

North American Network of Charismatic Covenant Communities launched on February 27th 2020

Brothers and Sisters, during the celebration of Pentecost last year the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships (the Fraternity), of which we were a founding member, and the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (a worldwide Charismatic Renewal support organization) were replaced by a new body called *Catholic Charismatic Renewal International* or simply CHARIS. The vision that the Holy Father has for CHARIS is that this new support organization bring together all expressions of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to further the grace of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Christian Community of God's Delight has registered with CHARIS and fully supports the mission of CHARIS.

One of the many blessings of having been associated with the Fraternity since its founding was the close personal relationships that developed among the leaders of the member communities especially those in North America. The leaders of the North American communities of the Fraternity met every year internationally or domestically to pray, discern, support one another and ultimately grow in love and trust with one another as leaders. As these relationships flourished we were able to help one another with our roles in leading Covenant Communities in North America. We discovered that the Holy Spirit would often speak a similar message to different communities and that many of us had very similar challenges and could share lessons learned.

So, while fully committed to the mission of CHARIS the leaders of the North American Covenant Communities have come together to create a new entity that will allow the comradery of the Fraternity to continue. We have partnered with CHARIS leadership in setting up this new entity so that we are fully aligned with CHARIS and do not do anything that would hinder or limit our individual and collective response to the mission of CHARIS.

Over the last year a draft document was sourced, reviewed, edited and shared with various leaders of North American communities as the entity took shape. Then, on February 27th leaders from many of these communities came together, after discerning with their respective leadership teams, to launch the entity. We decided to call it the ***North American Network of Charismatic Covenant Communities*** or North American Network for short (Network). We envision this Network will be similar to networks of communities in other regions such as the European Network of Communities (or ENC).

The founding members of the North American Network are:

- Alleluia Community (Augusta)
- Christian Community of God's Delight (Dallas)
- City of the Lord Community (Phoenix and California)
- Comunidad A.M.A Association (Brownsville)
- Community of Joy of the Spirit (Los Angeles)
- Glory to God Community (Topeka)
- Love One Another Community (Calgary)
- Mother of God Community (Gaithersburg)
- New Creation Community (Virginia Beach)
- Presentation Ministries (Cincinnati)

Some of these communities you will recognize as long time members of the Fraternity: Alleluia, City of the Lord, Glory to God, Mother of God, and New Creation. Other communities are new but have been developing a relationship with one or more of the Fraternity communities and expressed an interest in being part of the Network from the start. The Community of God's Love in Steubenville asked for more time to decide on joining and the Network will be open to new communities as they go through an understanding and discernment process.

Another important point to explain is how the Network is able to welcome ecumenical communities whereas the Fraternity was only able to admit Catholic communities. Since the Fraternity was an organization with members recognized by the Catholic Church it could only permit Catholic Communities, or the Catholic fellowships of ecumenical communities, to join. CHARIS, however, does not have members, only registered entities so CHARIS and the Network can welcome ecumenical Charismatic Communities to participate. Therefore Alleluia, for example, was able to join the Network as a community rather than just the Alleluia's Catholic Fellowship. The Network expects other ecumenical charismatic communities to join which was not possible as a Fraternity.

At the kickoff meeting of the Network, Peter Poppleton was elected as the moderator. Peter agreed to serve a three year term of helping to bring the group together and fully launch the Network.

Before the meeting a document was drafted that covered the principles for relating and logistics regarding organization and participation. This document was unanimously approved by those in attendance and will serve as the initial framework for the Network.

I think the best way to understand what the Network hopes to accomplish is to review the common priorities that we agreed to:

- **Build relationships** among Network leaders based on our mutual love and trust (Phil 2:1-4). Our experience is that we inspire and need one another.
- **Help one another in common challenges**, growing in spiritual formation, personal and communal holiness (Isaiah 11:2-4, 2 Cor 7:1), supporting our youth, raising up new leaders, responding to the Holy Spirit in ministry and use of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7-11, Eph 4:11-12), serving the renewal of the Body of Christ, and more ...).
- Let our **witness** be our love for one another (1 John 3:23) and our covenant life (Mal 2:5, 2 Cor 3:4-6) as a people of God (1 Pet 2:10).
- **Collaborate in mission** (Christian unity and reconciliation, bringing baptism in the Holy Spirit (Act 2:38) to the whole Church, serving the poor and the underserved).

I am very excited about the launching of the North American Network of Charismatic Covenant Communities and expect we will look back for many years at its founding and see the Holy Spirit at work just as we do with the founding of the Catholic Fraternity.

God Bless, David