



RENEWAL MINISTRIES

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Dear Friends,

The theological virtue of hope is under attack. Nations shake with wars, economic crises, and political disruptions, and it's tempting to get caught up in the cultural angst. Living with hope allows us to keep a proper detachment from worldly turmoil and live with clarity in all circumstances. As Pope Benedict XVI said, "The one who has hope lives differently" (*Spe salvi* 2).

In Scripture, Peter writes to a struggling community. They have wonderful faith but are being persecuted, marginalized, and martyred. Peter acknowledges their serious trials and articulates the power of hope:

We have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

(1 Pt 1:3-4)

Christians are empowered by the Lord to live from an awareness of who they are and what God has already accomplished. This is a bigger story than the daily troubles of the neighborhood or even our world. We will have tribulations. The world will shake until the Lord comes again. As situations intensify, we must live from the virtue of hope with the power of the Holy Spirit. This enables us to live differently—with joy—in difficult circumstances.

Consider St. Maximilian Kolbe. He was a priest in Auschwitz who offered his life to save a father with young children. The guards threw him in a cell with nine other people to starve to death. Human beings go mad in situations like that. It's darkness, hopelessness, total despair. But into that darkness, St. Maximilian brought the light of the world. He brought hope and confidence about the destiny of potentially everyone in that cell. Instead of screaming and

devouring each other, the prisoners sang. St. Maximilian led them in worship amid the darkest of circumstances. His trust in God gave him greater strength than all the powers of hell.

We need to run after Christ as he did. It's not a matter of natural powers; it's receiving and growing in God's supernatural work in our lives.

Paul reminds believers that,

Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

(Rom 5:5)

The Holy Spirit gives us a new identity, purpose, destiny, and relationship with the Father. If we don't live from that, it's difficult when circumstances start going south. That's when hopelessness, anger at God, and self-reliance surface, and that's exactly where the devil wants to take people, because then they don't threaten him. This is why we must live from the grace and strength God offers us.

Sometimes we put our trust in princes, but human beings can't save us (Ps 146:3-4). We may have strong political or financial preferences, but at the end of the day, those things won't save us. They will never give us unshakeable peace, joy, and confidence.

**The one who
has HOPE lives
differently.**

// Pope Benedict XVI

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



St. Paul asks God the Father to help us “know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might” (Eph 1:17-19).

Our inheritance comes with spiritual power to navigate all situations—no matter how difficult—and serve the Lord. That’s the normal Christian life. Are we accessing this power amid difficult times? We may still experience pain or fear, but can we push them back into their proper place? Jesus said it would be difficult, but nothing happens that God doesn’t ultimately permit. He will give us the necessary strength, which is found in faith, hope and love.

Something has been given to us that can never be taken away. To access it, we must read and reflect on Scripture. We must be in conversation with the Lord. We must regularly receive the sacraments.

Hope is not wishful thinking. It’s the confident expectation of the fulfillment of God’s promise and the saving work of Jesus to bring us home. Our hope is in a person who is alive forevermore. We are in a relationship; we are united to his body. This does not rely on our own strength.

God wants to help us be steady as his children. When St. Stephen was stoned, and when Paul lived through terrible circumstances, they never complained. They understood that this was all gold for them. Jesus said they would experience suffering and that they would experience the world’s rejection like He did. There is something amazing and beautiful in that.

Without hope—without seeing the cross as a gift that unites us with Christ and leads to salvation—it is easy to fall into complaining, depression, discouragement, or even despair. That is all normal in a fallen world. The Lord knows that, and He’s merciful and

NEW BOOKLET from Peter Herbeck

First Copy FREE!



Does God judge? It’s a question no one wants to consider, but from Genesis to Revelation, the question is present and is one we all need to face. We all will appear before Jesus; it is in the calendar of our lives.

This powerful booklet by Peter Herbeck is intended to wake us up! *Does God Judge?* will help its readers discover a precious gift—an awareness that leads to conversion and a healthy fear of God.

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kind, but He doesn’t want us to stay there. With hope, we can keep looking forward. We can keep growing. We don’t need to go after the things of the world—money, power, and influence—to make our lives meaningful.

I see so many signs of hope.

About forty girls gather weekly for a 6:30 a.m. bible study in our office, even in the dead of winter. They love being with the Lord. I also see wonderful work being done by Renewal Ministries’ collaborators around the world. For instance, we’ve been working with Joseph Auno, from Uganda, for more than thirty years. Over 3500 priests have gone through week-long Life in the Spirit seminars that we have collaborated on with his community.

That’s astounding! Every priest touches thousands of people, and we wouldn’t have had the privilege of participating in it if we didn’t have hope in Christ’s message. That’s just one example among many, but in each case, it’s about God’s power. He sends us out, and He provides. We’ve had many trials along the way, but the Lord keeps opening doors, and good things are happening.

We want Renewal Ministries to be a conduit of hope—and our supporters are a great source of hope for us too. I’m inspired and humbled by the faith and heroism of our donors. We are connected to a missionary family, a spiritual family in the Lord. I’m grateful for the hope each of you inspires in me—thank you!

Peter Herbeck

P.S. I want to honor Dr. Mary Healy, a consultant to Renewal Ministries. Pope Francis recently appointed her as one of four new members of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, an advisory board that directly serves the pope on matters of liturgy and sacraments. Let’s remember Mary in our prayers as she steps into this important position in service to the Holy Father and the entire Church.

Congratulations,
Dr. Mary Healy!





Walking with the Lord in Suffering

BY PETE BURAK



It's understandable that St. Paul equates our journey to heaven with athletes competing in a race, because victory in athletics requires pain.

As in sports, suffering in life is inevitable. In this fallen world, before the restoration and transformation of the Second Coming, we are certain to face times of physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual pain.

Thankfully, Jesus perfectly models how to navigate these trials. He uniquely understands our pain, because He chose to suffer with and for us. Jesus never promises a comfortable or suffering-free life. Rather, He consistently reassures his followers that the pain of this world is fleeting, redemptive, and within divine providence:

I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.
(Jn 16:33)

With the assurance of Jesus' absolute trustworthiness and his personal experience of indescribable suffering on the cross, Scripture reminds us to walk with the Lord in difficult times:

My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials. Accept whatever happens to you; in periods of humiliation be patient. For in fire gold is tested, and the chosen, in the crucible of humiliation.
(Sir 2:1, 4-5, NABRE)

We should not be surprised when things are hard. Human beings are remarkably adept at creating situations of profound pain, confusion, and sorrow. During these times, we must remember that God considers us as gold! Garbage is destroyed in a fire, but gold emerges from the blazing heat purer and more valuable. **Situations of discomfort and pain, when offered to the Lord in humble obedience, can uniquely strip us of worldly attachments, reorient disordered desires, and help us cling to Jesus as the only source of unwavering joy and peace.**

I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. . . . We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him.
(Rom 8:18, 28)

God can bring tremendous blessing and good out of every circumstance, but we wouldn't always choose his timing or methods. When walking



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through difficult times, a disciple simultaneously remembers the eternal glory that's coming and harvests each, often little, blessing in the here and now. Disciples are called to hold in tension the reality of deep pain here, immeasurable joy to come, and the promise of goodness throughout!

Jesus wants us to invite Him into every circumstance. He might choose to heal you immediately, resolve it over time, or wait until heaven for the ultimate restoration. Everything is possible with Him, so we should surrender everything to his will and gratefully receive and follow whatever He says and does.

A loving, intimate relationship with God transforms our suffering. Deep and abiding love sustains us in our weakness, motivates us towards virtuous habits, and reminds us of who we belong to and his indisputable trustworthiness. **Fruitfully and peacefully navigating hardships is impossible without a consistent, relational connection with Jesus. Allowing Him to be the lord of our lives rightly orders things so that we can walk by his perspective,**

looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
(Heb 12:2)

The **4** Last Things

This article has been condensed from a talk Ralph gave to an audience of young adults in Ypsilanti, Michigan.



Pope John Paul II said the Church cannot omit, without serious mutilation of her essential message, a constant catechesis on man's Four Last Things: death, judgment, hell, and heaven. Knowing what comes after this earthly life can guide us in it.

Beyond the mysterious gates of death and eternity, we will arrive at either joy and communion with God or separation from Him. Only by understanding these Last Things can one realize the nature of sin and move toward penance and reconciliation.

1 DEATH

Why do we die? God gave man freedom to eat from any tree in the garden, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He said, "in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gn 2:17). So, death came from listening to lies and turning away from God. It came from the influence of the devil, who said they would become like God if they ate the fruit.

But the fruit was only forbidden because it was harmful. It gave them knowledge of good and evil before they could handle it. Suffering came into the world and spread:

Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice.

Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient

to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.
(Rom 1:28-32)

The lie told in the Garden is being told again today:

**You shall be like God.
Create yourself, choose your
own identity, declare your
independence from Him.**

Meanwhile, the Church wants people to be saved, forgiven, and transformed. That means believing God's Word and turning away from sin.

THE ANTIDOTE TO DEATH

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. (Heb 2:14-15)

Jesus is the antidote to death. He paid a price for our sins. He perfectly obeyed and loved the Father as we never could. By dying and rising again, He established freedom, immortality, and eternal life. And He gives it freely to whoever wants it.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (Jn 11:25). He is saying something amazing: Take hold of Me, believe in Me, and obey Me—embrace the cross—and you shall have eternal life.

Jesus told the woman at the well, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water" (Jn 4:10). If we recognize who Jesus is, we'd ask Him every day for living water.

We can't face the pressures and responsibilities of daily life without the Lord's help. That's why Paul said, "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might" (Eph 6:10). That's why we say in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt 6:11)—not just the food that we need to live, but spiritual food for energy, strength, and hope, which comes from communion with the Lord.

2 JUDGMENT

Just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Heb 9:27-28)

Jesus will return in the fullness of his glory to judge the living and the dead. This will repeat what happened in Noah's time:

In those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man.
(Mt 24:37-39)

Don't be asleep; be awake. Each day, pray, meditate on Scripture, and ask God to help keep your head clear and your heart at peace as you follow Him.

Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pt 1:13)

We scarcely hear about God's severity, holiness, justice, and judgment. There should be a constant catechesis on these things. Christianity isn't a game; everybody doesn't get a trophy. Being a disciple is hard:

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Mt 10:37-38)

There will be two very different resurrections: One for Jesus' friends, who have accepted his offer and held on to Him. And another for those who kept saying "no" until they died in hatred, unbelief, unforgiveness, and bondage to sin.

The *Catechism* explains,

There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss. (1864)

We must "strive to enter by the narrow door; for many . . . will seek to enter and will not be able" (Lk 13:23-25).

3 HELL

Those who won't be welcomed into God's kingdom face what Scripture calls "the second death":

As for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Rv 21:8)

It's eternal separation from God. It's being given what we've chosen—awful isolation, rebellion, anger, hatred, lust, and greed.

When that happens, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Lk 13:28). There will be people who listened to Jesus' teachings and ate with Him on the streets, and He will say to them, "I do not know where you come from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity!" (Lk 13:27)

What does this mean? You can be familiar with Jesus and go to church on Sunday but not be in relationship with Him—not trust Him, commit yourself to Him, and become his disciple.

It's not enough to belong to the Church (*Lumen Gentium* 14). We must believe and obey the Word of God, or we will not be saved. In fact, we will be more severely judged (Lk 12:48).

This is not a game; this is life and death. The Son of God wants to save us, but we need to pay attention to what He is saying.

**Don't be asleep; be awake.
Each day, pray, meditate
on Scripture, and ask God to
help keep your head clear
and your heart at peace
as you follow Him.**



If you don't understand, ask for understanding. If you don't have the necessary strength, ask for strength. Jesus says if your right foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. If your right hand causes your sin, cut it off. It's better to enter life missing a hand than to go to hell with an intact body.

Do whatever you need to do to get free of serious sin, because it will kill you. Serious sin will send you to hell unless you repent.

4 HEAVEN

Those whose names are written in the Book of Life, however, can expect this:

*I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."
(Rv 21:3-4)*

God revealed a vision of heaven to St. Catherine of Siena:

The goodness of these souls is beyond what your mind's eye can see or your ear hear or your tongue describe or your heart imagine. What joy they have in seeing me who am all good! What joy they will yet have when their bodies are glorified!

Relationships on earth that are in the Lord are even better in heaven, because relationships on earth aren't perfect. In heaven, there is perfect love and union.

Heaven is no more tears, dying, or crying. No more poverty or illness. This is why Jesus says, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). For those who are part of his body, Jesus has transformed biological death into an entrance to paradise.

THE CHOICES WE FACE

2025 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

This month, EWTN will begin airing the forty-first season of *The Choices We Face*. This highly acclaimed program is the longest-running Catholic television show in history! Each week, hosts Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, and Pete Burak explore important topics concerning the faith. This season's interviews engage viewers with discussions on a wide-range of topics important to the life of a disciple of Christ.



The Choices We Face hosts: Peter Herbeck, Ralph Martin, and Pete Burak (in inset).



Fr. Graham Keep · Priesthood on Mission

▶ Fr. Graham Keep shares about his priestly vocation and his call to the Companions of the Cross after over thirty years of diocesan ministry.

Anthony Feola · Seeking the Holy Spirit

▶ Anthony Feola talks about his life-changing encounter with the Holy Spirit and how we too can personally know the third person of the Trinity.



Patti Maguire Armstrong · What Would Monica Do?

▶ Author and journalist Patti Maguire Armstrong shares about the struggles of raising Catholic children in today's culture.

Fr. Basil Nortz, ORC · Holy Silence

▶ Fr. Basil Nortz discusses the supernatural powers at work in the world and how to practice holy silence in our daily lives.



Sr. Mary Gabriel Devlin, SV · There's Always More

▶ Sr. Mary Gabriel shares her faith journey, from falling in love with Jesus to her vocation with the Sisters of Life.

Luke LeTourneau, OFS · Transformation of the Heart

▶ *Live Vertical* Cofounder Luke LeTourneau discusses his struggle with loss and alcoholism and the powerful way Jesus broke into his life.



Dr. Mary Healy · Restoration and Renewal

▶ Scripture scholar Dr. Mary Healy discusses the Second Vatican Council, the development of doctrine, and charismatic spirituality.





Steve Norman · *The Search for Meaning*

Steve Norman, director of Forged Ministry, shares about his travels and the search for meaning that eventually led him to Christ.



Patti Mansfield · *Apostle of the Holy Spirit*

Patti Mansfield introduces us to St. Elena Guerra and shares about the saint's call to write Pope Leo XIII about living a perennial Pentecost.



Miguel Zuniga · *Coming Back Home*

Miguel Zuniga talks about his experiences with the supernatural that led him back to Jesus after leaving the faith of his childhood.



Al and Patti Mansfield · *The Desires of Your Heart*

Al and Patti Mansfield share how they met and embarked on their vocation of Christ-centered marriage and Spirit-filled ministry.

Dr. Monique Ruberu · *The Primacy of Love*

Dr. Monique Ruberu experienced God's providential care when she became a bold advocate for the sanctity of human life.



Dr. Monique Ruberu · *Hungry for God*

Dr. Monique Ruberu returns to discuss how God healed her marriage and the importance of NaPro Technology in her medical practice.



Deacon Steve Doran, MD · *To Die Well*

Neurosurgeon Deacon Steve Doran discusses the importance of acknowledging death's certainty and preparing well for death.

Fr. Seamus Kettner · *Answering the Call*

Fr. Seamus Kettner shares his testimony of meeting Jesus personally and being called to the priesthood through Our Lady of Knock.



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS . . .

This season also features Ralph and Peter discussing talks given by Katey Norman, Fr. Mathias Thelen, Bishop Scott McCaig, Fr. Alex Colautti, and Debbie Herbeck.



ACCESS ALL EPISODES

Recent episodes of *The Choices We Face* are available on EWTN but also can be viewed at our website, renewalministries.net/tcwf, or our YouTube channel, [YouTube.com/@renewalministries](https://www.youtube.com/@renewalministries).



EVENTS

MARCH 2025

Colombia
Conferencia de Pastoral Juvenil*
February 28-March 2
Rachel Herbeck

Des Moines, IA
The Forge Conference
March 1
Pete Burak
Details: myforge.org/conference

Green Bay, WI
Esto Vir Conference
March 1
Peter Herbeck
Details: estovir.com/conference

Houston, TX
Filming with Woman in Love*
March 2-4
Debbie Herbeck

Cleveland, OH
First Friday Club
March 6
Pete Burak
Details: firstfridayclubcleveland.org/?p=2257

Bruno, SK
St. Therese Institute Lenten Retreat
March 7-9
Ralph Martin
Details: sttherese.ca/event/lenten-retreat-with-ralph-martin/#learnmore

Ann Arbor, MI
St. Thomas Young Adult Lenten Retreat
March 8
Debbie Herbeck
Details: sta2.org

Chicago, IL
Resurrection Prep Annual Retreat
March 9-11
Debbie Herbeck, Rachel Herbeck, and the Be Love Revolution Team

Tucson, AZ
St. Thomas Church Lenten Talk
March 15
Dr. Mary Healy
Details: statucson.org/dr-mary-healy-presentations

Steubenville, OH
Talk at Franciscan University*
March 17
Rachel Herbeck

Ypsilanti, MI
Ignite Catholic Men's Conference
March 22
Peter Herbeck
Details: michigancmc.org

Vancouver, BC
Marian Charismatic Conference
March 22
Dr. Mary Healy
Details: MediatrixConference@gmail.com

Toronto, ON
Lift Jesus Higher Rally
March 29
Peter Herbeck & the Renewal Ministries Team
Details: ljhr.ca

* Not open to the public.

View complete event list:
renewalministries.net/events



**PLEASE
PRAY**

▸ That this Lent, the Lord would help us draw closer to Him in our sufferings and better know his personal, unconditional love for each of us.

▸ That the Lord would help us grow in hope and enable us to bring it as a light into every situation.

▸ For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.



*Hope in God.
If you have good hope
and faith in Him,
you shall be delivered
from your enemies.*

// St. Joan of Arc



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.

Scripture references in the newsletter are from the *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition* of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

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