



# NEW WINE AND NEW WINESKINS

Issue No.: Vol. 5 Winter 2023

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*Newsletter of the North American Network of Charismatic Covenant  
Communities (NAN)*



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## From the Editor

Yes Lord, this is your plan that we recognize and believe that you want this – an abundant life in the context of community life – for us. Let’s pray for belief and a deeper commitment to our call as brothers and sisters in Charismatic Covenant Communities.

No matter how or why we have come to our respective communities, we have heard a call on our lives from the Lord. No matter what our vision for community was 5-45 years ago, God has His plan. And He called us to community, knowing His plan. We have the grace to live His plan, even when our own plans seem dashed or unfulfilled. We need to take on His big picture, His perspective. I know this is true as He is the one who called.

I asked the Lord one day while praying before our prayer meeting, “Is this worth it Lord? Do you really want us to keep working on community? Or is this the time to gracefully fold?” No answer. Nothing. I had been so afraid to ask Him directly about this for fear of His answer and for appearing cowardly. And now no answer at all.

At the prayer meeting that day, a sister got up and shared what she had heard from the Lord. Looking directly at me, she said, “The favors of the Lord are not exhausted! The favors of the Lord are not exhausted!”

What a creative and fantastic answer to my questions! How clever of my Father to answer through a covenant sister. The word breathed Life into my weary spirit,



By Mary Ann West

even as it came forth through my covenant sister. When I joined community, I felt the pleasure and favor of the Lord. And He is telling me now that He is not finished pouring out His favors on our community and on me. His anointing for living Community life is not finished. From God’s perspective, that calling, that anointing is as present and fresh as it was 40 years ago!

He has made each of us for this age in which we live. His call remains upon each of our lives as we faithfully live out His call to community life. Be encouraged!! The Lord is faithful. His favors are not exhausted as we remain resolute in His call.

Peter Poppleton introduces the articles in this issue in his “From the Desk of the NAN Moderator”.

Bill Kohler reviews *John Fisher and Thomas More: Keeping Their Souls While Losing Their Heads* (Conrad, 2021). Bill’s review encourages a thoughtful read of this short (190pages) and timely book.

“Living An Abundant Life in An Apostolic Age” is the focus of our NAN Conference this year. Alleluia Community, Augusta, Georgia, will again provide amazing hospitality and host us from February 23 through February 25.

Thank you Lord for Your plan of our living an abundant community life now!!





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### From the Desk of the NAN Moderator

By Peter Poppleton, NAN



Brothers and Sisters,

Let's tell it like it is: In 1968, while addressing the Bishops in the United States, then Cardinal Karol Wojtyla prophetically stated, *"We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel.... We must be prepared to undergo great trials in the not-too-distant future..."* How do we prepare ourselves for these times and how do we know what to do? In 1969 Cardinal Ratzinger said, *"You have heard correctly; but I maintain that reflection upon history, properly understood, embraces both looking back into the past and, with that as the starting point, reflecting on the possibilities and tasks of the future, which can only become clear if we survey a fairly long stretch of the road and do not naively shut ourselves up in the present."* So, what is our "starting point"? – the Apostolic Age, the age of the Apostles and the early Church.

Both St. Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI also gave us a glimpse into the present. Benedict XVI, as a Cardinal in 1969, saw the surprise gift for these times: *"But suddenly here was something that no one had planned. Here the Holy Spirit himself had, so to speak,*

*taken the floor. The faith was reawakening precisely among the young, who embraced it without ifs, ands, or buts, without escape hatches and loopholes, and who experienced it in its totality as a precious, life-giving gift."* And he added: *"Only when the person is struck and opened up by Christ in his inmost depth can the other also be inwardly touched, can there be reconciliation in the Holy Spirit, can true community grow."*

So, where do we stand in light of these quotations? Let me say we have to sharpen our awareness of these times – these are Apostolic times – and with that awareness we must fully enter the call the Lord has placed on our lives. This is why our February conference is named: *"Living an Abundant Life in an Apostolic Age"*. We have been given, what was quoted above: *"the Holy Spirit himself had, so to speak, taken the floor"*. So, let's continue to open our doors to the young who have been called to work with us for the future of the Body of Christ. They







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### *From the Desk of the NAN Moderator (Cont'd)*



have been “*struck and opened up by Christ*” and will help make “*true community grow*”.

As you read the NAN newsletter know that it is, in some degree, a prelude to the NAN Conference in February. The David Peterman, Sr. vision, and the prophetic word from Pentecost Today have us looking into these Apostolic times. The article on the CHARIS Conference of Communities shows us that we are engaged in the world-wide establishment of communities for these Apostolic times. The visit to the Community of Jesus by some City of the Lord members for further training in inner healing shows us that we are called to be working with other communities in this Apostolic time.

Let's close with three points: 1.) Prayerfully read this newsletter. 2.) Continue to earnestly pray for the February conference and 3.) Prayerfully discern and support those who the Lord is calling to attend the Conference. Know that the Lord and the Council Service Team are opening the door to more attendees for this Conference. So, let us look around us and see who the Lord wants to enter this Apostolic Age and invite them to come, build, and strengthen community life more fully. Come, Holy Spirit!





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## *Movemenets as Tugboats*

By David Peterman Sr. Christian Community of  
God's Delight

David Peterman, Sr. shared this vision and a fuller interpretation at the Christian Community of God's Delight Gathering on October 22, 2022. An abridged interpretation and teaching is shared here.

### **Vision:**

I had a vision of a huge ship in a stormy sea. Around this ship were many small tugboats trying to move the ship in a new direction. As I looked ahead of its path, I saw through a fog that there were huge rocks ahead.



### **Interpretation:**

This huge, ocean liner type ship is the Body of Christ, the whole Church. We, the passengers, are ill-prepared for the global changes that are happening in our society and our world (See: From Christendom to Apostolic Mission). I saw the ship unknowingly sailing towards rocks in a stormy sea. Our lives as Christians (faith, family, and community) are facing devastating destruction.

God has intervened in the past century to help His divided people in grave danger. Seventy years ago, the "captain" (Pope John XXIII) of this "ship" (whole Church) saw the danger coming and called the Church together to

prepare to change direction. Successive popes have shared clear, early warning prophetic messages to keep the Church on a safe way forward. But their warnings and directions have been largely ignored. As a result, huge cracks in the ship's hull (protective prohibitions) opened that have grown into a flood of unintended consequences: the sexual revolution, loss of protective moral barriers of truth, agnostic, secular culture; individualism, unbelief, rejection of authority, loss of



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### *Movemenets as Tugboats (Cont'd)*

tradition and wisdom from the past.

At the same time, many faithful passengers, responding to the Holy Spirit, have joined in tugboats (renewal movements like Charismatic Renewal) to reestablish the ship's course, turn it away from these dangers, and correct the Church's overall direction.

We who have been blessed to live in Charismatic Covenant Communities don't recognize how important we are as a body. In the 1960s many of us thought about ourselves as individuals. But Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Bible study, and God's grace changed our hearts into thinking about being part of God's people. We have been struggling ever since to hold on to that conversion, that change of thinking that we are a part of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12). We have come to have that collective, people of God, Body of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit mindset. We who are living Jesus' life in the Spirit should be showing the world the true Gospel message of surrender of self to God's call and plan for our salvation.

Even though the Church has started to realize that she is a participation in the Trinitarian Koinonia, a "communion," as individuals we remain separated by historical thinking, habits, and upbringing. Yet God's Holy Spirit is at work awakening a spiritual basis for restoring unity as a Trinitarian Communion, a community of saints. Individually, we are just beginning to dig down to this understanding, this meaning of Church as the assembly of God's holy ones. We're not there, but we have clearly glimpsed those rocks ahead of us. We should be working hard to steer this whole ship, especially our tugboat, away from those rocks.

So, when we pray, let us pray for the Body of Christ that is broken, hurting, and under attack everywhere, physically, spiritually, and mentally. We should be warriors in the battle. Even if we can't take up arms, we can raise our arms as Moses did (Ex 17:11) praising God, worshiping him, and begging him (2 Chron 7:14) for the mercy of salvation for his people, on his ship the Church.







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### *What I Sense the Holy Spirit is Saying*

**By Jorge Samaniego, Member of the Pentecost  
Today USA Board**



*by Jorge Samaniego*

While praying with the leaders of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Miami last January, 2022, I had a vision where I was in the middle of a vast and barren desert. I exclaimed to God that this desert is desolate and with seemingly no signs of life at all! The Lord revealed to me that the Church in many areas of the world, specifically in the West, is like this dry and arid place. It has grown cold and lifeless. It has no fuel and no fire of the Holy Spirit. The members of the Church He established Himself are leaving in great numbers and joining the “church of unbelief.” This Church will no longer be able to rely on its institutions. There will be ambiguity in the teaching of its leaders. Her foundational and biblical truths will be questioned and shaken to its core. She will be dry and lifeless in this desert.

Amidst this desolation, God is assuring us that He alone is the Lord and that He will

sustain us. He will be our sufficiency in this time of pruning. The Lord is saying that in this desert, He will make his Church a wonderful oasis. This wounded Church, tried in the furnace of suffering and tribulation, will eventually move in the fire and power of the Holy Spirit. The members of this remnant Church will be living again in the freedom of His Spirit.

The Lord Who was, Who is and Who is to come (Rev 1:8) will never abandon us. We can be confident in His promise that He will always be with us. The ocean of His mercy is deeper and wider than our desert. The water and blood from His side will

*Jorge Samaniego, MD is a physician and  
Renewal Leader in Hawaii. He is a member  
of the Pentecost Today USA Board*

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### *NAN Members on the Road*

#### *Participation at Second International Conference for Charismatic Communities' Leaders*

**By Sharon Poppleton, City of  
the Lord Community**

The Second International Conference for Charismatic Communities' Leaders, sponsored by CHARIS, took place in Rome October 10-12, 2022. There were over 150 attendees from 31 countries, including 8 American NANCCC members. The focus of the conference was Building Healthy Communities. The talks were interspaced with times for fellowship, worship, and prayer ministry. Teachings and sharings focused on: embracing families and young people; the rights and wrongs of pastoral care; foundational charisms; and Christian unity.

Full transcripts of the talks are available on the CHARIS website: (<http://www.charis.international/en/second-conference-charismatic-communities/>).

Following are some quotes and highlights from many of the speakers.







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### Quotes and Highlights from the Second International Conference for Charismatic Communities' Leaders

*"[My community] is a perfectly imperfect community. I hope you are living in the best Christian community in the world, too – the one you are called to."*

*"The aged deserve gratitude and esteem for their past contributions. They are living signs of the goodness of God. Blessed are those who honor the aged."*

**Tony Laureys, Jerusalem Community,  
Sword of the Spirit, Belgium**



*"Your community is how the Lord chooses to press into the need and lack that surround you. Your community is redemption for the families and young people you encounter."*

**Tod Densmore, Alleluia  
Community, Augusta, Georgia**

*In my women's group, we pray for each other and each of our children. We care for each other in every way. That is how we bond."*

**Veronica Ndoodhe - Emmaus  
Community, Uganda**



*"What are the best practices from 55 years of Charismatic Renewal? We can look at these and apply them to how to care for people."*

**Fred Mawanda, Holy Trinity  
Community, Uganda and a Board Member of  
CHARIS**

*"When people are looking for a quick answer for 'Why Ecumenism?', I simply state: There is a spiritual battle going on and the troops need to be talking with one another"*

**Peter Poppleton, City of the Lord, Phoenix,  
AZ, and the Moderator of NANCCC**



*"A mentor believes in others and raises them up. A pastor let those in his care make mistakes. He does not dictate."*

**Shayne Bennett, Brisbane  
Emmanuel Community, Australia, and a  
Board Member of CHARIS**





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### *Quotes and Highlights from the Second International Conference for Charismatic Communities' Leaders (Cont'd)*

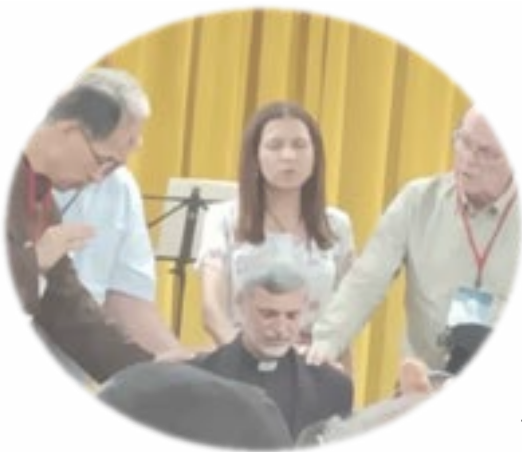
*"To maintain a truly 'Ecumenical Ethos' it is necessary that the members identify themselves truly with their own ecclesial background. .... Ecumenical communities will cease being ecumenical if they give in to confessional neutrality."*

**Deacon Johannes Fichtenbauer, Vienna, Austria, President of the European Network of Communities, and a Board Member of CHARIS**



*"We are tempted to think that being faithful to the charism is to do the same thing over and over. It is necessary to risk new ways."*

**Ruggero Ganon, Associazione Via Pacis, Riva del Garda, Italy**



*"Individual communities and movements will focus on certain elements more than others and will find them expressed in unique ways. This ...brings a richness and allows learning from each other in seeing the richness that the Spirit provides."*

**Jean Barbara Sword of the Spirit, Lebanon, President of Sword of the Spirit International, and a Board Member of CHARIS**



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### *City of the Lord Visits Brothers and Sisters in Bari, Italy*

**By Sharon Poppleton, City of the Lord  
Community**

Six members of City of the Lord Community visited Jesus Community in Bari, Italy this past October 14th-16th. The Community's Inner Healing team has been working for several years to help Jesus Community form a similar ministry. Formation training was interrupted due to the Covid pandemic, but prior to that, there had been four trips to Bari by various members. Each time, all were honored and blessed by the warm hospitality and amazing home-cooked Italian food of Jesus Community members. The community was founded by Mateo and Giovanna Calisi.



**Left to right: Peter and Sharon Poppleton,  
Team members Father Marty Negy, Mary  
and John Shepanski by, and Debra Bense**





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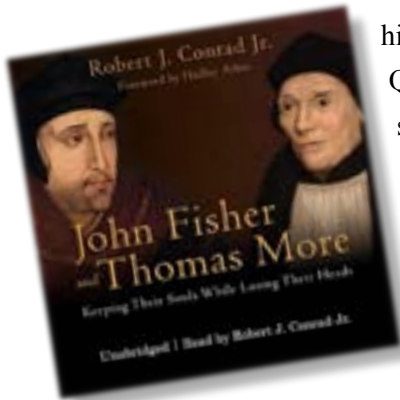
### Great Reads in the Communities

By Bill Koller, Ciry of the Lord

#### ***John Fisher and Thomas More: Keeping Their Souls While Loosing Their Heads***

by Robert J. Conrad, Jr.

As I read (and reread) this short book, I ask myself, “Would I risk love for the truth, or would I play it safe?” Written by trial judge Robert J. Conrad, this publication from 2021 takes a fresh look at the familiar story of King Henry VIII and his bid for a divorce from Queen Catherine of Aragon so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. It looks into all the ramifications of this event, delving into the opposition of Cardinal John Fisher and King Henry’s former Lord Chancellor, Sir



Thomas More, resulting in their martyrdom. The reader also gets to know another player, their friend Father Erasmus.

The focus is on Fisher and More: their characters, their consciences formed by the Word of God and the Church, their use of silence, and

their lack of malice towards the King and his actions. But the driver of the story is King Henry himself with his lust to divorce Catherine of Aragon, his lust for Anne Boleyn, and later, his use of law to essentially “divorce” himself and England from the Catholic Church. Essentially, he “cancels” Fisher and More. He arrests them, and brings them to trial, where the requirements of the law are promptly forgotten with perjured testimony and twisting of words. They are convicted of treason and sentenced to death in short order. They are martyrs for the faith.

I am always moved by Fisher and More’s stance for the Truth. In fact, More is my favorite Catholic saint. I try to watch *A Man for All Seasons* (the movie about this period in More’s life) on Fisher and

*“I have no more to say but only desire Almighty God to forgive them that have thus condemned me, for I think they know not what they have done.” – John Fisher to his judges and jury*

***“Is that all? Then let us go to dinner and be merry and thank God for all that we have still remaining and look better to it than we did to the rest before.” – John Fisher upon hearing that his house had been broken into and things stolen.***

More’s Feast Day (June 22) and again on the actual date of





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### Great Reads in the Communities (Cont'd)

More's execution (July 6).

Yet, for me, the most significant person in

***"To think my greatest enemies are my best friends, for the brothers of Joseph could never have done him so much good with their love and favor as they did with their malice and hatred." -- Thomas More on his love for his enemies***

Conrad's book is the Dutch theologian and humanist Erasmus, a friend of both Fisher and More. Erasmus articulates why he cannot be a martyr: "Mine was never the spirit to risk my life

for the truth. Not everyone has the strength needed for martyrdom. I fear that, if strife were to break out, I shall behave like Peter. When popes and emperors make the right decision I follow, which is godly, if they decide wrongly, I tolerate them, which is safe."

Thus, Conrad forces all of us to confront our own ideas and feelings about blood martyrdom and effectively to choose between Fisher and More on the one side and Erasmus on the other. Do we risk our (costly) love for the truth or do we play it safe? Do we tolerate

that which we know to be wrong, or do we take a stand and fight even if our lives may be required of us?

I am reminded of a statement G.K. Chesterton made on More in 1929: "More is important today, but he is not as important now as he will be a hundred years from today." I encourage all to read this book. Pray. Decide. 2029 is fast approaching.



***"I pray you and my children and your household be merry in God." -- Thomas More to his wife Alice after finding out his house had partially burned and all his barns were destroyed***

***"This is my marriage day. It behooves us therefore to dress for the solemnity of that marriage." -- John Fisher to his servant on the day of his martyrdom, June 22, 1535***