



### **Patriarchs Mission and Development Offering**

I look at the data that you submit every month. I look at the past and the trends. However, they do not determine my outlook on the future, since I am driven not by circumstances but by vision, dreams, and faith in God.

Recently, I had a great conversation with a dear friend and fellow worker in the harvest field. It was clear, during the entire conversation, that both of us shared a passion for reaching souls with the knowledge of Christ Jesus. And, both of us were aware that this task is only possible with the grace of the Holy Spirit received individually and in the life of the Church. Both of us are convinced that the sacramental life of the Church is not optional since it is the means of grace and the hope of glory.

During the conversation, he reminded me that our communion has a very interesting history. It has faced some very difficult trials. I was reminded that we are a small communion, and, generally, an aging communion. I was reminded that we have some challenges as we attempt to pass the faith on to the next generation. It was a good conversation because I was challenged by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, through our Bishops, has challenged us, this small community, to look at evangelism. We are not ignoring the sacramental/liturgical, charismatic, or catholic aspects of our communion, but for a moment focusing on the part of who we are and what the Holy Spirit wants to tell us.

This is important. I have for at least 20 years now carried a burden of reaching and empowering the next generation. It is for this reason that I resist things that are trendy and reject that paradigm that puts us into categories like boomer, lost, X, and millennial. I understand the culture and our need to utilize or “baptize,” if you will, the culture to advance the Gospel and to do discipleship. We need to be aware of social media, technology, and education and the impact it has had on each of us. However, the faith and practices of the ancient and historic church must never be dictated or interpreted by the modern cultural norms. Further, we must be constantly convinced that the Gospel is not dated, and every generation needs but one thing and is a living encounter with and participation in the life of Jesus who is the Lord and Christ of all creation. We preach Christ crucified!

The CEC is now tasked with how to pass on what we have been given to the next generation. I recently stepped down as the Senior Pastor of the Church of the Intercessor. It is still my Cathedral, but a Senior Pastor has taken my past place, and I have very little to do with the day to day life of the Cathedral. A new generation has been raised up, and if I have any success, it will be that which is lived out in my successors. There is the next generation. They are already committed to another generation of people.

This transition in my life now enables me to focus on both the national church and the international church in a more focused and intentional way. As part of this, my commission from the Lord, and I believe our corporate commission is to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28, as well as, passing on the vision birthed by the Holy Spirit into a small band of disciples in San Clemente, California, to the next generation.



God has also given us thousands of poor believers around the world. They look to the Church in the United States and the office of the Patriarch, and it gives them hope. We need to look to them to increase our faith and give us hope. We are connected and interdependent.

So, what does this have to do with a convocation? Why would I ask you to save money, take vacation time, and spend a week in New York?

I don't do things for the sake of doing them. I don't believe that things like convocations are locked in the realm of "sacred." I don't like going to conferences or events for the sake of going to them. If they are not important, transformational, and above all, giving glory to Christ Jesus, I am not interested.

What I do believe is that being a small and aging church is nothing to be ashamed of. What we need to know is that the vision given to us is from God. The CEC is an anointed ministry, and I don't believe the anointing has been lifted from us. We are called to be faithful to that vision.

It is easy to get discouraged. It is the reason why every leader in the Scriptures is warned not to get discouraged or fearful. It is why every leader in Scripture is called not to look at what the world considers success, but on the Lord God who has called us. We are called to take courage and not sway to the right or to the left but to keep our eyes on the author and perfecter of faith.

I don't know the future of the CEC. That is in the hands of the next generation. But I do need to gather with my brothers and sisters in faith and encourage one another, while at the same time hearing, through them, the voice of the Lord.

As clergy, we have vowed ourselves to the life of the Charismatic Episcopal Church and our Bishops. We have vowed ourselves together in ministry in good times and in bad. This together aspect is very important, especially in the difficult times because it is through each other that we can transmit either encouragement or discouragement.

So, on July 7-10, 2020, I am inviting you in the Name of Jesus to the greatest city in the world - New York - for a convocation of the clergy to hear from the Lord Holy Spirit. I know it will not be wasted time. We can come expecting God to work with us and in us. And, we can come knowing we will leave refreshed and renewed. Set the date in your calendar. Get rid of your excuses. Put aside your agenda. Put it in your thought life and agree that you will be present with your brothers and sisters.

Have a great summer. I pray for you always.

Under His mercy,

+Craig, Patriarch