

Renewal Ministries

October 2006

Proclaiming Jesus through Catholic Renewal and Evangelization



Dear Friends,

A letter from Ralph Martin

Greetings in the Lord.

One of the joys of overseeing the work of Renewal Ministries is that I regularly receive the reports from each mission trip soon after they're completed. And there is always so much good news and so much evidence of heroic, faithful service, often under difficult conditions, that it is impossible to publish it all. We do our best!

Let me share with you the report I just received from Tom Edwards our country coordinator for Tanzania, in East Africa. In my classes at the seminary I teach that the Acts of the Apostles are supposed to be continuing in our time and we are certainly seeing that in our mission work.

"For six consecutive years a Renewal Ministries team has made the long journey to the Eastern African country of Tanzania. Thus far we have held renewal events in nine of the thirty two dioceses of this large country. This year we traveled deep into the remote Southern regions of the country nearing the borders of Malawi and Mozambique.

Our thirteen member team rose to the challenge of very long and rigorous journeys, relatively primitive living conditions at times, and a demanding ministry schedule. After a long flight and a short night our team boarded our rented bus for a twelve hour ride to the Southwest and the town

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“*The Iringa diocese is still a stronghold for animistic practices and the local witch doctors play a prominent role in the lives of many people.*”

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Dear Friends

“As the power of darkness and evil was broken, the people in the wheelchair section began to get up and walk. One of the volunteers began collecting their crutches and canes.”

of Iringa. The daily schedule here would include outdoor rallies, several workshops in the mornings, as well as retreats for priests and another for sisters. Two of the participants in the priests retreat experienced notable blessings.

One of these men was a young seminarian who seemed to respond to all that the Holy Spirit was offering. He was thirsting for truth and drank deeply of all. Another, a missionary priest, came to the retreat in the midst of a traumatic crisis of faith. He had been laboring for years in his missionary endeavors and seemed to be trying to carry all of the burdens of Tanzania on his own shoulders. His exasperation at dealing with the dreadful consequences of a population in that region plagued by a 64% HIV infection rate had left him questioning the value of having any faith at all. Happily on the final day of the retreat, he surrendered to a renewing immersion in the Holy Spirit. In the midst of a prayerful experience accompanied by peace and joyful tears he found a quickening of his faith. The heavy yoke was lifted and his countenance was radiating like a newly born child.

The outdoor rallies in Iringa were held on the Cathedral grounds and were attended by thousands. Many villagers walked in from 25 or 30 miles away to attend this event, often times accompanied by small children and babes on the back. They slept on the ground or floors of warehouse type buildings and prepared their family meals over little open fires. The Iringa

diocese is still a stronghold for animistic practices and the local witch doctors play a prominent role in the lives of many people.

On the first days of the rally, people were called upon to turn away from such practices and to give their lives wholly to the Lord. The response was positive and a big box was filled with amulets, magical potions, and fetishes. As I was preaching on the fourth day of the rally, the intended topic was “Evangelization”. Sharing from the book of The Acts of the Apostles, I was emphasizing the success of Phillip’s preaching endeavors in Samaria. As the story unfolds, we are told about Simon the magician (equivalent to a witch doctor) who exerted great power over the people by working signs and wonders. At this point in the message, it seemed that the Spirit led in a slightly different direction and I sensed that now was the time to invite the witch doctors present to do as Simon had done and give their lives to Christ. Thousands of people had been sitting for hours on the hard baked and barren clay field. As we began to pray, turmoil broke out all over the field.

Our team members moved into the crowd to begin to pray for people. Sr. Bernadette went to a small covered shelter on the left side which was filled with dozens of people in wheelchairs, the lame on crutches, and people suffering with the fever of malaria. Suddenly the sovereign anointing of the Holy Spirit moved in and everything began to happen at once. Near the front row of the crowd chaos broke out. People got up and began to scatter. I saw a black snake lashing out at people and eventually some men ran up and stomped it to death under their heels.

At the same time there was a commotion in the crowd. A large snake came out of the mouth of a woman seated on the ground. The people all ran from the snake, but the woman did not move. The leaders told us she was a witch doctor and in seeking to obtain more power she swallowed a snake. Now that she was delivered, she vomited up the snake. As the power of darkness and evil was broken, the people in the wheelchair section began to get up and walk. One of the volunteers began collecting their crutches and canes. Another woman, also a witch doctor, was dancing around those who were healed trying to stop what was happening



Fr. Earl Muller S.J. from Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, MI, spent three days teaching the forty-five priests from the Mbinga diocese who attended their first retreat which emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit and empowerment charisms.

by casting spells but to no avail. Suddenly, she fell to the ground as if dead. The volunteers carried her out on a stretcher. The powers of darkness had been defeated and those who had been in bondage to sickness and infirmities were healed. There was great rejoicing in Iringa that day as the scriptures were fulfilled right before our eyes. ‘These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils. They will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.’ (Mark 16:17)

Our time in Iringa concluded on the rally field with a joyous celebration of the Sunday liturgy with Bishop Tarcisius Ngalalkumtwa. The following day we boarded our bus for another nine hours of winding our way to the South.”

Jesus is Lord! Thanks be to God!

On another front I’m really excited about the early responses to my new book, *The Fulfillment of All Desire: A Guidebook for the Journey to God Based on the Wisdom of the Saints*.

“I’m having trouble putting it down. I started off highlighting phrases and quotes that encouraged me, then I found myself marking most sentences...This book is such an answer to prayer. I’ve been speaking to God of my desire to be more one with him and to be rid of anything that keeps me from such oneness. I’m ordering a copy for a friend. Thank you for this book.” (An email from California)

“Your book will set new standards in understanding and communicating the call to discipleship and the meaning of true spirituality. What a great service to the Church.” (A priest from Michigan)

“This book will serve many people on their spiritual journey.” (A bishop in Rome)

“At this point in our lives this is the kind of teaching those who have been in the renewal for many years really need.” (A woman in England)

“This book is a masterpiece!” (A seminary professor)

“The layout and design really makes the book easy to read. This is surely your *magnum opus*. I am so impressed

I’m calling some friends and urging them to get it.” (A priest in Europe)

I think the book really can help a lot of people come closer to the Lord. Could you help get the word out? People who can benefit from the book—for whom it will literally be an answer to prayer—need to know about it. In addition to thinking about what friends or relatives or co-workers might be interested, one thing that can help (after you’ve read it yourself!) is to write a simple on-line review of it on the major book websites such as www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com. Just enter the book’s title and when you come to the correct page you’ll see an option to “rate” the book and write a review of it. This can be really helpful in making it known.

Secondly, on my part, **I’d be happy to autograph a copy** if you’d like, for yourself, or as a gift to someone, if you order the book through Renewal Ministries. Just attach a note to the enclosed reply card, if you’re ordering the book, and ask that I autograph it. Make clear whose names you’d like it to be dedicated to. You can also do the same by calling our office and speaking to Jan at 734-662-1730 ext. 27 or emailing her at jsauter@renewalministries.net.

Thanks for your help in getting out the word, and for everything you do to make it possible to carry out the work the Lord has given us to do.

In Christ,

Ralph Martin

“This book is such an answer to prayer. I’ve been speaking to God of my desire to be more one with him and to be rid of anything that keeps me from such oneness.”



Team members meet with Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

From the Field

The Renewal Ministries Institute

For the past five years we've worked to develop a series of annual training schools called the Renewal Ministries Institute. We developed the schools in response to the passionate vision Pope John Paul II gave us in his inspiring Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. The letter contains a pastoral plan for the Church in the Third Millennium. The vision of our late Holy Father found deep resonance in all of us at Renewal Ministries. We were convinced, and still are, that the Holy Father put his finger on the pulse of what the Spirit is saying to the Church in our time.

In the letter he said, "The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone the high standard of ordinary Christian living." That includes genuine "training in holiness," and making our parishes and Christian communities "schools of prayer." It demands a "renewed listening to the Word of God," and the commitment on the part of every believer to a "new apostolic outreach...filled with the ardor of the apostolic preaching that followed Pentecost." (NMI 31, 33, 39, 40)

Our schools were structured specifically to respond to that vision. The schools have been a very effective means of imparting the kind of vision and training the Holy Father proposed. This past July we held two schools at the St. John's Youth and Family Retreat Center in Plymouth, MI. The School of Spirituality was

led once again by Ralph Martin and Sr. Ann Shields. The school was truly a "genuine training in holiness," as both Ralph and Sr. Ann drew upon some of the primary themes from St. Francis DeSales' spiritual classic, *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

Once again, the school was not only a source for a good exchange of information, but a place of encounter. Students were inspired, convicted, challenged, refreshed and awakened to new passion for the call to holiness. Here are some of their reflections:

"It was a refreshing retreat that has strengthened my resolve for following the Lord...and has allowed me to receive insight into problems in my life."

"I came 'confused' about many life issues I'm dealing with presently. I left focused on what I need and want to do in my daily life, to place Jesus first."

"The School of Spirituality was water on the oasis. It has watered my soul and heart."

"The School was refreshing, re-energizing, a catalyst or fork in the road—to pause, reflect and to give God time to work a paradigm shift for His Kingdom."

The School of Catholic Bible Study began just a few days after the School of Spirituality. Some of the students attended both schools.

The Bible School was led by Laurie Manhardt, Debbie Herbeck, and Lavinia Spirito, with the bulk of the teaching given by Fr. Joseph Ponessa. We're so grateful to have such a dynamic, inspired, talented, credentialed and experienced team of bible teachers to lead the school. The students received a great deal of practical instruction on a range of topics: how to use the bible in prayer, how to study the bible, how to begin and lead a bible study, how to lead a small group, how to choose a bible study, and how to give a follow-up lecture. In addition, Fr. Ponessa gave a series of deep, inspiring and informative lectures on the life of King David and the Psalms. The students were profoundly blessed:

“The School of Spirituality was water on the oasis. It has watered my soul and heart.”



Students who attended the School of Spirituality were inspired, convicted, challenged, refreshed and awakened to a new passion for the call to holiness.

“I was reawakened to the full spectrum of what the Catholic Church has to offer. I am eager to delve more deeply into the scriptures.”

“The school increased my faith, rested my spirit and refreshed my soul.”

“I am leaving encouraged, spiritually fed and more confident in knowing God is here and wants us to cooperate with him.”

“It’s like the ‘second stage booster igniting’ on my spiritual journey toward a closer relationship with Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit.”

The schools continue to be a source of life and an important training ground for many. Though we have not yet set our dates, we will be hosting schools again next summer. If you haven’t attended one of our schools I encourage you to consider it for next year, and to bring a friend. I believe the schools are an important

way that we at Renewal Ministries can help you continue to grow in your relationship with Jesus and to equip you to fulfill your mission as his disciple. +



Fr. Ponessa, our beloved scripture scholar, (seen here with Debbie Herbeck) has taught at the Bible School for the past three years. This year he brought his wisdom, insight, and sense of humor to the teaching of the Psalms.

“I was reawakened to the full spectrum of what the Catholic Church has to offer. I am eager to delve more deeply into the scriptures.”

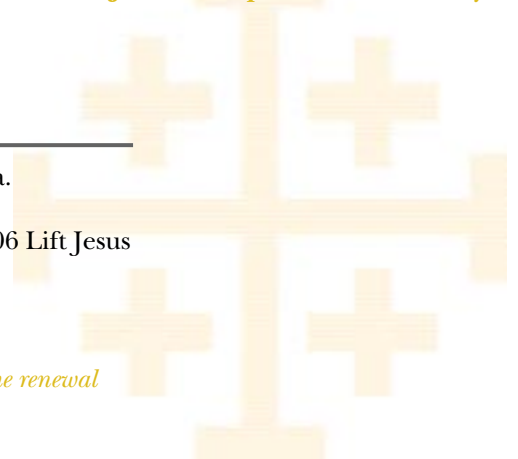


A highlight of both schools was the presence of young musicians whose zeal and love for God were a source of hope and inspiration. Chris Bray (right) from Canada led music at the School of Spirituality, and (l to r) Emilio Rutllant, Jacob Krempel, Eric Poisson, Kyle Collins and Patrick Knodziola came from Florida to lead music at the Bible School.

Please Pray...

- + for the upcoming missions to Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Mexico, and Kenya.
- + that many people would be drawn into a deeper relationship with the Lord at the 2006 Lift Jesus Higher Rally in Toronto this month.
- + for all the intentions of our supporters and their family members.

Thank you for your continued support through prayer as we labor together for the Gospel and the renewal of the Church.





Book of Revelation and in the evenings my dad (John) and Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw conducted a Life in the Spirit type seminar and taught the Unbound prayer method.

A particularly memorable night was when my dad gave a talk on “The Christian Worldview.” After telling the story of salvation history he concluded with a brief description of the spiritual warfare around us and the

main obstacles he sees to the people of Turkey growing in faith. It’s the same basic message he has been preaching across Turkey for years—forgive one another! It’s a very emotional message and a very relevant and difficult one for their culture. One of the Armenian priests with us told us that he had a deep anger towards certain people. It was giving him energy but also poisoning everything in his life. After speaking, my dad asked us to kneel and speak aloud words of forgiveness for those who had hurt us. This priest tried to kneel and say, “I forgive the Turks (for genocide).” Yet the words stuck in his throat. All of a sudden he felt like the words came pouring out from inside of him, and he began to repeat the phrase of forgiveness over and over again. “This,” he declared, “is the work of the Holy Spirit.” The anger that had driven him for years was gone and he was filled with peace. That night, strongholds of resentment and hatred were crumbling. The Holy Spirit was poured out in a new way, preparing Turkey for the spiritual fire that was to come.

The next night there was a brief explanation of the gifts of the Spirit and then prayer for the power of God to fall. Many people were blessed with the gift of tongues, some with the gift of healing and prophecy. Perhaps what made the gifts even more amazing was that the Armenian Apostolic Church, and even the Latin Catholic Church in Turkey are not particularly supportive or open to, this new Pentecost. Yet people were delighted in the power and presence of God. As we loaded onto our bus and began our drive back, people were excited, rejoicing, and energized by the Holy Spirit, ready to begin a different and new relationship with God. +

Mary Beth Kazanjian, seen here with her dad, John, has traveled to Turkey twice. She is currently a freshman at Hillsdale College in Michigan.

Mission to Turkey

By Mary Beth Kazanjian

Early Monday morning in Turkey, we began a journey that has great historic significance. For the first time as far back as anyone we traveled with could remember, Latin Catholics and Armenian Apostolics, including two priests from these different churches, were joining for a retreat. It was a small group, only fourteen to add to our team of thirteen, but committed. In the atmosphere of animosity between all the different churches in Turkey, to see such a gathering at all was phenomenal. Each day we traveled to the different churches mentioned in the



We visited the ruins of Ephesus one afternoon and stopped to pray at the ruins of the church of St. Mary, the site of the Third Ecumenical Council in 431. As we were praying together near what was the baptistery, a rainbow appeared in the sky; it was a sure promise of what was to occur later that evening as we prayed together for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Mission to Kazakhstan

By Dr. Peter Williamson

It was my first trip to Kazakhstan in three years and I was curious to see what had changed in the Church and in the society. The Catholic Church of Kazakhstan has made strides forward over the last eight years. First, its tenuous legal status in comparison with Islam and the Orthodox Church has been solidified. There has been something of a building boom in the Church as well, funded by Catholic churches in Western Europe. The Archdiocese of Karaganda has completed a large new diocesan center and is in the middle of building a new cathedral. Our retreat took place in an almost finished new retreat center.

The institutional growth of the Church is also progressing. When I first came eight years ago, there was one bishop, Jan Pawel Lengua, presiding over an apostolic administration (mission territory governed from Rome) for all of central Asia. Today there are two archdioceses, one diocese, and two apostolic administrations. During our visit two new bishops were installed, bringing the total number of bishops in the region to five. The seminary in Karaganda has only 15 seminarians but it is healthy and strong.

The spiritual growth of the Church as the people of God is also progressing, but not without difficulties. What pleased me most was to see many of the young people who attended our evangelization schools in the past, still faithfully serving the Lord. Many have completed their studies in high school or university and gotten jobs. Some have gotten married. Some of the seminarians have been ordained or will be soon.

I was particularly impressed with the young people of the Cathedral parish in Karaganda where our Slovak friends have been ministering. The informal community of young people includes members of different movements and many of them attended the Leaders' School. Under the leadership of Father Vlado, they have developed a very wholesome spiritual and social life that compares favorably with any parish youth group I am familiar with. The Leaders' School was conducted after an interval of four years since the last Evangelization School. About 40 young people attended the ten day school. The program, based on the beatitudes and seven deadly sins, using Peter Kreeft's book,

Back to Virtue, offered daily prayer, small group discussions, practical workshops, and teachings.



On the retreat I was impressed at the way these 15–24 year olds washed the dishes, cleaned the bathrooms and scrubbed the retreat house floors by hand daily without complaining or requiring any obvious supervision. They conducted themselves as good Christians and their small group discussions about relating to the opposite sex revealed a high ideal of purity before marriage. This contrasts with the secular culture in Kazakhstan as well as America.

Kazakhstan still has major cities without a single Catholic Church—there are simply not enough priests, religious and lay missionaries available. But a little can go a long way. As Jesus said, “the kingdom of God is like yeast which a woman put in three measures of meal until it was all leavened...” Meanwhile, let's pray that the Father send out more laborers into the harvest. +

Dr. Peter S. Williamson completed his studies in biblical theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He presently serves as a Country Coordinator for Renewal Ministries in Lithuania and Kazakhstan and is Assistant Dean and Assistant Professor of New Testament at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, Michigan.



Dr. Bohus Zivcak (seen here playing the guitar) brought an experienced retreat team from the River of Life Fellowship in Slovakia to help conduct the Leaders' Retreat for young people. Bohus is now functioning as a country coordinator in Kazakhstan for Renewal Ministries.

On the Road

“All things are beautiful because You made them; but You who made all things are inexpressibly more beautiful.”

St. Augustine

Lift Jesus Higher

Toronto, Ontario

CANADA

October 28, 2006

8:30 AM – 6:00 PM

new location:

The South Building
of the Metro Toronto
Convention Centre

www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org

October 2006

Medford, OR

Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference

October 6–8

Ralph Martin

Contact: LandinSSMO@aol.com

Slovakia, Czech Republic Mission

October 6–20

Tom Edwards

Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 x32

or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Orlando, FL

Diocesan Catholic Charismatic Conference

October 13–15

Sr. Ann Shields

Contact John Ligas at 407-875-2619

Romania Mission

October 18–31

Dcn. Steve Thomashefski

Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 x32

or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Newark, OH, Men's Retreat at Sts. Peter and Paul Retreat Center

October 20–22

Ralph Martin

Contact: Doreen at columbusccr@sbcglobal.net or 614-237-7080

Omaha, NE, Institute for Priestly Formation Advisory Council

October 25

Ralph Martin

Toronto, ONT, Lift Jesus Higher Rally

October 28

Ralph Martin, Sr. Ann Shields, Peter Herbeck, Rosalind Moss, Jesse Romero

Contact Sadie at 905-270-2510 or Larry at 416-227-2560 or www.lift-jesus-higher-rally.org.

Ann Arbor, MI, Renewal Ministries US Board Meeting

October 29–30

Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Sr. Ann Shields, Gary Seromik

November 2006

Tallahassee, FL, Deacons and Wives Retreat

November 3–5

Sr. Ann Shields

Syracuse, NY, Christ the King Retreat Center Leaders' Conference

November 3–5

Ralph Martin

Contact Dcn. Jerry Grigaitis at

DcnJMGrigaitis@aol.com

West Palm Beach, FL

Magnificat Luncheon

November 4

Debbie Herbeck

Contact: 561-793-0343 or drcarolraz@yahoo.com

Mexico Mission

November 4–11

Jim Murphy

Contact Jessica at 734-662-1730 x32

or jsherwood@renewalministries.net

Lynnfield, MA, Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Day of Renewal

November 10–11

Ralph Martin

Contact: 781-593-7074 or spaz1967@aol.com

Albuquerque, NM

Charismatic Leaders Meeting

November 10–12

Peter Herbeck

Contact Walter Matthews at 1-800-338-2445

Renewal Ministries

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Most Reverend Sam Jacobs, Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux, LA

President

Ralph Martin

In Canada

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

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Design

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