



New Apostolic Church USA

Remembering 2020 – Written by Apostle John Fendt
May 6, 2020

My dear sisters and brothers,

In the service on April 19th, our District Apostle presented us with a question – in the future, when the pandemic is behind us, how will we remember the year 2020? Before we dig into that question, let us try to imagine what the feelings of the disciples were during Holy Week. They experienced the swing from hosannas on Palm Sunday to the cries of “Crucify Him!” on Good Friday. They saw their Master and friend give Himself over to the earthly authorities, saw Him being judged and falsely accused, beaten, humiliated, and finally nailed to the cross like a common criminal. At that point, they may very well have thought, “this is truly the worst year of my life, one from which I will never recover.” Of course, the sentiment changed completely on Easter Sunday. And that was not the end of the change; it was just the beginning. On Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit made His presence very evident, a new normal began for the disciples.

Now, let us consider how we will remember 2020. One might define it as the worst year in his or her life, remembering the many difficulties, challenges, and sorrows connected with the pandemic. One might say, “it was a wasted year.” However, the freedom that we have in Christ makes it possible for us to make a choice. We can choose to focus on the opportunity for spiritual growth that these days offer, the opportunity to establish “new normal” in our life. We can choose to make 2020 the year in which we:

- Learned how to utilize the power the Holy Spirit
 - The gift of the Holy Spirit which dwells in our souls, and
 - God, the Holy Spirit, who accompanies us throughout life
- Deepened the relationship with our family, learning together about the wonder of depending on Jesus Christ and being secure in God’s hand
- Learned to pray in a manner that has more depth and substance than ever before
- Grew in the appreciation of true spiritual fellowship with our sisters and brothers in faith
- Developed a profound hunger to continuously share in communion with Christ and the congregation in Holy Communion.

The Spring 2020 Vision newsletter contains articles that can serve as the foundation for meditation on and discussion of some of the topics mentioned above. Here, I would like to address one topic in particular, forgiveness and Holy Communion. More than ever before, we eagerly await the next opportunity to share in communion with Christ. Forgiveness is necessary if one is to partake worthily of Holy Communion. As explained in the Vision article, certain prerequisites must be fulfilled if one’s sins are to be forgiven. As the Chief Apostle mentioned in the Easter service, when these prerequisites are fulfilled, the Lord can forgive our sins at any time. In addition, there is an article in the Spring Vision, providing clarification on the importance of hearing the absolution in the divine service.



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Let us consider, shall I wait until the week before the next divine service where Holy Communion will be served to confess my sins in prayer, forgive my neighbor, seek reconciliation, and repent? Think about a situation where a relationship has been marred by some inappropriate words or actions. Reconciliation is about *restoring relationships*, not simply saying to the other person, "I forgive you." If the offense still stirs up negative feelings towards the other person even after we have said these words, then there is still work to be done. There is peace in knowing that the Lord will strengthen us in this work, even during the time when we cannot come into His house and partake of Holy Communion. This effort will help us to come to the Lord's Table with hearts that are truly prepared to experience the fullness of communion with Christ.