

Health, growth, completion

Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

www.nac-usa.org

Autumn 2019

Dear brothers and sisters,

By God's grace, about 500 USA priests and the apostles gathered together at the National Priest Conference over two weekends in September. We participated in seminars and conversations, all pertaining to the work of a priest in our church. We experienced a multitude of blessed moments and I would like to share with you a few special experiences.

On Friday evening, the event began with an opening address defining the overall objectives of the conference. We considered the sacrifices and efforts of our past "fathers and mothers in faith" and their boldness and confidence in Christ during the trying and difficult years of the establishment and development of our church in America. Also, in their time, they were the catalysts and contributors of many developments, not the least of which was spreading the gospel over many nations.

Due to a number of recent congregational anniversaries, where old, faded photographs reminded us again of our pioneering members and ministers, in a humble act of respect, together with all the priests, we stood for a moment of silence. Again, we turned to our predecessors in the celebration of Holy Communion for the departed and felt moving moments as we together, in spirit, celebrated at the Lord's table. Unified in the body and blood of Jesus, we believe that those who have gone before remain in step with Christ's advancement of His church.

Please allow me to express my deep and heartfelt thanks to all priests for engaging in the conference, and to their wives, families, and congregations who gave them up for these weekends. Personally, I was strengthened and renewed, and I shall never forget the unique experience of having Holy Communion together with all the priests and the apostles of our nation.

With loving greetings,





mosaic
 National Priest Conference of the New Apostolic Church USA



Unlike any other event ever hosted in the USA district, the National Priest Conference in September was a historical gathering. Over the course of two weekends, almost 500 priestly ministers came together to be renewed and strengthened in the understanding of their ministry.

At the beginning of each weekend, September 6 – 8 and September 20 – 22, the ministers had the opportunity to attend an exhibition that highlighted and reinforced the various resources and programs in the USA district. A place for asking questions and diving deeper, ministers were able to gain insight into topics such as spiritual gifts, Faith Arc, small groups, music and worship, greeter and member resources, benevolence, giving, and perhaps the most applicable, minister development.

The District Apostle officially opened the weekend by sharing his thoughts on the importance of each minister's personal relationship with God and what it means for them to be part of the mosaic that He has created. A mosaic, which was the theme for the conference, is made up of pre-formed elements that when put together, create a larger image or pattern of beauty. These diverse elements come together to form a coherent whole, just as God's servants as part of the Body of Christ contribute to His mission on earth.

This theme, Mosaic, carried throughout the weekend as the ministers explored the different elements of the divine service and how they can fit together to create a Spirit-inspired experience for all members that deepens their relationship with God.

Groups of approximately 50 priestly ministers rotated between presentations given by the apostles on pastoral care, music and liturgy, preaching, the preparation for and celebration of Holy Communion, and sacraments and blessings. At the end of Saturday's sessions and activities, the ministers were able to meet with their own apostle and continue the conversation on the important aspects and expectations of their ministry.

The high point of each weekend was the opportunity to celebrate the Lord's Supper together as the apostolate and priesthood of the USA district. Needless to say, these moments created a deeply moving experience that shall always be remembered. Each one could perceive that the celebration of Holy Communion is the highest form of fellowship on this earth, which God desires for all people. The divine service themes for the weekends were the sacrament of Holy Communion and the holiness and wonder of God, the Holy Spirit, respectively.

As each weekend came to a close with the divine service experience and closing thoughts from the District Apostle, the purpose of the conference was highlighted – that each priestly minister understands and embraces their calling from God, and that this calling be fulfilled through their ministry. This fellowship and sense of unity amongst the brothers was truly an unforgettable experience.



Seminar topics



Sacraments and Blessings
Establishing a standardized approach to sacraments and ministerial acts or blessings



Divine Service Experience
How our understanding of the liturgy leads to creating an impactful divine service experience and the word of God properly



Pastoral Care
To more deeply understand ways and methods to support our brothers and sisters through pastoral care



Ministry
Understanding your ministry as a priest, expectations, and resources available to you



Holy Communion
Elevating the celebration of Holy Communion by deepening our understanding of and preparation for the sacrament





...more effective music and prayers,
...and understanding how to preach



One thing I learned at the National Priest Conference...

An Apostle told me that one of our priests says the confirmation vow every morning.

"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."

After I heard this, I also began to do this in my morning prayer. In reciting the words, I felt a strength come over me, firstly declaring war on Satan and making my resolution of faith anew. This was followed by a feeling of humbleness and warmth in the affirmation of my love and trust in the One who has always loved me.

In so doing, we gird ourselves for the day ahead, focused on the love and power of the Almighty, boldly facing whatever the evil one may put in our way. This is the advice of Apostle Paul to the Ephesians:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God... (Ephesians 6:11-17)

- LRK



As we move further into this season of harvest and gratitude, we naturally set aside time to focus on the goodness of our heavenly Father and all that He has given to us. While we reflect on His kindness, let's also contemplate how we can share with others what we have received from Him. How can we cultivate this season of Thanksgiving in our families, congregations, and communities through our own giving?

Consider the following during the time leading up to our celebration of Thanksgiving Sunday.

1. Giving is love. (An excerpt from the 2017 Autumn Vision Newsletter)

Our desire to give begins and ends with God. John wrote in 1 John 4:16, *God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.* It is love that has brought us from the brink of despair into fellowship with God. It is the love God has shown us that fuels our passion to share with others what we have been given. When we recognize that we are unworthy to receive all that God has given us, we must respond in love towards our God and our neighbors. This love prompts us to give freely from what we've been blessed with.

How have you experienced God's love this year?

2. Giving is faith. (An excerpt from the 2018 Spring Vision Newsletter)

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.

How is your faith expressed through your giving?



Thanksgiving

3. **Giving is joy.** (An excerpt from the 2018 Autumn Vision Newsletter)

Consider the words that Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 9:7 – *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.* When we mature in the mind of Christ, we will no longer give grudgingly or of necessity, but rather intentionally and with thought. Our giving becomes our decision, and because it is what we want to do, we give joyfully. Joyful giving is done freely, not grudgingly. This is where giving becomes faith, love, and joy intertwined.

When believers are united in their joyful giving, then the congregation becomes a foretaste of the kingdom of God.

Pray that God will enable us to see the world around us in such a way that we can clearly recognize the needs of others and act upon the prompting of the Holy Spirit to share what He has blessed us with.

4. **Giving is mission.** (An excerpt from the 2019 Summer Vision Newsletter)

As believers grow spiritually and mature in their faith, they gain the understanding that all they have is given by God and belongs to Him.

With the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, believers learn to trust in God and recognize how they can use what they have been given to give generously to others and to the church through their offerings, so that all people may come to know Jesus.

This means we don't just give to missions, but that Christian giving, in and of itself, is the mission to which we are called: to give a portion of that which we have for the sake of the gospel. Jesus Christ gave life to the dead, both spiritually and physically; Christians humbly follow His example by giving of themselves to the spiritual and physical welfare of others.

How do you contribute to fulfilling Christ's mission on earth?

EMAIL RECHARITABLEMINISTRY@NAC-USA.ORG
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS!



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GO  **OR** 
GIVE



Your Kingdom Come

From June 20 to 23, 2019, Chief Apostle Schneider visited the countries of the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the Caribbean. Following is an excerpt from the divine service he held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.



In Luke 11, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray using the Lord's Prayer. First, they began with, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." Begin in worship, and adore God, and once you've done that, you can come with your first plea. And the very first one is, "Your kingdom come." So, Jesus wanted the disciples to know that should be your first demand, your first wish, your priority. "Your kingdom come." And dear brothers and sisters, when we come together and we pray the Lord's Prayer, that's also our first wish, our first plea: "Please, Your kingdom come." That means something. Doing so, we express our priority and we confess our faith.

Our first prayer – "Your kingdom come." That means we are aware that the Son of God came to earth to establish His kingdom. In His kingdom, there's no place for evil. Jesus Christ overcame sin and the devil to establish His kingdom. He wants to save man, to deliver them from domination, from the power of the evil one. He wants to lead them into the kingdom of God where they can enjoy eternal life, eternal fellowship with God, with no more influence and damage caused by the evil one. That is why the Son of God came to earth. That is the work of salvation done by Jesus Christ. He didn't come to do miracles. He didn't come to solve all the problems on earth. He wanted to help man and to save them, leading them into His kingdom. That is salvation, and the whole meaning and purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when we pray, "Your kingdom come," we acknowledge that Jesus came to earth to save men, to lead them into the kingdom of God because that is the will of God.

So, praying, "Your kingdom come," is a confession of our faith. Jesus wants to save us, not to heal us, not to make us rich. He wants to lead us into His kingdom. We are waiting for the return of the Lord. And those who are prepared for His return will enter His kingdom, and they will live in fellowship with God. That is why we follow Jesus Christ, and that is what we express when we pray, "Your kingdom come." We long to enter His kingdom. That is the purpose and the goal of our life, and why we remain faithful. We do not follow Christ to become better people. We follow Christ and remain faithful because we are longing to enter the kingdom of God. We are waiting for His return, and we prepare ourselves for this time.

Road to Confirmation

With the launch of Faith Arc in 2017 came changes to the youth group, as well as Confirmation.

Leading to these changes, there was an increased realization that youth may separate themselves from the church after making their Confirmation vow because they needed more time to develop spiritually in order to make an informed vow of their commitment to God. The first change that came out of this realization is that Confirmation is no longer the entrance marker of when a student enters the youth group. This adjustment allows the Confirmation age to be at a time when a youth is truly ready to make their vow. Because of this, the age of Confirmation has increased from 14 to the time when a youth is in 10th or 11th grade (typically ages 15-17). The flexibility between the two grades allows a youth to decide, in collaboration with their parents, youth leader, and rector, the appropriate time for them to be confirmed. The decision to make the Confirmation vow and receive the Confirmation blessing is a very important milestone in a youth's journey of faith. When making this decision, age, maturity level, and understanding of faith need to be considered, and so this intentional flexibility is important.

These changes were made after years of prayer, consultation with educators both inside and outside of our church, and much discussion and contemplation with the Apostles, Bishops, and National Synod.

Those youth who decide to pursue Confirmation will begin a preparation process called, "Road to Confirmation." To help ensure that those making their Confirmation vow are best equipped to do so and understand core competencies of the Christian faith and New Apostolic Church doctrine, the "Road to Confirmation" process includes the youth completing self-paced online courses. This process also engages parent(s) or guardian(s), the youth leader, and the rector or other ordained minister from the congregation in strategic checkpoint conversations with the youth in the months leading up to Confirmation Sunday.

The "Road to Confirmation" process:

The initial conversation

- This is a conversation with the youth and parent(s)/guardian(s), initiated by the rector and/or youth leader, to determine if the youth that is currently in 10th grade would like to pursue Confirmation in the upcoming spring.
- The "Road to Confirmation – Initial Conversation Guide" is available in the "Road to Confirmation" section of NDI (NAC-USA Development Institute)

The self-paced online courses

- 6 courses that take an estimated 2 hours and 20 minutes to complete
- Available on NDI

Checkpoint conversations

- Parent(s)/guardian(s), the rector, and youth leader are expected to engage in strategic "Checkpoint Conversations" as the youth completes their coursework in the months leading to their Confirmation day.
- Who conducts which "Checkpoint Conversations," as well questions to discuss, are provided on the "Road to Confirmation Checklist," available November 19, 2019 on NDI.

The final conversation

- After the "Road to Confirmation" online courses are completed, all of the "Checkpoint Conversations" have taken place, and shortly before the youth's Confirmation day, a final conversation will take place. This ideally would be with the ordained minister that will conduct the Confirmation service. The youth can decide to invite any combination of parent(s)/guardian(s), rector, and/or youth leader to this final conversation. This will be a conversation to ensure the youth has an understanding of the Christian faith, the New Apostolic Church doctrine, and is ready to make their Confirmation vow and receive their Confirmation blessing.
- The "Road to Confirmation – Final Conversation Guide" will be available on NDI March 1, 2020.

The complete process, online courses, conversation guides, and deadlines for those pursuing Confirmation in 2020 are available on NDI (Faith Arc—Youth—Road to Confirmation).

Any questions can be directed to youth@nac-usa.org



We want to know why you love your small group!

Follow these simple steps to send us a video:

1. Before you record, turn your phone sideways (or horizontally).
2. Record in a quiet environment, an arm's length away from your subject.
3. If you are the person recording, be sure to have a window or light behind you, so the person you are recording is well-lit.

Answer the following questions:

1. What's one word you would use to describe small group?
2. If you could share one thought with someone who has not had a chance to experience a small group, what would you say?

These questions can be answered by an individual, or your entire group!

For best quality, upload the video from your phone to GoogleDrive, Dropbox, or OneDrive. Send a link to the file to communications@nac-usa.org



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DISTRICT UPDATE:

With the retirement of Apostle Reinhard Hecht and the ordination of Apostle Robert Ferguson in February of this year, an opportunity opened to realign some of the districts under the care of the apostles. This affords the apostles a more efficient and manageable working region for their periodic visits.

Going forward, the congregations of the Detroit district will be cared for by Apostle Karl Orlofski. The congregations of the Caribbean district, including Jamaica, Bermuda, Guyana, the Bahamas, and a number of smaller, English-speaking islands, will be cared for by Apostle Robert Ferguson.

Please join with me in praying that our heavenly Father will open new impulses as these apostles begin their activity in their respective areas. – LRK