

World RENEW



Send forth your spirit and renew the face of the earth

Professing, Celebrating, and Living Our Faith

Why Catholic? Now is the time to reassert the riches of our Catholic faith. Now is the time to revitalize small faith communities, which foster and proclaim that faith today.

There is an opportunity in the near future not only to revitalize, but also to unite faith communities in sharing, prayer, and reflection. RENEW

International's 2004 Institute, *Why Catholic? Professing, Celebrating, and Living Our Faith* will be held at the Sheraton Meadowlands in East Rutherford, NJ on July 8-11, 2004. This event will bring together group members, catechists, lay ministers, parish clergy, RCIA team members and others who are looking for new ways to deepen and proclaim their Catholic faith.

The session topics are powerful and timely, touching on the major concerns of today's Catholic leaders, both lay and clergy: strengthening Catholic identity, building community in diverse multicultural parishes, attracting and engaging young adults, "twinning" with international parishes, activating small Christian communities (SCCs) for social justice, using SCCs for sacramental preparation with Christians of all ages,

reaching out ecumenically.

Private donations and a scholarship fund have granted an unprecedented opportunity for many individuals to attend who would otherwise not

have the means.

University students from Slovakia, leaders of Youth at Risk in El Salvador, Campus RENEW community leaders, and migrant farm

workers from Mecca, California are among those who will be given the chance to understand *Why Catholic?*

"I couldn't believe the opportunity I was given," stated Asuncion Gomez, a small Christian community member in Mecca, who was provided with a scholarship. "I'm especially excited about the opportunity to meet other

“ *I couldn't believe the opportunity I was given... You can't find opportunities like this just anywhere.*

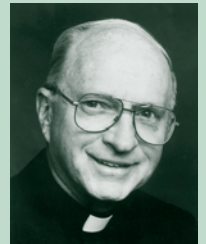
Asuncion Gomez
small Christian community leader
Mecca, California

See **PROFESSING - PAGE THREE**



Registration at previous Institute

President's WORLD



Msgr. Tom Kleissler

RENEWING FAMILY FAITH

Who is responsible for passing faith on to children? Certainly, Catholic schools, religious education programs, and local Catholic priests contribute much in this regard. Nevertheless, the Church tells us that parents themselves bear the main responsibility.

Yet, how is this to happen in instances where parents themselves know little about their faith and are not prepared for this critical task? Unfortunately, this is all too often the case.

RENEW International is stepping up to the plate to help families, and parents in particular, to meet this challenge. RENEWING FAMILY FAITH is an attractive, readable, informative two-page resource designed to reach large numbers of families over a period of 48 weeks. It can be used as a bulletin insert or in a

See **FAMILY FAITH - PAGE THREE**

Director's DESK

Solidarity



Michael Brough

Our Catholic Church is a global family. The United States Bishops in their statement, *A Call to Solidarity with Africa*, called for American Catholics to take action as part of God's family:

"We encourage the Catholic community in the United States to contribute its diverse talents and gifts to the continent's causes of justice, peace and integral development.... Our Faith demands it."

What does "Solidarity" with Africa mean? Pope John Paul II has called solidarity, a commitment to demonstrate practical and concrete love for humanity.

On a recent visit to Nigeria, Sr. Maureen Colleary and I had many opportunities to be in solidarity with our African sisters and brothers—in ways both "big" and "small."

RENEW International is living out its mission statement to have a "special regard for the poor" and demonstrate soli-



(Courtesy of Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund.)

solidarity with Africa by:

- meeting with Bishop Chikwe of Ahiara to respond to the huge need they identify for evangelization and adult faith formation among the people of his diocese
- committing to provide further training and materials for the leaders of small communities in Abeokuta
- participating in a moving exchange between young adults from U.S. and three African countries about how a new generation can build new relationships
- praying with over 500 seminarians at the overflowing Bigard seminary in Enugu

Just as important as the initiatives RENEW is undertaking, were the many moments where I was personally in communion with the people:

- visiting expectant mothers in the clinic in Ahiara and promising them prayers for their new babies
- walking hand in hand with young James, who is now being cared for by members of the community after the electrocution of his father
- blessing with Fr. Emmanuel, the children who surrounded us after Mass in St. Matthias parish

Without your prayers, financial support, and encouragement, none of this would be possible. I thank you.

Moments of RENEW

The Shipping "Good" News

When chief engineer, Fran Collins, leaves Boston Harbor and enters the Atlantic Ocean, he knows he will not see his family, friends, or even land for weeks. The freightliner on which he works becomes his world.

Collins, not unlike many of his 18 shipmates, leaves the comforts of home behind while at sea. However, one thing he does not leave behind is his faith. As a RENEW small Christian community member, he understands the importance of bringing faith to every facet of life and the importance of sharing it with others. Aboard the ocean liner, there is limited time to grow personal relationships. Yet, Collins seizes every opportunity to engage with others making the journey.

Because he is so open to discussing his own spirituality, spiritual growth has become a common topic in the galley. The conversations are rich, and people of various religions are invited to share their beliefs.

The gospel message is evident in their journey. Collins and his shipmates deliver food and supplies to people in need overseas.

"Obnova"

Nearly two years after her first visit to Slovakia to implement Campus RENEW, Sr. Cheryl Erb, Worldwide



RENEW Service Team Coordinator, and Leah Thomas, Campus RENEW Coordinator, were welcomed back to Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra by students sporting homemade

yellow tee-shirts declaring "Obnova" (RENEW). RENEW has blossomed on eleven Slovakian campuses. The number of small communities has doubled on many campuses over the last two years, involving an ever-growing number of students. One student said, "At first I was a bit skeptical of RENEW, but then I tried it! And it was wonderful. Sharing on the Scriptures in smaller communities is what we should be doing. It's how we should be living."

As the RENEW team members prepared to return to the airport, they were approached by Mitka, a young

See *OBNOVA* - PAGE FOUR

RENEW Updates

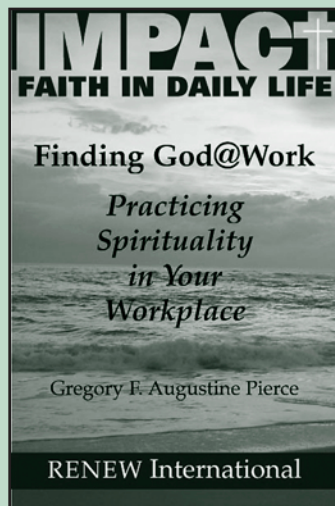
Glowing Reviews by Students Meeting with Cardinal

On March 2, 2004, 130 students had the unique opportunity to open dialogue with Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, England to discuss their faith journeys. The archdiocese is currently using RENEW for its spiritual renewal process. Renewal efforts have spread to 161 parishes within the archdiocese. One student, who participated in RENEW-based small Christian communities told the Cardinal, "I would advise anyone to join a small Christian community." Another student summed up the renewal efforts by saying, "Our one motivation in life is Jesus Christ and to work to build the kingdom of God." The archdiocese is currently in Season II and continues to spread the program's reach to people of all ages.

Finding God@Work

It's easy to find God in "sacred" places.... But it is often much more difficult to become aware of God's presence in the midst of the hustle and bustle of our daily work. *Finding God@Work*, by best-selling author Greg Pierce, is an attempt to raise our awareness of God, as reflected in a popular saying, "Bidden or not bidden, God is present"—even in our labors. This six-session small group faith-sharing book has been developed to help you think differently about your work and to share your experiences with others.

Visit our online bookstore at www.renewintl.org or contact us at Resources@renewintl.org for more information on ordering *Finding God@Work* and other resources from RENEW International. Orders only also toll free at 888-433-3221.



Professing

from PAGE ONE

Hispanic leaders at the Instituto Hispano. You can't find opportunities like this just anywhere."

The Instituto Hispano, an "institute within the Institute," will provide a full program of Spanish keynote speakers and workshops on Saturday.

"What an amazing opportunity to be able to pray, dialogue, and be in community with people from all over the world," said Sr. Terry Rickard, OP, Institute organizer. "Participants at the Institute will experience the richness found within the Body of Christ: richness in culture, diversity, and faith!"

The keynote speaker will be R. Scott Appleby, nationally known author and professor at the University of Notre Dame. Donna Peña, world-renowned liturgist, composer ("Digo Si Señor") and musician, will direct the liturgies and lead a workshop. Most Reverend Peter Rosazza, Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford, will preside at the concluding eucharistic celebration and also lead a workshop on social justice as part of the Instituto Hispano. All Institute liturgies will be bilingual.

We appreciate your support and hope to see you in July! Call 908-769-5400 x123 to register now.

Family Faith

from PAGE ONE

variety of creative ways to reach and assist those who do not attend Mass regularly. Children's programs, parents' meetings, the local bakery, or the cooperative newsstand can be utilized. What a valued gift this would be for so many couples looking for parenting aids.

The bright and lively format of RENEWING FAMILY FAITH holds great appeal. Each issue offers an interesting variety of faith reflections for parents, family activities, and questions that promote table sharing. Brief Scripture passages and wisdom quotes are interspersed. A special feature in each issue is an inspiring story on the life of an honored saint or a modern person who has lived an extraordinary faith life.

It gives us great joy to provide RENEWING FAMILY FAITH. Families are the pillars of civilization and families of strong faith are the pillars of the Church.

Catch RENEW on TV

Sunday, April 18 at 8 p.m. on Ch. 19 & 894 (WRNN)



Father Tom, the Whelan family and Joanne Archer

Msgr. Tom Kleissler, the president and founder of RENEW International joins host, Joanne Archer on **Blond in the Hood** for a discussion of RENEW's mission, how it began and how RENEW has

helped the Church face difficult challenges in recent times.

The Whelan family of Ramsey, NJ opens the segment by introducing Fr. Tom.

Blond in the Hood celebrates ordinary people, from NJ, NY & CT, doing extraordinary things and making a difference in other people's lives. It airs every Sunday at 8 P.M. on Ch 19 and Ch. 894 on Direct TV. For additional information, call (800) 768-8910 or visit www.blondinthehood.com.

PAGE FOUR

Obnova

from PAGE TWO

woman nearly in tears. She told them, "You don't know how much it means to meet you. We're over here in Nitra working so hard to make this happen," she paused to collect herself, taking a deep breath. "But when I talk to you, I realize that we're part of something bigger. That we're connected with other people all over the world sharing in small communities. Thank you so much for coming." And Mitka, thank you.

World RENEW: Newsletter of RENEW International.

Distributed without charge to friends of RENEW.

President: Msgr. Thomas A. Kleissler

Director: Michael Brough

Coordinator: Jose A. Hernandez

Editorial Committee: Mary C. McGuinness, OP; Deirdre Malacrea; Sean Donahue

Design: Eberly Designs, Inc.

RENEW International

1232 George St., Plainfield, NJ 07062-1717

Phone: 908/769-5400 **Fax:** 908/769-5660

Web sites: www.renewintl.org; ParishLife.com;

RENEWgala.org

E-mail: renew@renewintl.org



RENEW
INTERNATIONAL

World RENEW: Newsletter of RENEW International / EASTER 2004

RENEW International
1232 George Street
Plainfield, NJ 07062-1717



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 127
Plainfield, NJ

Dear Father Tom,

Yes, I want to spread the gospel through RENEW. Here is my gift of \$_____.

Please pray for my intentions which are listed at the right.
(Your intentions will be remembered in all Masses and prayers we offer at RENEW.)

I/We pledge \$_____ over the next year.

My intentions

Please make your tax deductible gift to RENEW International.

(Please Print)

NAME _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

Telephone (optional) _____

Please print and mail to

**Msgr. Tom Kleissler
RENEW International
1232 George St.
Plainfield, NJ 07062-1717**