

Health, growth, completion

# Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

[www.nac-usa.org](http://www.nac-usa.org)

Spring 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Recently, Kathy and I had the opportunity to see the church in this picture built on a mountain in Arizona. As I looked at how impressively this building was founded between the rock in this mountain, instinctively I began to hum an old choir hymn:

***On Rock that stands forever, the Church of Christ is built....***

Jesus Christ is the rock...as Apostle Peter states in Acts 4:11-12 -

*This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Thus, on His life, teaching, sacrifice, resurrection, and ascension, the Church of Christ is established on an unshakable foundation. Mountains and rock evoke a feeling of permanence, continuance, and resilience. Therefore, we are wise to build our life firmly on Him, our Rock.

This image also connects with this year's work to be *faithful to Christ*. We believe **Jesus Christ is in His Church** and that He, alone, **will finish** the Church.

*...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ... (Philippians 1:6)*

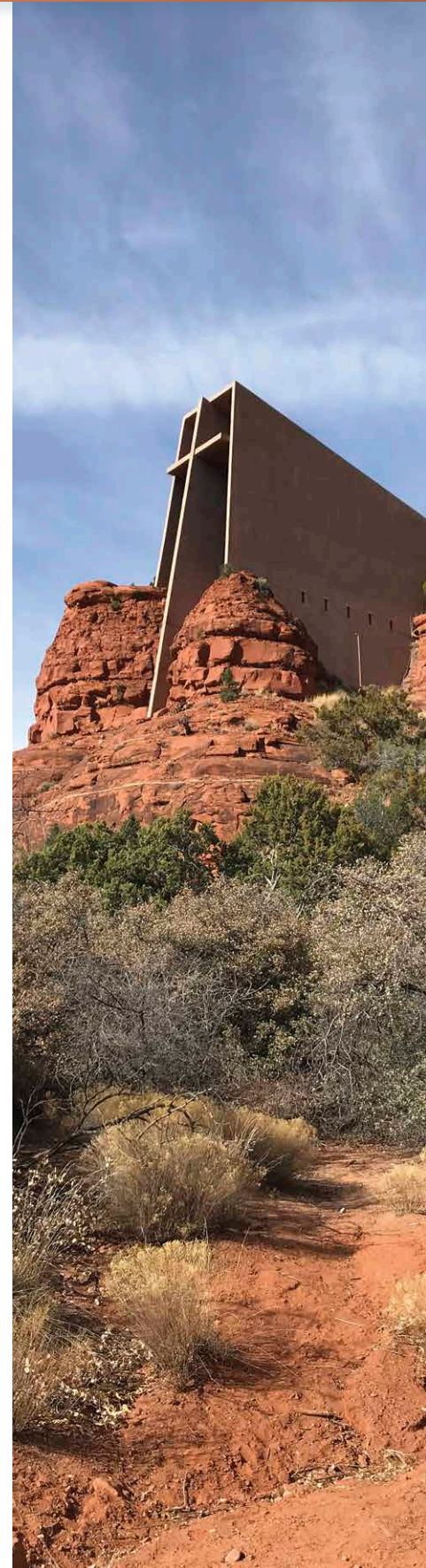
This means:

- He has allowed us to be in His church for a purpose, and He will help us to fulfill that purpose, if we want this.
- We believe in His omnipotence and that, despite conditions without and within, He will accomplish His intention to bring souls to salvation.
- We realize Christ does not measure by numbers and success as we see it.
- We remain resolute in our determination to continue serving and giving, and are not discouraged by setbacks. In our deep love for Christ, we continue...

Being faithful to Christ means we will endure, as our brethren in the first church, without wavering. Thus the hymn completes with a firm resolution:

***...nor shall Thy strength diminish, nor we forget our aim, we know that Thou wouldst finish the Church that bears Thy Name!***

With loving greetings,



GIVING IS FAITH



SO NEITHER THE ONE WHO PLANTS NOR THE  
ONE WHO WATERS IS ANYTHING, BUT ONLY GOD,  
WHO MAKES THINGS GROW.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:7 NIV

Disciples of Jesus Christ put their faith and trust in Him, and follow His teachings. Jesus teaches us the following in Luke 6:38 –

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosoms. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

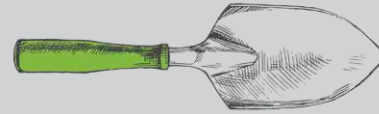


In this teaching, Jesus is directing the listeners to have a willingness to give, and He assures them that if they are obedient in their giving, they can be confident that God will always care for them. For the one who is generous, they will receive back what they need in full measure. Are you willing to put your faith in that teaching? Be reminded that Hebrews teaches us that *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. When Jesus is the One you are looking to and who your hope is in, He will give you the strength to walk by faith and give without the worry that you will not have enough for yourself.

When we follow God willingly and obediently in our giving, we demonstrate our faith. All that we have, whether it is a little or a lot, is a gift from God. It is by His grace alone. Just as God has been generous and faithful to us, we are called to be generous with all that we have received. But sometimes fear overwhelms faith. With the uncertainty of the time we live in, the concerns that many have over their employment and the economy, fear of insecurity can be an obstacle that diminishes one's desire and willingness to give. Be encouraged during those turbulent times of life to steady your faith in Jesus, who is the author and finisher of faith (Hebrews 12:2). He has done all things necessary for us to endure in our faith. He will always be faithful to us and the Scriptures are proof of this. Read about the Israelites, and the experiences of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David,



etc...Through their experiences, we see how God fulfilled His promises and remained faithful to them all. And just as Jesus taught the disciples not to worry about what they will wear and what they will eat, we should take this encouragement to heart and hand over our worry and fear to Jesus (Matthew 6:31).



Paul taught the following to the believers in Corinth:

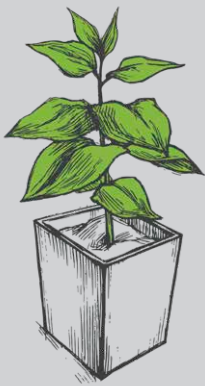
So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work (2 Corinthians 9:7-8).

If the question wells up within you about whether or not you can afford to give of your money, joy, time, etc...keep this lesson from Paul in mind. If one who is obedient and faithful with what one has been given and shares it as the Spirit guides them, they will experience how God continually provides.

Think for a moment about the work a Sunday School teacher does. They give their time and use their gifts, passions, and energy to teach young students. They share what they have been given. They don't know exactly what the child will grow up to be like, but they have hope that their work will inspire that young person to grow up with a thirst for the knowledge of God. Or think about the work of parents. Parents give to their children out of what they have received. They set an example and, in faith, hope that their children will grow up and follow their lead. This goes beyond the material things and extends to the giving of time, a listening ear, compassion, and so on. Again, parents do not know exactly what their children will grow up to be like, but they

give of themselves in faith, hoping that they make a positive impact. God knows our good deeds and when we act according to His will, we believe He will bless all that is done, bringing us closer to Him and others. In this way, our giving is faith.

When we give by faith, then what we share with others will be acceptable to our God. In the story of Cain and Abel, the two brothers brought their offerings and presented them to God. The Bible tells us that *the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering* (Genesis 4:4-5). The reason why God accepted one and not the other wasn't explained in Genesis, but the author of Hebrews offers us some clarity in Hebrews 11:4 (ESV) -



By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. Abel's offering was acceptable in the sight of God simply because of his faith.

Because of his faith and his desire to do the right thing, he was commended as righteous. And even after his death, Abel's faith still spoke loudly. His actions were, and still are, an example for all to follow. The intention isn't for us to give out of obligation or because we will receive a reward if we do. We are to give out of our love for the Lord and out of our faithfulness to Him. We are to share what we have with the right heart's intention. Then, our offering will also be commended as righteous, and our faith will speak loudly to the world around us.

The concern of God is not how much we have, but how faithful we are. Our willingness to give demonstrates our faith in God and our confidence that He will always care for those who have

surrendered their hearts to Him. In Luke 12:48, as part of an answer to Peter, Jesus said,

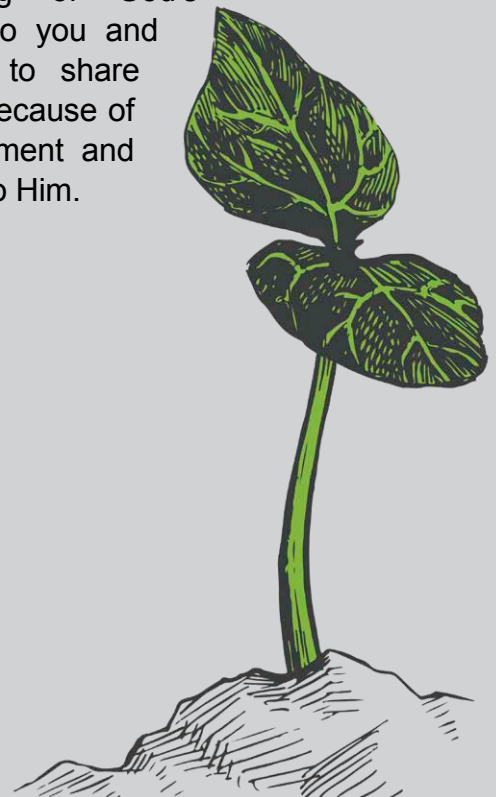
*"For everyone whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."*

Jesus is emphasizing here that great privilege brings great responsibility. The greatest privilege given is to be children of God. When we believe that we received that title through faith, then whether we have a little or a lot, we will be led by the Holy Spirit to utilize what we have in the service of Him.

GIVING IS FAITH BECAUSE IT IS OUT OF OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD AND OUR DEVOTION TO JESUS THAT WE OBEDIENTLY SHARE WHAT WE HAVE IN FULL KNOWLEDGE THAT OUR GOD WILL ALWAYS CARE FOR US.

This doesn't mean that we should have the expectation that if we give \$10, God will reward us with \$100. Or that if we serve with our car, that He will one day reward us with one that is brand new. Our God will continue to be faithful to us and will provide us with those things we need in order to continue to serve Him by serving others. May this teaching on **giving is faith** strengthen your understanding of God's faithfulness to you and your desire to share with others because of your commitment and faithfulness to Him.

- MJB



# Giving to others...

This past year, I was touched by the pure act of a child in our district. After receiving the yearly birthday card from our church, he decided that he wanted to donate the money inside to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Truly, this child is an example of giving is love.

Inspired by this act and his suggestion, the apostles and I agreed that half of the money from the children's birthday cards this year would also be donated to St. Jude's. We would like to continue this charitable act, on behalf of our children, in the future.

This is a special example for us. Our children, as part of the body of Christ, spread His love and hope with the little they possess. As parents, we can also talk to our children about what it means to give to others and why giving is important. The time and resources we give to serve others glorifies God and speaks of Him to those around us. Our desire is that He is evident in our lives through our serving. - **LRK**



*Morning by morning, new mercies I see...*

# FAITHFUL TO CHRIST

What does it mean to be faithful to Christ? First, we must recognize and understand – God is faithful to us!

How great is the faithfulness of our God? It's difficult to even comprehend God's faithfulness to us because He is perfect and He is love. Why would He stay faithful to us, people who are imperfect and oft times have a hard time showing love? But, even when we are faithless, He is faithful. He is interested in every soul – those who come near to Him and those who walk away.

Everything shows His faithfulness. Let us look at the lyrics of the hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Even the seasons, as the song says, show His faithfulness. The more we discover and understand how God is faithful to us, the closer we move towards our faithfulness to Him. This is not measured by how much we offer or how often we are in church, but rather by how much we are learning, growing, and transforming into the image of Christ.

So, let's ask ourselves: Am I faithful to God? Chief Apostle Schneider brought out four ways that we can demonstrate our faithfulness to God.

## FOLLOW CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

In order to follow His example and conform to His image, we have to know about Him. This requires a culture of learning. The Lord wants to open new understandings of who He is and what He wants for us.

One example that Jesus set for us was how to pray. He teaches us about prayer in the Lord's Prayer and shows us examples through the many times He spent alone in prayer. Do our prayers parallel Jesus' prayers? Wouldn't it be nice if at the beginning of our prayers, we start in adoration and praise by expressing to God the ways that He is faithful to us, and *then* bring our intercessions and petitions?

## BE CONSTANT IN LOVE

We want to both always dwell in His love and be unending in our love towards Him. Of course, this means that even in times of suffering, we are

constant in our love. Christians will have suffering; Christ even foretold this in John 16:33.

We can read in 1 Corinthians 10:13: *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

God is always there to provide the way of escape or offer courage and strength to get through it. He is faithful, and that's why we remain constant in love.

His faithfulness also inspires us to have love towards each other. God wants us to share His love with other people, and so it is our sacred duty to do this. Because we have His Spirit in us, we have the love of Christ in us and we can love as He did, everlasting and directed towards all people (ref. Romans 5:5).

## BE WILLING TO SERVE

What is our motivation to serve? Doing something because we have to is not a willingness to serve. Christ was willing to serve. Jesus calls us to be a witness of Him and that means our lifestyle is different. We have to keep moving or evolving our lives into what Jesus would want, and be willing to serve in all types of situations.

We all have been given gifts by God to do what He wants us to do. These gifts are given to us in order to serve one another. So let's always be asking ourselves: Am I doing what Jesus has asked me to do?

And maybe we already do serve when we have the opportunity, but we don't experience much success. Mother Teresa once said, "God has not called me to be successful. He has called me to be faithful."

Let us not be discouraged if we don't see positive results from our serving. We don't know God's plans; what we know is that we are called to do what He asks us to do.

## KEEP YOUR PROMISES

In the confirmation vow, we promise to renounce the devil. God doesn't expect us to live perfect lives, but He does want us to renounce sin, to push it away and resist when something is wrong, to give up the part of ourselves that rebels against God. This is all part of keeping our promises.

With the marriage blessing and vow, couples promise to glorify God through their marriage and let their relationship with Christ be a guide for their relationship with each other. In the vow made during the baptism blessing, parents promise to raise their children under the teachings of the gospel and to have a relationship with Christ. The Church is not responsible for us keeping these promises. We are responsible, so let's be faithful to God in this way and remain true to our promises.

---

Our faithfulness to God demonstrates who we are as Christians. Are we part-time Christians, where we only show love sometimes, or we only serve in situations that are convenient, or we only keep our promises if it suits us? Let our lives be a reflection that we are God's children and let us strive to always be faithful to Him. – LRK / VAA

## Constant in love...

One of the ways we are faithful to Christ is to remain constant in love to Him and to each other. In this regard, I am especially mindful of those who no longer walk together with us. May our constancy of love inspire us to remember and reach out to them – we are family!

*Please let there be no strife between you and me... for we are brethren.*

Genesis 13:8

To watch a **For Your Journey** on the theme *Faithful to Christ* scan this code:



To watch a sermon clip from our District Apostle on the theme *Faithful to Christ* scan this code:



You can also watch these video clips by visiting and subscribing to our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/newapostolicchurchusa>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

*Chorus:*

Great is Thy faithfulness  
Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside

Looking at these lyrics, how is God's  
faithfulness expressed?

What else in your life is a sign of God's  
faithfulness to you?



---

**19-20 MAY 2018**

FESTIVE PENTECOST SERVICE WITH OUR CHIEF APOSTLE ON SUNDAY  
EXHIBITION, NAC TALKS, AND FELLOWSHIP ON SATURDAY  
**FIND MORE INFORMATION ON [WWW.EVENTS.NAC-USA.ORG](http://WWW.EVENTS.NAC-USA.ORG)**

---

*And they continued...*

*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Acts 2:42



**PENTECOST 2018**  
New Apostolic Church USA

Hylton Memorial Chapel • 14640 Potomac Mills Road • Woodbridge, VA 22192 • [www.events.nac-usa.org](http://www.events.nac-usa.org)

**Pentecost** is a feast that has its roots in the Jewish feast of thanksgiving. Later, it was recognized as the day that marked the renewal of the covenant between God and the Israelites, and the day to commemorate when Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

**After Christ's Ascension, Pentecost was known as the day God's promises were fulfilled: His Church was established; the Holy Spirit – the Helper – dwelt within each one of the believers, providing them with what they would need to fulfill their calling; and the apostle ministry was equipped to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ among all nations and point the congregation towards His return.**

When the Holy Spirit filled Jesus' disciples on Pentecost, they were able to speak in other tongues (Acts 2:4). With this gift, they did not talk about themselves or their own thoughts and emotions. Instead, they did what the Spirit inspired them to do – they praised the Lord's greatness and spoke of His deeds of salvation. They were moved to profess the Lord. Their profession in many tongues allowed all the people gathered to hear the Lord being praised in their own language, **which had not happened before**. This experience at Pentecost was more than a miracle of tongues; it was also a miracle of listening.

Peter then gave a sermon to the Jewish people gathered from the many nations about the sending of God's Spirit and what that meant for the people. After Peter's call to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, about 3,000 people were baptized and became part of the first church. *So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:46-47).*

**The disciples continued...** The book of Acts is just one testimony of how the disciples continued in their work for the Lord with the Holy Spirit as their Guide and Helper. We are also called to do the same. The Holy Spirit that filled the disciples of Jesus' time is also within us. Let us be moved to profess Christ in our actions and words. Let us be a sign that the Spirit is working within us and not talk about ourselves in times of fellowship, but rather, share Christ with each other and lift Him up. Let us use our schooling, our work, our leisure time as opportunities to glorify God and serve others. When we do these things, our lives become a testimony of **how we continued** in our work for the Lord.

As believers today, **Pentecost is still a time of celebration**. We celebrate that the church of Christ is active and that we are part of it. We celebrate that the gift of the Holy Spirit dwells and works within us. We celebrate that the apostle ministry is still active in dispensing the sacrament of Holy Sealing through the laying on of hands. We can celebrate these things together, giving thanks and glorifying God as His people.

Pentecost 2018 is an opportunity for us, as people of different cultures and backgrounds, to come together for one weekend and celebrate the fulfillment of God's promises, the ones that were fulfilled many years ago, and the ones He will fulfill in the future.

In the NAC USA district, we can gather to celebrate Pentecost in a divine service with our Chief Apostle. We can experience Holy Communion together and Communion for the departed. During this weekend, you'll find old friends and new friends, and experience together different activities that will help equip you in your personal calling in the Body of Christ. Let this weekend be an opportunity to worship God, glorify Him, and engage in fellowship, sharing our lives with one another to become one heart and one soul.

**Join us for this 2018 Pentecost weekend to rekindle the gift of the Spirit in us, to deepen our passion and joy in the work of God, and to continue our work according to His will. – VAA**



*Do this in remembrance of Me.*  
CELEBRATING HOLY COMMUNION

On the same night in which He was betrayed, Jesus instituted Holy Communion in the presence of His disciples during their celebration of Passover. Holy Communion, also known as the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, and the breaking of bread, is the moment set aside for Christians to gather to remember Christ's sacrifice and all that He accomplished for them through His selfless act of love. The celebration of this sacrament can never be taken lightly nor can it be allowed to become mundane; every time is an opportunity for a soul to remember and fellowship with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Why do we continue to celebrate Holy Communion during our divine services today? Simply because Jesus Himself is the origin of it, He is its focus and content, and He commanded that it be continued. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in the Upper Room, an element of this institution was His command **to repeat** this supper in remembrance of Him as He said, "*Do this in remembrance of Me*" (Luke 22:19). The Apostle Paul re-iterated this point and expounded upon it when writing to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Paul says,

*For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**" In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This **do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.**" For **as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.***

Notice the command being repeated – "do this in remembrance of Me." And then the repetition of the words, "as often," indicating that this celebration wasn't just to be a one-time event. "You proclaim" indicates that this meal is a moment of professing our faith. And finally, "till He comes" tells us that we are to continue remembering what He has done through His death until He fulfills His promise to return.

It is clear from Scripture that we should continually celebrate Holy Communion, but the New Testament doesn't dictate how often we are to celebrate it. In the New Apostolic Church, we have the opportunity to participate in Holy Communion every time we come together for a divine service. While that opens the way for us to share in fellowship with Jesus each week, it also opens the possibility for our celebrations to become routine and dull, and for us to become callous to the moment. Some may ask themselves, "Why do we have to do this same thing repeatedly?" In addition, it's possible that for some, Holy Communion means it's time to nudge the person next to them because their mind has gone elsewhere during the service. And sadly, for some of us, it's just an indicator that the divine service is coming to its end.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we must do our best to protect ourselves from becoming apathetic to the celebration of Holy Communion and keep it from becoming part of a routine. Holy Communion is an integral part of our life with Christ, and is a moment that we should **look forward to, prepare ourselves for, and be fully present in.**

Our lives are very busy and time flies by for many of us. In order to keep up with all of the things we need to accomplish and everywhere we need to go, our minds are constantly working to remind ourselves of those things. In order to celebrate Holy Communion properly, we must intentionally set aside time to remember what Jesus has done on our behalf. This act of remembering cannot just be done in the moments immediately preceding Holy Communion. Time must be spent throughout the week to remember how great the grace of Jesus is.

#### HOW CAN WE DO OUR BEST TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM DIMINISHING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN OUR LIFE?

First, we keep our focus on Jesus Christ. Take the time to remember that Jesus' death on the cross was a historical event. It really happened!

- It happened because our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He wanted to restore His relationship with us.

- It happened because it was the only way for us to be forgiven of our sin.
- It happened because we were powerless against sin and could not enter into fellowship with our Heavenly Father on our own.
- It happened so that the Scriptures could be fulfilled.
- It happened so that we could be rescued, set free, and receive the promise of eternal life

When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we feast spiritually by faith on all the promises of God that were purchased by the blood of Jesus.

Second, in preparation for this meal, we have to consider what it means to be forgiven. What impact has Jesus' act of grace had on your life? What does it mean to you that you no longer have to live with the guilt of your sin? What has Jesus set you free from? As you answer these questions, it's very possible that you will end up standing, sitting, or kneeling in awe of Jesus. Take the time to worship Him and give thanks for all He has done for you. In these moments, you may discover a deeper understanding of the Lord's Supper. Imagine how powerful our celebration could be if we would all come together prepared in this way.

Third, Paul cautioned those participating in the breaking of bread to do so worthily by taking the time to examine themselves prior to coming to the table (1 Corinthians 11:28). We are to come with a proper attitude of humility and repentance. Recognize that you did not earn your place at the table by your works and good deeds, but that your place was secured by the grace of Jesus Christ and that you have the opportunity to take your place only by faith. Examine your life and see where sin has crept in, and then, through repentance, invite Jesus into those places so that you can turn away from the things that seek to separate you from God. Humbly reflect on any offense you committed against a brother or sister, and resolve yourself to make it right with them. Strive, as Paul wrote to the Philippians, to *let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ* (Philippians 1:27).

Holy Communion is one of the most precious gifts Christ has given to His church. When we participate in the Lord's Supper, we meet with the living Christ and receive the benefits of communing with the Bread of Heaven. Never take the opportunity to share in this moment lightly, and encourage each other to celebrate Holy Communion with the proper preparedness, reverence, and sensitivity. - **MJB**



# CELEBRATING OUR VOW

CONFIRMATION CELEBRATORY SERVICE – MAY 6

Confirmation is that act of blessing in which young New Apostolic Christians take upon themselves the obligations their parents undertook on their behalf at their Holy Baptism and Holy Sealing. From then on, these Christians, who have reached a point of spiritual maturity, bear full responsibility before God for everything they do or neglect to do. They commit themselves to resist Satan and remain faithful to God in front of Him and the congregation with the words:

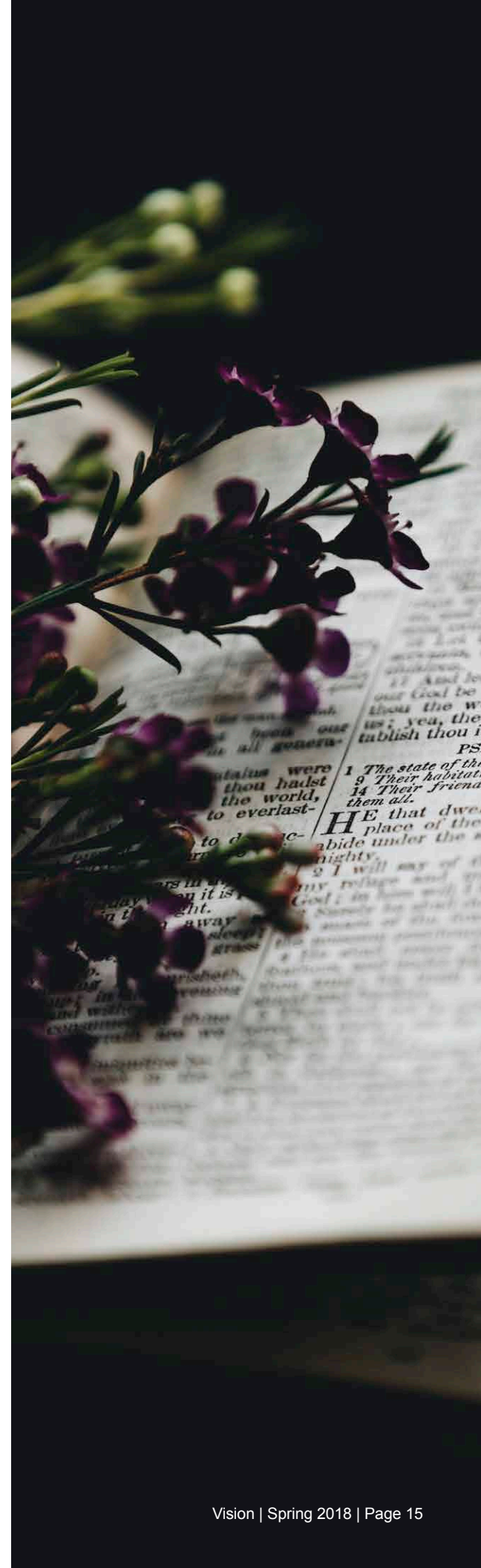
I RENOUNCE SATAN AND ALL HIS WORK AND WAYS,  
AND SURRENDER MYSELF TO YOU, O TRIUNE GOD,  
FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, IN BELIEF, OBEDIENCE,  
AND THE EARNEST RESOLUTION TO REMAIN FAITHFUL  
TO YOU UNTIL MY END. AMEN.

The confirmation blessing happens only once, but the vow is something we are expected to keep alive every day. When we are mindful of these words, we constantly renew our endeavor to avoid evil and ungodly things, and diligently follow the path of the gospel. When we keep the promises we made in this vow, we are true to our belief in the triune God and our intention to conduct our lives in faith and obedience toward God. Every day, we strive to transform our nature using Jesus as our example.

Being in charge of our own spiritual lives is a responsibility. God expects us to keep growing in and discovering more about our relationship with God, so that He becomes the most important part of our lives. While each of us has to go on our own spiritual journey, that does not mean we are alone. The congregation and the Church are here to help each one along. Salvation is offered in fellowship, and it is in this community that we can support each other on our journeys.

This spirit of being unified in our journey and vow to God gives way to a unique experience. As we heard in the beginning-of-the-year message from the District Apostle, because making the confirmation vow has shifted from the year the student turns 14 to when they are in 10th or 11th grade, there will be a couple of years when youth will not be confirmed.

However, we still want to celebrate and remember the essence of Confirmation. This is the reason there is a Confirmation celebratory service scheduled for May 6. It will be an opportunity for those of all ages that have been confirmed to reflect on the vow they've made to Christ and the blessing they received upon that vow. It will be a way for us to keep encouraging one another to grow, and deepen our relationships with each other and God. – VAA





NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE  
NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH  
3753 N. TROY STREET  
CHICAGO, IL 60618-4594

NON PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
HICKSVILLE, NY  
PERMIT NO. 842

## PRAYERS FOR VENEZUELA

The crisis in Venezuela continues: the price of basic groceries has increased to about five times the minimum wage, medicine shortages mean that people are suffering and are in pain, the unemployment rate is alarmingly high, and masses of people are migrating to surrounding countries to have a chance at better lives. Because of this turmoil, it has not been possible for apostles from the U.S. to visit with the members in Venezuela. District Apostle Montes de Oca from Brazil, who is able to travel into the country, agreed to make a visit to some of the congregations to provide pastoral care and support them in this difficult time.

In total, he traveled to seven cities and served over 3,100 souls in divine services and minister meetings. Regarding his visit, the District Apostle shared that the brothers and sisters are admirable, never once complaining of the difficult situations they live in. A letter he received during the trip from a young sister perfectly expressed the exemplary position of the members' hearts. In the middle of the letter, she wrote: "In these difficult hours please pray that our faith does not fail and we do not depart from grace." She added, "It is beautiful how our ministers continue to work with joy...the problems do not stop them because they love our heavenly Father."

This sister truly illustrates that when one is faithful to Christ, they can remain joyful and endure anything with God's help, as our members in Venezuela are doing. For this trip and the efforts of District Apostle Montes de Oca, we express gratitude and joy to our Heavenly Father. Let us also persevere in our prayers for those who have been able to escape the troubles in Venezuela, and for those who are still in the country, daily struggling with the situation there.

