



MISSION

Volume 7, Issue 1

The Official Newsletter of the Legionaries of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement

CO-WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

A Regnum Christi Primer

St. John Paul II's apostolic exhortation "On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World" marked its 30th anniversary in December 2018. In this letter, the laity's role in the Church is explored in several aspects, particularly: the dignity of lay vocation (universal call to holiness), co-responsibility in the Church's mission, stewardship of graces and the formation of laity for the purpose of bearing fruit.

Last December also marked the final session of Regnum Christi's Extraordinary General Assembly toward finalizing the Movement's statutes of organization. This article's purpose is to present some foundational ideas from that assembly, showing the relation between the consecrated branches and that of Regnum Christi (RC) laity. To this end, *MISSION* spoke with Donna Garrett, one of the lay leaders attending the General Assembly in Rome.

Donna explained that an RC lay member differs from third-order Franciscan, Dominican or Benedictine lay members. RC laity derive the "gift" of their charism directly as a call from the Holy Spirit, while third-order laity are associated with a particular order of priests (whose charism belongs specifically to that order of priests).

The increase of "movements" in modern times, such as Regnum Christi, has created a need within the Church to find a place for these new realities. Regnum Christi in its fullest



Fr. John Connor, LC, Territorial Director of North America, Donna Garrett and Mike Williams, American Regnum Christi (RC) lay representatives, in Rome for the Extraordinary General Assembly. The Assembly affirmed that the identity of Regnum Christi is formed by four different vocations, each one expressing with originality the common mission and charism, yet maintaining autonomy.

expression encompasses lay people, the religious priests of the Legionaries of Christ and the consecrated lay members. This is a rather new type of organization within the Church.

In the process of discerning and submitting statutes for approval these past eight years, the entities decided that what canon law refers to as a "Federation" best describes the interaction between Legionary priests, RC Consecrated Women and RC Consecrated Men. Religious entities can form a Federation under existing canonical structures. The lay members of Regnum Christi are not part of this Federation, but they associate with the Federation.

(continued on the following page)

CO-WORKERS IN THE VINYARD *continued*

In this arrangement, RC laity accept a responsibility to support the life of the RC religious vocations. Likewise, the religious vocations (priests and consecrated) support the life of the RC laity. Each branch is separate, but they are collaborators – or co-workers – in the vineyard of the Church. The umbrella that extends over both the religious federation and the lay members is that of their common charism (spiritual and evangelical).

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While this is the canonical organization, a separate Rule of Life describing the lived dimensions of an RC lay member is outlined in a separate document. It is beyond the scope of this article to expand on this Rule of Life, but, in general, there are five areas that RC laity seek to keep in balance: 1) spiritual and sacramental life, 2) apostolate in response to the charism, 3) team life, 4) formation and 5) personal accompaniment such as spiritual direction. This Rule of Life was approved at the December General Assembly.

Lay members contribute a special dimension to the overall unity, as described in one of the paragraphs in their Rule of Life: **“They bring to Regnum Christi their secular nature and their apostolic action, by which they extend Christ’s presence in the world and transform human realities, especially in their family, professional, and social lives, in accordance with the Gospel.”**

Donna Garrett believes that Regnum Christi can be seen as a microcosm of the struggles and growing pains the larger Church is going through today. The Church, and all the complementary vocations within it, must faithfully respond to the Holy Spirit and the needs of its particular time in history. Each vocation needs to strive for personal holiness and to support, encourage and sometimes advise in charity our fellow workers in the vineyard.



During the Extraordinary General Chapter, it was determined that Regnum Christi’s governing body will be called the General Directive College of the Regnum Christi Federation. It will be formed by the directors of the three consecrated vocations – the Legionaries of Christ, the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi, and the Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi – and by two lay people with a consultative voice and vote. Father Gianfranco Ghirlanda S.J. explained, “The path we are taking is the path of seeking the juridical configuration that best protects both the autonomy of each branch and the unity of Regnum Christi.”




Representatives for the Extraordinary General Chapter gathered in Rome from November 27 to December 5, 2018.



Gloria Rodríguez, Consecrated Woman of Regnum Christi, Father Eduardo Robles-Gil, LC, General Director of Legionaries of Christ, and Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.



Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, with Jorge López (representing the Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi). Archbishop Carballo is presenting the formal decree elevating the status of each consecrated lay branch to societies of Apostolic Life.



Excerpt From the Press Release Following the General Assembly:

The words with which Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, addressed the Assembly at the end of the inaugural Mass of the General Assembly resonated with and guided the work of these weeks: “Congratulations, and may Regnum Christi continue working from this moment, if possible with even greater strength, as a family united in Christ and in the same charism. Always count on each other and on the help of Mother Church, who will certainly give you her hand as she has given it you from the beginning always and everywhere No one among you can develop his mission in isolation I will always repeat: ‘Be United!’ The charism is one, although the ways of developing it and living it are diverse.”

Documents and information related to the approval process can be found at:
www.rcstatutes.org

- Communiqué of the Lay Members of Regnum Christi
- Message of the General Assembly of Regnum Christi
- Statutes of the Regnum Christi Federation (to be presented to the Holy See for approval)
- Rule of Life of the Lay Faithful Associated with the Regnum Christi Federation (pending the approval of the Statutes of the Regnum Christi Federation)

SPIRITUAL ESPRESSO

Mustard Seeds Become...Coffee?

About six years ago, I (Fr. Simon) began writing a blog. I chose a simple format: a brief quote from a saint, a photo, a short reflection and an action item. The recipients found the brevity and the personal touch appealing; I called them “mustard seeds.”

Not long after I began my blog, I was walking down Fifth Avenue with a Legionary priest who ministered in Manhattan. A passerby, a broker, recognized him and five minutes later we were on a trading floor shaking hands with his colleagues. One of the traders asked what my work was, and I started explaining the idea of the mustard seeds.

These daily steps outside my comfort zone were changing me imperceptibly, yet irrevocably.

Conscious of the secular environment, I felt inspired to change the name to “spiritual espresso.” At the sound of coffee, his eyes lit up, and he proudly showed me the personal espresso machine in his office. The new name stuck, and now over a thousand readers get their shot of spiritual espresso every weekday by email.

I never expected such a positive response. But what has truly surprised me is the impact writing (or “brewing”) these espressos has had on me. I began to discover the power of the Gospel principle of the mustard seed. Attempting to do my own action items, I was trying to brighten up someone’s day by sharing a joke, playing cards with a child, giving a sandwich to the poor.

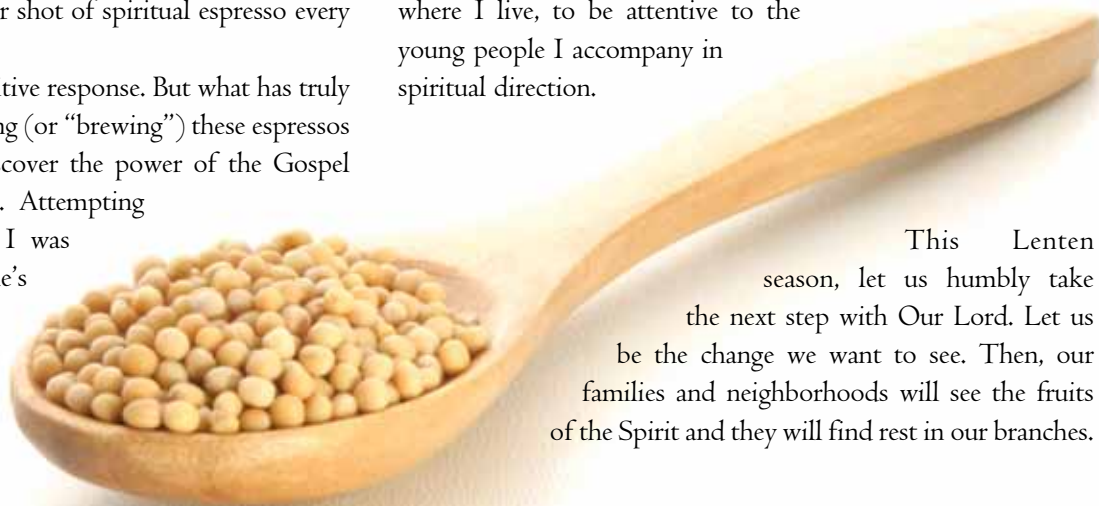
These daily steps outside my comfort zone

were changing me imperceptibly, yet irrevocably. As readers shared their own adventures, I was encouraged to keep writing and keep growing. Is this perhaps how grace works in our souls? As we cooperate with the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, the seeds of the virtues grow within us even though we know not how (cf. Mark 4:27).

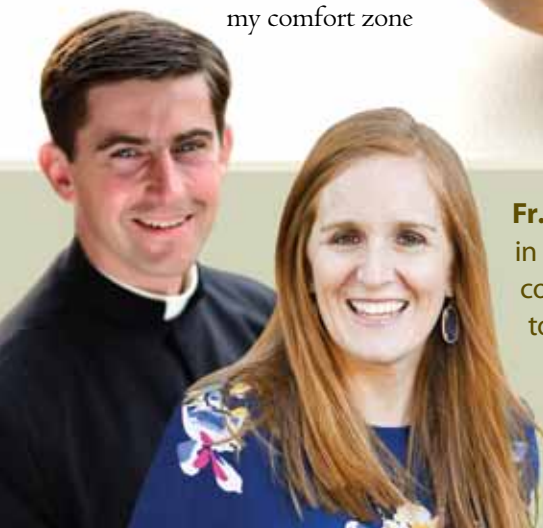
The enemy of our soul, however, tries to persuade us that the seed should become a full-grown tree overnight. He tries to overwhelm us into thinking “I could never do that.” This discouragement paralyzes us and we never take that first step, or we give up halfway through.

Jesus, however, encourages us to take the next step, the one that we can take today. Tomorrow will take care of itself, he promises (Matt 6:34); the bread he gives us is today’s bread, not tomorrow’s (Matt 6:11).

As we begin our Lenten journey, I invite you to embrace the Gospel principle of the mustard seed (Matt 13:32). Ask yourself, what good is God actually asking me to do today? For my part, I have realized that God isn’t asking me to change the politics in Washington D.C. or feed the starving children in Africa. But He is asking me to be a better religious, to pray the breviary well, to be available to my Legionary brothers where I live, to be attentive to the young people I accompany in spiritual direction.



This Lenten season, let us humbly take the next step with Our Lord. Let us be the change we want to see. Then, our families and neighborhoods will see the fruits of the Spirit and they will find rest in our branches.



Fr. Simon Devereux was born in New Zealand. Since his ordination in 2010, he has worked in Development, youth and family ministry and missions. He now lives in the Legionary community in Silicon Valley and gives spiritual direction to young people who feel called to be apostles of Jesus.

Mary Mulvaney, who co-authored this meditation, earned her theology degree from University of Dallas in 1988. She and her husband, Mark, have five children attending The Highlands School, an RC apostolate, and a daughter at Benedictine College.

A SURPRISE INVITATION

by Jennifer Ristine, CRC

The call came on a promising spring day of May 2014. “There’s a new mission opening up,” announced my territorial director of the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi. “It is in Magdala, the Holy Land.” In August, I was on a plane traveling to the Middle East.

Few people knew that I had a developing affinity with Mary Magdalene over the years. Her experience of Jesus’ pure gaze became my conviction of his unconditional love that sets me free and invites me to participate in his life and mission.

The Magdala project had been under development for eight years under the leadership of Fr. Juan Solana, LC. A partially constructed guest house stood next to ancient ruins that became my daily stomping ground. I spent the next four years praying, learning, discussing, teaching and preaching about the ancient first-century town.

The Visitors’ Center welcomed more than 400,000 international visitors. Those who step into Ancient Magdala walk around the best preserved first-century synagogue in Israel, villas with Jewish purification baths, marketplace shops and an ancient harbor. They also come to pray in the newly built worship center called *Duc In Altum*.

Countless questions from visitors about Mary Magdalene led to research and prayerful reflection. In January 2018, I offered a conference to more than 120 local tour guides, piecing together a mosaic-like figure of Mary Magdalene

from her historical and cultural contexts, sacred scripture, historical traditions and personal insights. Last July, Magdalena Institute released my book called *Mary Magdalene: Insights from Ancient Magdala*.

Mary Magdalene has become more than a friend in heaven. She is a coworker in the mission. Together, with the Holy Spirit’s guidance, we can instigate encounters with the unconditional love of Jesus, so others may know the freedom to which they are called. That continues to be my hope and my prayer.

Jennifer Ristine has been consecrated since 1997. She is currently stationed in the Washington D.C. area serving as a contributor for the RC Spirituality Center. She obtained her master’s degree in Theology from Catholic Distance University. Jennifer was a professor at Mater Ecclesiae College from 2003 to 2014. From 2014 to 2018 she served in Magdala, Israel, as Director of Magdalena Institute, Visitors’ Center Coordinator and Media Spokesperson.

Jennifer’s book is available through Amazon.com. She is available for conferences and retreats by visiting: <https://rcspirituality.org/speaker/jennifer-ristine-crc>



Jennifer Ristine



Magdala volunteers and staff gather in front of the Duc In Altum.

PRESERVING SACRED ART

Fr. Kevin Lixey, LC, Director of The Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums



In September 2017, Fr. Kevin Lixey, LC, was appointed as International Director of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums. He is the third consecutive American Legionary to occupy this position.

The Vatican Museums attract six million visitors a year, people of all faiths. Fr. Kevin’s responsibility is to facilitate and oversee funding from Patrons of the Arts chapters so that the Vatican’s art can be conserved for generations to come.

There are about 25 different chapters of the Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums. Patron chapters have supported the restoration of works of art in the Vatican Museums since 1983. The chapters are predominantly from the United States, with the largest chapters being from California, Florida and New York.

In the years since his ordination in 2001, Fr. Kevin was Vice-rector of the Legionaries seminary in Cheshire, Connecticut. He was then called to Rome to found and run the “Church and Sport” section within the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for the Laity from 2004 to 2012. From 2012 to 2017, he was a spiritual director for the Regnum Christi Ecclesial Movement in Atlanta, Georgia.

At an audience of Patrons leadership with the Holy Father, Pope Francis had this to say: “In today’s troubled world, unfortunately so often torn and damaged by selfishness and the thirst for power, art represents, perhaps more than in the past, a universal need because it is a source of harmony and peace....” (Sept. 28, 2018.)



Before restoration



After restoration

Schedule of Events

Atlanta Area

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment.

See website (events or services) for dates and information.

www.rcatlanta.org | 770-837-2798

Bethesda, Maryland – Retreat Center

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment.

See website for dates and information.

www.ourladyofbethesda.org

301-365-0612

Connecticut Area

Legion of Christ Novitiate & College of Humanities

See events at www.LCCheshire.org | 203-271-0805

Dallas Area

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment.

See website (events) for dates and information.

www.dfw-rc.org

Greater Charlotte Area

Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment.

See website (retreats or events) for dates and information.

www.rcgreatercharlotte.com

Greater Ohio Valley Area

Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment.

See web site (events) for dates and information.

www.rcohiovalley.org

Houston Area

Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment.

See website (resources) for dates and information.

www.thykingdomcome.us

New York/New Jersey/Connecticut Area

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment

See website (events) for dates and information.

www.regnumchristinyctnj.org

914-244-3685 | info@RegnumChristinyctnj.org

Missions

Online Spiritual Resources/Retreat Guides

www.rcspirituality.org

Study Circle Guides, Ask a Priest - Q&A

contact@rcspirituality.org

Mission Youth Missions – International Missions

See website for dates:

www.missionyouth.com | 855-556-6872

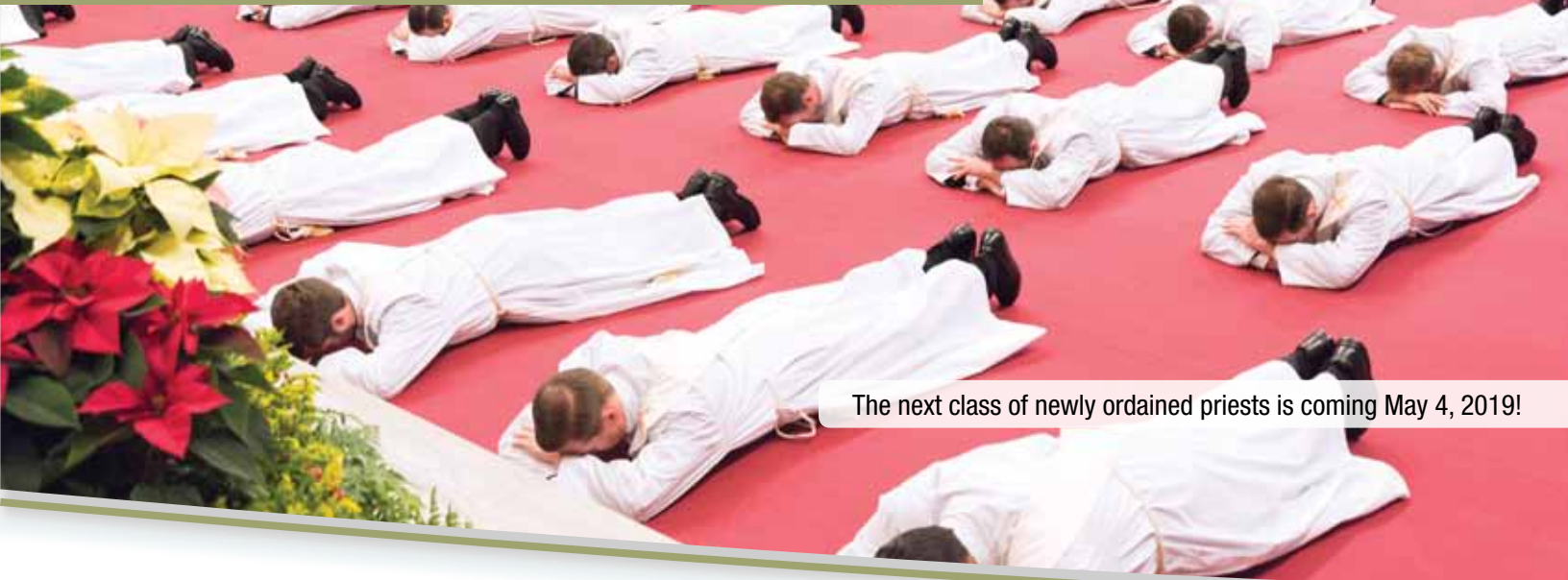
missionyouth@missionnetwork.com

Helping Hands Medical Missions

See website (join) for dates: www.hhmm.org

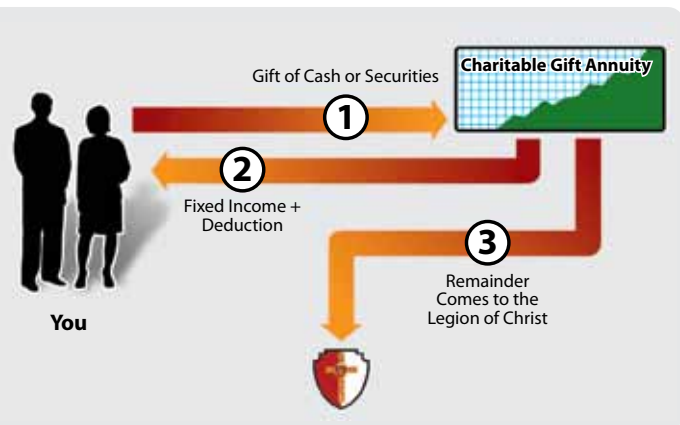
972-253-1800 | mission@hhmm.org

Fr. Kevin recently visited his home state of Michigan to make a presentation titled *Unveiling Ancient Beauty: The Hidden Art of Restoration in the Vatican Museums*, where he showed an image of a newly restored masterpiece: the *Madonna of the Cintola*. The “*Sacra Cintola*” is Italian for a Christian relic of a textile cord used as a belt that, according to a medieval legend, was dropped by the Virgin Mary from the sky to Saint Thomas the Apostle at or around the time of the Assumption of Mary to heaven. The supposed original cord is a relic belonging to Prato Cathedral in Central Italy. This masterpiece was beautifully restored thanks to Patrons from Texas.



The next class of newly ordained priests is coming May 4, 2019!

Here's how it works



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- **Capital Gains Tax Savings.** When funding the Charitable Gift Annuity with appreciated stocks or mutual funds, you will reduce capital gains taxes.

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- ✓ Amount I am considering as a Charitable Gift Annuity: \$ _____ (if you are not sure, we will base our proposal on a hypothetical amount of \$10,000)
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REGNUM CHRISTI LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

Territorial Director

Fr. John Connor, LC

30 Mansell Court
Suite 103

Roswell, Georgia 30076
(800) 532-7478

www.regnumchristi.org
www.legionariesofchrist.org

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VOCATIONS OFFICE

Legionaries of Christ
Fr. Edward Hopkins, LC
475 Oak Avenue, Cheshire, CT 06410
(203) 631-2894

www.legionvocations.org | vocation@legionaries.org

VOCATIONS OFFICE

Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi
Adrienne Rolwes
951 Peachtree Parkway, Cumming, Georgia 30041
(401) 300-9705 | arolwes@regnumchristi.net

MASSES & NOVENAS

Barbara DiSpirito
475 Oak Avenue, Cheshire, CT 06410
(800) 532-7478
masses@legionofchrist.org

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Our Mission

We work as Jesus did. We reveal his love, form apostles and send them out to help build the Kingdom of Christ. We help awaken the individual and the family to their mission in life and in the Church.

Who We Are

We are an apostolic movement of evangelization composed of four vocations – Legionaries of Christ, Consecrated Women, Lay Consecrated Men and Lay Members – called to help people discover Christ's love and build His Kingdom.

What We Do

Regnum Christi has a Christ-centered spirituality that is lived together in communion with all members, in union with the whole Church and through a mission to build the kingdom of Christ.

ON OUR MASTHEAD

Br. Binh Hoang, LC

Br. Philip Weisbrod, LC

Missionaries in Action | Witnesses In a Secular World

EVANGELIZING ON CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

Fr. Martin Connor, LC, recently traveled to Spain with 15 other Americans for a pilgrimage known in English as “The Way of St. James.” Most of the pilgrims were from Massachusetts, friends of his cousin Tom, who helped organize the trip. The others were Regnum Christi laity from other parts of the country.

They had spiritually prepared themselves months ahead of time, studying and praying several novenas. During their pilgrimage, they started each day in prayer. The pilgrims began their daily walks in silence for the first 30 to 60 minutes to reflect and meditate. They gathered every evening for Mass. Walking between 14 and 18 miles each day, they reached the Cathedral of St. James in six days.

Their greatest shock was observing how secular the walk was for most people they met. Very few seemed to be praying for important faith-based intentions. It was the same feeling in the local towns and villages. There were many chapels, but they were all closed. Seeing this, they wanted to share their faith – even those who only spoke English could silently pray the Rosary as they walked.



Fr. Martin with pilgrims in Galicia, in Northwestern Spain.

One notable example was an encounter with an Australian man they kept running into – a lapsed Catholic returning to the faith. On the very last day of the pilgrimage, 15 minutes before Fr. Martin was being picked up by a taxi headed for the airport, the man made his life confession. It was a very powerful experience with a lot of tears.

Considering the post-Christian atmosphere found in much of the world, even among some holy places, one lesson these pilgrims learned is to be ready to be a witness wherever you are.

“Missionaries in Action” features inspirational people who give of themselves to build the Kingdom of God. For more stories and information about living an active faith, see our website at www.regnumchristi.org