each of the three cities:

» In Sydney, I gave several talks to younger priests who had been ordained ten years or less. This was organized by one of the priests in Sydney who is also a student in the Licentiate in Sacred Theology program at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit where I teach.

» **I experienced an unexpected blessing in Sydney, when I was invited to have dinner with Archbishop Anthony Fisher, OP, a leader among the Australian bishops.** When he arrived carrying a copy of *The Fulfillment of All Desire*, and then asked me to sign it, I knew we were going to have a very positive conversation.



» In Hobart, Tasmania, an island off the southeastern coast of Australia, I was able to spend time with Archbishop Julian Porteous, who has been a leader in evangelization and renewal for many years and who invited me to speak to all his priests.

» I was invited by the prior of a new contemplative Benedictine monastery in Tasmania to stay overnight at the monastery, give a talk to the seven monks, and lead a seminar with them. Inspiring.

» In Perth, about fifty priests showed up for what was an “optional” formation event—an excellent turnout.



Ralph with Archbishop Anthony Fisher, OP, a leader among Australian bishops.

While it was a privilege to support many priests, as well as the lay people at well-attended parish events, I was sobered by the challenges facing the Church in Australia. The woke culture is even stronger in Australia than in the US, although maybe not stronger than in Canada, in that the government has been successfully enacting extreme laws that put great pressure on the Church to mute its preaching of the Gospel.

In Canberra, the capital territory, when Catholic hospitals refused to perform abortions, the government decided to take them over. In Melbourne, the government passed legislation that seemed to me so extreme that I thought it might be “fake news,” and I asked a friend close to the situation whether this possibly could be real. He said it was. The legislation enacts large fines

and imprisonment on anyone praying with or counseling someone experiencing same sex attraction. It’s ostensibly directed at forced “deprogramming” efforts by extreme groups but is applied so broadly that it even prohibits counseling that individuals have requested themselves. This is what my friend told me:

Yes, I can confirm that this is legislation that has been passed in Australia in the state of Victoria (a state that was once conservative but has become the hot point for all the more extreme social issues). The other states have similar pieces of legislation, but this is the most extreme.

Driven by the LGBTQ+ lobby, you are no longer able to pray with people who self-identify with a sexual orientation or gender identity that once may have been deemed “disordered”. . . . Of course, the Catholic Church, together with the other churches, have made representations to government, but to no avail.

Many of the Australian bishops will tell you plainly that their voice counts for nothing in the public arena—a consequence of the sexual abuse scandals. Catholics together with other Christians are living in a season of humiliation that will last for decades. The loss of credibility for the Church has been massive.



At the request of Bishop David Ricken (pictured at the center table on the right), Ralph gave four talks to all of the clergy of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

We are becoming a remnant, but it is a blessing to be part of the remnant, and a remnant has a special responsibility to carry on with confidence, joy, and courage amid the growing darkness.



While I was in Perth, the parliament passed legislation that removed many restrictions on abortion, including the need for there to be an investigation if a baby is born alive but subsequently dies, since such an inquiry might make people feel “uncomfortable.”

At the same time, the archbishop of Perth was called to testify to a parliamentary committee about why he withheld a report on serious wrongdoing on the part of the bishop of Broome, a diocese north of Perth. Although I couldn't get all the details, it was often the lead item on the nightly news, with photos of the accused bishop ignoring the press.

Of course, similar news can be found all over the world. It's a time of humiliation and chastisement for the Church, but also a time when seeds of renewal are germinating, lukewarm believers are regaining their first love, and good yeast is being put into the dough of the remnant. Yes, we must admit, we are becoming a remnant, but it is a blessing to be part of the remnant, and a remnant has a special responsibility to carry on with confidence, joy, and courage amid the growing darkness. The true light has come into the world and the darkness will never overcome it.

Upon returning to the US, I was blessed and encouraged to do two more clergy events. Bishop David Ricken, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, asked me to give four talks to all his clergy. I must say that of all the dioceses I've spoken in, this was a diocese that is clearly moving in the right direction. There is a great team of priests, deacons, and lay people working with the bishop and making statistical progress in many different areas, from church attendance, to vocations, to growing numbers of people coming to the only recognized place of Marian apparition in the US, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. And then, I traveled on to Prince George, British Columbia, Canada, to encourage the faithful priests carrying out the mission there.

In this issue, you'll see an overview of all the ways in which we are trying to bring people to Christ and help them grow and persevere. We are so encouraged by what we see the Lord doing here, I hope you will be inspired and encouraged as well—since your support makes it all possible!

Your brother in Christ,

Ralph Martin

Ralph

DIGITAL/ SOCIAL MEDIA

RenewalMinistries.net/media



Radio Programs

Sr. Ann Shields and Peter Herbeck continue to provide spiritual nourishment to listeners across the US with their daily radio programs *Food for the Journey* and *Fire on the Earth*.



YouTube

We surpassed eight-million YouTube views and reached 75,000 subscribers.



Podcasts

We surpassed 225,000 plays on *Right Now with Ralph Martin*.

THE CHOICES WE FACE

The Choices We Face | This fall, we recorded our fortieth season of *The Choices We Face*, which will begin airing in March 2024. The season features a tremendous lineup of guests, including Patti Mansfield (pictured at right), Kevin Wells, Montse Alvarado, Ali Hoffman, and Steve Lee.



AT HOME & ABROAD



"I attended the Marian Conference at Ave Maria and heard you speak. Thank you for giving me a new way to understand how to look at the insanity I see every day. I had never thought about the necessity of bringing all this sin and rebellion into the light of day. It has really helped me a lot and given me new hope."

(Email from Florida)



"We cannot thank you enough for coming to our parish to speak. We have received so many, many wonderful comments. Thank you! You made quite the impression! I think it is because you are speaking the truth of our faith and guiding us to take the narrow path to our final destination. On a more personal note, your comments have buoyed me up and given me strength. Your whole manner, peace, and patience that your presence gives to those around you has truly inspired me. Now I know more specifically what I need to beg our Lord to grow in my heart and soul. I want what you have! Your words are powerful, but your example is equally so!"

(Email from Canada)



"Thank you for your witness and courage. I marvel at your clarity, courage, conviction, and love of our Lord Jesus. You proclaim the Word boldly and with kindness and strengthen not only me but millions around the world."

(Website inquiry)



Peter Herbeck spoke at a men's conference hosted by the Maranatha Community in Presov, Slovakia. While there, he visited Country Coordinator Deacon Zoli Kunszabó and his wife, Panni, in Hungary. Here, they are pictured outside the Only One homeless shelter that Panni runs.



One highlight of Ralph's year is teaching his summer classes for priests studying for their Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL) Degree at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. His students from around the world are filled with a zeal for our Lord and evangelization.

More than two-thousand people attended the Diocese of Lafayette's recent Eucharistic Rally, where Ralph Martin was the keynote speaker. Ralph said, "It was a very fervent, joyful group, and a wonderful sense of Eucharistic blessing fell over everyone." Ralph's plane arrived late, so a police escort helped him get to the Cajundome in time!



“The snowstorm and piles of snow on the driveway were not hindrances to praise the Lord with the multitude! Lift Jesus higher! He is worthy to be praised!”

(Facebook comment)



“I thank and praise God for your amazing talent and his gift that you share!”

(Facebook comment)



“I have been inspired by Renewal Ministries for some years now. Particularly, I have enjoyed teachings at various conferences. This has helped me deepen my life in the Spirit, grow in my faith, and draw strength in these trying times.”

(Email)



“Your messages through the years continue to uphold his truths and share ways we can live our lives more fully in Him. Thank you. Keep up his good work.”

(Email)

LIFT JESUS HIGHER // YOUTH RALLY

We returned to Toronto for the first in-person Lift Jesus Higher Rally since 2020! Although there was a lot of snowfall, and even more predicted than fell, just over two-thousand people attended the adult rally and eight-hundred people attended the youth rally. Pictured, during a time of Adoration, Fr. Graham Keep processes with a monstrance through the crowd at the Lift Jesus Higher Youth Rally.

LIFT JESUS HIGHER // ADULT RALLY

In order to attend the Lift Jesus Higher Rally, participants said they dug themselves out of their driveways or walked long distances in the snow to access public transportation. Many people even told us that they put snow shovels in their cars in case they encountered difficult road conditions on their way. One first-time attendee said, “The Lift Jesus Higher Rally confirmed and strengthened the direction I am going in. . . . This event was what I needed to continue to run the race.”



Save the Date
MARCH 2, 2024
IN PERSON 📍 **TORONTO**

Details: www.ljhr.ca

GLOBAL MISSIONS

In 2023, Renewal Ministries completed thirty-eight missions in twenty-five countries. We have plans to complete thirty-seven missions in twenty-four countries in 2024.

Mexico | In 2023, Renewal Ministries traveled to a garbage dump in Mexico City for five missions that focused on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. High school students joined us for one of the missions. Pictured, a doctor prays with a woman in the dump's chapel.



2023 Mission Countries:

- Botswana
- Cameroon
- Croatia
- Congo
- Ghana
- Guinea-Bissau
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Kazakhstan
- Latin America
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Mexico
- Namibia
- Papua New Guinea
- Romania
- Rwanda
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe



Zambia | Renewal Ministries' mission to Zambia included a retreat for priests and religious sisters that focused on baptism in the Holy Spirit.

UGANDA | During our mission to Uganda, participants prayed over each other for repentance and faith, forgiveness, renunciation, taking authority, and the Father's blessing.



id | id, Renewal Ministries' outreach to young adults, has about seventeen active Discipleship Communities in the US, Canada, and Australia. Pictured is the community from Perth, Australia, which launched in 2021 and has about thirty-five members. Discipleship Communities—just one of id's many forms of outreach—help form young adults into disciples of Christ. Members establish rhythms of life together that allow them to grow in their relationship with God and with each other while activating them to live on mission in their community.



BE LOVE REVOLUTION | Now in its fifth consecutive year, the Be Love Revolution (BLR) Bible Study helps high school girls stay rooted in the truth of who God is and who they are. Forty girls meet every Tuesday morning at 6:30 a.m. to study God's Word.

FORGED | Forged (formerly Zion) continues to minister to high school boys and young men through Bible studies, praise and worship, intersquad games, and more. Pictured, Director Steve Norman speaks to the boys at a recent event.



NEXT GENERATION



id

"Thank you for taking the time and resources to speak to our organization. We had 112 young adults in attendance, our record this year for a speaker event. I had members who've attended for years approach me and say it was their favorite event yet. You truly welcomed the Holy Spirit into our community last night and gave us the wake-up call we all needed to hear in a way that was joyful, sincere, and honest."

(Email from Columbus, Ohio)



BE LOVE REVOLUTION (BLR)

"Thank you, more than I can ever say, for camp and BLR and your constant yes to God for the hearts of these girls. Our daughter glows after Wednesday nights at Beloved, and she seeks to live it all week."

(Email from Ann Arbor, Michigan)



FORGED

"It takes someone with a passion for boys of that age group to meet them where they are at. I didn't tell my son anything about the program, just that it was starting, and he should try it. He came out with a grin on his face and got in the car and said, 'I really hate it when you are right.' He is looking forward to the rest of what is in store. Thank you for the work you do. I will be praying for the continued success and outpouring of the Holy Spirit to guide the guys."

(Email from Ann Arbor, Michigan)

DECEMBER 2023 EVENTS

Plymouth, MI
Our Lady of Good Counsel Advent Tea*
December 1
Debbie Herbeck
More info: olgcp parish.net

Novi, MI
St. James Confirmation Retreat*
December 2
Debbie Herbeck and the Be Love Revolution Team

Columbia, MO
Biblical Healing, Then & Now
December 3
Dr. Mary Healy
More info: comonewman.org

Toronto, ON
Catholic Renewal Ministries Board Meeting*
December 3-4
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, and Team

Louisville, KY
Legatus*
December 4
Dr. Mary Healy

Livonia, MI
Awards Brunch*
December 10
Ralph Martin

Monroe, MI
Set A Fire Night
December 15
Peter Herbeck
More info: facebook.com/groups/288455184890756/

Centerburg, OH
Damascus Empower Conference*
December 15-17
Pete Burak



- 👤 US BOARD
- 👤 CANADIAN BOARD



We have two boards of directors to help guide the US and Canadian arms of our ministry. We are grateful for their support!

(Not all members are pictured)

Ennis, TX
Parish Mission
December 19-21
Peter Herbeck & Rachel Herbeck
More info: www.stjohnncc.net

** Not open to the public.*



For a complete listing of events, visit RenewalMinistries.net/Events.

PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ That the Prince of Peace will bring lasting peace to our homes, communities, countries, and the world.
- ▶ For those who are lonely or mourning this holiday season, that our Lord would comfort them with his very own presence.
- ▶ For the prayer intentions of all our supporters, their family members, and their parish families, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.



Renewal Ministries is a Catholic ministry committed to renewal and evangelization in the Church. It seeks to proclaim Jesus Christ through its TV, radio, and social media outreaches, as well as through books, conferences, retreats, and other international evangelistic events.

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