



# CHRISTLIFE™

CATHOLIC MINISTRY FOR EVANGELIZATION

March/April 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Praised be God our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ!

I give thanks to our Lord Jesus for the gift of each of you and what we are able to accomplish together. We have just returned from an amazing trip to Slovakia. Although we were there to work and to serve in various capacities, each of us experienced renewal and were inspired by these beautiful people.

Our brothers and sisters in Slovakia reflect some of the fruit of your partnership with ChristLife. The Slovak and Polish Catholics are living testaments to abiding faith in Christ, love for the Gospel, and willingness to sacrifice for the sake of advancing the kingdom of God.

Our relationships with our European brothers and sisters began in the early days of ChristLife's ministry when we were teaching young adults at schools of evangelization in Poland and Slovakia. A significant number of these young adults, who are now leaders, began their path to mission in these same schools. Each one heard a call from the Lord Jesus that set a course for their life and they continue to follow His leading and direction.

Their yes to God comes with a price. Bohus Zivcak, as leader of a community, leads a very simple life with his wife and children. Materialism is beginning to infect the culture in parts of Slovakia, but this humble servant is passionate for Christ and his joy is contagious.

The local team who ministered with us - Xenia, Fr. Rasto, Paul, Marik, and Andie - to name a few, are each passionate about mission and give generously of their time to make this a real priority. Their fire and zeal are an inspiration to us all. We are deeply grateful for the opportunities we had to serve together.

As a team, Pete, Dianne, and I had a genuine sense of being connected with you, of having been sent forth for mission from the body of Christ. You made this possible with your prayers and financial support. Renewal Ministries sponsored Dianne and me. Your contributions allowed Pete to accompany us. It was an invaluable experience for Pete and a welcome addition for us as a team. Pete did a tremendous job teaching and interacting with people. It was a blast listening to him, especially as he tried to learn some of the language.

What can I say to you my brothers and sisters? We have a lot of work to do. There are too many people who are dying for lack of nourishment because no one has spoken to them about our Lord Jesus nor invited them to a genuine relationship with him and to discipleship.

This trip renewed our call to strengthen our nets and put out into the deep for a catch. Let us pray together that the fire of the Holy Spirit will ignite our hearts with passion to proclaim the Gospel and the courage to push through all of the "ism's" of our culture – materialism, commercialism, dualism, pantheism, paganism, etc. – to declare the victory of the cross of Christ Jesus our Lord! Let us renew our partnership in sharing Christ and dare to be everyday missionaries, anytime and anywhere!

Your brother,

*Dave Nodar, Director*

# FAITH, LOVE, AND SACRIFICE

## *Discovering Christ in the High Tatras of Slovakia*

Slovakia, by its central geographical location, is at the very heart of Europe. It is a land that has suffered under oppressive governments and communist control. It is a relatively new democratic nation having separated from the Czech Republic in 1993. According to statistics, Slovaks are 83% Christian, 69% Catholic – most of whom were baptized as infants. As commercialism and materialism have pressed their way into the country, fewer people attend mass on Sunday.

Our sponsoring host for the trip, Bohus Zivcak, works full time as a leader of a Catholic lay community in Podolinec called River of Life and serving in mission schools for evangelization. Bohus and his lovely wife Alena are the parents of four beautiful children. They are dedicated as a couple and as a family to serving the Catholic Church and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ in Slovakia, and other countries like Kazakhstan, Latvia, Ukraine, and Poland.



### TIME TO RETREAT

We spent our first weekend in a small mountain village, Vernar, directing a retreat for about 60 people from several Catholic communities, River of Life and Calvary being primary.

Our topics explored different ways to spend every ordinary day with Jesus. The teachings offered practical suggestions and applications for making God's presence alive in the course of daily activity.

Each session began with a time for praise and worship. Fr. Rasto Dluhy, a young Redemptorist priest from Bratislava, played lead guitar while Fr. Norbert, a Capuchin priest and professional drummer, joined Bohus and Robert Wojcik from Warsaw in leading the communities in celebration and worship of our Lord.

The atmosphere was electric with music, song, dancing with flags, prophecy, praise, and scripture readings. The joy of the Lord was palpable. It was inspiring to see mostly young adult Catholics so actively engaged in professing their love for the Lord and each other at daily Mass and during the times of praise and worship.

### JESUS HEALS TODAY

On Sunday evening Fr. Michael Zamkowsky celebrated a healing Mass and prayer service in the monastery where we stayed. There were easily 1,000 people crowded into a space suited for 400, standing shoulder to shoulder in an unheated, very cold church for over 3 hours. They came from nearby towns as well as Poland, Latvia, and Ukraine, some drove many hours to attend this monthly event. During Eucharistic Adoration there was music, singing, praise, and worship. It was a taste of heaven hearing the praise and glory being given to our Lord.

Following several testimonies, Fr. Michael knelt before the Blessed Sacrament and began to speak aloud words of knowledge and prayers regarding the healings and miracles that we believe the Lord desired to give to his children. One of our friends expressed great concern about his family and the kind of witness to Christ he desired to be for them. He had no sooner voiced his silent prayer when these words of the Lord were spoken: "There is a business man who has great concern for his family and their faith. Be at peace for I am with you and your family."

Fr. Michael carried the Sacred Host through the crowd and blessed them. After the closing song and prayer, and the last "Amen" had been said, the congregation erupted in spontaneous applause that lasted for over 5 minutes. No one wanted to leave this holy place where indeed the Lord had visited his people, ministered to their needs and listened to the longings of their hearts.

### "OUTSIDE THE BOX" THINKING

Our journey continued to the Catholic University in Levoca where we preached the Gospel to almost 1,000 students over the course of 5 days. This was definitely "outside the box" evangelism. The students were required to be there or take a final exam. Professor Bohus Zivcak used this as an opportunity to evangelize and give an invitation for those who desired to commit themselves to Jesus and open the door of their hearts to him. Many people were touched and some encountered God's love for the first time.



## SEEKING WISDOM

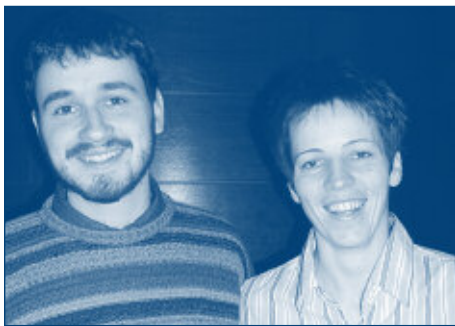
Before leaving for home, we spent the evening in Krakow with the leaders of the New Jerusalem community. Once again, the faith and fire of the people were compelling testimonies to the living Christ and to their dedication to Him.

Words cannot capture all that we experienced. We have been sent to bear witness to the Lord Jesus and in this quiet hidden place in the kingdom, we have brothers and sisters who are giving their all to make him known. What an extraordinary adventure to join Christ Jesus in his mission to seek and save the lost!



## YOUNG ADULT PERSPECTIVES *by Pete Ascosi*

After a long flight, our ChristLife team landed on Thursday 2/1 in the snowy Polish airport in Krakow – the home city of Pope John Paul II. That afternoon, we met up with two young men – Paul and Bohus – at the airport and they drove us three hours to our destination – a Redemptorist monastery in Podolinec, Slovakia. Our first evening we shared dinner with Bohus’ family in a simple apartment. Though there was a language barrier between us and Bohus’ wife and four young children – we had a wonderful time.



On Friday, we traveled to the High Tatras, which are the mountains where Karol Wojtyla went hiking in as a young priest. Our ChristLife team – Dave, Dianne, and myself – ran a retreat for about 60 young adults from several lay Catholic charis-

matic communities in Slovakia and Poland. The theme of the retreat was “spending an ordinary day with Jesus” (cf. Eph 5:19).

On the second day of the retreat I gave a talk on “solitude” – spending time each day alone with God. Writing in my journal that morning, I remarked, *“Last night and this morning I came to the realization that I have little to offer – I’m trying to encourage prayer and fire... but I feel sometimes I don’t have it. Lord, I am a common clay pot – please fill me this morning with your unfathomable riches – so I may bear you to this wonderful people. Amen.”* And He is faithful, the talk went very well – I felt plenty of confidence and God’s peace. Though just a simple lay person from America, God was able to use me in communicating his goodness to the young people in Slovakia.

After my talk on solitude there was time to reflect on God speaking to us through Psalm 23 – “the Lord is my shepherd...” That evening we celebrated mass and the same Scripture was the

responsorial Psalm! Further, a young Redemptorist priest came up to me after the mass and said, “that talk was right on, it was not only ‘coincidentally’ the responsorial Psalm but was the verse I received this morning as my penance – I think God is certainly speaking to His Church.”

The retreat culminated on Saturday evening with a joyous time of worship, dance and celebration of God’s greatness – it was so encouraging to see the love and joy on the faces of those sixty young adults! On Sunday evening, hundreds of mainly young people crowded the freezing cold, cavernous 17th century church in the monastery in Podolinec. Dave gave a wonderful presentation of the Gospel which was followed by a time of worship, allowing ourselves to be, in the words of John Paul II, “docile to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Looking across the crowd you could see, with the eyes of faith, the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit opening hearts to the beauty of Jesus and bringing healing to many others. It was quite a powerful experience!

The following week we

traveled daily to the medieval town of Levoca in Northeast Slovakia where we hosted day retreats for a total of nearly 1000 students at the Catholic university. Just like here in America, few of the students were truly Christian – followers of Jesus. Each day we delivered the central message of the Gospel, the kerygma, and invited students to actualize the grace of their baptism and confirmation and commit their lives to Jesus Christ. Many of the students shed tears as Dianne gave powerful testimony to her own journey as a prodigal daughter and her awesome rebirth in Christ as an adult. One young woman who was so touched by the talks returned the next two days and happily remarked in broken English that “every since I made commitment to Jesus I have felt such peace!” The transformative effect of the Gospel was evident on her face – so beautiful.

Though these activities were the major events of my time in Slovakia, there were many small moments of grace in conversations, times of personal prayer, and just in the simple beauty of the Slovakian people.

## CALENDAR EVENTS COME AND BRING A FRIEND!

### Board of Directors Meeting

March 10

### Slovak Mission Celebration

March 11, 1:30-4:00 PM, Franciscan Friary, Ellicott City, MD

### Discovering Christ Training Day

March 17, 9:15-3:30 PM

### Building Evangelizing Eucharistic Communities

March 24th, St. Patrick's, York, PA from 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

### Missionary Corps

March 13, 7:30-9:00 PM

March 27, 7:30-9:00 PM

April 10, 7:30-9:00 PM

### Discovering Christ

April 17-May 22, 6:30-9:00 PM

Church of the Crucifixion, Glen Burnie MD

### New Pentecost for New Evangelization

June 8-10, Charismatic Renewal Conference,

Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH

## DISCOVERING CHRIST

April 17, 2007 to May 22, 2007

Discovering Christ is an exciting event designed to help men and women encounter the person of Christ and accept his invitation to know him in a personal relationship.

Listen to dynamic teachings, engage in small group discussions, and explore answers to these basic questions:

- What's it all about? What gives meaning and purpose to life?
- Why Does Jesus matter?
- Does God Really Love Me?
- Why Do I Need A Savior?
- The Holy Spirit – Who is He?
- How Can I Begin This New Life?
- How Do We Grow From Here?
- Believing and Belonging: How Do We Live as Disciples of Christ?

The Church of the Crucifixion Parish, 100 Scott Ave., Glen Burnie, Maryland 21060 in Glen Burnie, Maryland, will host our first pilot course, which will run for 6 consecutive Tuesdays from 6:45 pm to 9:15 pm and includes a day of retreat on Saturday, May 12.

For more info, to ask more questions, or to register please call Leo or Pete at ChristLife at 410-531-7701 or Fr. Erik Arnold at 410-768-4880.

CHRISTLIFE is a tax exempt ministry dedicated to equipping Catholics for the work of evangelization. To continue in this work, we depend entirely on the donations of fellow Christians like you. Please send donations to: CHRISTLIFE: 12290-A Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042 USA, *We appreciate your support!*

For more information on our mission and activities visit our web site: [www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org)

Non Profit Org.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Clarksville, MD  
PERMIT #25

CHRISTLIFE™  
CATHOLIC MINISTRY FOR EVANGELIZATION  
12290A Folly Quarter Road  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
[www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org)