



A LETTER ▶ FROM RALPH MARTIN

The Risen Jesus Is the Source
of Our Hope & Joy
PAGE 3

Choose Life,
Choose Eternal Life
PAGE 4

Spreading the Gospel
in Australia
PAGE 6

Event Calendar
PAGE 8

Dear Friends in Christ,

Even though a number of us haven't met each other, I recognize your names from signing thank you letters and marvel at how long so many of you have been faithfully supporting this mission.

It's going forward in full gear. Just yesterday I returned from Peru where Bishop Scott McCaig and I did a week-long retreat for Peruvian priests.

There were 72 of them there. Bishop Scott gave a homily each day and four of the main session talks, and I gave six of the main session talks.

Bishop Scott and I have now done three of these priests' conferences together in the last two years—one in Uganda, another in Cameroon, and now in Peru. We will be doing another priest retreat together in Uruguay later this month.

We try to prioritize responding to requests to do priest events as it is so vital to strengthen and support priests in their most important mission of reconciling souls to God and preaching the Gospel.

Many of them need encouragement because the mission today is suffering the influence of secular culture on virtually the entire world. Many of them also need encouragement because church attendance has

dropped off significantly since Covid. Maybe only 3% of Peruvian Catholics go to Mass on Sundays! Knowing how to stay connected to Christ and being reaffirmed in the importance of their vocations, the truth of the Scriptures, and the power of the Holy Spirit were all needs that the Lord helped us to meet during the retreat.

During the final session, both Bishop Scott and I turned to each other and said, "It was really worth it," as we heard priests share what they received during the week. Some shared about how various parts of the Gospel message that they only "notionally" understood were now very real to them and were going to be important to their preaching. Others shared very personally about the retreat strengthening them in leading a life of holiness and continuing to struggle against weaknesses for the sake of the Lord and their people.

Thank you for your prayers and your financial support that allows us to continue serving priests and so many more.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Bishop Scott and Ralph (front row center) recently spent a week with Peruvian priests.



Renewal Ministries' International Episcopal Advisory Council



We are grateful for all the positive feedback regarding our International Episcopal Advisory Council! Please pray for these men and continue to pray for the Lord's work through Renewal Ministries!



"[We] were so excited to learn of the formation of the International Episcopal Advisory Council. What a powerhouse of God's servants - bringing Christ to so many and bringing so many to Christ. All of us have been praying for you and for your ministry these past months. Reading this newsletter was so very encouraging and confirming of God's continued work in and through you. I look forward to future news!"

"Renewal Ministries Episcopal Advisory board is brilliant! What an amazing testimony to the ministry!"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

On the last day of the week, we both gave talks at a day conference to 3,500 fervent charismatics. We were particularly touched by the hour-long Adoration session, during which the monstrance was carried through the vast arena and people made intimate, personal contact with Jesus in the Eucharist. During a "free day" between the priests retreat and the rally, we were able to visit the birth and death sites of St. Martin de Porres and St. Rose of Lima and venerate some of their relics. Very inspiring saints. Look them up!

And as our team expands so many things are happening at once. Rachel Herbeck was invited to lead ministry on the Good News Cruise. She led a Bible study in the mornings with different speakers joining her each day. They engaged in a fruitful study of Ephesians with the cruise participants.

Our youth outreaches hosted a worship night for the young men and women that they serve this past week and had the largest gathering they have ever had for this event. Over a hundred young people came to worship God together.

A *Life in the Spirit* is now being printed in Portuguese.



Peter and Debbie Herbeck recently gave talks for a marriage event at a nearby parish that has worked with many members of our team before. This coming weekend, Peter and Pete Burak will be speaking at the Esto Vir Men's Conference in Appleton, Wisconsin.

The Holy Spirit is moving powerfully in the Church around the world!

Grateful for you and inspired by you,

Ralph Martin

Ralph



Ralph Martin recently spoke at the annual pro-life banquet hosted by Nebraskans Embracing Life in Omaha.

The Risen Jesus Is the Source of Our Hope & Joy

BY PETE BURAK

This article was first published in *Faith Magazine* in their April 2024 edition.

There is a running joke between my children and me: If you can't find something, ask Mom for help, and she will immediately find it in whatever place you've looked seventeen times already. It's uncanny how often we are convinced Donovan's basketball bag has spontaneously combusted and is gone forever, only to have Cait casually walk into the den and emerge holding the elusive duffel.

On this small scale, it can be unsettling when something is missing from the place you last saw it. Imagine the utter confusion, skepticism, awe, and wonder of the apostles when Mary Magdalen bursts in and proclaims that Jesus is no longer in the grave! How their hearts must have soared, ached, marveled, inquired, and dared to hope. Questions must have erupted in their minds and conversations.

Could this really be true?

Has Jesus actually risen from the dead?

Where did he go?

What does this mean?

Do I believe it?

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Perhaps the most profound and startling claim of Christianity centers around the fact that Jesus of Nazareth died on a cross, was sealed in a grave, and three days later, was no longer there. He vanished, leaving behind his burial cloths.

This mind-blowing reality begins to erupt across Israel and eventually the whole world, because Mary Magdalen arrives at his tomb hoping to honor and revere his remains, but instead encounters a risen Jesus. What a tremendous gift to Mary to be the first to see and believe in Christ's resurrection! Her witness leads to a biblical

footrace between John and Peter (John wins), but Peter enters the tomb to confront first-hand the fact that Jesus' body is no longer there.

Throughout the remainder of the Gospels, Jesus continues to demonstrate the power of his resurrected body (walking through walls), the reality of what he suffered (Thomas' finger in his side), and his vision for how the Gospel will reach the whole world (the Great Commission). The Gospel is lifeless and impotent if Jesus didn't rise from the dead. His resurrection changes everything. Death was defeated and the perfect sacrifice was made for the expiation of our sins. We, who had no hope of eternal life, now can be raised to heaven's glory by the man who conquered the curse of sin.

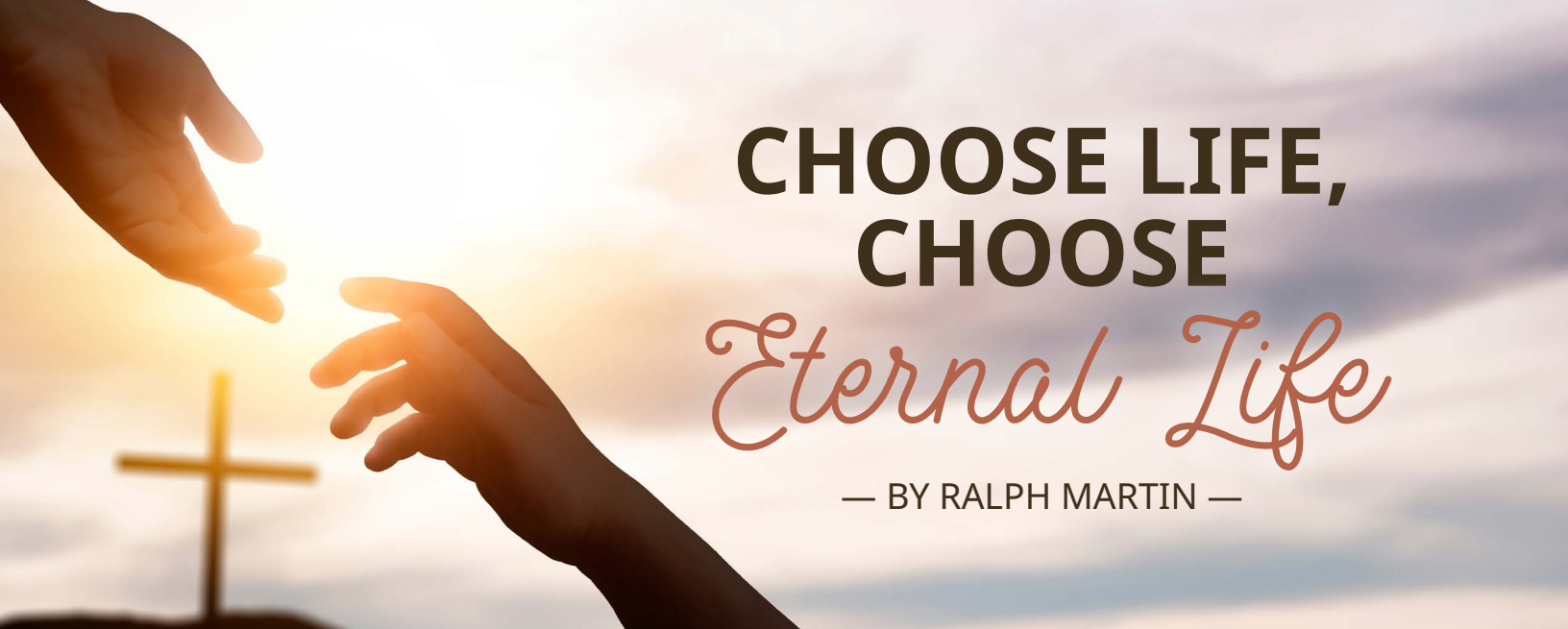
Mary Magdalen helped the apostles "find" the Good News of Jesus' resurrection, and now the Holy Spirit does the same for those who are searching. Now we can seek and find the Savior of the world. Now we can look and see the source of our hope and joy. Now we don't need to wonder where God is because he's near to, walking with, and in the hearts of those who believe!

“

Wisdom from the Saints

*“Look at Him as risen.
Just imagining how He rose
from the tomb will bring
you joy. The brilliance!
The beauty! The majesty!
How victorious!
How joyful!”*

// St. Teresa of Avila



CHOOSE LIFE, CHOOSE

Eternal Life

— BY RALPH MARTIN —

This article has been condensed from a talk given at the Nebraskan’s Embracing Life Annual Banquet in January 2026.

The choice for life has been central in the whole history of God's dealing with the human race. In Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses says,

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live.”

The pro-life movement is often characterized by the slogan, “choose life,” but I think we need to understand that the choice for life at its center has to contain a choice for God, for righteousness, for obedience to the commandments of God, and ultimately, for Jesus and the Church.

JUSTICE ON EARTH

Important questions are raised in the Old Testament regarding justice being done on this earth. While it's generally the case that blessing comes to people who choose God, it doesn't always happen. Sometimes bad things happen to good people, and sometimes good things happen to bad people. That is the question that Job asked, and the Lord answered. Job says, “Lord, I'm living a good life. What is going on? My chil-

dren have died, my flocks have been taken away from me, my wife has died, and now boils have broken out all over my body. My goodness, Lord, help.” Then the Lord responded to Job, but He didn't give an intellectual answer. Instead, the Lord said, “Job, where were you when the earth was created? Where were you when the stars were placed in the universe?” Basically, God is saying, “I am God. You are not. You can't understand it, but you've got to trust. You've got to keep on believing, even in the midst of suffering.” Job repented for forgetting that he was the creature and God was the Creator, and that he needed to trust God. Then, everything was restored to Job in a mysterious way—fields, flocks, and family—and the last days of Job were more prosperous than the first.

SIN AND HUMAN SUFFERING

This question of suffering develops further in the New Testament where the choice of life now means the choice of eternal life, a choice that overcomes the finality of death. The finality of death is rooted in sin and rebellion against God. Wisdom 2: 23-24 says,

“For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil's envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it.”

This is a very profound revelation. It wasn't God's intention that human beings die. He created us in his own image and wanted to make us imperishable, but through the envy of the devil, death entered the world. Those who believe the devil's lies and give in to the temptations with which he assaults us will experience eternal death.

When Jesus heals the paralytic in Matthew 9, the paralytic's friends can't get near Jesus, so they lower him through the roof. Jesus is impressed with their faith, and he tells the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven”. This disturbs the Pharisees who say only God can forgive sin. It's true that only God can forgive sin, but the Pharisees misinterpreted



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Jesus' statement as blasphemy instead of receiving the revelation of his identity through it. Jesus says to the Pharisees, "...[W]hich is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He then turns to the paralytic and says, "Rise, take up your bed and go home." (Mt 9:1-8)

Jesus' response was so indicative of the link between sin and human suffering. The root problem is sin. Physical healing, the way that we help people on this earth through works of charity, and the way we care for the poor must come from an understanding that the root problem for every

"The root problem for every person in this world is sin."

person in this world is sin. The best thing we can do for anybody is to help them to repent of their sin and be reconciled with the Lord through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and to be part of his body in the Catholic Church. This also applies to everybody that we engage in the political realm, in the state legislatures, the women that we help in pregnancy counseling centers, and the people we serve who are in need and in pain. The thing that they really need is reconciliation with God.

HOPE IN CHRIST

Our hope for this reconciliation that leads to eternal life is found in John chapter 11.

When Jesus heard about Lazarus being sick and then dying, He went to Lazarus' house.

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. . . . Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.'

Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said to her, '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 11:17, 21-26)

Jesus is talking about two kinds of death. He's talking about biological death, which is the punishment for our sin. The guilt of our sin is forgiven in the waters of baptism through faith, but the penalty is still there. The temporal punishment due to sin is still there. It has not been removed from the human race, even when people repent. **The reason why human beings die is because of the rebellion against God. However, for somebody who believes in Jesus, for somebody who is connected to Jesus, for somebody who eats his Body and drinks his Blood, for somebody who remains faithful in the midst of temptation and chooses Jesus time and time again, biological death is not the end. It is the doorway to paradise.**

When Jesus says those who believe will never die and will have life, He is talking about eternal life. That's the gift that the Father has sent Jesus to give. In the last analysis, that's the only gift that makes a fundamental difference. Sin and death are the condition of the human race. The only remedy for sin is the sacrificial love of Jesus on the cross, dying and rising for us, and the only way that great deed can become real to us is through faith and baptism, continually renewed in the Holy Eucharist. That's the greatest gift we can give to anybody.

In its last analysis and its final goal, the pro-life movement must eventually become the eternal life movement. It is deeply admirable what those in the pro-life movement do, and Anne and I consider ourselves part of this. Our profound

works of charity, standing up for the unborn in all the ways that we do must broaden out to be alert to evangelization opportunities. Life on this earth is a great good that is to be deeply cherished and defended, but eternal life is even greater. The choice of life must eventually lead to the choice of Jesus in order for all the good we do for people on earth not to be lost in death and hell but to be saved, raised up, and transfigured in the Father's house.



For the same reasons you support Renewal Ministries now, would you consider remembering us in your will?

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One significant way you can help ensure Renewal Ministries' continued work of Catholic renewal and evangelization is to join the St. Catherine of Siena Society by designating us as a beneficiary in your will or trust.

For more information, please contact Jess Jenkins at 734-662-1730, ext. 130, or jjenkins@renewalministries.net.

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RenewalMinistries.net/plannedgiving



SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN AUSTRALIA



BY KATEY NORMAN

Renewal Ministries Team Member

Katey Norman is a proud Stratford, Ontario, native, and graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville. She is currently finishing her master's degree in theology. She and her husband, Steve (pictured below), moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, with their two children to be on mission and serve the Lord with Renewal Ministries. Katey is the Director of Discipleship for Be Love Revolution and has over fifteen years of experience working in ministry.

This past January, my husband Steve and I were blessed to travel to Armidale, Australia, on behalf of Renewal Ministries to work with the Immaculata Community, a religious community made up of religious sisters, brothers (including one newly ordained transitional deacon), and lay people whose mission is to bring Christ to the people of Australia and to invite them into their call to evangelize. Each year, the community puts on a school that serves to equip members of the Church with a renewed understanding of life in the Trinity, love for neighbor, and the call to invite others into a life of deep, unwavering faith. Participants come from all over the country to receive, including families, couples, individuals, and priests. Ralph and Anne Martin were in Australia for a previous evangelization school a few years ago, and the sisters and the brothers visited us in Ann Arbor last year. We are really happy to continue the relationship with this wonderful community.

The theme for the school this year focused on the "Heart of the Father" with the core message coming from a quotation from St. John Paul the Great:

"We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us . . ."

The Immaculata Community seeks the Lord's voice and will in everything they do, and the fruit of that abandonment to Jesus was powerfully revealed throughout the course of the week. Over 500 people were gathered for the school this year, and the community created a schedule that allowed



for varying opportunities depending on state of life, age, and vocation. In addition to the teachings, there were many occasions for prayer each day, including Mass, Adoration, morning prayer, and the rosary.

Our daily schedule included giving talks, offering prayer ministry, and ministering to people one-on-one. I was able to spend significant time talking with young women about the adventure of following Christ and allowing Him to be the center of their lives. I spent several days praying with some younger sisters in the Lord who were ready to give their lives completely to God. Steve's week was filled with ministering to many people with a particular emphasis on serving the men attending the school. We both were able to lead small groups throughout the week, as well. Every waking moment of the day, people were hungrily seeking God.

In the middle of the school, ensuring grounding in the Holy Spirit, stood Mother Mary Therese, the foundress of the community who has worked tirelessly in serving the Lord since the inception of the order in 2008. The foundation of the order is to live under the banner of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady and seek spiritual revival for those they serve and the country of Australia at large. Mother's vision and heart for the people who attended the school mirrored our Blessed Mother's love for her children. This bedrock of faith and service was evident in the entire religious community as they daily poured themselves out to bring Christ to the people gathered. The charity of the community is quickly bearing fruit as the order is growing with many young vocations.

The newly appointed Bishop Peter Murphy joined us for a large portion of the week, giving talks and ministering to his people. We were also blessed to build friendships with many priests who attended, several of whom are from the Sydney area. These men have a profound desire to see the Church built up in their country. We are excited to continue to grow these relationships.



Members of the Immaculata Community and lay people of all ages gathered for the annual Immaculata Mission School in Armidale, Australia.

During the week, there was a great desire for catechetical teachings. Australia is a country much like my own native land of Canada—its origins are Christian but with a deepening culture of secularization. As a result, the Church in Australia has a growing need for formation opportunities and the ability to gather as a community. The school provided much needed renewal for those gathered and an opportunity to be filled with the hope, freedom, and glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

One moment that stood out to me was on our final evening serving with the community. We offered prayer ministry several evenings during the week, and on the final night, as people hungered for the Lord, we ended up praying in prayer teams for close to five

hours. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was tangible. Men and women were being brought to Jesus and his healing power. Addictions and relationships were healed, faith was restored, and an overwhelming sense of peace and joy covered the school as people received the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This entire opportunity left me with a deep hunger to continue my part in the “yes” that Renewal Ministries has given to the Lord in its commitment to bringing the Gospel to the world. Australia is a country with incredible opportunity for continued conversion and transformation. He is doing mighty work in our brothers and sisters who are underneath the banner of the Southern Cross, and we are excited to participate in what our Father is doing there.

Bishop Peter Murphy, the Bishop of Armidale, and priests of his diocese brought the Blessed Sacrament to the participants of the mission school.



EVENTS

APRIL 2026 View complete event list at renewalministries.net/events.

* Not open to the public.

Jefferson City, MO
Heart of a Hero Men's Conference
April 10-11
Pete Burak
Details: heartofaheromensconference.com

Kansas City, MO
Legatus*
April 8
Rachel Herbeck

Austin, TX
Legatus*
April 15
Ralph Martin

Evansville, IN
Legatus*
April 15
Pete Burak

St. Louis, MO
Walking with Purpose Conference
April 17-19
Rachel Herbeck
Details: walkingwithpurpose.com/flourish-2026/

Oklahoma City, OK
Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Spirituality Course*
April 18
Ralph Martin

De Pere, WI
Presentations at St. Norbert College*
April 27-28
Dr. Mary Healy

MISSIONS



Mexico
April 5-13
Jim Murphy & Team

Lithuania
April 12-19
Peter Herbeck & Team

Uruguay
April 21-28
Ralph Martin & Bishop Scott McCaig



FRANCISCAN

GREECE PILGRIMAGE IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL WITH GREEK ISLE CRUISE

March 29-April 8, 2027



Join Fr. Dave Pivonka & Ralph Martin in experiencing the holy sites of: Thessaloniki • Philippi • Kavala • Kalambaka • Meteora • Athens • Corinth • Cruise (Celestyal Cruises) • Mykonos • Kusadasi • Ephesus (Mary's House) • Patmos • Heraklion • Santorini

DETAILS & REGISTRATION:

faithandreason.com/pilgrimage/greece-pilgrimage/



PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ For the people of God to experience the graces of Easter more deeply and fully.
- ▶ For all priests to be renewed and refreshed in the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members.



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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