



## A LETTER ▶ FROM RALPH MARTIN

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## Dear Disciples,

**First of all, thank you for your amazing response to our year-end giving appeal. It's given us a good boost for the coming year of opportunities. Last month, I mentioned that I wanted to report on some things that came from a very special visit to a place of real historic value.**

I was invited, along with leaders of ministries from around the world, to a consultation sponsored by CHARIS, the international organization tasked by the Vatican with serving the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR). It was held at The Ark and the Dove, the historic retreat center near Pittsburgh that is famous for the "Duquesne Weekend" that took place there in 1967 and marked the beginning of the CCR.

A few months after this outpouring began, Steve Clark (recently deceased) and I visited this group of students and professors. Very quickly, we became involved with the movement, not only in a personal way, but in national and then international leadership roles.

I was tasked with serving the international renewal and we set up the International Communication Office (ICO) in Ann Arbor to deal with the flood of written inquiries and multiple international visitors seeking more

information about the renewal. At that time, the Lord sent us Gary Seromik who just happened to know multiple languages to help with the task and he stayed with us serving the ministry for the next fifty plus years!

The next step was to move the ICO to Belgium at the request of Cardinal Suenens and broaden the leadership by setting up an international council with two representatives from each continent, and I was elected the first chairperson. The initials then changed to ICCRO and then ICCRS. Shortly afterwards, it moved to Rome to establish offices in one of the Vatican buildings, the Palazzo San Calisto, where it is to this day. My wife, Anne, and I visited the office last spring when we were in Rome for a week for various meetings.

A few years ago, Pope Francis wanted to change the name again and establish a more formal organizational structure and status that was more directly tied to Vatican oversight. The international organization is now called CHARIS.

In various talks and publications of governing documents, Pope Francis laid out three purposes for CHARIS in promoting the CCR:

- 1. Spreading the reality of "baptism in the Spirit" to the whole Church**
- 2. Working for Christian unity**
- 3. Serving the poor in their material and spiritual needs**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Ministry leaders from around the world gather to pray and dialogue at a CHARIS consultation event.

At the recent CHARIS consultation that I attended, I was asked to offer some comments “as the Spirit led” and what follows is a short summary of what I felt led to share.

While the three purposes enunciated by the Vatican for CHARIS’ service to the renewal are admirable, what we see in the Bible concerning baptism in the Spirit is broader and more challenging. Baptism in the Spirit as it is described in the Scriptures is not just for the purpose of enlivening people’s spiritual lives but is fundamentally an empowerment for mission, bringing with it a deep contemplative grace where people now *know* the Lord in such a way that they are impelled to share Him with others.

We see this connection of baptism in the Holy Spirit and evangelization in Luke 24 and Acts 1. Jesus tells his disciples that they are to stay in the city until they receive power from on high and then they will be his witnesses throughout the world.

Baptism in the Spirit is also presented in the Scriptures in light of the final judgment and calls us to be accountable to the Lord in obeying the commandments empowered by the Spirit. In Matthew’s Gospel, John the Baptist says that Jesus will baptize “with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” (Mt 3:11-12)

In Mark 16, Jesus commissions his disciples to preach the Gospel to all creatures and baptize them. He tells them that those who believe and are baptized will be saved and those who refuse will be condemned. Understanding evangelization in light of the final judgment needs to be more clearly included in our understanding of the purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the CCR.

**Why am I sharing this, even in such a shortened form? Because it’s important that we do not “domesticate” or “put in a box” the mighty work of the Holy Spirit and isolate it from its evangelistic and eschatological context.**

Thank God for this outpouring of the Holy Spirit! May it continue. And thank God for those who are serving in the leadership structures of the renewal and for those who have made The Ark and the Dove a true place of pilgrimage, including the wonderful sisters of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who warmly welcome any visitor.

In Christ,

Ralph

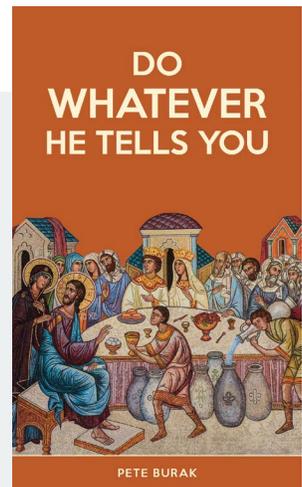
P.S. For those interested in more of the history of what I’ve briefly referred to here, I highly recommend Patti Mansfield’s book *As By a New Pentecost*, which is the best history of the beginning of the movement. Very inspiring.

For more on my personal involvement and the drama and fascinating details that often accompanied it, I recommend my recent book, *A Life in the Spirit: A Memoir*.

Ministry leaders gather at The Ark and the Dove outside of Pittsburgh for CHARIS Gathering of Ministries event.



Learn more about The Ark and the Dove  
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# Elon Musk's Optimism?

— BY PETER HERBECK —



This article is condensed from Peter Herbeck's YouTube video entitled *Elon Musk's Optimism??*, which can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loy7nD05Jfc>

Elon Musk was recently interviewed at the 2025 All-In Summit. In the interview, Musk addressed a question on the civilizational suicide of the West today, particularly the high suicide rate and the unwillingness of people to reproduce. In the interview, Musk says,

Unless people have a sense of optimism and purpose about the future, suicide might just be what happens. . . . We need to maybe give people a sense of optimism and excitement about the future, and a belief that the future will be better than the past.<sup>1</sup>

**Musk said that the loss of religion in the West has created a vacuum of meaning. He proposed that a “coherent philosophy that people can get excited about” could provide this optimism and purpose that people lack. While Musk identifies a critical issue, I think he fails to find a meaningful and compelling solution. There isn't a great philosophy or optimistic vision that we can put together that will be enough to fill this vacuum because the fundamental problem is spiritual. We are made for something greater.**

In his book, *How Civilizations Die*, David Goldman addresses the historically low birth rate, which has fallen well below replacement, and how the unwillingness to reproduce today is unprecedented. Goldman states,

As traditional society gives way to modernity, faith and fertility vanish together. . . . The truth is that humankind cannot survive without faith, specifically faith that our lives have meaning beyond the mere span of years. Humankind cannot bear mortality without the hope of immortality. When men and women lose the sacred, they lose the desire to live.<sup>2</sup>

Goldman says that as we move away from traditional society and the biblical worldview that corresponds to our human dignity and our ultimate call, we move away from the only thing that will ever satisfy. We cannot help but to seek immortality because we are immortal creatures. We are destined for eternal life. This divine purpose and destiny comes from the Word of God that is passed down to us through lives lived with God and in God. This life leads to a renewed mind and a fresh spiritual way of thinking about reality, the meaning of life, and human destiny. An exciting philosophy will never fulfill the deeper longing in the human heart.

“  
The truth is that  
humankind cannot  
survive without  
faith . . .

C.S. Lewis articulates the reason for this in his book, *Mere Christianity*. Lewis says,

The reason why it can never succeed is this. God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. . . . [People] are all trying to run it on the wrong juice. That is what Satan has done to us human beings.<sup>3</sup>

**Goldman and Lewis identify the problem exactly. This is a post-Christian world that is trying to tell people they can be as gods and can find happiness and fulfillment apart from God. In fact, there is no other way to find it than being aligned with Him. It is time for the Christian people to be the light of the world and to articulate the truth about the only answer to this desperate situation in the world where people have fallen into the great lie of the devil.**

1. Elon Musk, “Elon Musk on DOGE, Optimus, Starlink Smartphones, Evolving with AI, Why the West is Imploding,” interview by Chatham Palihapitiya, Jason Calacanis, David Sacks, David Friedberg, September 9, 2025.

2. Goldman, David P. *How Civilizations Die: (And Why Islam Is Dying Too)*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2011.

3. Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

# SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN SLOVAKIA



Students from a Catholic school in Prague learn about the development of babies as a part of Jean Marie's pro-life teaching.



## BY TOM & JEAN MARIE EDWARDS Country Coordinators for Slovakia

Tom Edwards is Renewal Ministries' country coordinator for Slovakia and Tanzania. He began full-time ministry in 1974; it soon evolved into an international outreach of lay Catholic evangelization and mission with an emphasis on preaching and teaching Scripture. Tom's wife, Jean Marie, is a retired teacher and life-long missionary of the Gospel of Life who now serves with Tom, teaching the dignity of the human person and human sexuality all over the world with great effectiveness. They make their home in St. Augustine, Florida.

## PRESOV, SLOVAKIA

In 1995, Renewal Ministries introduced the first FIRE rally to Slovakia. Since then, the event has continued annually in the city of Presov under the direction of the Maranatha Community, a Catholic charismatic group that has been instrumental in bringing a renewal of the faith to this formerly Communist part of the world. From when we began mission work in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, we intended to spearhead evangelization events throughout the two countries. The Lord has been faithful to lead us to most major cities, as well as rural areas and remote villages. There have been rallies, parish missions, retreats, and evangelization and discipleship training seminars for priests, religious sisters, and schools at every level.

This 2025 mission effort was launched once again in the city of Presov, Slovakia, with a FIRE rally in the M-Arena, a new facility built by the community.

Peter Herbeck and Pete Burak flew in for this to share their amazing gifts as speakers. We saw many new faces as people came in, each hungry for a move of God. The atmosphere seemed electric as the Holy Spirit did what only He can do.

## PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Immediately after the FIRE Rally in Eastern Slovakia, we set out on the eight-hour journey to Prague where we connected with Sr. Marie-Anna Linhartova, an Ursuline sister serving in Prague. Through Sr. Marie-Anna's efforts, our team was invited to speak to the classes at one of their Catholic schools about salvation and the pro-life message.

Like many Catholic schools, the student body is a mix of those coming from believing and unbelieving families. In the early twentieth century, over 90 percent of Czechs identified as Christian, with Catholicism being dominant.

However, after several decades of Communist rule, 90 percent of Czechs identify as atheist, agnostic, or non-religious. Thanks to the diligent work of the Ursuline sisters, these students can hear and experience the faith.

### BRATISLAVA

Over the years, we have visited the Slovak capital city of Bratislava many times. The events scheduled in Bratislava this year included a parish evening of renewal, a time of teaching and fellowship with the leaders of the community, and a pro-life teaching for about a hundred electrical engineering students at a trade school.

Traveling forth from Bratislava, our team made the long drive back to Eastern Slovakia and the city of Presov. This would serve as our base of operations for the remaining outreaches into smaller towns in Slovakia. The first was an hour-long journey to the town of Lubica, a historic town with a population of 4,600. While we were there, Tom gave a talk to the community about activating the spiritual gifts. A local family music group led us in a great session of prayer and worship, and then we moved into a time of individual prayer ministry.



Our team prays with people from a community in Bratislava.

Tom speaks to a group concluding the Alpha program about living the ongoing commitment to discipleship and walking with a missionary mindset.



### OUTREACH TO SNINA

With a population of about 18,000, the town of Snina is in the far northeastern part of Slovakia, just twelve miles from the Ukrainian border. Our meeting there at the Church of the Exalted Cross was refreshing. We were invited to speak and pray with a group of about forty people who were just concluding an Alpha course. For most, this was the first time they had experienced being challenged to radical discipleship. Their zeal and their desire for ongoing commitment were tangible. They responded eagerly to the message presented and the whole of the group lingered late into the evening for personal prayer, responding wholeheartedly to a call to walk in a missionary mindset.

### BACK IN PRESOV

Our final evening in Presov came at the end of a very full itinerary that had us traveling by land nearly four thousand kilometers throughout Slovakia and the Czech Republic. At this point, we were strong in Spirit but growing physically exhausted. Tom responded to a last-minute invitation to share with a new discipleship group on the topic of methodical Bible study. Although it was a very abbreviated talk, the participants were thankful for the sketch, and it seemed to spark a desire to delve deeper into the riches of the inexhaustible Word of God.



### TESTIMONY

Our team member, Carol Ann Fox, shared the following summation of the mission.

Although it's very difficult to encapsulate the entire mission experience in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, my fondest memories are from the opportunities we had to pray with people and to see their faith and hope, their expectation and trust. I saw the Lord's grace work in their honesty, their poverty, and their openness, which allowed them to receive the gift of tears and of peace. The inspirational teachings were so eagerly received at the FIRE Rally. Their joy was evident and contagious. I feel so blessed to have been there and will forever treasure the gifts I received by saying 'yes' to the invitation.

# THE CHOICES WE FACE

## 2026

### SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

This month, EWTN will begin airing the forty-second 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

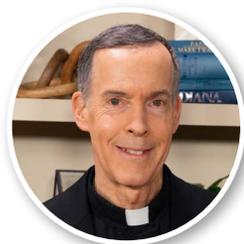


#### **Caroline Dirkes · *Evangelistic Fire***

▶ Caroline Gambale-Dirkes shares her testimony and how the Lord invited her into ministry and evangelization.

#### **Fr. Donald Haggerty · *The Hour of Testing***

Fr. Donald Haggerty discusses his recent book *The Hour of Testing* and the ways the Church needs to be vigilant and proactive in engaging the battle.



#### **Sr. Louis Marie Zogg · *Encountering Love***

▶ Sr. Louis Marie Zogg, O.P., shares her story about discovering the Lord's love and her vocation in an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist.

#### **Dr. Kristen Krieger · *Clothe Yourself in Humility***

Dr. Kristen Krieger shares her story of becoming Catholic and how the Lord inspired her to serve on Mexico mission trips as a medical doctor.



#### **Dr. Peter Newburn · *A Missionary Life***

▶ Dr. Peter Newburn, Renewal Ministries Country Coordinator and Divine Renovation coach, shares about bringing the Gospel to the Church in Africa.

#### **Jake Khym · *Pursuing Freedom and Wholeness***

Jake Khym shares his story of encountering the healing love of Jesus and how it has led him to minister to priests and Church leaders.



#### **Annie Baldante · *Will You Choose Jesus?***

▶ Annie Baldante, Ralph's granddaughter, talks about the Lord inviting her to choose Him, developing a prayer life, and serving in middle school ministry.

#### **Dr. Jacob Imam · *Saints, Scholars, and Builders***

Dr. Jacob Imam shares about being raised in a Muslim home, discovering the truth of Catholicism, and being led to start a new college in Steubenville, OH.





**Fr. Ed Fride · *Lord, Renew Your Wonders***

Fr. Ed Fride shares his conversion and vocation story, as well as the amazing fruit coming from the charismatic parish he serves.

**Pete Burak · *A Man on Purpose***

Pete Burak talks about his new book, *A Man on Purpose*, which offers ten principles he learned from his father for becoming a man of God.



**Miriam Wright · *Knowing the King***

Miriam shares her journey of surrender to the King of Kings, and how each step brought her deeper into freedom, transformation, and mission.

**Rachel Herbeck · *Boldly Proclaim the Gospel***

Rachel shares her passion for God's Word, the transformative power it proclaims, and how she invites young people into discipleship.



**Bishop Hying · *Return to the Upper Room***

Bishop Donald Hying shares his personal journey of faith, priesthood, and episcopacy and offers insights into how we can build an evangelizing culture.

**Patti Mansfield · *The Priesthood***

Patti Mansfield offers a teaching on the priesthood as the love of the heart of Jesus. She highlights a threefold purity that the faithful long for in their shepherds: purity of heart, of doctrine, and of the moral life.



**Janelle Gergen · *Dual Motherhood***

Janelle Gergen shares about the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of her life and how they prepared her for a life of service to the Church.

**Fathers Zach and Drew Mabee · *Brothers in Christ***

Fr. Zach Mabee and Fr. Drew Mabee share about their family life growing up, their conversion to Catholicism, and answering the call to priesthood.



**OTHER HIGHLIGHTS . . .**

This season also features Ralph, Peter, and Pete discussing talks given by Deacon Larry Oney, Katey Norman, Bishop Scott McCaig, Fr. Rastislav Dluhý, 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](http://renewalministries.net/tcwf), or our YouTube channel, [YouTube.com/@renewalministries](https://www.youtube.com/@renewalministries).



# EVENTS

MARCH 2026

View complete event list at  
[renewalministries.net/events](http://renewalministries.net/events).

\* Not open to the public.

**Dartmouth, NS**  
**Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Mission**  
February 28-March 4  
Peter Herbeck & Rachel Herbeck  
Details: [ourladyofguadalupe.ca](http://ourladyofguadalupe.ca)

**Ralston, NE**  
**St. Gerald Parish Mission**  
March 2-3  
Pete Burak  
Details: [stgerald.org](http://stgerald.org)

**Nashville, TN**  
**Legatus\***  
March 3  
Dr. Mary Healy

**Cleveland, OH**  
**Catholic Men's Conference**  
March 7  
Pete Burak  
Details: [cmfneo.com/#conference](http://cmfneo.com/#conference)

**Lansing, MI**  
**St. Mary Cathedral Lenten Mission**  
March 8-10  
Ralph Martin  
Details: [stmarylansing.org](http://stmarylansing.org)

**Flushing, MI**  
**St. Robert Parish Evening of Reflection**  
March 12  
Ralph Martin  
Details: [srbcatholic.com](http://srbcatholic.com)

**Ponchatoula, LA**  
**St. Joseph Parish Mission**  
March 13-14  
Dr. Mary Healy  
Details: [stjosephsonline.com](http://stjosephsonline.com)

**Toronto, ON**  
**Lift Jesus Higher Rally**   
March 14  
Ralph Martin, Peter Herbeck, Pete Burak,  
Rachel Herbeck & the RM Team  
Details: [ljhr.ca](http://ljhr.ca)

**Columbus, OH**  
**Lecture at Pontifical College  
Josephinum\***  
March 18  
Dr. Mary Healy

**Avila Institute (online)**  
**Lenten Retreat on the Eucharist**  
March 27  
Ralph Martin  
Details: [avila-institute.org](http://avila-institute.org)

**New Boston, MI**  
**St. Stephen Parish Retreat**  
March 28  
Ralph Martin  
Details: [ststephennewboston.org](http://ststephennewboston.org)

## MISSION

**Taiwan**  
February 26-March 15  
Tom & Jean Marie Edwards

## Wisdom from the Saints

*"As Lent is the time for  
greater love, listen to Jesus'  
thirst ... He knows your  
weakness. He wants only  
your love, wants only the  
chance to love you."*

// St. Teresa of Calcutta



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**PLEASE PRAY**

- ▶ For persecuted Christians throughout the world that they would be strengthened in the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ For men in the Church to know the love of St. Joseph and offer his tender strength and fatherhood to the world.
- ▶ 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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