



HOLY FATHER ADDRESSES FAMILY MARCH

More Than 2 Million Participate

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 1, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).

Benedict XVI greeted more than 2 million participants in a pro-family march in Madrid, urging them to be witnesses "of the beauty of human love."

The Pope said this Sunday before praying the Angelus together with those gathered in St. Peter's Square. His words could be heard via video link by those who congregated in the Plaza de Colon in Madrid to promote the Christian family.

The event in Madrid was organized by the archdiocese with the support of ecclesial movements as well as pro-life and pro-family organizations.

Addressing the participants in Spanish, the Holy Father said: "I invite all Christian families to experience the loving presence of the Lord in their lives. I encourage them, inspired by love of Christ for all mankind, to give witness before the world of the beauty of human love, marriage and family."

"This, founded in the indissoluble union between a man and a woman, constitutes the privileged environment in which human life is welcomed and protected, from its beginning until its natural end."

The Pontiff underlined the "right and fundamental obligation" of parents "to educate their children, in the faith and in the values that dignify human existence."

"It is worth it to work for the family and marriage," continued Benedict XVI, "because it is worth it to work for the human being, the most valuable being created by God."

Cardinal Antonio Ruoco, archbishop of Madrid, said to the crowds that the family is "objectively the most serious problem that European societies face today."

He added that "the idea of marriage and family is radically relativized," and that lifestyles "opposed to the value of the indissoluble love between a man and a woman" are being promoted among the youth.

Rights the family is recognized as the "natural and fundamental nucleus of society," and that it should be protected by society and the state.

Cardinal Ruoco added, "A Christian response to this crucial question is urgent and crucial for our future, that of Spain, of Europe and of all of humankind."

COUNSELS

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

WORD: Is. 6:1-6; Ps. 72:1-2,8 10-13;
Eph. 3:2-3;5-6; Mat. 2:1-12

ORDER: *"Rise up in splendor your light has come"*

Is. 60: 1

THEME: The glory of the Father shines upon those who are good stewards of His grace.

REFLECTION: The oldest Christmas feast celebrated on January 6th is Epiphany. It means "manifestation"; "revelation" It is the major feast of the season by eastern Christian Churches.



Probably it began in those churches in the Middle East strongly influenced by the Gospel of John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and made

his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory of the Father's only Son full of grace and truth".

The date of the Feast of the Epiphany proved that the Magi reached Bethlehem thirteen days after the Nativity. Historians see the feast originating from early Jewish-Christian celebrations of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated God's glory in covenant, light

□ page 4

Promise of the Week

"For the riches of the sea shall be emptied out to you and the wealth of nations shall be brought to you" Is. 60: 5b

Make Straight the way of the Lord

Every year, as we draw closer to Christmas, we hear this same invitation. God, who in every age has shown His burning desire to be with His children, now makes *"His dwelling among us"* (Jn 1:14). Today too He stands at our doorstep and knocks because He wants to come in and "dine" with us (Rev 3:20).

We ourselves often long to meet Him, to have Him as our companion on life's journey, and to be filled with His light. For Him to enter our lives, we first need to remove the obstacles in His path. It is no longer a matter of clearing the roads, but of opening our hearts to Him.

Jesus himself identified some of the barriers that close our hearts: *"theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly"* (Mk 7:21-22). At times these barriers may be put up by grudges against our brothers and sisters, prejudice against people of other races, indifference to the needs of our brothers and sisters, or a lack of attentiveness and love in our families.

Faced with so many obstacles that impede our encounter with God, once again we are reminded by John the Baptist recollection of the joyful cry of the Prophet Isaiah: *"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert. Make straight the way of the Lord."* (Jn 1:23)

How can we do something practical to prepare the way of the Lord? By asking His forgiveness each time we realize we have put up a barrier that obstructs our communion with Him. With this sincere act of humility and truth, we stand before God as we are, acknowledging our fragility, our mistakes and our sins.

With this act of trust, we recognize His fatherly love, which is *"merciful ... and abounding in kindness"* (Ps 103:8). With this act we tell God we want to improve and start over a new beginning. In the evening, or before going to sleep, is perhaps the best time to stop and take stock of the day just gone by, and ask for forgiveness.

We can also be more aware and heartfelt in our expression of contrition when we pray for forgiveness as a community such as at the beginning of the celebration of the Eucharist or during other moments of worship together.

Then individual confession or reconciliation, the sacrament of God's

Begotten By God

The life of a child begins upon conception. It is at this point that the father begets the child. At birth, the child bears the image of the mother and the father.

The spiritual birth follows the same pattern as a physical birth. The Holy Spirit dwells within our body (the temple or womb) until we are changed or born again through Jesus Christ. We are begotten into this living hope that Jesus Christ will come and save us. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* 1Pt 1:3 .

Our spiritual birth began when God invited us to share in his plan of salvation through our BLD community. Our obedience to God initiated the call for discipleship. Luke 8:15 states, *"But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop"*. BLD as- a fertile ground allowed us to grow in the love of Christ, a stage for servanthood and ministry for discipleship. Through the Life in the Spirit Seminar, we received the Holy Spirit, and gained sonship with Christ and God the Father. *"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the father loves the one begotten by him"*. 1John 5:1

The community's vision, mission and charism, encourage us to be dependent on Jesus Christ as Our Lord and Savior. It means unity of mind, heart and spirit with other Christians through obedience to God the father and at the direction of the Holy Spirit. However, our arrogance, hatred, disobedience, act of rebellion, unforgiving attitude, lack of trust, pride and the weakness to resist worldly vanities obstructs the prompting of the Holy Spirit to testify that we are "begotten by God". Let us always remember John 15:5 *"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me, you can do nothing"*.

Let us joyously welcome 2008 as the year of renewal and recommitment to the covenant of communion we pledged for. Let us look into our hearts in relation to our spiritual

Fr. Paul Speaks:

During this relatively brief liturgical season of the year we are celebrating the Incarnation, the reality of God entering our human nature and becoming one of us. In the first epistle of St. John 3, 7-10 he teaches that the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil. The Incarnation is the human revelation of the Son of God who came visibly to destroy sin. The Son of God became flesh, because he could not suffer and redeem us in his divine nature alone. He used the instrument of His humanity to destroy the power of the devil and reveal his deceptive works. The destruction of the devil's cunning deceptions is only part of the work of Jesus. He came not only to destroy, a negative, but also to give us new life, a positive. He came so we could be born again into the new life of God himself..

If we are begotten by God John assures us that cannot sin anymore. Is this the reality? We do sin, maybe not grievously, but sin nonetheless. That is another one of those mysteries, called by St. Paul, the mystery of iniquity. When we are born again, whether we think of our experience of Baptism or of our personal commitment of faith, we do realize that we have the capacity of leading a perfect life. In other words there is nothing lacking in the gift given to us by God. We just do not open up to the potentiality of that gift. We struggle to be open to the power that has been given to us to become perfect. Sin is deeper than breaking a commandment, a negative. It is failing to live under the power of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, a positive.

The more we let go and submit to the power of the Holy Spirit (which is actually the baptism of the Holy Spirit) the better able we are to live the ideal that has been presented to us in the gospel of Christ. This gradual submission becomes more and more evident, first in our prayer life. Our prayer becomes more passive, more contemplative. Then our decision making becomes more directed by the influence of the Holy Spirit rather than through the difficult process of reflection and analysis. We find it easier to forgive and even to love our enemies. Are we still struggling to be holy by our own power or can we finally make a total surrender to Jesus of our life to experience the fullness of the freedom won for us by Our Lord?

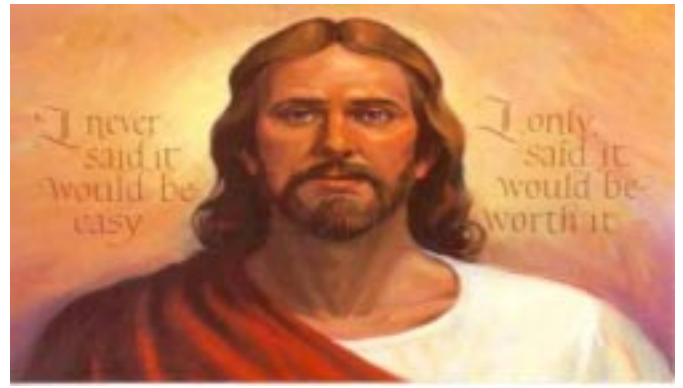
MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION: Nursing Home Visit every 2nd Sat. of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ – Volunteers needed contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

MEDICAL MISSION: Feb. 18-22 - Infanta, Quezon - Medical & Non-medical volunteers needed. Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

SINGLES: There will be an Archdiocesan Outreach Service on January 12, 2008 (Sat). Details to follow. Please contact Eric Cruz (jcruzer@gmail.com) and Lee Ann Aguila (laguila@gmail.com)

WORD: Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.). Email to word@bldnewark.com



from page 2 col. 1 Make Straight...

forgiveness, can also be of enormous help. It is an encounter with the Lord when we can hand over to him all the mistakes we have made. We leave confession with a sense of our salvation, of being made new, and we experience the joy that comes from discovering that we are truly children of God.

It is God Himself who, through his forgiveness, removes every obstacle, who “makes straight the way” and establishes once more a bond of love with each one of us.

from page 2 column 2...Begotten...

growth. God's will is for us to change our ways to Christ's ways, grow in God's love and develop into righteous children of God, nourished and sustained by His divine Word. Let us continue to strain forward to be born again as we aspire to become the fruitful community “begotten by God” for His glory through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Counsels from page 1

and water; also called the Feast of the Holy Kings or Three King's Day.

In John's gospel this same Jewish feast often becomes the setting for the question: Who is Jesus Christ? (cf John 7-10) The gospel affirms, as does this feast, He is God's Divine Son.

The arrival of the Magi caused a great stir in Jerusalem. King Herod and his priests were saddened. by the news; although the priests showed the Magi the way, they would not go that way themselves.

"Was it really a star which they had seen in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was" (Matthew 2:2,9). No fixed star could have so moved before the Magi as to lead them to six miles southward to Bethlehem. Only a miraculous phenomenon could have been the Star of Bethlehem. There must have been some special Divine revelation whereby they knew that "his star" meant the birth of a king. The gift of gold and frankincense reflect the honor given to a king but myrrh a symbol of bitterness indicated something special will be done by this child.

The story of the Magi, from Matthew's gospel, celebrates the call of God to all peoples to share in the grace of Jesus Christ. He gave power to become children of God." (John 1, 12). As "the true light, which enlightens everyone " come into the world, Jesus came not only that we might see his glory but also that we might share in it. *"From his fullness we have all received, grace for grace."* (John 1,16)

Like the three kings, most of us followed the Star- Jesus Christ who shines eternally in our lives and in our hearts. There was a Divine revelation in each of us through this community and in our personal lives. We believe that Jesus Christ brightens the darkened world. We can help radiate the light of Jesus by constantly renewing our lives, focusing on HIM, determined to let His light shine through the BLD communities and parishes by helping each other grow deeper in faith each day.

We can provide our treasures to the community through our unselfish service and share with those we encounter our pastoral gifts and spirituality, to nurture them patiently so that they may also be witnesses

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TEACHINGS

- 1/04 Fri **ME30** - Basics of Prayer
- 1/05 Sat **LSS28** - Gifts of the Holy Spirit
LSS29/LSS30 - Christian Parenting 1
- 1/18 Fri **Youth/John6/Mk10** - Teachings
Singles - Basic Bible Seminar
- 1/19 Sat **LSS1-LSS24** - Coaches Development
LSS29 - New Creation Realities/ Growth in Prayer
- 1/25 Fri **Golden Years** - Golden Years Teaching
Intercessory Track Class - Intercessory
Formation Teaching
Service Track Class- Service Formation Teaching
Singles-Theology of the Body

LORD'S PROVISIONS:

Weekly Collection Report for the Week
ending December 28, 2007 Tithes, Love
Offering, Mission and Fast for the
Poor

\$ 2,502.00

Thank you for your continued generosity.

to others and all might share in Jesus' glory!

"Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick clouds covers the earth, and think clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the LORD shines, and over you appears His Glory".(Is, 60:1-2). As a community we were given stewardship of God's Grace, that through out talent, time and treasure we may help rebuild churches, like new Jerusalem. Our discipleship calls for a continued sacrifice to see that others may benefit from God's Grace and His Light shall be radiant in darkness at all times.

Celebrate God's Glory! Let us offer sincerely and wholeheartedly our gifts!" Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you; the wealth of nations shall be brought to you.: (Is. 60:5b).

DIRECTION:

Open your treasures, offer your gifts to those we serve.



COVENANT NEWS

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Pope: Foggy World Needs Church's Light

Says Epiphany a Feast of God's Fidelity

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 7, 2008 (Zenit.org) - The Church completes its mission when it reflects the light of Christ to nations enveloped in a "dense fog," says Benedict XVI.

The Pope affirmed this Sunday during his homily at a Mass on the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, held in St. Peter's Basilica. He said the feast is when the Church celebrates "Christ, light of the world, and his 'manifestation' to all people." The Pontiff considered the history of God's fidelity to humanity and the covenants God made with his people. "The evangelical episode we commemorate at Epiphany — the coming of the Magi to the Baby Jesus at Bethlehem — draws us back to the origins of the history of the people of God," he said, noting "a first 'covenant' established by God with Noah after the flood a universal covenant that concerns all humanity."

"With the calling of Abraham," Benedict XVI continued, "began God's great plan to make humanity a family, through his alliance with a new people, chosen by him to be a blessing among all mankind. This divine plan is still under way and has its culminating moment in the mystery of Christ, [...] but it needs to be accepted by human history, which always remains a history of faithfulness on God's part and, unfortunately, also one of unfaithfulness by we humans. "The Pope acknowledged that "the Church herself, depository of the blessing, is holy and made up of sinners.

The Pontiff explained how Christ, "in the fullness of time," came to fulfill the covenant: "He himself, true God and true man, is the sacrament of God's faithfulness to his plan for the salvation of us all." He continued: "The coming of the Magi from the East to Bethlehem to adore the newborn Messiah is the sign of the manifestation of the universal king to all peoples, and to all men and women who seek the truth. "The faithful and tenacious love of God, whose covenant never fails from generation to generation [...] represents the hope of history. (continue on page 4) 

COUNSELS

Serve One Another with Gentleness & Humility

Word: Is 42:1-4, 6-7; Ps 29:1-4, 9-10; Acts 10:34-38; Mt 3:13-17


Theme: The glory of the Father shines upon those who are meek of heart.

Order: *"Give to the Lord glory and praise; Give to the Lord the glory due his name."* (Ps. 29:1b-2a)

Reflection:

The first reading is a prophecy of the coming of the servant of God, who has the Spirit of God, is meek, humble and merciful. A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench. (Is 42:3) A light to the nations, he shall open the eyes of the blind, bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness. (Is 42:7)

From the second reading we learn that God shows no partiality and that any man who fears God and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. Committed, covenanted and regular members of the BLD community are the same in the eyes of God. These designations are not hierarchical but structural for the purpose of organizing and maintaining order within the community. What matters most is that each is humble and meek when performing the assigned task. The glory of the Father shines upon those who are meek of heart. *"Humility drives away Satan and keeps the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit safe within us."* (St. Francis de Sales)

The scene and the conversation of Jesus and John in the Gospel show us two individuals completely and humbly obeying the will of the Father. (continue on page 4) 

God's Promise for the Week

"...to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness." (Is 42:7)



How can one say “God is Love”? Well, the catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that God created us because of His great love for us. Genesis 1:26 tells us how God created man, “*Let us make man in our image,*

after our likeness.” It is very clear how God loves every one of us, wanting to share His own life, calling us to know, love and serve Him.

Being created in God’s image and likeness means it is our nature to love and be loved. 1 John 4:7 says, “*let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.*” This tells us that the nature of God is “love”. It also tells us that to say we know God is to say we are able to love. When we live a life of love we proclaim who God is and are putting flesh in a God we don’t see. We also help others who don’t know God, meet and experience Him – we proclaim who God is – LOVE! 1 John 4:2 reminds us of this, “*This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God*”. Jesus Christ en-fleshed the divine in His person becoming one like us except sin. As God’s children, the measure whether we live a life as such is our ability to love! The more we share love, the more we testify to the nature of God and to His presence in our lives. One who loves shows that one is a child of God and knows God, for God’s very being is love. One without love is without God. The revelation of the nature of God’s love is found in the free gift of His Son to us. The love we have for one another must be of the same sort: authentic and merciful. This unique Christian love is our proof that we know God and can “see” the invisible God. Our love is grounded in the confession of Jesus as the Son of God and the example of God’s love for us. Christian love is not abstract but lived in the concrete manner of love for one another. As members of this blessed community, I invite you all to ask this question each time we see each other, “**Have you loved more than the last time we met?**” Avoid identifying each other as of the ME, SE, SPE that you belong to. Remember our encounters called us all to know and experience God. We are called to strive a life of God; we should become who we are – LOVE - God’s nature, image and likeness!

May the blessing and favor of the Lord be upon those who are celebrating their birthdays and wedding anniversaries this week.



Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Throughout the ages, Christians have celebrated Christmas as a season, including the twelve days between Christmas and the Epiphany as one long Christmas “day”. The season of Christmas ends with our celebration of the Lord’s baptism.

Recounted in our liturgy through the proclamation of the gospel of St. Mark, chapter 1, verses 1-11, the baptism of the Lord is “on His part the acceptance and inauguration of His mission as God’s suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners He is already **‘the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’**” (CCC 536)

What is revealed as only a sign of the Lord’s coming death in John’s ‘baptism of repentance’ is not merely a sign for the new Christian who rises from the waters of the sacramental font. For each of the baptized, the immersion in, or pouring of, water and the invocation of the Trinity is a real sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus, who in His own baptism anticipates His death and resurrection. The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with Him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father’s beloved son in the Son and **‘walk in newness of life.’** (Rom 6:4)” (CCC 537).

“Jesus’ public life begins with His baptism by John in the Jordan. (Lk 3:23; Acts 1:22). The Baptist hesitates, but Jesus insists and receives baptism. Then the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, comes upon Jesus and a voice from heaven proclaims, “This is my beloved Son.” (Mt 3:13-17) This is the manifestation (“*Epiphany*”) of Jesus as Messiah of Israel and Son of God.” (CCC 535)

“Everything that happened to Christ lets us know that, after the bath of water, the Holy Spirit swoops down upon us from high heaven and that, adopted by the Father’s voice, we become sons of God.” (CCC 537)

The greatest of gifts is ours in baptism: God’s very own life and love... a life to overcome the death which is our inheritance from Adam’s sin, and a love to overpower and win us away from love of self to love of God for His own sake and our neighbors’ for His glory.



"They all ate and were satisfied." (Mk 6:42)

Hunger is arguably the most horrible condition that man can experience. We need food & water to survive and if this physical need is not

satisfied we will die. But we also experience a different kind of hunger and we know that no matter what we do nothing of this world can satisfy that hunger, only Jesus can. It is no coincidence then that in the Celebration of the Eucharist He calls us to partake of His Body & Blood or that He is called *"the Bread of Life"* and *"the Living Water"*.

Last Tuesday's gospel is about the miracle of "the multiplication of the loaves & fishes" (Mk 6:34-44). It is interesting to note that this is the only miracle that is recorded in all four gospels. Our Lord must be trying to emphasize a very important point, to make sure we get it. Although the main message of this miracle is that Jesus alone can satisfy our hunger there might also be another message that we can get out of this that could be equally important.

Though He can, our Lord did not have the loaves & fishes miraculously appear out of thin air. Instead, He asked His apostles to surrender what little food they had and when they did, He used that to perform His miracle. His apostles knowing that whatever they had was not enough, even for them, placed their trust in Jesus instead and surrendered everything to Him. Therein lies the lesson for us all.

By asking the apostles to surrender everything they had, Jesus is calling them, and calling us, to be participants in this miracle as well. When He told His apostles to *"give them some food yourselves"* (Mk 6:37) what He's saying is that we can also feed the hungry among us no matter how little we have if we entrust everything to Him.

How often have we been called to surrender what little we have so the Lord can perform His miracle again, in our Church, in our own parish, or even in our own BLD community, and yet have told ourselves, "I haven't studied the faith enough to be a religious education teacher" or "I'm not good with words when I try to explain my faith, I'll just evangelize through good example" or "I'm too busy at work" or "I don't even earn enough to feed my own family, how can I be expected to give my time to my assigned ministry or to give tithes & participate during Friday Praise & Worship"?

During those times let us try to remember that from what little the apostles had to offer, our Lord was able to feed thousands. Not only was it enough, but after *"they all ate and were satisfied"*, there was still a lot more left over.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every **2nd Sat.** of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passiac, NJ - **Volunteers are needed.** Please contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340.

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WORD

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Abraham & Sarah - A Journey of Love Sight & Sound
May 03, 1pm @ Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA
Payments due on April 4.

Ticket + bus fare: Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00
Child (3-12) \$42.00

For tickets only: Adults \$33.00 Teen (13-18) \$16.00
Child (3-12) \$12.00

Seating arrangements based on date payment is received. For details, please call Frank or Malou Venadas - 973-562-0055 or send email to bobbitski@hotmail.com.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Jan 20 FE #14 Reunion - St. Mary's Auditorium
Feb 01-03 Singles Encounter #3 - BLD-Washington
Feb 08-10 Singles Encounter #2 - BLD-Phoenix
Apr 04-06 Life in the Spirit Seminar #30 - St. Mary's
May 23-25 Marriage Encounter #31 - Please contact:
Norie/Mirian Abes, normir01@aol.com

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Week Ending Jan. 4, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for the Poor

\$3,698

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times, visit www.masstimes.org.

Counsels *(cont. from page 1)*

When Jesus came to John at the Jordan to be baptized, John tried to prevent him, saying: *"I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?"* (Mt 3:14) It didn't make sense to John that the Lord should come to him for baptism. However, Jesus asserted that John must *"Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* (Mt 3:15) *"After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him."* (Mt 3:16-17) The confirmation or authentication that Jesus is the Son of God came when John obeyed.

Humility must come from the heart and not from the lips. During his time, Jesus showed extreme dislike at religious hypocrisy, exterior rites and solemnity, which have no relation to interior morality and justice.

Since the cross is the standard of the leadership of Jesus, it appears that for some, the scale of humility in the community is set much higher for those in governance than for the rest of the members. *"And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for: God opposes the proud but bestows favor on the humble."* (1 Pt 5:5). Let's all remember that humility is not putting down oneself. Humility is childlikeness. *"Whoever makes himself lowly, becoming like this child, is of the greatest importance in that heavenly reign"* (Mt 18:4)

Jesus is the ultimate role model of gentleness and humility. *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will rest for yourselves."* (Mt 11:29) People who are meek and humble of heart will certainly have a less stressful life. Gossips and oppressions are far from these people.

Humility also involves the willingness to confess sin. *"Have mercy on me. O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me."* (Ps 51:3-4) We must take care of any wrong we have committed before we worship God publicly. *"Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift."* (Mt 5:23-24)

In community, humility comes when members recognize that they all need God and only God can meet their needs. Problems, oppression and conflicts are expected and are necessary for the growth of a community. The big challenge for us is: "Who do we trust: our own talents and intelligence, or God? Do we serve like Jesus served... with gentleness and humility?"

Directions:

1. Fear the Lord and act uprightly.
2. Serve one another with gentleness and humility.

TEACHINGS

Jan 18	After Worship	
	Basic Bible Seminar	Singles
	Teaching	Youth, Mark 10, & John 6
Jan 19	St. Mary's 1-6 pm	
	Coaches Development	Community Shares
	New Creation Realities and	LSS 29
	Growth in Prayer	
Jan 25	After Worship	
	Theology of the Body	Singles
	Teaching	Golden Years
	Formation Teaching	Intercessory and Service
Feb 02	St. Mary's 1-6 pm	
	Christian Maturity Program 1	LSS 28
	Christian Parenting 2	LSS 29 & ME 30
	Shepherds Refresher Course	LSS Shepherds
	Excellence in Worship	Worship Leaders
Feb 08	After Worship	
	Four Basic Truths	ME 30

Foggy World Needs Church's Light *(from page 1)*

In this mystery of God's faithfulness, the Church fully accomplishes her mission only when she reflects in herself the light of Christ the Lord and thus helps the people of the world on the road of peace and true progress."

Benedict XVI lamented that, even after the coming of Christ, "Today too there is still much truth in what the prophet said: 'Dense fog envelops nations' and our history. Indeed, it cannot be said that globalization is synonymous with world order. "In this context, he added, "conflicts for economic supremacy and for the monopolization of energy and water resources and raw materials hinder the efforts of those people who, at all levels, are seeking to build a more just and united world."

Benedict XVI called for austerity so as to avoid wasting wealth when so many people suffer in extreme poverty. "Greater hope is needed," the Pope affirmed, "so as to permit the common good of everyone to prevail over the luxury of the few and the poverty of the many. 'This great hope can only be God, [...] not any god, but the God who has a human face.'"

"If there is great hope, it becomes possible to persevere in sobriety," he said. "If true hope is lacking, happiness is sought in inebriation, in superfluity, in excess, in the ruination of oneself and of the world. "Moderation is not then just an ascetic rule, but also a path of salvation for humanity. It is now clear that only by adopting a sober lifestyle, accompanied by a serious commitment to the fair distribution of wealth, will it be possible to establish a just and sustainable order of development. To this end, there is need for men and woman who nourish great hope and possess great courage."

Covenant News is also available on our website at www.bldnewark.com



SINGLES MINISTRY IN ACTION

Last Saturday, January 12, was a very busy day for our singles as our Singles Ministry, again, sponsored the Young Adult Outreach Day, one of the many events organized by the Archdiocese for the month of January. This event was a joint venture between the BLD Singles Community and the Young Adult Council of the Archdiocese of Newark. A total of 45 singles answered God's call to serve His people in 3 different places that highlighted some reflections from the group:

Savannah Sights, Archdiocesan Retreat Center

A group of ten singles served at the Savannah Sights Charitable Foundation, a charity that raises money for children who are blind and have special needs. At the venue, we put together greeting cards that will be used for a fundraising event. We were fortunate enough to meet Savannah (whom the foundation was founded for), a beautiful and energetic 11-year girl, who is blind in one eye, has slight vision in the other and has Asperger's syndrome, a disorder that is sometimes referred to as "high-functioning autism." Despite her family's inevitable struggles, they told us that they are able to overcome them with the power of prayer. It is with the Lord's graces that Savannah is able to live a normal life as much as possible. She shared with us her love of playing with her dolls, watching her favorite cartoons, singing in her school choir and praying with her father and older brother. We are all looking forward to the next time we can spend more quality time with Savannah!

Community Food bank of NJ

I was one of 27 singles who went to the Food Bank in Hillside, NJ. Going into it, I expected that we would be feeding the poor. We ended up actually organizing the food and goods for the poor and for the "working poor" - those who see food and goods as a luxury. I now know that when people are asked to donate perishable foods and goods to local school and parish food drives, there is a lot of work being put into it other than just the donation. We organized the products by category (household products, cans, waters, beverages, etc.). We did our best to disinfect all the products so that they are, in fact, usable for those to whom they will be donated. Although we were only there for two hours, it felt as if the time flew by because there was so much to be organized. I was even slightly disappointed when we were told that our time was up;

(☞ Page 4)

COUNSELS



A Witness for the Lamb of God

WORD: Is 49:3,5,6; Ps 40:2,4,7-10;
1 Cor 1:1-3; Jn 1:29-34

THEME: The glory of the Father shines upon those who witness to Jesus as the Son of God.

ORDER: *"Be my servant through whom I show my glory."* Is 49:3

REFLECTION:

Today's Gospel reminds us that being a disciple of Jesus means that we grow by faith to become witnesses for Him. And witnessing for Christ is an active, lifetime commitment. One cannot be a disciple of Jesus at a distance, any more than one can be a distant lover. To love Christ is to be drawn close to Him, and to know Christ is to inspire others to want to know Him. To continue the mission of Christ is to share the Good News about Him with others. Like John the Baptist, let us use today's Gospel as a personal and community call to become a witness for the Lamb of God.

When John the Baptist pointed Jesus to the disciples, they, in turn, brought others to Him. That is the way faith in Jesus spreads. Those who believe in Jesus lead others to Him by giving witness to Him. Just like the disciples, we should not be shy about speaking of Jesus and our experience of Him to other people. We should not be afraid or ashamed to witness to our faith in Him if we believe that Jesus is truly the Son of God and Savior of the world. We should not keep Him to ourselves, but share Him with others.

(☞ Page 4)

God's Promise for the Week



"I will make you a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." Is 49:6

Speak Lord, Your Servant is listening

On my way to the office one day, I noticed that an elderly woman was struggling to open a door into a building. I had an early conference call and was running late but somehow I was compelled to go out of my way, walk towards her and hold the door open until she was safely through. I realized later that what occurred was a visual way of God speaking to me, giving me an opportunity to follow His will which is "to love one another" and share his love.

God speaks to us in many ways. The question is: how attentive are we with God's promptings? God speaks by way of the daily readings, through spoken prophecies, and mass homilies. Sometimes, it is visual. For example, when we observe a good deed, he is showing us how to behave and conduct ourselves toward our brothers and sisters through others. At times, it is that restless and agitated feeling inside, the gut feeling, through which our Lord speaks to us. We know this because once we have completed what He wants us to do, the agitated feeling goes away. His ways are subtle but by using all our senses, you will hear, see, touch and feel the Lord speaking loud and clear.

In today's secular world where the attitudes are "to take care of number one" and "to be politically correct", the tendency is to behave unlike-Christ. There is a fear of being an outcast and considered different, a rebel. Human attachment to worldly possessions and preoccupation for our own interests prevent a lot of good people to choose and allow obedience to God's will to prevail in their hearts and minds. I, for one, will be first to admit that it is easier to look the other way because it is more convenient and in most times, acceptable.

When I am faced with an uncomfortable situation or dilemma, I have learned to ask myself this question, "What would Christ do?" I pause for a moment and wait for the answer. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, it states, "**No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.**" The trials will always be there every second of the day. But in keeping God in our hearts and allowing Him to drive our life's journey, we will have fewer pitfalls. God will guide us, instruct us and lead us to opportunities to share his love and teach us how to be good servants to His brethren. It is up to us to observe, listen intently, discern and carry out Christ-like behaviors accordingly and live as God wills.

Covenant News is also available on our website at bldnewark.com
Make the Covenant News a part of your covenant life.



God alone heals and forgives

"Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins? Jesus immediately knew in His mind what they were thinking to themselves, so He said, 'Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise, pick up your mat and walk.'" (Mk 2:7-9)

Jesus was moved to heal the paralytic because of the faith that He saw on him and on the four men who carried him. Is our faith as strong as their faith? Sometimes, our faith is weak because we doubt and we are afraid.

God's healing hands are always upon us. Whether it's a physical sickness or a spiritual one, God promised that we have healing in Jesus. No illness is beyond God's power. We may not even realize how many times God has restored our health to fullness. Sometimes, we fail to see or understand many of God's actions and credit others for what is, actually, God's healing and preservation. "**But He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon Him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by His stripes we were healed**". (Is 53:5) Let us be thankful that no matter how many times we offend God, He will always be there waiting for us with open arms.

Whenever we encounter a difficult trial, suffer from physical pain, we must take it as a beautiful opportunity to grow spiritually and become closer to God. Let us never fail to trust in Him. We pray, day and night, for healing, but without believing in the One to Whom we are praying, our words are in vain. On a daily basis, we do believe that God is able to heal us, but sickness frightens us. There is something in our memory, which keeps us from being compassionate and merciful. So deeply rooted that this resentment obstructs us from the good that God has for us. We know that God forgives us, but we find it so hard to forgive others.

Amazingly, we experience God's healing love even with all our shortcomings. Let us be mindful of the price that Jesus paid so that we could enjoy a healthful relationship with our Heavenly Father. We are human and our soul is in need of healing. We need that confidence and hope that comes from the Holy Spirit. We know that He is present now and we beg Him to remove all of our guilt and make us new.

May we surrender to God totally and receive His healing and mercy for He alone can forgive and heal!

.....
"Sing a new song to the Lord, who has done marvelous deeds, whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory." Psalm 98:1



Intercession of the Saints

Fundamentalists often challenge the Catholic practice of asking saints and angels to pray on our behalf. But the Bible directs us to invoke those in heaven and ask them to pray with us. Thus, in Psalm 103 we pray, *"Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word! Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will!"* (Ps 103:20-21) And in the opening verses of Psalms 148 we pray, *"Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his host!"*

Not only do those in heaven pray with us, they also pray for us. In the book of Revelation, John sees that *"the twenty-four elders [the leaders of the people of God in heaven] fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."* (Rv 5:8) Thus, the saints in heaven offer to God the prayers of the saints on earth.

Angels do the same thing: *"[An] angel came and stood at the altar [in heaven] with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God."* (Rv 8:3-4)

Jesus himself warned us not to offend small children because their guardian angels have guaranteed intercessory access to the Father: *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven."* (Mt 18:10)

Because he is the only God-man and the Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus is the only mediator between man and God (1 Tm 2:5), but this in no way means we cannot or should not ask our fellow Christians to pray with us and for us. (1 Tm 2:1-4) In particular, we should ask the intercession of those Christians in heaven, who have already had their sanctification completed, for *"the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects."* (Jas 5:16)

As the following passages show, the early Church Fathers not only clearly recognized the biblical teaching that those in heaven can and do intercede for us, but they also applied this teaching in their own daily prayer life.

Source: <http://www.catholic.com>

Traveling Catholics: For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times, go to www.masstimes.org

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit

Scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ

Volunteers needed.

Contact Persons: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

MEDICAL MISSION

Feb. 18-22, 2008 - Infanta, Quezon

Medical & Non-medical volunteers needed.

Contact Persons: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

SINGLES

Archdiocesan Outreach Service

For schedule, contact Eric Cruz (jcrucer@gmail.com) or

LeeAnn Aguila (laguila@gmail.com)

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.).

Email to word@bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Abraham & Sarah - A Journey of Love Sight & Sound

Saturday, May 3, 2008 at 1 pm

Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA

Payments due on March 28

Ticket + bus fare: Adult \$63, Teen (13-18) \$46

Child (3-12) \$42

Ticket only: Adult \$33, Teen (13-18) \$16

Child (3-12) \$12

Seating Arrangements based on date payment is received.

For details, please contact Frank/Malou Venadas

(973)562-0055/bobbitski@hotmail.com

T E A C H I N G S

Venue: St. Mary's Classroom

January 19 (Saturday 1-6pm)

Coaches Development - Community Sharers

New Creation Realities/Growth in Prayer - LSS 29

January 25 (Friday, after worship)

Theology of the Body - Singles

Teaching - Golden Years

Formation Teaching - Intercessory and Service

February 2 (Saturday 1-6pm)

Christian Maturity Program 1 - LSS 28

Christian Parenting 2 - LSS 29 & ME 30

Shepherds Refresher Course - LSS Shepherds

Excellence in Worship - Worship Leaders

February 8 (Friday, after worship)

Four Basic Truths (LSS Orientation) - ME 30

Counsels (from page 1)

We have looked for Jesus. We have sought him out. And by God's grace, we have found Him and by that same grace, we stay with Him. We are now called to bring others—as many others as we can find—into our community. It will be helpful for us to remember that we are all here by invitation. Each one of us is here because someone else moved us, one way or another, to be here. Many of us are here because of friends who cared enough to invite us to our worship, encounters and/or Life in the Spirit Seminars. Many of us are here because we responded to these invitations and found ourselves at home. We were strangers until we were invited into this community. At this very moment, there are a great many others who are strangers. These people will remain strangers, until one of us finds them and invites them in. If we are not excited to make Him known to others, it is perhaps we do not know or love Jesus enough.

Through baptism into the Body of Christ, we are empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit to build up the oppressed. Through the love of Christ, we are called to minister the broken spirit of all who have been exiled from the possibility of hope, exiled from God's righteousness, burdened by the yoke of spiritual, social, economic, and political dislocation. In other words, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are called to connect or re-connect human lives to the ultimate reality, which is God, who creates and sustains life, who is active in the affairs of the world. Furthermore, God's encounter with us is a gift to be shared. Through this grace-filled experience, we are also called to be partners and emissaries, empowered to enrich the world with an example and expression of God's justice and peace. It's all a matter of answering God's call and then, responding by faith through our witness.

The start of the New Year provides us with an opportunity to review our commitment to Christ and reflect upon the pledges that we have promised when we committed and sealed our covenant with the Lord through this community. To be a disciple of Christ is to die of self for the glory of God. Blessed are we when we bring to others the gift of love, peace, justice, tolerance, and mercy. Blessed are we when we do so by becoming a witness for the Lamb of God.

DIRECTIONS:

- * Testify to God's victory in your life
- * Invite your friends and families to join our upcoming encounters.
- * Encourage everyone to attend our weekly worship



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Jan 30	FE #14 Reunion St. Mary's Auditorium
Feb 1	YLSS #13 Salubungan After the Eucharistic Celebration
Feb 1-3	SE #3 - BLD Washington
Feb 8-10	SE #2 - BLD Phoenix
Mar 29&30	YLSS #13 St. Mary's Auditorium
Apr 4-6	Life in the Spirit Seminar #30 St. Mary's Auditorium Contact Persons: Larry/Leni de Guzman (201-757-2162) or Faith Ikalina (201-450-6655)
May 23-25	ME #31 Contact Persons: Norie/Miriam Abes (normir01@aol.com)

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending January 11, 2008

**Tithes, Love Offering, Mission
& Fast for Poor** **\$ 3,213.00**
Thank you for your continued generosity.

Singles Ministry (from page 1)

however, when I saw the amount of categorized boxes that we had packed and organized in such a short amount of time, it gave me a sense of good-doing. This experience was fulfilling because I now know that the donated goods and food would, in no way, be allocated to those in need without the work of volunteers. In addition, I also learned that I do not have to do the type of volunteer work where I am working hands-on with someone in need as long as the work I do means something to someone and makes his/her life a bit easier. This is when I know I've done a good job as a Christian. I look forward to doing better in the (hopefully near) future!

Forest Hills Nursing Home, Newark

Having volunteered for Forest Hills in prior outreaches, I've always felt it was a great opportunity to reach out to some lonely lives of elderly people. Those 2 hours of being able to provide great company, prayers & bible reflection was invigorating. Some of them find themselves in the unfortunate situation of feeling lonely and depressed on a daily basis. Even with an activities program, many residents lack the personal one on one time that most of us crave. Therefore, it was refreshing for them that we visited & spent some quality time with them. It allowed us to realize how blessed we are that we have one another in the BLD Community as a support system. I strongly encourage for people to volunteer for the Nursing Home outreach. You can truly make a vast positive difference! God is working strongly in each & every one of them, so be a witness to His works.

We praise and thank the Lord for all of those who answered His call to serve His people!



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 4

Bulletin Edition

January 25, 2008

BENEDICT XVI NAMES 2 GREAT TASKS FOR MODERN CHURCH

Says St. Paul Will Play Key Role in October Synod

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 21, 2008 (Zenit.org).- Benedict XVI says he considers evangelization and ecumenism two of the greatest tasks facing the ecclesial community in the modern world.

The Pope affirmed this today when he received in audience participants in the 6th Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, who are meeting to prepare the Synod's General Assembly, scheduled for Oct. 5-26 in the Vatican.

The Holy Father spoke of the "social character of hope," a theme taken from his encyclical "Spe Salvi."

"It is my belief that the effective application of this fruitful principle is evident in the synod, in which encounter becomes communion and the solicitude for all Churches is expressed in the shared concern of all," he said. "The forthcoming General Assembly of the Synod will reflect on the 'Word of God in the Life and the Mission of the Church.'

"The great tasks facing the ecclesial community in the modern world — and among the many I particularly stress evangelization and ecumenism — are centered on the Word of God and, at the same time, draw there from their justification and support.

"Just as the Church's missionary activity [...] finds its inspiration and its goal in the Lord's merciful revelation, so ecumenical dialogue cannot base itself on the words of human wisdom or on skilful strategies, but must be animated exclusively by constant reference to the original Word, which God consigned to his Church to be read, interpreted and lived in communion."

Apostolic experience

Benedict XVI said that in this context, "St. Paul's doctrine reveals a particular strength." The apostle's doctrine is, the Holy Father explained, "clearly founded on divine revelation but also on his own apostolic experience which, ever and anew, made it clear to him that not human wisdom and eloquence but only the force of the Holy Spirit builds the Church in faith."

He noted that the Synod will take place during the celebration of the June 28, 2008, - June 29, 2009, Pauline Year.

The meeting will provide pastors of the Church with an

(continue on page 4, col 2) 

COUNSELS

ONE IN CHRIST



WORD: Is 8:23-9:3; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; 1Cor 1:10-13, 17; Mt 4:12-23

ORDER: "Let there be no division among you, but that be united in the same mind and in the same purpose (1 Cor 1:10)

THEME: The glory of the Father shines upon those who are one in mind and purpose with Christ.

REFLECTION:

The Word order "be united in the same mind and in the same purpose" is not the same as the unanimity or the absence of disagreement in a group (Ps 83:6; Rv 17:13). Rather, it is our unity with the mind of Christ — which the Lord subordinated to the Father's will, and our unity with the purpose of Christ — to finish the Father's work (Jn 4:34; 6:38) — which the Lord dedicatedly pursued to Calvary. Such unity is the fruit of our communion of life and love with God, in and through the person of Jesus Christ.

Matthew's account of the call of the first disciples gives us three levels of unity arising from the relationships of the men in the story. The first level is fraternal unity — they were two sets of brothers and apparently friends. The second level is occupational unity: in addition, they were all fishermen in the Sea of Galilee. In Luke's version of the same event (Lk 5:7 & 9), we learn that these four men were not only fishermen, but "koinonia", which was translated to "partners". This is where this Greek word was first used in scripture. Later on in Acts 2:42, Luke used "koinonia" again, but in a more profound

(continue on page 4, col 1) 

GOD'S PROMISE FOR THE WEEK

"You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing." (Is 9:2)

ONLY GOD KNOWS YOUR HEART



“But the Lord said to Samuel: Do no judge from the appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as a man sees does God see, because HE sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart.”
(1 Sam.16:1-3)

It is likely that each of one us had in the past or even presently judged another based on appearance, attitude or behavior. When we catch ourselves doing so in this community, we may think that a brother has not yet reached the level of spiritual maturity we expected. Whenever we doubted someone’s sincerity or fidelity to God, we would say- “God knows his heart”. We are imperfect and we cannot make anything happen without surrendering our lives to God. Fully experiencing God’s love and letting it perfect us means that we have to be completely honest with ourselves and with God. Conscious of who we are now, we want to be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The desire to cleanse our heart is God’s call to be completely right before Him so He can bring all the blessings He has for you. Ask the Lord and pray that He will show you what is in your heart, soul, mind and spirit that are obstacles to having a pure heart. Ask Him to tear down arrogance, pride, fear and insecurities, and to see positive changes in your life.

Given the chance, would you ask God, “how do you see my heart?” When the Holy Spirit will expose your heart, it is so that you will not be deceived about yourself. Confess your sins and repent because sins separate us from God. Seek God’s forgiveness, self forgiveness and reconciliation with others. Having an unloving attitude toward another does not get our prayers answered. *“Your iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear”* (Is 59:2).

As we gather every Friday, let us worship ‘in spirit’ - that is of human spirit, the inner person. True worship involves the emotions. We may be in the right place and time, singing songs together, raising hands, standing and sitting at the right time, but it is not a matter of what happens on the outside, rather what flows from the inside. Worship must begin in the heart, not what we think or feel; not just an acknowledgement but a response to God’s love and goodness.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES



On three occasions, the Acts of the Apostles recount this marvelous vocation, where Paul, himself is the source of information, and with gratitude and unfailing wonder, he recounts it , as we also look back to this great conversion, and wonder how amazing is His divine grace!

Saul was a Jew, born in Tarsus, a Roman citizen, but a convinced follower of his ancestral faith. He grew up in Jerusalem, studied under the most learned and devout rabbi, Gamaliel. He became a Christian persecutor after Jesus’ death, as he participated in the stoning of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

Around the year 34, as Christian-Jews continued to proclaim Jesus and make converts to His gospels, Saul asked permission from the high priest to go to Damascus, arrest Jews and bring them walking in chains to Jerusalem to be punished. As he set out in zealous fury with some assistants, his conversion foiled that mission. Around noontime, as they neared Damascus, Saul and his associates were enveloped in a bright light from heaven. Everybody saw it and fell to the ground. Saul alone, however, saw in the light a vision. It was Jesus Himself, who said to him, unheard by the others, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” “Who are You, Sir?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting. Get up into the city where you will be told what to do.”

When Saul arose, he found himself blind. Led by one of his companions, Saul lodged with a Jew named Judas, in Damascus. For three days, he could not eat or drink. Then Jesus appeared to Ananias in Damascus, to go to Judas’ house and heal Saul, body and soul. At first, Ananias hesitated because he heard of Saul’s coming to persecute the Christians. But Jesus said, “You must go! This man is an instrument I have chosen to bring My name to the gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel”. So Ananias went to Straight Street, where he told Saul, that Jesus, who appeared to him, sent him to help him recover his sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. He then anointed Saul, who regained his sight at once, and baptized him. After eating, Saul regained his strength, and after staying a few days with

DCS Speaks

OBEDIENCE AS A COMMUNITY VALUE

The BLD Community defines values as dispositions of the Holy Spirit and as such they enliven, inspire and enrich the community's norms and culture. It is most critical therefore that each member possesses and practices these Christ-centered values as they are the wellsprings that sustain our community life as well as each member's spiritual life..

The community upholds 38 community values and of these, 19 are grouped as personal values as they refer to a member's inner Christian life with respect to oneself and to others. Among these personal values, in a category called self-giving, is Christian obedience.

For many of us with children, we think of obedience as when a father says to his child at play: "Go and do your homework." When the child cheerfully gives up his Wii controller and goes to work on his research-challenged AP Bio report, that is obedience. The more pleasant the activity one gives up and the more difficult the task one has to comply with, the greater the sacrifice and therefore the greater the obedience shown.

Christian obedience is not measured however in the magnitude of the sacrifice involved. In fact it is not measured at all, as it is driven solely by a love for the Lord and not for any personal gratification or glory. As BLD members, we do not obey God's laws out of fear or compulsion but live our lives on the invitation and imitation of Christ, directed only by our love for and trust of His will. As we live according to His righteousness, we are also called to servanthood: the proactive practice of loving our neighbors as we love ourselves and as an expression of our love for the Lord.

Obedience as a community value underlies our culture and all of our norms. Coupled with the values of humility and fruitfulness, it emphasizes the norm on availability – To be always ready to serve in whatever capacity to which we are called by the BLD Community. Christian obedience is the guiding value on the cultural element of submission. Directions are to be received willingly by each member in humility and submission to authority; while free to express one's views and reservations. Obedience is also the hoped-for grace to truly realize the norm on tithing: Give 3-1/3% of the personal income to the BLD Community, 3-1/3% to the Parish and 3-1/3% for worship celebrations of the family

The community's values like obedience drive the heart of the community towards achieving our vision and mission. It is the ground-zero on which we build the structure of our community life. It is how we live and how others view our lives. Let us all strive to make them the blazing, fired-up lamps on our walk to answer Jesus' call: *Come and follow me.*

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Jan 30	FE #14 Reunion St. Mary's Auditorium, Rahway
Feb 01	YLSS #13 Salubungan (After the Eucharistic Celebration)
Feb 1-3	SE #3, BLD-Washington
Feb 8-10	SE #2, BLD-Phoenix
Mar 28-30	YLSS #13 St. Mary's Auditorium, Rahway Contact persons: Larry/Leni de Guzman (201) 757-2162 Faith Ikalina (201) 450-6655
Apr 4-6	LSS #30 St. Mary's Auditorium, Rahway
May 23-25	ME #31 Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes normir01@aol.com

TEACHINGS

Jan 25, 2008 Friday	Golden Years Teaching - Golden Years Formation Teaching - Intercessory & Service Theology of the Body - Singles
Feb 2, 2008 Saturday	Christian Maturity Program 1 - LSS28 Christian Parenting 2 - LSS29 & ME30 Shepherds Refresher Course - LSS Shepherds Excellence in Worship - Worship Leaders
Feb 8, 2008 Friday	Four Basic Truths/LSS Orientation - ME30
Feb 15, 2008 Friday	Teachings - Mark 10 / John 6 / Youth Basic Bible Seminar - Singles
Feb 16, 2008 Saturday	Prayer Leadership / Understanding Corporate Worship - LSS27 Basic Bible Seminar - LSS29
NOTE:	Friday Teachings - after worship Saturday Teachings - 1-6 PM at St. Mary's

St. Paul... (cont. from page 2)

the Christians he had arrested, he himself started preaching in the synagogues, that Jesus was indeed, the Son of God!

This was the start of Paul, being wanted by the Romans dead. On the other hand, this marked the beginning of Paul's intensive apostolic career. He eventually changed his name from Saul to Paul while preaching in Cyprus, and the rest of his holy, dynamic and charismatic life and works are included in the Holy Scripture, in the New Testament.

**Make the Covenant News a
part of your covenant life.**

Covenant News is also available on our
website at bldnewark.com

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

sense- no longer referring to a business partnership, but rather to the “communion” or communal life of the first Christians after the Pentecost.

The third level is mystical unity. This is implied in the unanimous assent of the first disciples to Jesus’ call, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” The difference is that it is now the Lord’s mind and purpose that united them. True, they remained blood brothers, friends and partners. Most importantly, their partnership is now of the Father’s business (Lk 2:49 NKJ), coming from their new and most enduring relationship, their communion with Christ. Thus began the Christian partnership “in the little ship of the Church.” The Church – all of us – is this new partnership. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, we have become “the communion of the Lord Himself, who grants what we could never have achieved by our own resources.” What was granted? We are one family, one body with Him. “Whoever is joined to Christ becomes one spirit with Him” (1 Cor 6:17).

If this were so, why is there conflict and division even among Christians? Although we are one body with Christ, we are endowed with free will. Because of our broken nature, we tend to use this freedom to do anything we please, even if it is evil. This concern prompted Paul to urge the Corinthians to use their freedom not for division, but for unity. He called their attention to their rivalries, their factions. He pointed out that Christ, not men, is our leader, that Christ is not divided. Paul used himself as example, as being sent by Christ, not because of his eloquence or wisdom, but because of his embrace of the cross of Christ. Two millennia later, Vatican II echoed Paul’s exhortation: “Genuine freedom is an outstanding manifestation of the divine image in man. For God willed men ‘in the power of his own counsel’ (Sir 15:14) so that he would seek his Creator of his own accord and freely arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to God.” (Gaudium et Spes). This perfection is our abiding communion with God.

What should we do to be of the same mind and have the same purpose as a community? The Lord’s call to “Come after me” is not only a call to follow His footsteps, but a radical summon to cleave to His person, “partaking of His life and His destiny, sharing in His free and loving obedience to the will of the Father” (John Paul II). When we are conformed in mind and heart to Jesus, to the extent of embracing His self-emptying death on the cross, then the Lord’s purpose for us is fulfilled: “fishers of men.”

DIRECTIONS:

- Communicate well – to help promote a better understanding of common concerns and issues, which in turn should promote unity and peace in the community. This may take the form of dialogue, consultation, fraternal correction, or just plain information sharing.
- Live our Christian values and norms firmly – this means obedient faith, faith in action. It’s a life that’s cleaved to Christ, so that it is Christ who lives in us. Thus will the glory of the Father shine on us.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month - Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home
Passaic, NJ - Volunteers are needed.

Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

MEDICAL MISSION

Feb. 18-22 - Infanta, Quezon.

Medical & non-medical volunteers needed.

Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

SINGLES

Archdiocesan Outreach Service. For schedule, contact :

Eric Cruz (jcruzer@gmail.com)

LeeAnn Aguila (laguila@gmail.com)

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max).

Send to word@bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Sight & Sound - Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA

May 3, 2008, Saturday, 1:00 pm show, Payment due March 28

Ticket + bus fare - Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00

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Child (3-12) \$12.00

Seating arrangements based on date payment is received

For details, contact Frank/Malou Venadas, 973-562-0055 or

email bobbitski@hotmail.com

THE LORD’S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending January 18, 2008

*Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for Poor* **\$ 4,274.00**

Thank you for your continued generosity.

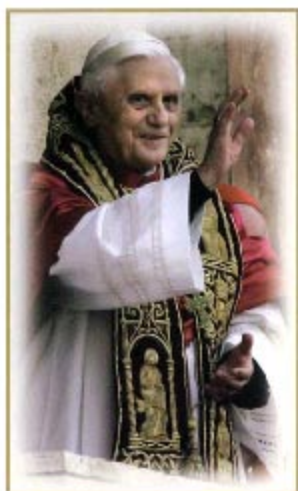
Benedict XVI...(cont. from page 1)

opportunity to reflect on “the witness of this great apostle and herald of the Word of God,” the Pontiff said. “May his example be an encouragement for everyone to accept the Word of salvation and to translate it into daily life, in faithful discipleship of Christ.”

Benedict XVI told the council participants: “Yours is a meritorious service to the Church” because the synod is the institution best qualified “for promoting truth and unity of pastoral dialogue within the mystical Body of Christ.”



BENEDICT XVI: MIRACLES SHOW GOD IS NEAR



Reflects on the Good News of Christ

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 27, 2008 (Zenit. org) - The healing miracles that Christ performs in the Gospel demonstrate that God has drawn near to humanity, says Benedict XVI. Addressing the crowds gathered today in St. Peter's Square to pray the midday Angelus, the Pope reflected on the beginning of Christ's public mission as recounted in the Gospel of Matthew.

The Holy Father said that the "good news" that Jesus proclaims can be summarized by the expressions used in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark: "The kingdom of God," or the kingdom of heaven, "is near."

He noted that these expressions do not refer to an earthly kingdom "limited by space and time," but rather they proclaim "that it is God who rules, that God is Lord and his lordship is present -- actual -- it is being realized."

The Pontiff continued: "The novelty of Christ's message is that in him God has drawn near, he already reigns in our midst, as the miracles and the healings that he accomplishes show."

"Where Jesus comes, the Creator Spirit brings life and men are cured of diseases of body and spirit," said Benedict XVI. "The lordship of God is thus manifested in the total healing of man."

He continued: "With this Jesus wants to reveal the countenance of the true God, the God who is near, full of mercy for every human being; the God who makes a gift to us of life in abundance, of his own life."

"The kingdom of God is for this reason life that affirms itself over death, the light of the truth that scatters the darkness of ignorance and falsehood."

COUNSELS

The Good News of the Master, Meek and Humble of Heart

WORD: Zep. 2:3; 3:12-13; Ps. 146:6-10; 1Cor. 1:26-31; Mt. 5:1-12a

THEME: We trust and bow to the will of the Father when we acknowledge our nothingness.

ORDER: *Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth, seek humility. (Zep.2:3)*

REFLECTION: As we fast approach the season of Lent, this Sunday's readings clearly speak to each of us on how to prepare ourselves to share in our Lord's passion. In the first reading, the prophet Zephaniah exhorts us to "Seek the Lord and to seek humility."

To "seek the Lord" meant to go to the temple in order to consult Him through a priest, or in a wider sense to render to the Lord what is due Him. ***It meant above all to conform one's own behavior to the demands of the covenant.*** Jesus would likewise say, "*Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all the things you need will be given to you.*" (Mt.6:33)

This hope is for the lowly ones, the little ones, the poor ones. To designate these poor ones, the prophet uses a word, *anawim*, a term that will become widely known. This word signifies those humble believers eager to welcome God, always ready to do His will, hoping in Him alone. Their search for God and His justice will give rise to a current of admirable spirituality exemplified by the Virgin Mary.

In the second reading the first words of St.Paul are, "***Consider your own calling.***" Paul writes this letter to help the community to take hold of its self. ***It was divided into rival factions.*** Paul begins by confronting this intolerable and absurd situation. These schisms are an insult to Christ and empty the cross of all meaning.

(continued on page4)

God's Promise for the Week

"They shall pasture and couch their flocks with none to disturb them." (Zep. 3:13)

Undivided Kingdom



"If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand." (Mark 3:24-25) This was Jesus' response to the scribes, who wanted the people to believe that Jesus' power came from Satan, not God, to disprove His claim as the Messiah and place Him instead in league with the devil.

This scenario tells us that the more immersed we are in our Christian life, the more extreme will be the attacks of the enemy. Even the most ridiculous accusation will convince some, when it is cleverly packaged, to sound sincere and concerned. However, Jesus proved that if we stand firm to the truth, the prince of lies will not win, and His Kingdom stands, undivided.

Religious communities, like ours (BLD), will always be under attack. As members, we must be aware that we are engaged in daily spiritual battles. Satan and the evil spirits do not want loving communities to exist, so they will do everything they can to discourage, wound and ultimately destroy the Kingdom of God in our hearts through our minds.

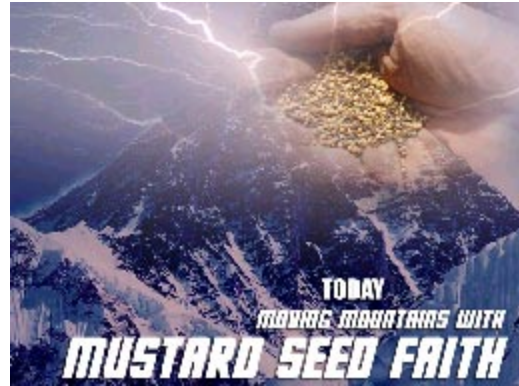
In our minds exist two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness, the forces of evil that seek to divide – pushing people to self-righteousness, pride and arrogance; and the Kingdom of Light, the forces of love and trust, which open up people to forgiveness, humility, meekness, understanding, compassion, mutual acceptance, unity and peace. Since God gave us free will, there is always this battle within each person and the mind is the battlefield.

As renewed Christians, we know that God renewed our minds and hearts and that we must always make Jesus as our example. "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His footsteps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When He was insulted, He returned no insult; when He suffered, He did not threaten; instead, He handed Himself over to the one who judges justly." (1 Peter 2:21-23)

People living in the vanity of their own mind not only destroy themselves, but far too often, they bring destruction to others around them. "I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace." (Eph 4:1-3)

May love, peace and unity remain in our hearts and in our minds at all times for us to have the Undivided Kingdom of God.

Fruitfulness In God's Kingdom



"He said, "This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and rise night and day and the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come." He said, "To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private." (Mk 4:26-34)

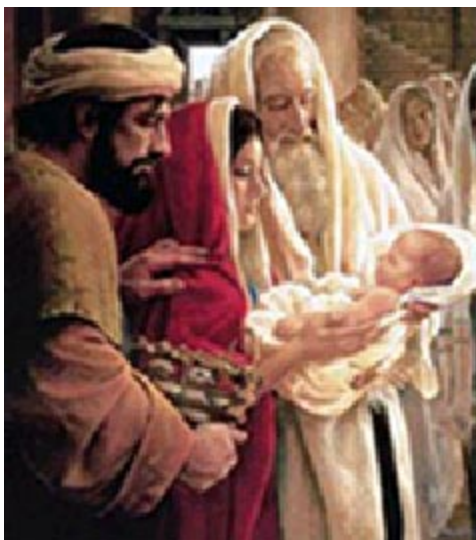
In this reading from the Gospel of St. Mark, we are taught through several parables that speak of sowing and harvesting. We also know that Jesus explained the parables to His own disciples, while to the rest of the crowd the parables remained a mystery that they had to uncover. Why is that?

Perhaps Jesus wanted to pique the crowd's curiosity so that they may continue to follow Him, curious to unveil the mystery of His teachings. With the parable, as relayed by St. Mark, the evangelist, Jesus sows the seeds of God's heavenly kingdom in our hearts. We, the readers of the Word, become intrigued by the mystery of His vignettes, and like the seed that has been scattered on the ground, we read and reread the passage, ponder upon it, and before long, an understanding beyond our human, earthly cognizance begins to sprout from within us.

When we receive the Word with a childlike wonder, we are like the fertile ground upon which the seed is sown. Our openness to the Holy Spirit enables the Divine Sower to water and nurture this seed. When we become willing participants to this process of spiritual growth and pruning, we receive more gifts. In yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit, we become the mustard seed that springs up to become an expansive tree, with branches wide enough to provide shade for others.

As a community of believers, let us continue to fertilize the ground upon which the Sower sows His seeds. Let us all continue to upbuild God's Kingdom and bear good fruits that lasts!

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord



The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is used to be called the Feast of the Purification of Mary and Candlemas as well. It is a feast that is sixteen centuries old. It occurs forty days after Christmas.

The prophet Malachi prophesies, “Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; and suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek, and the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts” (Mal 3:1).

The presentation of our Lord is the fulfillment of God’s promise in the Old Testament to the holy ones who were waiting for the Messiah. When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to Jerusalem forty days after his birth for his presentation to the Lord to comply with Jewish Law (Lk 2:27), there was an old man called Simeon, a devout Jew, who was moved by the Holy Spirit to go to the temple at that moment. As soon as he saw the infant Jesus, he took him into his arms because he recognized the child as the Messiah. Looking up to heaven, he blessed God in these words:

“Now Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel” (Lk 2:29-32).

Simeon was ready to die because the Holy Spirit had promised him that he would not die until he had seen the long-awaited Messiah. There was also Anna, an elderly woman. Anna went forward at that very moment, rendered thanks to God and uttered wonderful praises about the child to all who were expecting the salvation of Jerusalem (Lk 2:38).

Simeon and Anna represent Israel in their patient expectation for the Messiah. They both acknowledge the infant Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

Jesus is the light of the nations. Christ himself says, “*I am the light of the world*” (Jn 8:12). We receive His light if we accept Him. Let us have the eyes of faith like Simeon and Anna who were blessed and joyful upon seeing the Lord. Let us have the eyes of faith like any believer who is blessed and joyful upon seeing the Lord who is present in the members of our family, in friends and people whom we do not know but we bring to each other the good news of salvation. Let us have the eyes of faith like any believer who is blessed and joyful of seeing the Lord who is most present in the Eucharist.

Community Calendar

Feb 1	YLSS #13 Salubungan (After the Eucharistic Celebration)
Feb 1-3	SE #3, BLD-Washington
Feb 9	DLC Meeting 1:00p.m. St. Mary's Auditorium
Feb 8-10	SE #2, BLD-Phoenix
Mar 28-30	YLSS#13 St. Mary's Auditorium, Contact Persons: Larry/ Leni de Guzman (201-757-2162) or Faith Ikalina (201-450-6655)
April 4-6	Life in the Spirit Seminar #30 St. Mary's Auditorium

TEACHINGS

Feb 2 Saturday	Excellence in Worship Worship Leaders and Covenanted Disciples Christian Maturity Program 1 LSS #28 Christian Parenting 2 LSS #29 & ME #30 Shepherds Refresher Course LSS Shepherds
Feb 8 Friday	Four Basic Truths/LSS Orientation ME #30
Feb 15 Friday	Teachings - Mark 10/John 6/Youth Basic Bible Seminar - Singles
Feb 16 Saturday	Prayer Leadership & Understanding Corporate Worship LSS #27 Basic Bible Seminar LSS #29
Feb 22 Friday	Golden Years Teaching Golden Years Intercessory Formation Teaching Intercessory Formation Service Formation Teaching Service Formation Four Basic Truths - Solo Parents

Counsels from page 1

To refuse its "foolishness" amounts to seeking salvation in a so-called "human wisdom." To illustrate God's way of bringing salvation, Paul invites the community to examine the kind of people they are. (1Cor.1:25-31)

In our Gospel, we find the first lessons we must learn. We must all look honestly into our minds and hearts to discover how we serve God and each other in the community. Can we learn the lessons of poverty and meekness? Suffering is an integral part of life. How do we react to it? And do we suffer for the right reasons? Do we grieve because we are petty and feeling sorry for ourselves or because we long for a world of justice and peace. How can we learn the lessons that suffering has to teach?

As disciples, our inner dispositions must be patterned after those of Jesus, the one we follow. As disciples we are taught to forgive those who have wronged us, whether family members, neighbors, people at work, friends or disciples in the community. We are taught to be single-minded and not duplicitous in our dealings with others, whoever they may be. We are taught to work for peace rather than revenge. These Beatitudes, these blessings, call for **"profound inner transformation."**

This transformation comes only when we truly seek God's will for our lives. ***"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My way...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."*** (Is.55:8-9). Only by humbling ourselves in the eyes of God and in our community can we truly bear our cross and follow Him.

The Gospel outlines the kind of person the disciple is to become; the psalm sketches the program to which the learner is called. The disciples of Jesus are not merely His followers; they are to continue the work He began. As disciples of Christ, we work to sustain the good that is in the world and our community and to transform whatever needs to be transformed in our lives.

Just by being aware of what we are called to be, we recognize that the Church at large and each Christian community are made up of people deprived of everything in order to gain God's grace. With thanksgiving, as poor people, we welcome the mystery of Christ's "meek and humble of heart," and we boast of His cross, which is the revelation of God's supreme wisdom and God's love in our lives.

DIRECTIONS:

- Whoever boasts should boast in the Lord.
- Do no wrong, speak no lies.
- Do not speak ill or judge others at any time even if what you saying is true.



Ministry Announcements

Mission

Nursing Home Visit every 2nd Sat. of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ – Volunteers needed contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

Medical Mission

Feb. 18-22 - Infanta, Quezon - Medical & Non-medical volunteers needed. Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

Singles

Archdiocesan Outreach Service

For schedule, contact: Eric Cruz (jcruzer@gmail.com) and LeeAnn Aguila (laguila@gmail.com)

Married Life Apostolate (MLA)

Marriage Encounter #31

Venue: Mary Immaculate Center
300 Cherryville Road
Northampton, PA 18067

Date: May 30 to June 1, 2008

Contact: Norie and Miriam Abes ME# 30
class shepherd (973)960-3711

Gary and Mil Camacho MLA (732)821-4507

Word

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.)

Email to word@bldnewark.com

Special Announcement

Abraham & Sarah – A Journey of Love

Sight & Sound - Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA

May 3, 2008, Saturday, 1:00 pm show, Payment due March 28

Ticket + bus fare - Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00

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T E N E B R A E

(Latin for "Shadows")

What: - A time for quiet reflection on the Passion of Christ

When: March 19, 2008; 8:00pm (Holy Wednesday)

Where: St. Mary's Parish (Church)

Who: BLD-Newark and St.Marks/St. Mary's Parishioners (pls. invite relatives and friends)

Sponsored by: BLD Mission and Evangelization Ministry in collaboration with St. Mark/St.Mary's parish.

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the week ending

January 25, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission and Fast for the Poor

\$3,739.00

Thank you for your continued generosity.



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 06

Bulletin Edition

Feb. 08, 2008

A Harvest of 31 for SE #3, DC

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt 18:20)



Twenty-five members of the Singles Ministry Newark truly felt God's presence as they answered His call to serve Him at the Singles Encounter #3, in Washington DC held last February 1-3. It was the first time for many to serve at an outreach encounter, but they quickly learned that distance could never prevent them from spreading His

perfect love to our brothers and sisters in an outreach community. It was held on top of a fog-covered mountain at the Skycroft Conference Center in Middletown, Maryland.

The Lord called thirty-one candidates by name to participate in the encounter. The pastoral team was headed by Spiritual Director Fr. Pete Literal and facilitated by Newark's Trisha Arias, Carol Manguiat, Mhyllanie Guinto and Ditto Fernando. They spread His good Word by sharing their life stories and personal reflections on God's everlasting love. The hearts of the candidates opened more with each sharing and group activity. The transformation in the candidates became apparent as they came Friday night, meek as lambs, searching for the Lord and left happy with a deeper desire to be closer to Him.

The Newark contingent was welcomed with open arms by the DC Singles Ministry and felt very much at home. It was truly a pleasure to serve with the sponsoring class and DC auxiliaries. They are a smaller, but blossoming ministry, yet their love for our Lord and their desire to know Him more are just as great. Together - we prayed, interceded, praised and worshipped, served and grew as a unified community to be used as instruments of God's love and healing mercy.

The ministry coordinators from both communities, along with their DCS for Pastoral and class shepherds, discussed the structure and need to have a separate Friday worship for DC's Singles Ministry. Their grand reunion is slated for March 2.

COUNSELS

Time of Trials


Word: Gen 2:7-9, 3: 1-7; Ps 51: 3-6, 12-13, 17; Rom 5:12-19; Mt 4: 1-11

Theme: We trust and bow to the will of the Father when we are faithful to our calling and are not swayed by temptations.

Order: The Lord your God shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.
You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.
Do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

Reflection:

Last Wednesday most of us had ash crosses on our foreheads to remind us that we are entering into the holy season of Lent. In her wisdom the Church guides her faithful to remember the work and sacrifice done by our Savior to redeem us. At the start of the season we make resolutions to pray more, to fast, to read Scriptures, to give alms to the poor, serve in the soup kitchen or to forego some of the niceties that we are used to - perhaps not eating out as much or refraining from watching too much television. If we are honest with ourselves our experience with these Lenten promises will be the same as the New Year's resolutions we made 2 months ago - how many have we lived up to?

Today's readings give us some explanation on why we are having difficulty in fulfilling our good intentions - we are engaged in a spiritual battle and the enemy uses every trick that he knows that are effective against humans. In Genesis we read how the serpent tricked Adam and Eve to sin against God using clever words to convince them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. This has caused man to fall from grace - since then we all inherited the stain of original sin. In His goodness and mercy the Lord did not condemn the human race but set forth a plan (continue on page 4) 

God's Promise for the Week

"...so, through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous." (Rom 5:19)

Ambassadors for Christ



If His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI called you one day and said, “I would like you to be the Vatican’s Ambassador to the United Nations”, how would you feel? Or what if you received a letter from the President of the United States assigning you to the post of US Ambassador to Australia? Wouldn’t you feel honored and special?

You and I, however, are even more special and precious since *“we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us (2 Cor 5:20).”* What could be more honorable and yet so humbling at the same time? Each one of us, by virtue of our baptism, has been given the rare privilege of not only becoming God’s son or daughter but also His ambassador. In other words, every baptized Christian represents Christ. St. Paul, who considered himself the “least among the apostles”, understood the great responsibilities associated with his task as Christ’s ambassador. Since he was Christ’s representative, he was willing to endure *“afflictions, hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils, fasts; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love, in truthful speech, in the power of God,” (2 Cor 6:4-7)* because it was God Himself who was appealing through him.

What about us who have been called by the Lord to serve in the community of the BLD? Do we still feel blessed that we received a special calling? Do we bear in mind that once renewed in the Holy Spirit, we become a new person, a new creation? How well do we represent Jesus in our lives? What kind of witnessing do we show others? Are we reconciled to one another, working together so as not to receive the grace of God in vain? Do we persevere in following Christ even though the journey may not be so smooth?

We just celebrated Ash Wednesday and thus the season of Lent has begun. As we prepare for the glory of Easter, let us reflect and ponder on how faithful we are in answering God’s call to us to be His ambassadors. How can we become a better emissary, a better envoy of His love and grace to others? Let us pray for an obedient and humble heart to allow God’s will to prevail in our lives. May each of us be able to truly represent our God to one another and to the rest of the world!

A Tree Planted Near Running Water

“They are like a tree planted near streams of water, that yields its fruit in season, the leaves never wither, whatever they do prospers” (Ps 1:3)

The Living Word of God is likened to streams of water flowing with unfailing and bountiful graces of life and growth. It sustains life, invigorates it to a path of righteousness and spiritual prosperity. Any believer who soaks on it is like a growing plant drawing through its roots on those running water and becoming and maturing into a big tree rich in blossoms and fruitfulness.

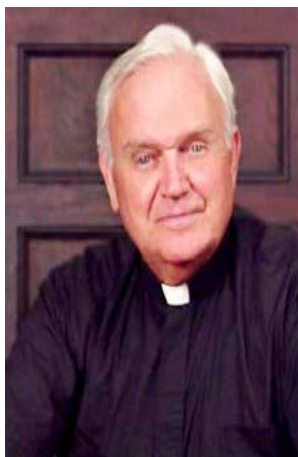
A charismatic community like our community is like a plant, a grapevine or a huge tree whose life depends upon the sap of the Spirit pulsating through the tree and every part of it. Its strength comes from the Word made Flesh, and prompted by the Advocate and able to move to all ends of the earth by the empowering gifts of the Holy Spirit. From a seed to a big tree it continues to grow a worthwhile life contributing to the good of mankind.

We found our identity through the sacrament of Baptism. By His water and Spirit we have become God’s begotten, His very own sons and daughters. By this sacramental grace, the seed of God was planted into man’s heart, filling the void left by the sins of man. This seed will grow its roots from the unmerited graces that the Divine Providence rains upon us.

In John 7:38 Jesus said *“Whoever believes in me, as scriptures says, ‘Rivers of living water will flow within him.’”* He who is near Him will bear much fruit.

We are called to a persevering, prayerful, and sacramental life initiated by God, thus we are lavishly nourished by supernatural graces from our Eucharistic Lord. He is the Bread of Life, the true Vine, and anyone who remains in Him will have eternal Life. He who sinks his roots near this water will bear fruit by faith and good works and hence what follows that yield, is the *“fruit of the Spirit that is love, joy, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”* (Gal 5:22) God knows that our life will face moments of dryness and we will struggle in this desert experience. But the flow of his Living water is infinite and boundless. He satisfies our thirst and rejuvenates us to a life in Him, with Him and hopefully through Him that our example and witnessing will ripple to others that they too will grow abundantly along the rivers and streams of God’s grace and blessings.

The Word Incarnate is so rich in promise that will not disappoint. In season and out of season, He prospers those who love and serve Him.



Fr. Paul Speaks

The beginning of Lent this year on February 6th is unique in terms of time. It is the earliest possible beginning of Lent and of course the great feast of Easter. The date of Easter is determined as the Sunday after the first full moon after March 21st, the first day of Spring. This year the full moon is on March 21st, which is Good Fri-

day, and the first day of Spring. Thus we arrive at Easter on Sunday, March 23rd. These observations are secondary in relation to the challenge of the Lenten season. Lent is more than a remembrance of the death/resurrection of Jesus. It is an invitation to the whole church to enter into this reality not only in our minds, but to bring that reflection into external reality. We live out our faith not only in our reflective and prayer life, but also in the external way we live our relationships, both within the family and in real living personal contact outside the private world of family life.

Lent is the retreat time for the whole Church. Obviously we cannot go away into a monastery to pray and do penance for the forty days of Lent. But we can pray for a reality check. There may be issues that we have not faced up to. There may be resolutions that we have not fulfilled. Maybe our prayer life is limping. Perhaps we have just gotten lazy, and have cut down or even forgotten to pray regularly. Maybe there is that feeling of unforgiveness that we still harbor. Those of you who made the ME remember the last sharing on Sunday morning when we included the death/dying/resurrection mystery as part of marriage spirituality. You also may remember the powerful witness that the sharing couple gave on that occasion, how through the suffering and pain of the couple, new life evolved in their marriage.

We all face suffering in some form. Sometimes it is our own fault. Sometimes we do dumb or even sinful things that cause many problems. Sometimes these problems just "happen", beyond our control. No matter the cause, we can grow from the pain and "rise" to a new freedom that come into our lives when we surrender to the "sandpapering" that only suffering can bring. No one looks for pain, but eventually it's there. Do we get frustrated and angry, sometimes even at God? Suffering does not produce good results automatically. Suffering can even make us cynical. But if we see our pain as an opportunity to unite to the suffering Jesus, something miraculous happens. We begin to realize that Jesus is alive and we too are called to live his victorious risen life. Happy Lent!

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times, visit www.masstimes.org.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every **2nd Sat.** of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passiac, NJ - **Volunteers are needed.** Please contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340.

MEDICAL MISSION

Feb. 18-22 - Infanta, Quezon - **Medical & Non-medical volunteers needed.** Please contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340.

SINGLES

Feb. 23-24 - Kearny, NJ - Savannah Sights Charitable Foundation Indoor Festival – Fund Raising for Blind Children & Kids with Special Needs & their Families.

Volunteers Needed to help run the Game Booths like the Games of Chance (18 yrs old and older), food stalls, popcorn machines and many more.

Interested parties, please contact: Natasha Montesclaros natasha_montesclaros@yahoo.com, Lee Ann Aguila laguila@gmail.com, Eric Cruz jcruzer@gmail.com.

OUTREACH

Apr 25-27 - BLD Charlotte, NC - ME #2 - The Oratory, South Carolina - Please contact Henry & Aida Koryan (973) 709-1387.

WORD

Share your walk, faith, transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max). Email to word@bldnewark.com.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Abraham & Sarah

May 03, 1pm @ Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA

A Journey of Love Sight & Sound

Payments due on April 4.

Ticket + bus fare: Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00
Child (3-12) \$42.00

For tickets only: Adults \$33.00 Teen (13-18) \$16.00
Child (3-12) \$12.00

Seating arrangements based on date payment is received.

For details, please call Frank or Malou Venadas – 973-562-0055 or send email to bobbitski@hotmail.com.

TENEBRAE (Latin for "Shadows")

Mar 19, 8pm (Holy Wednesday) @ St. Mary's Parish Church

A time for quiet reflection on the Passion of Christ

BLD Newark & St. Mark's/St. Mary's Parishioners (please invite relatives and friends).

Sponsored by: BLD Mission and Evangelization Ministry in collaboration with St. Mark/St. Mary Parish.

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

to bring us back to Him through a second Adam who is like the first in every way except sin. The eventual confrontation was set right after the fall of our first parents, The Lord said, *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, between her seed and your seed, he will strike at your head and while you strike at his heel"* (Gn 3:15). Jesus prepared well by being baptized by the Holy Spirit and fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. The devil relished to inflict the tactics that he used to conquer the first Adam. Using Jesus' hunger he urges him to turn the stones into bread – the same temptation in making Eve to see that the fruit of the tree was good for food. *"Not by bread alone that man lives but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"* was the Lord's reply. In the John's account about the Samaritan woman, Jesus spoke about His food is to do the will of One who sent him and finish His work, John 5:34. Failing his first try the devil used a previous winning strategy appealing to pride he told Eve that they will be like gods with the knowledge of what is good and what is evil. He even quoted Scripture in challenging Jesus to show his pride and power by throwing himself down from the parapet of the temple but to no avail. The third time the devil used the proven tactic that worked earlier – showing things that are pleasing to human eyes and appealing to the human heart. Possession of wealth, beauty, power and glory from all the kingdoms of the earth but Jesus has to prostrate before him and worship him but again his temptation did not work.

The work of the evil one did not end with the temptation of Jesus, as recorded in Revelation 12:17 *"Then the dragon went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus."* The question we have to answer is, "How are we doing against the temptations in our time?" Let us examine ourselves this Lenten season to see how well or how bad our relationship with the Lord and one another. What are the rival thrones or kingdoms that we cling to? What are the areas in our lives that we find difficult to surrender to the Lordship of Christ?

Directions:

- 1 Set aside time for prayer and fasting
- 2 Acknowledge your offense by reconciling with your brethren and God.
- 3 Be faithful to God by availing of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

Covenant News is also available on our website at www.bldnewark.com

TEACHINGS

Feb 15 After Worship	Basic Bible Seminar Teaching	Singles Mark 10, John 6, Youth
Feb 16 St. Mary's 1-6 pm	Prayer Leardership Understanding Corporate Worship	LSS 27
	Basic Bible Seminar	LSS 29
Feb 22 After Worship	Formation Teaching	Golden Years Intercessory and Service Solo Parents
	Four Basic Truths	
Mar 01 St. Mary's 1-6 pm	Christian Maturity Program II	LSS 28
Mar 15 St. Mary's 1-6 pm	Advanced Intercession & Spiritual Warfare	LSS 27
	Encounter With Jesus	LSS 28 & LSS 29
	Seven Anointines Intercession	Post Covenantal

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Feb 08-10	Singles Encounter #2 - BLD-Phoenix
Feb 09	DLC Meeting - St. Mary's Auditorium (1pm)
Mar 28-30	YLSS #13 - St. Mary's Auditorium
	Please contact: Larry/Leni de Guzman (201) 757-2162 or Faith Ikalina (201) 450-6655
Apr 04-06	Life in the Spirit Seminar #30 - St. Mary's
May 30-	Marriage Encounter #31
Jun 01	Mary Immaculate Center
	300 Cherryville Road, Northampton, PA
	Please contact: ME #30 Class Shepherd Norie/ Mirian Abes @ normir01@aol.com or (973)0960-3711, MLA Gary/Mil Camacho (732) 821-4507. Applications forms available @ www.bldnewark.com .

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Week Ending Feb. 1, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission & Fast for the Poor **\$2,403**

Thank you for your continued generosity.

May the blessing and favor of the Lord be upon those who are celebrating their birthdays and wedding anniversaries this week.



A Warm SE# in Phoenix

Two weeks ago, after members of the BLD Singles Ministry went to Washington DC to serve the Lord's SE#3; they realized that their work was not complete.

This past weekend several singles from Newark accepted the calling to travel to Phoenix AZ to spread the good news and serve SE#2 Phoenix. This was a retreat that all the singles would not forget. They give much appreciation to the whole Newark BLD community for supporting them with their bake sale that they held to raise funds to help offset some airfare expenses.

The weekend was facilitated by Newark's Maris Manansala, Carol Manguiat, Paul Lazaro, and James Laforteza, the only facilitator originating from Phoenix. The Spiritual Director was Father Dave Sison whose powerful words impacted and left footprints in the candidates' hearts. With the Lord's guidance, the pastoral team led a total of 17 candidates, each called by name, toward His everlasting love, wisdom and forgiveness.

With singles from Phoenix and Newark working together as one, singles from the BLD Bay Area and Seattle were also in attendance serving the candidates during the weekend. With four communities joined together in one encounter, it showed the unity and service that the singles in the BLD community has. The retreat center was located in the middle of the desert near Lake Pleasant where signs of living things are not visible. However, as Father Sison mentioned, there were 17 living people in this desert. These 17 candidates were born again and renewed. Through the power of prayer, their hearts were changed, and the love of Christ now reigns in their hearts.

Overall the weekend was successful and a victorious one, with many new found friendships, both for the candidates as well as all the auxies. The Singles Ministry of BLD Newark would like to extend our gratitude for all the families who helped house all out of town auxies, and extended their arms and warm hospitality. God is good all the time. All the time God is good!

COUNSELS

This is My Beloved Son, Listen to Him

WORD: Gen 12:1-4a • Ps 13: 4-5, 18-20, 22
2Tim 1: 8b-10 • Mt 17: 1-9

ORDER: *"Bear your share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God"*

REFLECTION: God seeks to draw us into a relationship with Him by wanting us to turn away from our self-centeredness and sinful desires. But the greatest obstacle in achieving this is people pursuing their own desires rather than seeking God's will. Through life experiences, successes and failures, criticism and praise, loyalty and betrayal, illness and loss, people gave more regard on self interest and on being self-reliant. We develop aggressive goals. We dream grandiose dreams. We cast visions. Then we ask God to join us in our plans and to bless our efforts. Is there anyone among us who has sought God's will first before pursuing his personal plans? Is there anyone who has not questioned the conditions of discipleship and the crosses and sufferings that go with it?

This Sunday's scripture speak of the need to seek God's will in everything that we do for God is perfectly capable of developing us into the person that He wants us to be. No person, no demon, no circumstance, no obstacle can prevent God from accomplishing His will in our life. He only asks for our willingness to obey Him and do what He asks us to do. Matthew's Gospel describes Christ's transfiguration where Jesus revealed His divine nature to Peter, James and John.

(page 4)

God's Promise for the Week

"I will make you a great nation and I will bless you. All the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you," Genesis 12: 2, 3b

In God's Holiness

Holiness – is everybody's objective. People try to participate into works and adopt values that will make them holy. If you become too holy, people will tease you that you will either go beyond heaven or you will be a candidate for sainthood. Sometimes, these teases make someone take a step back and see whether what he or she is doing something right. The Holy Spirit will confirm that the things that you do are definitely pleasing to the Lord because there will be peace and contentment within you.

In Leviticus 19:11-18, we are reminded of the commandments given by God the Father to Moses, as:

1. Not to steal
2. Not to swear falsely by the Lord's name
3. Not to defraud your neighbor
4. Not to act dishonestly in rendering judgment
5. Not to take revenge nor grudge against your neighbor

Similar to the rich man in gospel story of Matthew, he did everything and followed the commandments given by the Lord. However, when Jesus asked him to give up his riches to follow him, he hesitated because he had a lot. We, the members of the BLD Community surely feel the same way. We do not steal nor kill. We surely did not commit these grave sins against the Lord. However, there are others missteps that we did:

1. Did we kill our kid's dreams because of hurting words we uttered? Or killed our spouse's self-esteem because of unkind jokes we made of him or her?
2. Have we become insensitive to our elderly neighbor's needs and stole his/her strength by ignoring his/her request for help? Did we steal somebody's idea at work and given ourselves credit for it? Did we steal somebody's quiet moment by keeping on with our noisy presence?

True, there was no person who was killed or from whom we have stolen a material thing. And yet, as shown by the examples above, we have contributed to killing or stealing from someone or something. Truly, these actions do not augur well on our path to holiness.

Dear Lord, especially in this season of Lent, let me recognize and atone for my sins. Help me to change my ways that I can live my life in holiness, the way You led your earthly life. And, if I stumble along the way, pull me up to be able to start anew. Let me be a shining light to my neighbors that I can radiate the love that you have shown me. Let me be the salt that can give a good aroma and flavor to the lives of my fellowmen. Let me shower everybody with Your presence that their lives will be drenched with Your warmth just like you showed me. In Jesus Name, I pray. Amen

God Spares the Just

The Father has promised to spare the just. He did it before in Nineveh by sending the prophet Jonah to warn the people of its impending doom. He is still doing it now through the Church, and will continue to do so for generations to come. The Lord is always ready to give us a chance to be worthy of salvation as long as we strive to be just in his sight.

But who is a Just person? How can one be worthy and spared?

A just person can be one blessed with righteousness, one who knows God's words and ways. For His words are mighty, with the power to succeed in what he expects to achieve. His ways are effective, bringing about amazing transformation in our lives. On the other hand, a just person can be a sinful person who has changed his ways, atoned for his misdeeds and begged the Lord's forgiveness. The heart of the just may not be perfect but will always desire mercy by filling it with true repentance to please the Father. He is confident in the Lord's promise of forgiveness and yet meek enough to accept his judgment. A humbled and contrite heart O Lord, You will not spurn (Ps 51:19b). Our Father's ability to show mercy is greater than our weaknesses that lead us to sin. He finds no delight in the death of a wicked man, only in his conversion.

We are like Ninevites coming from all walks of life mending our ways to be pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. We are called upon to reconcile in Him and be saved. As the king of Nineveh used his power to command his people to fast and pray for God's pardon, we are called upon to use our resources to bring other people closer to God. We are a community that goes beyond praise and worship. We are bound by our desire to have a closer and more fruitful relationship with our Creator, that we may serve others and be good witnesses of our faith. Each of us is hampered by our individual limitations and has the tendency to return to our old self. But we trust that our Lord will continue to transform us until we may truly be just in his eyes. This may take a long time but God our Father will spare His sinful sons. We are the reason that He did not spare His only beloved and sinless Son.

Apologetics: **Reward and Merit**

Paul tells us: "For [God] will reward every man according to his works: to those who by perseverance in working good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. There will be . . . glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality" (Rom. 2:6–11; cf. Gal. 6:6–10).

In the second century, the technical Latin term for "merit" was introduced as a synonym for the Greek word for "reward." Thus merit and reward are two sides of the same coin.

Protestants often misunderstand the Catholic teaching on merit, thinking that Catholics believe that one must do good works to come to God and be saved. This is exactly the opposite of what the Church teaches. The Council of Trent stressed: "[N]one of those things which precede justification, whether faith or works, merit the grace of justification; for if it is by grace, it is not now by works; otherwise, as the Apostle [Paul] says, grace is no more grace" (Decree on Justification 8, citing Rom. 11:6).

The Catholic Church teaches only Christ is capable of meriting in the strict sense—mere man cannot (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2007). The most merit humans can have is condign—when, under the impetus of God's grace, they perform acts which please him and which he has promised to reward (Rom. 2:6–11, Gal. 6:6–10). Thus God's grace and his promise form the foundation for all human merit (CCC 2008).

Virtually all of this is agreed to by Protestants, who recognize that, under the impetus of God's grace, Christians do perform acts which are pleasing to God and which God has promised to reward, meaning that they fit the definition of merit. When faced with this, Protestants are forced to admit the truth of the Catholic position—although, contrary to Paul's command (2 Tim. 2:14), they may still dispute the terminology.

Thus the Lutheran Book of Concord admits: "We are not putting forward an empty quibble about the term 'reward.' . . . We grant that eternal life is a reward because it is something that is owed—not because of our merits [in the strict sense] but because of the promise [of God]. We have shown above that justification is strictly a gift of God; it is a thing promised. To this gift the promise of eternal life has been added" (p. 162).

The following passages illustrate what the Church Fathers had to say on the relationship between merit and grace.

Source: <http://www.catholic.com>

Ministry Announcements

MEDICAL MISSION: February 18-22 -
Infanta, Quezon - Medical & Non-medical
volunteers needed. Please contact:
Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

SINGLE's: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

To help run Game booths, food stalls, popcorn machines and more.

WHO: Savannah Savannah Sights Charitable Foundation Indoor Fest – Fund Raising for Blind Children and Kids with Special Needs and their Families

WHERE: Kearny, NJ

WHEN: Saturday and Sunday – February 23 and 24

Interested parties, please contact: Lee Ann Aguila (laguila@gmail.com), Eric Crus (jcruser@gmail.com), Natasha Montecarlos (natasha_montesclaros@yahoo.com)

WORD: Share your **walk/faith/transformation** in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.). Email to rguiao@yahoo.com; cblmont@hotmail.com

MLA: Marriage ENcounter # 31

Venue: Mary Immaculate Center
300 Cherryville Road
Northampton, PA 18067

Date: May 30 to June 1, 2008

Contact: Norie and Miriam Abes ME# 30
class shepherd (973)960-3711 or Gary and Mil
Camacho MLA (732)821-4507

Application forms available at bldnewark.com

OUTREACH • BLD CHARLOTTE, NC:

Marriage Encounter #2 - April 25-27, 2008
The Oratory, South Carolina. Contact Henry &
Aida Koryan for further details (973) 709-1387

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report
for the Week Ending February 8, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &

All good giving and every perfect gift is from above.

Counsels *(continued from Page 1...)*

In that sacred event, Jesus was seen conversing with Moses and Elijah signifying Christ as the fulfillment of the law and Prophets. So glorious and sacred was that moment that Jesus was transfigured and the glory of God radiated about Him. When Peter saw the magnificent scene unfolding, he said Master, it is good that we are here. If you wish I will make three tents here one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. Verse 4. The moment Peter began talking, the vision disappeared and only Jesus was visible. The heavenly Father immediately corrected Peter saying, This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him. Verse 5. It is not clear what Peter's intention was but this scenario points to Peter's spontaneous reference to himself rather than to listen to what the Lord wants him to do.

In 2 Tim 1, we are admonished to seek God with all our hearts and wait upon His will, to bear our share of hardship and suffering for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God. In Gen 12:1, A glimpse of God's providential power is seen in the story of Abraham. God said: Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. Then God gave this promise: I will make you a great nation and I will bless you .. all the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you. Verse 3. In complete faith, obedience and submission to God, he uprooted his family and traveled for generations. He obeyed without hesitation, trusting and bowing to the will of the Father. Abraham not only deepened his relationship with God but also demonstrated his readiness to be a great leader of God's people. To this day, Abraham's prodigious blessings are still being fulfilled.

When a person submits himself to God and the workings of the Holy Spirit, a transformation or transfiguration takes place. The change or metanoia brings about a radiance that glows within a person. Jesus wants us to be transfigured and he wants our heart to shine like the sun and be dazzling bright just like His

Let us take the Words of our Heavenly Father for ourselves this weekend. Let us hear them as if we are alone with Jesus in the mountain of transfiguration – dazzling white before us – as we hear: This is My Beloved Son, LISTEN TO HIM.

DIRECTION:

1. Spend more time listening to God by reflecting on His Word
2. Be willing to step out of your comfort zones to serve Him
3. Be transformed into the righteousness of Christ

Schedule of TEACHINGS

Feb 15 - Friday

- **Mark 10, John 6, Youth Teachings**
- **BBS - Word of God - Singles**

Feb 16- Saturday

- **Prayer Leadership**
- **Understanding Corporate Worship**
LSS 27

Feb 22 - Friday

- **Golden Years**
 - **Intercessory Formation**
 - **Service Formation**
 - Ministry Teachings
- **Solo Parents**
 - Four Basic Truths

March 1- Saturday

- **Christian Maturity Program I -LSS 28**

March 15 - Saturday

- **Advance Intercession & Spiritual Warfare - LSS 27**
- **Encounter with Jesus - LSS 28 & LSS 29**
- **Seven Anointings of Intercession**
 - Post Covenantal

NOTE: Friday teachings - after worship
Saturday teachings - 1-6pm St. Mary's

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Abraham & Sarah - A Journey of Love

Sight & Sound - Living Waters Theatre

Lancaster, PA • May 3, 2008 • Saturday, 1:00 pm
show, Payment due March 28

Ticket + bus fare - Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00
Child (3-12) \$42.00

For tickets only - Adults \$33.00 Teen (13-18) \$16.00
Child (3-12) \$12.00

Seating arrangements based on date payment is received. For details, contact Frank/Malou Venadas, 973-562-0055 or email bobbitski@hotmail.com

TENEBRAE (Latin for "Shadows")

WHAT: A time for quiet reflection on the Passion of Christ • **WHEN:** March 19, 2008; 8:00pm (Holy Wednesday) • **WHERE:** St. Mary's Parish (Church) • **WHO:** BLD NEWARK and St. Marks/St. Mary's Parishioners

Please Invite Relatives And Friends

Sponsored By: BLD Mission And Evangelization Ministry In Collaboration With St. Mark and St. Mary's Parish



Pope: No Resurrection Without The Cross Reflects on Gospel Account of Transfiguration

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 17, 2008 (Zenit.org).- To enter into life, it is necessary to listen to Jesus and follow him along the way of the cross, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope affirmed this today after praying the midday Angelus in St. Peter's Square. He began his address by thanking those who spiritually accompanied him and the members of the Roman Curia on their spiritual exercises, which ended Saturday.

Then the Holy Father turned his attention to the Gospel from today's liturgy, which presented the story of the Transfiguration.

"The transfiguration is an event of prayer," the Pontiff said. "Praying, Jesus is immersed in God, he is united intimately to him, he adheres with his human will to the Father's will of love, and in this way light invades him and the truth of his being appears visibly: He is God, light from light. Even his robes become white and luminous."

Benedict XVI said this image recalls the sacrament of baptism and "the white robes worn by the neophytes."

"Those who are reborn in baptism are clothed in light, anticipating heavenly existence, which the Book of Revelation represents with the symbol of white robes," he explained.

"This," the Pope said, "is the crucial point: The Transfiguration is an anticipation of the Resurrection, but this presupposes death."

He added: "Jesus manifests his glory to the apostles so that they have the strength to face the scandal of the cross and understand that it is necessary to pass through many tribulations to reach the kingdom of God. The voice of the Father, which resounds from on high, proclaims Jesus as his beloved Son, as in the baptism in the Jordan, adding: 'Listen to him.'"

"To enter into life it is necessary to listen to Jesus," the Holy Father affirmed, "to follow him along the way of the cross, carrying, like him, the hope of the resurrection in our heart. 'Spe salvi,' saved in hope. Today we can say: 'Transfigured in hope.'"

COUNSELS

Give Me A Drink

WORD: Ex 17:3-7; Ps 95:1-2, 6-9;
Rom 5:1-2, 5-8; Jn 4:5-42


ORDER: *Ask the Lord and He will give you living water.* (Jn 4:10b)

THEME: We trust and bow to the will of the Father when we are vessels to save others.

REFLECTION: On the 3rd Sunday of Lent, the Readings lead us to reflect on the theme of WATER. We read words like thirst, river, drink, well, bucket, cistern; of a spring welling up.

The Gospel scene opens with Jesus, tired and thirsty from his journey, saying to a Samaritan woman at the well, "*Give me a drink.*" It does not take long before the conversation turns to the Lord making His pronouncement, which is our Promise for this week, of some special water that will become "*a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*" Before long, the Lord has turned the situation around and it is the woman who is now asking Him, "*Sir, give me this water!*" (Jn 4:7-15)

Our BLD global worship theme for this week goes beyond our need for water and reminds us to demonstrate our discipleship in Christ when we serve as vessels for the salvation of others. As he did the Samaritan woman, Jesus invites us to **drink of the Spirit**, the only source that will never run dry; the deeper we drink from this well, the more abundantly it flows and the greater our capacity to drink from it.

 page 4

Promise of the Week

"Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (Jn 4:14)

In Search of Authentic Witnesses

Jesus said: *"The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice."* (Mt 23:3) Jesus reprimanded them, said: *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites."* The phrase "Woe to you" was repeated seven times (Mt 23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29).

This scripture passage often leads me to focus on the wrongdoings of others, especially those that I considered to be entrusted with pastoral or leadership responsibilities in community. I find myself often disappointed with those who have awe-inspired me in my spiritual journey, seeing them and knowing them up close, noticed their imperfections. I placed them on pedestals, hoping that their light will lead me out of my darkness, where I often stumble and fall. I felt misled when their lamps start to flicker and sometimes extinguished.

Often I stood behind Jesus, conveniently invoking His Name, echoing His reprimand "Woe to you!" and felt justified in pointing finger at others.

Witnessing exchanges of unkind words and cold-heartedness, I felt like a young helpless child witnessing disputes between parents and siblings, crushing my heart. I asked myself "Do I really want to continue to be part of this family?" In disgust, I lost interest in attending worship, convinced that I have nothing to gain by attending worship.

I searched for authentic witnesses to keep my hope alive. My faith and my hope rekindled when I witnessed moments of affections between two young brothers in the Youth Ministry. I listened to an ME couple who were inspired to join the community because they witnessed transformation in their son who attended SE. Singles Ministry members who encouraged one another to grow in their faith by attending the CDFP inspired me.

I found inspiration in RCIA catechumens and a corporate executive who were self-professed atheist, hungering for Truth and found the Catholic Church. I was deeply inspired by the zeal of those who shared their God-given gifts with others in the parish.

After I found these witnesses, some of their lamps started to flicker... my hope was dampened once again. Jesus spoke to my heart, said: "Come follow me."

As I followed Jesus, who was carrying His cross through the narrow streets, I watched in horror the indignities and tortures that Jesus was subjected to... then I saw myself as one of those in the crowd... no different from them.

Lord Jesus, in self-righteousness, I rendered judgments against others, spoken unkind words and turned cold-hearted, Lord have mercy. Lord Jesus, I planted the seed of division in others' hearts, led them into darkness away from You, Christ have mercy. Lord Jesus, I am a sinner and an unworthy servant, Lord have mercy.

Christian Discipleship

Daily living is a constant challenge. Oftentimes, we get wrapped up in our jobs or school works, our home chores, our personal and family responsibilities, our social activities, even in the demands of our respective community ministries. In our desire to find our life's meaning, we ponder on our role and our purpose in what we do. Our quest for peace, happiness and wellbeing seems to be elusive.

Jesus offers us the antidote for our daily struggles. He said: *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."* (Mt 11:28-30)

In our childhood we learned in our Catechism class that God made us for Himself and our purpose in life is to know God, love God and serve God. Jesus invites us to seek Him, abide by Him and learn from Him...to recognize His meekness and humility and to imitate Him, so that we may grow in meekness, humility and obedience. We need to open ourselves to the grace of the Holy Spirit to guide us and lead us to the Living Water and the Bread of Life where our thirst is quenched and our hunger satisfied. The yoke of our sinful desires enslaves us and oppresses us. The cross that we embrace is not an empty cross, because there we shall find the crucified Savior, who patiently awaits us. There we will experience freedom from wants.

The Book of Sirach 15:13-30, is a canticle describing the approach to wisdom through prayer, persistent study and instruction, purification from sin, enlightenment and ardent desire, the possession of wisdom (NAB Notes). *"When I was young and innocent, I sought wisdom. She came to me in her beauty, and until the end I will cultivate her. In the short time I paid heed, I met with great instruction. Since in this way I have profited, I will give my teacher grateful praise. Come to me, you untutored, and take up lodging in the house of instruction. Submit your neck to her yoke, that your mind may accept her teaching. For she is close to those who seek her, and the one who is in earnest finds her."* (Sir 51:13-14, 16-17, 23, 26)

The BLD Covenant Community, Christian Discipleship Formation Program (CDFP) provides us with the opportunity to grow in wisdom in the ways of the Lord. Through prayers and studies we grow in the knowledge and appreciation of our Catholic faith. This growth leads us to experience God's love more fully and more abundantly. Our love for God increases our selfless service to God and to one another.

Chair of St. Peter

February 22nd commemorates Christ's choosing of Peter amongst His disciples to be the servant-authority of the whole Church. Peter was the prince of the apostles and the first pope. Jesus said: *"And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it."* (Mt 16:18)

"He summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness." (Mt 10:1) Jesus chose twelve disciples to spread His ministry throughout the world and annointed Peter to head His Church.

Ironically, several hours before Christ's death, Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus appeared before them, promised an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who came down upon them on Pentecost, giving them the boldness and courage to proclaim the good news to all, including the Gentiles.

Peter performed many healing miracles like raising Tabitha from the dead and curing the crippled beggar. He guided the small, but growing, Christian community in its formative years. He started his work in Jerusalem and in Antioch and then in Rome, which was then the capital of the world. He never looked back; never again will he deny our Lord and put his personal being before the good of the Church.

The chair of St. Peter is a portable chair preserved at the Vatican and believed to be the chair used by St. Peter. The early Christians originally celebrated the feast of the chair on the 18th of January commemorating the day when St. Peter held his first service in Rome. The feast of the Chair of St. Peter at Antioch, commemorating his foundation of the See of Antioch, has also been long celebrated in Rome, on 22nd of February. At each place a chair (the latin word is cathedra) was venerated which the Apostles used while presiding at Mass. The chair refers to the occupant not to the furniture.

Peter initially stumbled when he denied our Lord three times, but still prevailed once the Holy Spirit empowered him. The same can be said to its succeeding occupants. There are a few leaders who stumbled along the way, yet our Catholic community endured the long tradition of being the one universal Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The feast of St. Peter's chair reminds us that Peter started the Christian community in Rome and the chair is the symbol of the authority that Jesus gave him. Peter was put to death and died a martyr for his faith in Jesus.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

SINGLES

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! To help run Game booths, food stalls, popcorn machines and more.

WHO: Savannah Savannah Sights Charitable Foundation Indoor Fest – Fund Raising for Blind Children and Kids with Special Needs and their Families

WHERE: Kearny , NJ

WHEN: Saturday and Sunday – February 23 and 24

Interested parties, please contact: Lee Ann Aguila (laguila@gmail.com), Eric Crus (jcrucer@gmail.com), Natasha Monteclaros (natasha_montesclaros@yahoo.com)

MARRIED LIFE APOSTOLATE (MLA)

ME # 31

Venue: Mary Immaculate Center
300 Cherryville Road
Northampton, PA 18067

Date: May 30 to June 1, 2008

Contact: Norie and Miriam Abes ME# 30 class shepherd (973)960-3711, Gary and Mil Camacho MLA (732)821-4507 Application forms available at bldnewark.com

OUTREACH

BLD Charlotte, NC, Marriage Encounter #2 April 25-27, 2008 The Oratory, South Carolina. Contact Henry & Aida Koryan for further details (973) 709-1387

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.).Email to word@bldnewark.com

TEACHINGS

2/22 Friday

<i>Golden Years</i>	Golden Years Teaching
<i>Intercessory Form.</i>	Intercessory Formation Teaching
<i>Service Formation</i>	Service Formation Teaching
<i>Solo Parents</i>	Four Basic Truths

03/01 Saturday

<i>LSS 28</i>	Christian Maturity Prog 1
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3/15 Saturday

<i>LSS27</i>	Advance Intercession & Spiritual Warfare
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<i>LSS 28 & 29</i>	Encounter with Jesus
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<i>Post Covenantal</i>	Seven Anointings of Intercession
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Note: Friday teachings – after worship

Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's

LORD'S PROVISIONS:

Weekly Collection Report for the Week ending

February 15, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission and Fast for the Poor

\$ 3,476.00

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Counsels from page 1

Many of us are heavily burdened, weary not only from backbreaking labor, with blistered hands from caring, but also burned-out from striving to secure divine favor with works. We try to redeem ourselves or keep in God's good books by what we "do for God." This commercial way of thinking is widespread, and extends right into our modern spiritual communities. Certain of good will, with utmost generosity, and growing zeal, people offer God more and more hours of work, or commit themselves to spending more time in pious service for Him.

In our sometimes-misguided zeal, we grit our teeth and charge on, working, instead of letting go and surrendering to God, which is also an attitude of faith and an evidence of our trust. The true Christian attitude does not consist solely in loving God, as in knowing and accepting the love of God. *"In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins."* (1 Jn 4:10)

We can look at Lent from another perspective, as a time when God speaks to the overzealous because He knows that when we do too much of His work, it destroys our inner peace: "Stop! Break off! Relax and find rest with me. Smile, let go for a while and know that I love you. Don't you feel it? I love you. Can't you accept it?"

He now comes peacefully by the well and invites us to deeper reflection, with His words: *"If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."* (v10)

Like Moses in the First Reading, we are constantly being asked to be the **vessels for this living water**, to *"Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink."* (Ex 17:6b)

Jesus is thirsty. He seeks us and comes to meet us because He is zealous and thirsty for our souls, for our love.

We are thirsty. In this community, we look back at our weekend Encounters and the start of our knowledge and thirst for the Living Water; for the Spirit that nourishes New Life, for the Word that slakes our thirst and hunger for things eternal and divine.

Many others are thirsty. *"If you knew the gift of God..."* But who will tell them, *next colm pls..* ↗

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mar 21	Good Friday No worship
Mar 28-30	YLS#13 St. Mary's Auditorium, Contact persons: Larry/Leni de Guzman (201) 757-2162 or Faith Ikalina (201) 450-6655
April 4 - 6	Life in the Spirit Seminar #30, St. Mary's Auditorium
May 30-Jun 1	Marriage Encounter #31 Contact: Norie/miriam Abes, email: normir01@aol.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Abraham & Sarah – A Journey of Love

Sight & Sound - Living Waters Theatre,
Lancaster, PA - **May 3, 2008**, Sat., 1:00 pm show,
Payment due March 28 Ticket + bus fare -
Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00 Child (3-
12) \$42.00. *For tickets only* - Adults \$33.00
Teen (13-18) \$16.00 Child (3-12) \$12.00
Seating arrangements based on date payment is
received. For details, contact Frank/Malou
Venadas, 973-562-0055 or email
bobbitski@hotmail.com

TENEBRAE (Latin for "Shadows")

WHAT: - A time for quiet reflection on the
Passion of Christ
WHEN: March 19, 2008; 8:00pm (Holy
Wednesday)
WHERE: St. Mary's Parish (Church)
WHO: BLD NEWARK and St. Marks/St.
Mary's Parishioners

*PLS. INVITE RELATIVES AND FRIENDS. SPONSORED BY:
BLD MISSION AND EVANGELIZATION MINISTRY IN
COLLABORATION WITH ST. MARK/ST. MARY'S PARISH*

cont'nd from left column..

and how?

The BLD Community Vision offers help for us to fulfill our Order for this week:

- We are Charismatic, blessed with personal gifts, spiritual and natural, innate or acquired, which we yield to the Word and Spirit.
- We are Caring and Giving, freely and fully of ourselves, loving and serving one another as we seek and proclaim God's kingdom.

DIRECTION:

- Be bold in witnessing to the grace of our encounter with Christ.
- Harden not your hearts.
- Worship the Father in Spirit and in truth.



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 10

Bulletin Edition

Mar. 07, 2008

Lord's Mission: Accomplished!



This year's medical mission officially started on Monday (Feb. 18th) and ended on Thursday (Feb. 21st) in Infanta, Quezon where we served the residents of the REINA (Real, Infanta, and Gen. Nakar) area of the province. Even residents of nearby islands came to obtain the needed medical care. Others who lived in the mountains had to walk great distances to get to the

medical mission venue.

The estimated number of patients we cared for is about 4,500 including 740 dental patients and 63 major and 78 minor surgical patients. As in the past, our Lord provided us with adequate volunteers and everything we needed to care for them.

The government officials, from the governor to the town mayors of REINA, were united in their support for the mission as they welcomed us with open arms. Local medical professionals supported us including student nurses who provided us with much needed help.

The rainy weather did not dampen the spirits of volunteers nor cause any major interruption in the conduct of the mission.

The mission started daily with an early morning mass and prayers with patients before we started our work. Vigils were held throughout each mission day. On our way back to the city, we stopped by at the "Kamay ni Hesus" shrine in Lukban, Quezon, to pay homage and offer our praises and thanksgiving for His loving presence during the mission.

As is always evident in previous missions, the workers were blessed by His Divine guidance and protection, as we stayed focused and united, one TRUE body in Christ in caring for the sick. His faithfulness endures. May all the glory and honor be HIS forever!

COUNSELS

Christ in us!

Word: Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

Theme: We imitate the life of Jesus and receive His Spirit when we do not live according to the flesh.


Order: Allow the Spirit of God to dwell in you. (paraphrase Rm 8:9)

Reflection:

"I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus you shall know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord." (Ez 37:14) Let's reflect on this promise from God and compare it to the various promises we are presently getting, as life, health, property, liability insurance policies; various warranties, employment contracts, retirement benefits, social security, diet programs, medicines, vitamins, just to name a few examples of this worldly promises. Let us all ask ourselves honestly how often do we all succumb to trusting more on these worldly promises than God's promise. It is not advocated by this counsel writer that these worldly promises are not important. In fact, they are vital to our existence here on earth.

Life is not just our mere existence here on earth. We are talking about our life everlasting. *"I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."* (Jn 11:25-26)

In Romans 8:8 Paul said, *"...Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."* As *"The flesh in its tendency is at enmity with God; it is not subject to God's law"* (Rom 8:7) Let us, therefore,

(continue on page 4) 

God's Promise for the Week

"I will put my spirit in you that you may live." (Ez 37:14)



Seeking God's Will

"I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me" (Jn 5:30)

Choices! Decisions! Discernment! Do we know how, and if it is the will of God for us? We need Wisdom to know where to go and what to do in our life. We often say, we prayed for this decision and yet we may be blinded and have chosen what we think is best for our lives and not what God wills for us, because we did not ask for His Wisdom and direction. It is also easier to see a lack of wisdom on others rather than on ourselves. Wisdom means having a clear understanding and insight, applying the Truth in every situation, discerning what is right or wrong.

Jesus Himself acknowledges that He cannot do anything on His own. He submits His will to the Father's will.

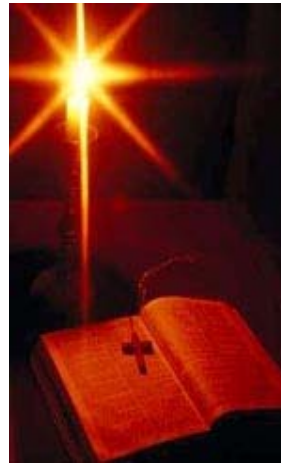
To walk in Wisdom, we must be in the Word of God by reading the scripture daily, reflecting and listening to God's message. When we receive His word, we treasure His commandments. We should apply our heart to understanding, and remain in fear of the Lord, to seek and find the knowledge of God.

If lacking in Wisdom, pray for it. Ask God for He gives to all and without reproach. Acknowledge the Lord in everything, walk in reverence and obedience of God. It is also important to listen to wise people; value Wisdom. Above all, be humble and love your neighbor. Strive to seek the wisdom of God not the wisdom of the world.

It is quite easy to be misled by others, and often we fall into the trap of judging others, because of our standards for them and our expectations. Seldom do we ask ourselves, "Are we just in our judgment of others?" When we seek our own will, we may not have the right judgment and thus we make the wrong choice or decision. Ask God to show you if you are receiving any advice or guidance from a source that is not of the Lord. Ask Him that you will not be led to any ungodly counsel.

Why do we need to ask God for Wisdom? To have a good life; enjoy longevity, wealth and honor; enjoy happiness; secure protection; gain confidence, and to gain understanding.

Simple wisdom can save our lives. We can't live without it and so we have to fervently ask God for it. *"But when He comes, the Spirit of truth, He will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming."* (Jn 16:13).



Testify in Truth

Jesus laments that His testimony on His own behalf cannot be verified (Jn 5:31.) Jesus will not accept a testimony from a human being, although John the Baptist paved the way for Jesus to be validated. There is no greater testimony than during the baptism of Jesus when the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove

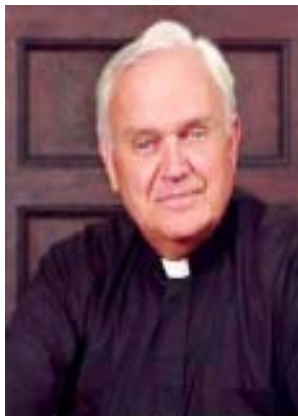
appeared and the voice of God the Father, proudly and powerfully declared *"This is my beloved Son whom I am well pleased."* (Mt 3:17) Nothing can be more powerful than this divine proclamation, all three persons in One God vividly present in one most divine testimony to the truth that Jesus is God.

God so loved us that He made man to His likeness. After the fall of man, God with His eternal love for us handed down The Ten Commandments to Moses as His covenant with His beloved people. Despite His graciousness and generosity the fallen man continued to displease God. Yet God so loved us and wanted fellowship with His creation; so for one final time He sent His last Ace, the most precious, the most significant of all, His only beloved Son.

Now, why should God the Father, send His only beloved Son to save us? Why would God the Father make Jesus both God and man? It is because of His endless love for us and His magnanimity. He made Jesus both God and man so His pain and suffering will be felt truly, in a level that humans physically comprehend; and God, as no human can possibly stand the suffering and dying on the cross, to negate and nullify the original sin incurred in the fall of Adam & Eve. Jesus as a man had so much trepidation of the suffering to ensue but heeded His Father as God, and in turn, testified to the truth of His divinity.

As followers of Jesus, we testify with our belief and faith. Faith is not a gift to the utterly religious, but to all people, available, waiting to be wholly embraced not just by our head but by our hearts. The joy and peace that comes from faith testifies to the belief and recognition, that Jesus Christ is truly our Redeemer and our Savior.

All these proclamations and utterances are useless without tangible, concrete and effective ways and means to testify to Jesus through works of mercy and service. BLD is proudly testifying to Jesus' divinity by edifying Him through evangelization, Christian teaching formations, mission work, pastoral care, and more. Being unified and cohesive, focused and determined to do God's will. Blessed with powerful charisms from the Holy Spirit, our charismatic group, exalts and testifies that Jesus is God and the only way to eternal life, and the reason for all season for our mission



Fr. Paul Speaks

I would like to take this opportunity to report briefly about the inter-district conference in Cavite last weekend. Apart from the theme of stewardship and the call to the serious situation of poverty in the Philippines, it was an opportunity to meet many other

dedicated BLD members from other districts throughout the world. It was also an honor for Richard del La Fuente and myself to report on the situation of the Church in America, and the impact that BLD and other evangelistic communities have upon the American culture. It was a busy weekend for me to also visit my GK village in Nueva Ecija.

The poverty situation in the Philippines is very serious, as you all know. I was reflecting upon our situation here in the US. I know there is poverty here, but often of a different kind. There is material poverty here, but often there is a greater poverty of spirit that can be more destructive than a lack of money. We may be fairly well off financially, but may lack a dependence upon the richness of the Lord. That is why one of the Lenten penances called for by many of the early fathers was almsgiving. The spiritual notion behind this was to deprive ourselves of superabundance so as to enable the less fortunate to live in a dignified way. When we are doing fairly well financially, it is easy to forget that the Lord is the source of our happiness. The materially poor can angrily resent the good fortunes of the rich, and miss the spiritual values of poverty. I have seen that to be more of a problem here in the US where material poverty is not as serious as the poverty in the Philippines. When Jesus preached poverty of spirit, he was referring to dependence upon the Lord rather than dependence upon material thing. The simple poor can teach us how to really live with total dependence upon the Lord. When material poverty deprives people of the basic necessities of food and shelter, we are talking about an evil, an evil that Jesus was opposed to. Thus movements like GK can be one of the answers that can help the poor live in the dignity that is rightfully theirs. The obvious plight of the poor both here and abroad can remind us of our duty to help, as well the opportunity to reflect upon our need for the Lord. Prayer is very closely connected to the realization that we need the Lord not only to put food into our mouths, and shelter over our heads, but to grow rich in the things that really count, a deep love for the Lord who became poor that we might become rich.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every **2nd Sat.** of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passiac, NJ - **Volunteers are needed.** Please contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340.

OUTREACH

Apr 25-27 - BLD Charlotte, NC - ME #2 - The Oratory, South Carolina - Please contact Henry & Aida Koryan (973) 709-1387.

WORD

Share your walk, faith, transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max). Email to word@bldnewark.com.

MLA

May 30-Jun 1 - ME #31, Mary Immaculate Center 300 Cherryville Road, Northampton, PA Please contact: ME #30 Class Shepherd Norie/Mirian Abes @ normir01@aol.com or (973) 0960-3711, MLA Gary/Mil Camacho (732) 821-4507.

SINGLES

May 30-Jun 1 - SE #20, Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY, Contact: Glenn Canlas Invazian21@yahoo.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Abraham & Sarah

May 03, 1pm @ Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA

A Journey of Love Sight & Sound

Payments due on April 4.

Ticket + bus fare: Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00
Child (3-12) \$42.00

For tickets only: Adults \$33.00 Teen (13-18) \$16.00
Child (3-12) \$12.00

Seating arrangements based on date payment is received.

For details, please call Frank or Malou Venadas - 973-562-0055 or send email to bobbitski@hotmail.com.

TENEBRAE (Latin for "Shadows")

Mar 19, 8pm (Holy Wednesday) @ St. Mary's Parish Church

A time for quiet reflection on the Passion of Christ

BLD Newark & St. Mark's/St. Mary's Parishioners (please invite relatives and friends).

Sponsored by: BLD Mission and Evangelization Ministry in collaboration with St. Mark/St. Mary Parish.

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Week Ending Feb. 29, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission & Fast for the Poor **\$3,538**

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

be certain that “the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us.”... “But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness.” (Rom 8:9) When we imitate the life of Jesus and receive His Spirit we do not live according to the flesh.

In the Gospel we are exposed to the family of the dear friend of our Lord Jesus, Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha. This family lives according to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lord loved them. In fact, “the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him (Lazarus)’” And yet when Jesus said, “Take away the stone. Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him, ‘Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?’” (Jn 11:39-40) We too need this constant reminder from Jesus that we have to believe to see the glory of God in our life. We too can we live a life free from attachments from the things of the world by fasting, praying and almsgiving. It is more about how we feel about these things than the act of owning these material things that is important. Having material things could be a blessing and a curse at the same time depending on our attitude or how we feel about these things. It is a blessing when we know how to share our blessings and it will become a curse when we keep all these material things to ourselves. When we reflect on the life of Jesus, he owned nothing for himself. In Matthew 8:20 Jesus said, “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to rest his head.” His life is dedicated to love and service to others. Life in community is an opportunity to serve one another with love and compassion. Like the early Christian, we can sustain our community through genuine Christian love, giving of oneself, compassion and forgiveness. Therefore, let us allow the Spirit of Christ to dwell in us.

Directions:

Let go of our attachments to the things of the world by fasting, prayers and almsgiving.

May the blessing and favor of the Lord be upon those who are celebrating their birthdays and wedding anniversaries this week.

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times, visit www.masstimes.org.

Covenant News is also available on our website at www.bldnewark.com

TEACHINGS

Mar 15 St. Mary’s 1-6 pm

Advanced Intercession & Spiritual Warfare	LSS 27
Encounter With Jesus	LSS 28 & LSS 29
Seven Anointing Intercession	Post Covenantal

Mar 28 After Worship

Formation Teaching	Golden Years
	Intercessory and Service
Motivational Gift Test	LSS 28

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mar 28-30 YLSS #13- St. Mary’s Auditorium

Please contact: Larry/Leni de Guzman (201) 757-2162 or Faith Ikalina (201) 450-6655

Apr 04-06 Life in the Spirit Seminar #30 - St. Mary’s

Milestone Survey for Newark Members

Our responsorial psalm for Sunday says: “Let your ears be attentive to my voice in supplication.” (Ps 130:2)

For the first time ever in the history of the BLD Newark, a community-wide survey was commissioned and implemented by the leadership effective Sat., Mar. 1, 2008. The goal of the survey was precisely to gather feedback from the community so that our servant-leaders can be more attentive to the voice of the membership.

All BLD Newark community members are greatly encouraged to participate in the survey. After more than fifteen Spirit-led and fruitful years as a covenant community, we need to know what areas we are good at and at the same time, where we need some improvement. The survey questionnaire is available online through the following links:

<http://bldsury.fastmail.fm>

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=z8RB9XdAwnqN41IDXgh3kA_3d_3d

<http://www.bldnewark.com>

A password is required. Please contact your Ministry Coordinator or Class Shepherd for the password, or you may also send an email to bldsury@fastmail.fm or call 732-754-7644 for further assistance. For those without access to a computer, printed copies of the questionnaire are also available every Friday at the Secretariat.

All respondents are anonymous and your name will not be required. The deadline for survey participation is Mon., Mar. 31, 2008. We would like to hear from you.

Won’t you help us?



THE JOY OF EASTER

Easter is the most important religious feast in Christian liturgical year. It commemorates Christ rising from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. The Catholic Season of Easter covers a fifty-day period. This year, it started on March 23rd, *Easter Sunday*, and will end on May 11th, *Pentecost day*, an event which brought into existence the Church of Christ and gave rise to the Christian faith on earth.

Jesus Christ has, indeed, risen from the dead. Amazingly, after His tremendous sufferings on the cross, He was raised to life. The empty tomb ceased to be a place of mourning and became a place of exultant joy.

The Resurrection is the crowning event in the historical life of Jesus. In the battle between death and life, Christ is the victor! And His victory is ours! However, there is no Easter victory in us, unless there is a personal victory in which love becomes stronger in our hearts than hate, moving us to forgive each other and to live together in mutual respect and brotherhood.

Through faith and baptism, we share in our Lord Jesus Christ's glorious resurrection if we fully share in it by partaking in His ascension into heaven. Pope Benedict XVI, in his sermon at the March 22, 2008 Easter Vigil mass in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican where he baptized Magdi Allam, an Egyptian-born convert, wove a connection between the resurrection of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism, the initiation rite of Christianity. The Pope said, "...from the abyss of death, He was able to rise to life. Now He raises us from death to true life. This is exactly what happens in baptism."

With Pope Benedict's word, let us take time to pray and give thanks and adore the Risen Christ, alive with His Divinity but above all, in His Humanity, in His Body and Blood in the Eucharist; alive in the eyes of charity in all who suffer. Let us say over and over to ourselves: "Christ is risen. He is truly risen."

Lord, may the life we receive in these Easter sacraments continue to grow in our hearts. As you lead us along the way of eternal salvation, make us worthy of your many gifts. Amen.

COUNSELS

Faith: The Salvation of Souls

WORD: Acts 2:42-47, Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24, 1 Pt 1:3-9, Jn 20:19-31

THEME: We imitate the life of Jesus and receive His Spirit when we profess that He is our Lord and our God.

ORDER: "Do not be unbelieving but believe."
John 20:27

REFLECTION:

After the passion and death of Jesus, the Holy Scripture tells us that the disciples of Jesus locked their doors for fear fearful of the Jews. The disciples must have been disheartened and lonely. Also, they must have missed His physical presence so much. After His crucifixion, on the evening of the first day of the week, Jesus came and appeared to them. Although He had the right to condemn them because they all abandoned him, He greeted them saying, "*Peace be with you.*" (John 20:21a). The disciples rejoiced. We read in the gospel that Jesus empowered them with the Holy Spirit by breathing on them and saying "*Receive the Holy Spirit...*" (John 20:22)

One of the disciples, Thomas, who was not present, refused to believe the others unless he saw for himself physical proof. The Gospel tells us that a week later, while the doors were locked, Jesus, appeared in the midst of the disciples and said to Thomas "*Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.*" (John 20:27)

(Page 4)

God's Promise for the Week



"Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

(Jn 20:28)



Repent and be baptized

Peter said to them, ***“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”***

When we received the Sacrament of Baptism, we were freed of the original sin, which we inherited from our first parents. However, we have committed sins after our baptism; therefore, we need to ask God for His forgiveness and receive His abundant graces in order to live His Word and be true followers of Jesus. When Peter said to the crowd, ***‘Repent and be baptized’***, it is obvious that he was addressing those Jews and Gentiles who were old enough to differentiate right from wrong and know the sins they have committed. Peter emphasized that if they asked for forgiveness and accepted Jesus as their Savior, the gifts of the Holy Spirit will overflow.

We, in the BLD community, were given the opportunity to repent and be baptized. Most of us, who attended the Life in the Spirit Seminar (LSS), went through the same process as with the Gentiles and Jews in those days. The talks we heard at the seminar reminded us of the sins we had committed and the difficulties we had endured in life. Also, it made us realize the consequences of our actions, inactions, and decisions. During the seminar, after being exposed in our own transgressions and sins, we were given the opportunity to confess our sins. With an open and willing heart and mind, we acknowledged all our sins before our Lord and lifted them up to Him. Through His healing grace and mercy, our heart, mind and soul were cleansed and transformed. The forgiveness that we received from our Lord was so satisfying. Finally, all the heavy burdens we had been carrying for so long were finally lifted from us. We went through Baptism - this time not of water but of the Holy Spirit.

All of us who went through LSS did not know how it was going to affect us. Baptism of the Holy Spirit was, indeed, a beautiful experience. During the baptism, as the gifts of Holy Spirits were being poured upon us, some attendees were “slain” in the spirit, some were talking in tongues, some were having spiritual visions, others were wailing and screaming, while others were just resting quietly and peacefully in the Spirit. It was such a wonderful blessing from the Lord! We are so grateful to our Abba Father for allowing us to experience great peace and indescribable joy, which we all know we can only find in Him, who loves us so much.

Let us pray that the Lord will continue to give us His wisdom, knowledge, patience, and understanding and the grace to use the gifts that He has bestowed upon us.

Covenant News is also available on our website at
bldnewark.com

Make the Covenant News a part of your covenant life.



Have you seen the Lord?

Mary of Magdala, many believed to be one of the Lord’s most devoted follower, did not even recognize Jesus after she distressingly discovered that His body was not in the tomb. She mistook Him as a gardener and said, ***“Sir, if you carried Him away, tell me where you laid Him, and I will take Him.”*** The gardener may have seemed like someone who is up to no good, grubby and filthy from tilling the soil. It was Jesus’ tender, all-knowing voice, calling out to her “Mary” which caught her attention, as she turned back and responded to His call in her most personal way of addressing Him, “Rabbouni” which in Hebrew means Teacher. She must have clung to Him then, joyful in His return. Thoughts of her Lord’s insurmountable suffering, crucifixion, and death vanished, because He is here now. Jesus then issued proper instructions for her to follow. Lovingly designating His disciples as “brothers”, Mary is to tell them that He is to meet them in Galilee. Mary stopped holding on to Him as He commanded, and she then set forth to do what He told her.

Many times, Jesus would not reveal His Presence in an obvious manner as one expects. In the recent Medical Mission of BLD, for example, I had to explain to a 55-year-old, feeble, dreadful-looking man, who came from one of the nearby islands, how to take his medication for hypertension. I needed to spend a little bit more time giving him instructions because it seemed he has some difficulty in understanding. I went looking for drinking water, so he may start the medication immediately. As soon as he took his pill, he gleamed a smile and said, ***“Salamat po ng marami”*** Tagalog for ***“Thank you so much.”*** Somehow, I am touched by his honest expression, and answered, ***“God bless you, po.”***

The missionaries of the Medical Mission start the day with holding on to Jesus in the Eucharist. Thereafter, they set off to their assigned tasks: registration of indigent people who came to avail of free medical, dental, and surgical services, evaluation and treatment of patients, and providing and giving instructions of their medications. All throughout, the Holy Spirit of God is working double-time, empowering, caring, and loving His people. How much so, as Jesus appeared to Mary letting her know that He is sending forth the Spirit, saying ***“I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”*** (Jn 20:17) His sentiments are like in Ruth 1:16 ***“Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”***

Oh, how wonderful is our Lord, compassionate, merciful, and generous in His gifts. He shows His face to those who seek Him, not by man’s own shallow absorption of hallowed people or places, but even in deplorable situations where God’s Spirit ultimately will shine forth in glory.



The Annunciation of the Lord

The Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th, is one of the most important in the church calendar. It celebrates the actual Incarnation of our Savior, the Word made flesh in the womb of His Mother, Mary.

In the first chapter of Luke, we read how Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she had been chosen to be the mother of the Christ, and how Mary answered, *"Here I am, the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me as you have said."* It is reasonable to suppose that our Lord was conceived immediately after this. Accordingly, since we celebrate His birth on December 25th, we celebrate the Annunciation nine months earlier, on the 25th of March.

Mary has an important role to play in God's plan. From all eternity, God destined her to be the mother of Jesus and closely related to Him in the creation and redemption of the world. She is united with her Son in carrying out the will of God.

Together with Jesus, Mary is the link between heaven and earth. She is the human being who best, after Jesus, exemplifies the possibilities of human existence. She received into her lowliness the infinite love of God. She shows how an ordinary human being can reflect God in the ordinary circumstances of life. She exemplifies what the Church and every member of the Church is meant to become. She is the ultimate product of the creative and redemptive power of God. She manifests what the Incarnation is meant to accomplish for all of us.

God had put Mary on a pedestal and therefore, has put all human being on a pedestal. We have scarcely begun to realize the magnificence of divine grace, the wonder of God's freely given love. The marvel of Mary, even in the midst of her very ordinary life, is God's shout to us to wake up to the marvelous creatures that we all are by divine design.

In families with young children, this feast would be a good time to begin teaching youngsters important lessons about the immeasurable value God places on human life. First, that He loved us so much that He chose to become one of us - to take on humanity so completely that He "became flesh", as utterly weak and dependent as any human infant is. Second, God became "like us in all things except sin" at the moment of His conception in Mary's womb, not at some later time.

The Feast of the Annunciation is a celebration of the actual Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

What better way than reading first the chapter of Luke to gently begin teaching children about the beginning of each new human life?

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit

Scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ

Volunteers needed.

Contact Persons: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

MLA

May 30-June 1 - ME # 31

Mary Immaculate Center

300 Cherryville Road, Northampton, PA

Contact Persons: Norie & Miriam Abes - ME# 30 class

shepherd (973)960-3711, Gary & Mil Camacho - MLA

(732)821-4507

Application forms available at bldnewark.com

SINGLES

May 30- June 1 SE #20

Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY

Contact Person: Glenn Canlas - invazian21@yahoo.com

OUTREACH

April 25-27 - ME #2 BLD Charlotte, NC

The Oratory, South Carolina

Contact Persons: Henry & Aida Koryan (973)709-1387

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.).

Email to word@bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Abraham & Sarah - A Journey of Love

Saturday, May 3, 2008, 1:00 pm show

Sight & Sound - Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA

Payments due on March 28

Ticket + bus fare: Adult \$63, Teen (13-18) \$46,
Child (3-12) \$42

Ticket only: Adult \$33, Teen (13-18) \$16,
Child (3-12) \$12

Seating Arrangements based on date payment is received.

For details, please contact Frank/Malou Venadas
(973)562-0055/bobbitski@hotmail.com

T E A C H I N G S

Venue: St. Mary's Classroom

April 18 (Friday after worship)

John 6 Teaching - John 6

Mark 10 Teaching - Mark 10

Youth Teaching - Youth

Encounter with Jesus - Singles

New Creation Realities - Solo Parent

April 19 (Saturday 1-6pm)

Healing and Deliverance - LSS 27

Christian Maturity Program 2 - LSS 29

Tithing - Post Covenantal

Counsels (from page 1)

We are told that Thomas immediately believed and he joyfully acknowledged Jesus and said **"My Lord and my God."**

The disciples were genuinely afraid of the Jews and were probably distrustful of anyone. Like the disciples, especially Thomas, most of us are quick to call for proof for anything out of the ordinary or beyond our experience. We don't want to be "taken in" by extravagant claims or wild speculations and so we make remarks or ask questions such as: *"I will need to see some proof."*, *"How can you be certain?"*, Or we say *"OK, I will take your word for it."*

As Christians, Jesus' response to Thomas, **"Have you come to believe because you have seen me?"** (John 20:29a), extends to us today. We are called to have faith and to rejoice even in the midst of trials (1 Peter 1:6&7) so that the genuineness of our faith may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' resurrection gives us a new birth, a new hope in life. Having faith in Him; therefore, gives us peace of mind and helps us to believe that through Jesus Christ, we can accomplish anything and everything. Having faith in Jesus means not only believing in His words, but in living His commandments and refraining from sin: cleansing our soul. St. Peter tells us that we will rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy as we attain the goal of our faith, the salvation of our soul. (1 Peter 3:9) Salvation of our souls, which is offered by the resurrected Christ, can be attained when we, as Disciples of Christ, love Him and believe in Him although we do not see Him. Jesus refers to such as blessed saying, **"Blessed are those who have not seen and have believe."** (John 20:29) Loving and believing in Jesus also entails loving and believing in His people: our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Attaining this goal of salvation of our souls may not be easy due to our human nature. We, therefore, need the Holy Spirit to empower us. When we accept each other and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, as a community, we will enjoy peace and live like the early believers who after being empowered with the Holy Spirit were not only joyful (Acts 2: 42 to 47) but devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to communal life, to breaking of bread, and to prayer. Like the early community of believers, who devoted themselves to meeting everyday, breaking bread in their homes and ate their meals in exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people, we, too, would enjoy such favor with God and the Lord will continue to add to our number everyday.

DIRECTIONS:

- * Attend corporate worships, living word group and word sharing circles regularly.
- * Read and reflect on the scriptures daily.
- * Rejoice in your trials.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

March 28-30 YLSS#13

St. Mary's Auditorium, Rahway, NJ
Contact Persons: Larry/Leni de Guzman
(201)757-2162 or Faith Ikalina (201)450-6655

March 29 Soup Kitchen

Blessed Sacrament, Irvington, NJ
Contact Persons: Eme/Imma Anyanwu
(973)342-9933

April 4-6 Life in the Spirit Seminar #30

St. Mary's Auditorium, Rahway, NJ

April 12 Holy Spirit Breakfast

9am-12n
Our Lady of Liberia School Auditorium
5808 Kennedy Blvd, W New York, NJ
Mass celebrated before breakfast
If interested please call: Angel/Aida
Calilap (973)284-1853 or Sal/Marie Russo
(973)338-1050

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending March 14, 2008

**Tithes, Love Offering, Mission
& Fast for Poor \$ 4,199.00**
Thank you for your continued generosity.

Last Chance to Hear From You

This is it! Monday, **March 31st**, is the **final deadline** for the BLD Newark Member survey! To those who have responded to the survey, our sincerest "Thanks." For those of you who still have not participated, you have three (3) days left to do so.

All BLD Newark community members are greatly encouraged to take part in the survey. Our servant-leaders want to hear from you. The survey questionnaire is available online through the following links:

<http://bldssurvey.fastmail.fm>

<http://www.bldnewark.com>

Please contact your Ministry Coordinator or Class Shepherd for the required password. You may also send an email to bldssurvey@fastmail.fm or call 732-754-7644 for further assistance. All respondents are anonymous and your name is not required. Let us all join together in contributing to the future well-being of our beloved BLD community.



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 15

Bulletin Edition

April 18, 2008

ASPIRANT'S RETREAT

"Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68-69)

Thirty-five aspirants sung in chorus in lauding and praising the glory and the triumph of God last April 11-13, 2008 at the Emmaus Retreat House in Perth Amboy, NJ. Each aspirant shared the belief that Jesus is the way to eternal life. They reaped the love and wisdom of God as they joyfully shared the victory of Christ during the weekend. Father Paul Lehman headed the group of officiating priests. He stressed that with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, true transformation should start from the heart, then the mind before the spiritual transformation eventually manifest itself outwardly.

We give glory to our Lord as we welcome our newest thirty-five disciples. They are: From Newark - Dhemie & Divine Alba, Ray & Susie Atienza, Marc & Emma Belmonte, Rolly & Nila Castillo, Ramie & Emmy Espina, Arnold & Cely Ocaya, Pete & Precy Pajela, Don & Irene Rodriguez, Al & Edith Rosales, Riel & Gina Sabale, Nestor & Cecile Vasquez (all from ME25); Joe Aboyme (ME24); Dulce Samonte (ME23). From Rockland - Johnny Salgado (SP). From Trenton - Armand & Elvie Atienza, Letty & German Butay, Jose & Rosette Lemon, Allan & Ellen San Rafael, Agnes & Robert Raymundo (ME5).

DISCIPLES ASSEMBLY

"If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His footsteps." (1 Pt 2: 20b-21).

Despite the conflicting schedules of all BLD activities, from Nursing Home visits, to Aspirants' Retreat, to the planning of Fr. Fernando Suarez' massive Healing Mass, forty-two committed and covenanted members exercised their time management skills, and faithfully found their way to St. Mary's Church Library in time to attend the Disciples Assembly on April 12, 2008.

(continue on page 3, col 1) 

COUNSELS

The Way and the Destination

WORD: Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33:1-2,4-5,18-19; 1Pt2:4-9; Jn14:1-12

ORDER: Let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ

THEME: God's Word delivers us out of darkness into His wonderful light

REFLECTION: St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church in his exposition of the Gospel of John said, "In his human nature he is the way, and in his divine nature he is the goal. Therefore, speaking as man he says 'I am the way' and speaking as God he adds, 'the truth and the life'". This is a loving reminder not to forget the ways and works of the Lord. In His perfect obedience to the Father, He stripped Himself of His divinity and wore our flesh so He can become like us that we too may follow as we dispossess ourselves of everything that will prevent us from becoming like Him, to strip ourselves of our faulty ways. Christ is the answer to man's sinful ways.

He crossed social barriers as He associated himself with the drunkards, tax collectors, the poor and the Samaritans. He was unafraid of the social consequences as He was labeled a drunkard and a glutton. This example is at the heart of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, calling upon the faithful, often in strong language, to engage the culture and evangelize it. Our community's designation as private lay association of the faithful is being challenged to assume greater responsibilities into the arena of mission and evangelization.

(continue on page 4, col 1) 

GOD'S PROMISE FOR THE WEEK

"To deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine" (Psalm 33:19)

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE



When we think the world is covered with darkness and despair, hope for happiness and peace still reign because of God's promise and faithfulness in his covenant with us. This covenant is sealed with love through Christ, the Lamb of God. His promise assures every one of us eternal peace, and comfort in His own home.

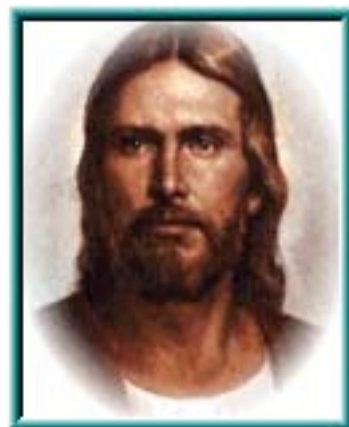
"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2a,b). God's house is abundant with things only made for the best of the best, for it is the home of our Almighty Lord. It is unimaginable to think of how extravagant His palace is, and even more, our Father wants to share everything He has with us. We are given a great gift, the promise to imitate Christ that we might live with Him forever together in the Father's house. God reserved a room for every one of us, and just seeks and waits for us with open arms to come in. All that is left is for us to follow Him with clean hands and a pure heart. For our Father's house is a sacred place with no room for unclean spirits. Therefore, in order for us to enter we must abide by following the ways of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Despite this, we often fail and fall into the devils clutches and tricks. We commit sins constantly, choosing to disobey and deny God, denying our Lord, and living a life so far away from Him. Our sinful hearts that choose to defy him will not be permitted in God's house to dirty the rooms He has kept clean for us. As He has promised, the great reward is only for those who follow Him.

Yet, even though we have hurt God severely, the room that He reserved for us will remain exclusively ours. *"For the Lord your God is a merciful God, he will not abandon or destroy you."* (Deuteronomy 4:31). Our sinful hearts are dirty, but God made a way for us to cleanse them. We should realize how much we have hurt Him, and be sorry for our transgressions. God's house is open as He welcomes and embraces a repentant heart. The world we live in, Earth, is a place to prepare for our eternal home in heaven. Christ became like us so that he could show us the way to the Father's house. In Him we can even create a place here on earth that is similar to our home in heaven, a place that is of God. A place where there is unity, understanding and love for each other. Through our Lord Jesus, heaven and God himself is really not that far away.

WHEN SHALL I GO AND BEHOLD THE FACE OF GOD

'My being thirsts for God, the living God. When can I go and see the face of God' (Psalm 42:3).

As I write this article, the reading for today aptly describes my sentiments about the psalm above. John 3:30 states, *'It is I. Do not be afraid'*. The story is that the apostles saw Jesus walking on water and they



were perturbed by what they saw. To calm their nerves, Jesus introduced Himself. I realized I had to ask myself the same question. Is it the same for me, that every time I come across somebody or something, does Jesus need to introduce Himself to me and say, *'my child, do not be afraid, it is I, your God'*. It is sad, right that somebody who I profess to know have to introduce Himself to me every time. It is sad that I can not easily recognize the signs that it is Him my God who is before me.

My spiritual growth is one that tries to quench a thirst in me to know Him more. Knowing means being able to converse with Him, know what He wanted me to do and I follow, be able to recognize His presence in all the I do that I should always think twice whether my actions or words speak of God being in me or not and if it is the latter, I better take a step back and not do it or speak it out at all. The ultimate objective of everybody in his walk with the Lord is to be holy and if we keep on falling flat on our face when we try to do so, tries to stand up, admit his mistakes and bounce back to be able to toe the line of holiness. All of us should have as our number one goal to be a saint the way my Lord is asking me to be.

Abba Father, in my walk with You, never let me go. Be beside me always that I may be able to toe the line when I slip. Pick me up whenever I fall down. Let me recognize Your face in every one that I see and come across with, that I will be able to treat these people the way You want me to. To borrow the lyrics of a song composed by the Jesuit priest, Fr Manoling V. Francisco, *'to see the face of God is my heart's desire. To gaze upon the Lord is my one desire'* and when that time comes that I will see Him face to face, may I be deserving to gaze upon my Lord's face and be with Him eternally. Amen.

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times,
go to www.masstimes.org

Apologetics

GIFT OF TONGUES

What is the gift of tongues? Do you believe in it? What do you think of the Pentecostal Movement, where people are supposed to have the gift of tongues?

The gift of tongues is one of the special manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit in an individual or group by which the individual (or group) speaks in a language that no one present can understand without a corresponding gift for "translation." It was not uncommon even in the early days of the Christian Church. St. Paul treats the subject at some length in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14.

There is some dispute whether the gift of tongues as experienced then, and apparently in a number of instances today, is a miraculous ability to speak a foreign language, which could have some missionary symbolism, or an ecstatic expression of syllables totally meaningless to anyone except another person similarly inspired to "interpret" the tongues. Maybe it is a combination of both, or even two separate gifts entirely.

Speaking in tongues may be a special gift by which the Holy Spirit's presence and power becomes evident in a group. One difficulty, of course, as St. Paul points out, is that self-deception is quite easy. An individual, or others, may believe he is speaking in tongues when the vocal expressions result only from a hyper-emotional state. The test of genuineness, according to Paul, is whether the experiences increase faith, serve a constructive purpose, and bring peace to the group rather than confusion.

Participation in charismatic (sometimes called Pentecostal) prayer activities seem to have helped many to a better life of faith and closeness to God. Supposedly, the gift of tongues has been experienced in some charismatic meetings, but it is by no means essential or common to them.

Source: Catholic Q&A by John J. Dietzen

Disciples Assembly (cont. from page 1)

The meeting was held from 1-6 p.m. Reports from the 2nd Inter-district Conference held in Manila, Philippines on February 22-24, 2008 were received from the DCS members, Mon Chan (Mission), Nestor Laxina (Evangelization), George & Cathy del Fierro (Formation), with special participation of Jun Isidro on behalf of the Belarminos (Management) and Fr. Paul Lehman, Richard Dela Fuente and Rene Castaneda. Each also shared their own personal reflections on the IDC discussions, with the central theme this year as "Stewardship and Servanthood".

A brief report of the 2008 Medical Mission held in Infanta, Quezon last February was presented by Nong Bustos (Medical Mission) along with a short video of the event. This was followed by a partial and preliminary report by Chito Ciocon on the recently concluded BLD Survey. The results of this survey will be further analyzed and used as guidance by our DCS. The final presentation was a teaching by Epie Ocampo, on *Community Building*.

Let us all continue to be faithful to our calling and serve Him with all that we have!

Community Calendar

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| April 18-20 | Marriage Encounter #1
BLD Allentown, Northampton, PA
Contact: Boyie & Stella Huelgas |
| April 25-27 | Marriage Encounter #2
BLD Charlotte, NC
The Oratory, South Carolina
Contact: Henry & Aida Koryan
(973) 709-1387 |
| May 30 - June 1 | Marriage Encounter #31
Mary Immaculate Center
300 Cherryville Road, Northampton, PA
Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes
(973) 960-3711 and Gary/Mil Camacho
MLA (732) 821-4507 |
| May 30 - June 1 | Singles Encounter #20
Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY
Contact: Glenn Canlas
(invazian21@yahoo.com) |
| June 27-29 | Solo Parents Encounter #10
Xavier Center, 23 Covenant Road,
Covenant Station, NJ 07961
Contact: Vic/Dee Lim (cp 973-865-4203
or home 973-226-2306) |
| June 27-29 | Youth Encounter #15
St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, PA
Contact: Mario/Cecil Salonga
(mcsalonga@optonline.net)
Steph Rigor (steffunee@yahoo.com) |
| July 11-13 | Family Encounter #15
Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA
Contact: Gene/Bing Ymbong
(732-254-7743) or Manny/Nette
Manguiat (201-955-0439) |

*Application forms for all encounters are available at
bldnewark.com*

Ministry Announcement

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month - Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home Passaic, NJ - Volunteers are needed.
Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max).
Send to word@bldnewark.com

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

We are asked to serve more beyond the limits of our community, from private to a public life, from ministry to the outside secular world not to become of the world but to be in the world that we may explain, defend and live the gospel truth with words and deeds. This is our true baptismal identity as a community to seek out to the very ends of the world. Many of us have been recipient of our Discipleship Formation Program yet there remain many unfilled jobs in our community's mission fields. There remains a huge gap between faith and patterns of Christian living. Our community perseveres and endures as God is waiting for those who are drawn to serve with intense spiritual commitment.

As our community direction we are called to a life of royal priesthood sustained by prayers and inspired by the Word to teach, to pastor, to shepherd, to share and to serve but often our busy lives prevent us from doing so. We can best serve when our kids are grown up or when we are fully retired or after a family crisis or when we get better jobs or when we don't have to take care of ailing parents then we are in a better position to respond. But we need to be clear that there will never be a better time or a better set of circumstances than now to respond wholeheartedly to the call to holiness. Who knows how much longer we'll be alive on this earth? We do not know what the future holds. NOW is the acceptable time (2Cor6:2). The very things we think as obstacles are the very means God is giving us to draw us to depend more deeply on Him.

Jesus can be controversial as he radically changed the social order. He is the only King who washed His people's feet. He could easily change a stone to bread or extricate himself from the cross, but instead he gave us the greatest love of all. The way of the cross revealed to us the truth and gave us life.

His kingship and authority He shares to leaders of community. Scott Peck the author of a book "Different Drums" described "a true community as a community of All leaders". We are all leaders, therefore, we can all lead to love and serve each other to lead to forgive and to acknowledge our brokenness and mistakes. That is a true exercise of Jesus' authority on the cross.

"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. I am going to prepare a place for you" (Jn14:2). This household is a house of rest with no walls of divisions nor with closed doors of indifference. Its foundation is built upon the wooden cross and living stones.

For all our members who are battle weary, bruised and limping in this journey, let us stay the course relying on God's strength knowing that ultimately we shall reach the house of God. In a sense, we are already there, because Jesus our Lord and Savior is with us. He is both our way and destination.

TEACHINGS

April 18	Encounter with Jesus (Singles)
Friday	New Creation Realities (Solo Parents)
April 19	Covenantal Leadership (Covenanted
Saturday	members, All Newark and District disciples
April 19	Healing & Deliverance (LSS 27)
Saturday	Christian Maturity Program (LSS29)
April 20	Healing damaged emotion
Sunday	Rockland District, 2pm
April 25	Teaching (Golden Years)
Friday	Intercessory/Service Formation teachings
May 3	Prayer Leadership (LSS28)
Saturday	Encounter with Jesus (LSS29)
	Growth in Prayer, New Creation Realities (LSS30)
	Circle Shepherds Training (Post-Covenantal)
May 16	Mark 10/John 6/Youth Teachings
Friday	Intro to Intercession (Singles & LSS30)
	Growth in Prayer (Solo Parents)
May 17	Agony in the Garden/Washing of the Feet (LSS27)
Saturday	
<i>Note: Friday teachings – after worship Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's</i>	

May the blessing and favor of the Lord be upon those who are celebrating their birthdays and wedding anniversaries this week.



THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending April 11, 2008

*Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for Poor* **\$ 2,861.00**

Thank you for your continued generosity.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Devote ourselves to deeper prayer and consistent and regular study of the word
2. Let us focus on our roles as teachers, preachers, sharers, shepherds, and prophets



Volume 14 Issue 16

Bulletin Edition

April 25, 2008

ME 1 Allentown: God's Chosen called to His Wonderful Light

"You are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises' of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Pt 2:9)

It was a joyous Eucharistic celebration that culminated the historic Marriage Encounter #1 weekend of BLD-Allentown DIP. The very first MEW was held on April 18-20, 2008 at the beautifully serene Mary Immaculate Center in Northampton, Pennsylvania amidst rolling hills and a bucolic setting.

There were eight couples and a solo parent who heeded to God's call and became part of the "first harvest" in our newest DIP. They are: Joe & Gladys Belarmino; August & Melody Cabanela; Margie De Arce; Rich & Sas Guerra*; Freddie & Evelyn Presto; Vic & Nancy Sandoval*; Jonjon & Alie Trinidad; Efrain & Cristina Ventura; Oliver & Jag Villavicencio*. The Holy Spirit was truly with the Pastoral team as they led the candidates through their sharing and reflections. They were: Fr. Pete Literal (Spiritual Director); Boyie & Stella Huelgas and Nes & Becbec Laxina (Presentors).

Many BLD volunteers from various districts, lovingly served the weekend. Brethren from Newark, Trenton, Camden, & Washington, DC came to support, encourage, and most importantly pray for our Allentown brothers and sisters who steadfastly worked to build God's Church in their community. Praise the Lord, Hallelujah!

Fr. Fernando Suarez's Healing Mass

"The hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord." (Acts 11:21)

There were over one thousand five hundred people who showed up at the Healing Mass led by Fr. Fernando Suarez and concelebrated by priests and deacons from BLD-Newark and neighboring parishes. The hugely popular Eucharistic celebration and healing service was held on April 15, 2008 at St. Mary's Church as part of BLD-Newark's mission to minister to the temporal, emotional and spiritual needs of others.

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COUNSELS

Keeping The Commandments While Living A Christian Life

WORD: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Ps 66-1-7, 16, 20; 1 Pt 3:15-18; Jn 14:15-21

ORDER: *"Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts."* (1 Pt 3:15a)

THEME: God's Word sanctifies our heart and leads us to holiness.

REFLECTION: Jesus prepared His disciples for His eventual physical absence, by telling them that they would experience His presence fully and intimately, because the Counselor or the Holy Spirit would be with them. He is the Spirit who will preserve His Word to the end and will bear witness to the good news Jesus promised. *"The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you."* (Jn 14:26)

The disciples who at this point, were still not clear in their understanding of the Lord's Divine plan, were shaken. However, before they could fully understand Who He was, Jesus gave them the assurance that, if they followed His commandments, the Father would send the Holy Spirit to live with them.

This 6th Sunday of Easter, we are being prepared by Jesus for His mission. In the first reading, believers escaped persecution in Jerusalem, were forced to leave their homes and were scattered to preach the good news about Jesus. What about us? Are we ready to lay down our lives for each other and to love each other as Christ loves us? There are times when we encounter the challenge of loving someone who is different; to love someone we do not like. This tests the limit of our capacity to love, but when we

□ page 4

Promise of the Week

"I will ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate to be with you always." (Jn 14:16)

Christian Persecution

Christian persecution started when the high priest asked Jesus this question "... Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?" - these words came out from Him - "I am." The religious elite in Jerusalem knew what Jesus was saying and it was very clear to them that He was claiming to be God. As such, Jesus was put to death on the cross for the crime of blasphemy, thus becoming the first martyr for what would become the Christian Church.

In John 15:18, Jesus said, *"If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first."* Jesus was even hated by the religious people of those times. In fact, it was these self-righteous people that ultimately wanted to kill Him. When Jesus sent His disciples into the world, He knew it would not be easy for them. They were going to be attacked and persecuted when they witnessed and shared Jesus with the people. In Matthew 10:16, Jesus said, *"Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves."*

Christian persecution was a dramatic part of early church history. Many of the early disciples, died because of their strong belief in Son of Man. Many throughout history have died martyred deaths for a religious belief because of the "Truth".

Modern day Christian persecution exists in all ages because of their faith. *"If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own; but because you do not belong to the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you."* (Jn 15:19) Here, Jesus has called believers out of the world, as they will no longer belong to the world.

Before we came to Christ, we were part of the world and were blinded from the truth, partaking of worldly activities. After we came to Jesus and decided to give our lives to Him, we immediately gained an enemy - the devil. His goal is to take our focus off Jesus and he often uses persecution to distract us, by putting us on trial.

The beautiful thing is that Jesus did not leave us as helpless orphans. He sent His Holy Spirit to empower us. We should not be afraid of modern day Christian persecution. Jesus made an astonishing statement that we have to keep in our minds all the time: *"Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father."* (Mt 10:32-33)

Persecution is a privilege because of our belief in God and is a consequence of our choice to be on the part of the light. We impact others when we shine God's light into the world. So if we are faced with some challenges in our walk with the Lord, just remember these letters "WWJD?" By putting ourselves in that state of grace, to which Jesus Christ and his martyred disciples had perfected, we may be true witnesses to others.

Empowerment

"But find some capable men who fear God and hate bribes... They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you." (Ex 18:21, 24)

As we have seen in our ME weekends, the Lord blesses the community's work with fruitfulness in terms of new members. Community growth in turn requires a commensurate increase in the number of servants giving of their talents, time and resources. We need all of our members to answer the call to servanthood and to participation in the life and mission of the community.

Given our community's rapid growth, the work of the Lord must be entrusted and shared with other members of our community. The members should in turn trust in God and accept their share of the Lord's work. The act of trusting, sharing and acceptance of responsibilities is called "empowerment". It is the responsibility of our servant leaders to assess the gifts of the members so they could be used for the benefit of the whole body. They are also responsible for the formation of disciples who will be anointed to lead our community in the future.

The perfect example of empowerment is our Lord Jesus Christ. In Scriptures, we see how He received empowerment from the Holy Spirit and how He selected, taught, trained and empowered His disciples:

- Prayer – After receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit during His baptism, Jesus went to the desert where He fasted and prayed for many days. Hungry but filled with the Holy Spirit, He resisted the devil. He wholeheartedly embraced His mission from the Father.
- Selection of disciples – Jesus did not pick the learned and the rich but the lowly and the sinners. He does not call the qualified but qualifies those He has called. He prayed overnight before selecting the 12 Apostles.
- Teaching – He taught the disciples by word and deed.
- Witnessing – Jesus practiced what He preached.
- Patience – the Lord explained the meaning of the parables and other aspects of His teaching that His followers could not understand.
- Servant leadership – He said, "whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first shall be your slave. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve." (Mt 21:20)
- Condition for discipleship – He said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross and follow me." (Lk 9:27)
- Work definition – He defined their initial mission work. "Do not go into pagan territory or Samaritan town but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Mt 10:5ff)
- Empowerment – "He gave them power and authority" to do the work." (Lk 9:1)

"Now the body is not a single part but many... If one part suffers, all parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy." (1 Cor 12:14, 26)

Mark the Evangelist

Mark the Evangelist is traditionally believed to be the author of the Gospel of Mark and a companion of Peter. He also accompanied Paul and Barnabas in Paul's first journey. After a sharp dispute, Barnabas separated from Paul, taking Mark to Cyprus (Acts 15:36-40). Ironically, this separation helped bring along the creation of the Gospel of Mark. Later, Paul calls upon the services of Mark, the kinsman of Barnabas, and Mark is named as Paul's fellow worker.

He is believed to be the first Pope of Alexandria by both the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Greek Church of Alexandria, and thus the founder of Christianity in Africa. His evangelistic symbol is the lion.

Traditionally the Pentapolis of North Africa is believed to be where Saint Mark was born and he returned to Pentapolis after preaching with Saint Paul Colosse (Col 4:10) and Rome (Phil 24; 2 Tim 4:11); from Pentapolis he made his way to Alexandria.

Though it is possible that some uses of the name "Mark" in the New Testament refer to different people, it is also possible that they are one and the same person. In this interpretation, John Mark in Acts 12:12,25, 15:37, mentioned simply as John in Acts 13:5, 13:13 and as Mark in Acts 15:39, is the same person as the Mark mentioned in Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11, Philemon 24 and 1 Peter 5:13. Mark of the Pauline Epistles is specified as a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10); this would explain Barnabas' special attachment to the Mark of Acts over whom he disputed with Paul (Acts 15:37-40.) Mark's mother was a prominent member of the earliest group of Christians in Jerusalem; it was to her house that Peter turned on his release from prison. The house was a meeting – place for the brethren, "many" of whom were praying there on the night Peter arrived from prison (Acts 12:12-17). Evidence for Mark's authorship of the Gospel that bears his name originates with Papias.

A number of traditions have built up around Mark, though none can be verified from the New Testament. It is suggested that Mark was one of the servants at the Marriage at Cana who poured out the water that Jesus turned to wine (John 2: 1-11). Mark is also said to have been one of the Seventy Apostles sent out by Christ (Luke 10); the servant who carried water to the house where the Last Supper took place (Mark 14:13); the young man who ran away naked when Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:51-52); and the one who hosted the disciples in his house after the death of Jesus, and into whose house the

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION - Nursing Home Visit every 2nd Sat. of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ – Volunteers needed contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

WORD - Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.). Email to word@bldnewark.com



THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Week Ending April 18, 2008
Tithes, Love Offering, Mission
&
Fast for the Poor \$3,849.00

TEACHINGS

Apr 25 Friday

Golden Years -Teaching

Intercessory/Service - Formation teachings

May 3 Saturday

LSS28 - Prayer Leadership

LSS29 - Encounter with Jesus

LSS30 - Growth in Prayer, NewCreation Realities

Post-Covenantal - Circle Shepherds Training

May 16 Friday

Mark 10/John 6/Youth - Teachings

Singles & LSS30 - Intro to Intercession

Solo Parents - Growth in Prayer

May 17 Saturday

LSS27 - Agony in the Garden/Washing of the Feet

May 23 Friday

Golden Years - Teaching

Intercessory/Service - Formation teachings

*Note: Application forms for all encounters
are available at www.BLDNewark.com*

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A PART OF YOUR COVENANT LIFE.

resurrected Jesus Christ came (John 20). In Egypt, Mark the Evangelist is said to have performed many miracles, and established a church there, appointing a bishop (Anianus of Alexandria), three priests and seven deacons.

When Mark returned to Alexandria, the people there are said to have resented his efforts to turn them away from the worship of their traditional Egyptian gods. In AD 68 they tied him to several horses and dragged him through the streets until he was dead.

Counsels from page 1

obey Christ, His grace will give us the ability to love everyone.

Living a faithful Christian life today is difficult. We often have to explain and defend our views on abortion, premarital sex, homosexuality and abuses in the Church. As Christians we must be ready to reply and explain the reason for our Christian hope, in a gentle and respectful way. We should be able to give reasonable defense of our faith, by being bold and taking every opportunity to proclaim what great things the Lord has done for us. As walk with God, He will speak to us and let us know the difference between right and wrong. We should be above reproach, so that when we suffer, it is not for doing wrong, but for doing good.

“The Spirit of truth which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.” (Jn 14:17)

In our BLD community, the Spirit manifests Himself, when love and compassion flows abundantly within its walls, among its members. When we seek and obey God, we find strength and consolation, as we labor in His vineyard. The same Spirit that enriches us calls us to comfort patients in the nursing homes, feed the poor in the soup kitchens, help the sick as volunteers in our medical mission and serve as auxiliaries in our outreaches encounters. We are a community of faith; when we console and carry each other's burden, exhort each other to live holy lives and when we give praise to God. He is the God who was willing to call us His friends and who laid down His very life for us, to be shaped into people of the Cross.

“Beloved, sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.” (1 Pt 3:15a) This is our order as discerned by our District Council of Stewards.

Brethren, as we make the Lord number One in our hearts, our actions and our deeds should be done only to please and glorify Him. The Lordship of Christ should dominate every area of our lives, our marriages, possessions and occupations. We have to endure our trials and tribulation, always keeping in mind with the confidence that He is always with us.

Let our challenges become opportunities to witness to others about Him and to bring lost souls to Christ, with strong faith and patient forgiveness. We can witness that we have found God and bring others closer to Him. When Christ Jesus is Lord in our hearts, we find satisfaction by following the will of God.

DIRECTION:

- Keep the commandments.
- Bear your share of hardship for the Lord.
- Be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- April 25-27 Marriage Encounter #2 BLD Charlotte, NC The Oratory, South Carolina. Contact Henry & Aida Koryan (973) 709-1387
- May 30-June 1 Marriage Encounter #31 Mary Immaculate Center, 300 Cherryville Road Northampton, PA Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes (973) 960-3711 and Gary/Mil Camacho MLA (732) 821-4507
- May 30-June 1 Singles Encounter #20 Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY Contact: Glenn Canlas (invazian21@yahoo.com)
- June 27-29 Solo Parents Encounter #10 – Xavier Center, 23 Covenant Road, Covenant Station, NJ 07961 Contact: Vic/Dee Lim (cell 973-865-4203 or home 973-226-2306)
- June 27-29 Youth Encounter #15 St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, PA Contact: Mario/Cecil Salonga (mcsalonga@optonline.net) or Steph Rigor (steffunee@yahoo.com)
- July 11-13 Family Encounter #15 Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA Contact: Gene/Bing Ymbong (732-254-7743) or Manny/Nette Manguiat (201-955-0439)

Visit our website at
www.BLDNewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Abraham & Sarah – A Journey of Love

Sight & Sound - Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA May 3, 2008, Saturday, 1:00 pm show Ticket + bus fare - Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00 Child (3-12) \$42.00 Tickets only - Adults \$33.00 Teen (13-18) \$16.00 Child (3-12) \$12.00. Seating arrangements based on date payment is received. For details, contact Frank/Malou Venadas, 973-562-0055 or email bobbitski@hotmail.com

from pg. 1 Fr.Suarez

The Lord's faithful waited patiently as the long lines slowly poured in to fill the auditorium, gymnasium and Church at St. Mary's. Community members of BLD- Newark served tirelessly, undaunted by the seemingly endless lines of people who waiting to be touched and anointed by this healing priest.

The Lord's hand was with those who ministered to the sick and infirm, as countless people declared the Lord's goodness and mercy as they spoke of their healing miracles. May all the glory be His forever!



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 17

Bulletin Edition

May 02, 2008

Let Us Welcome ME #2 BLD-Charlotte

In a Spirit-filled weekend, BLD-Charlotte, NC Community held their second Marriage Encounter Seminar on the weekend of April 25th-27th at the Oratory in Rock Hill, SC. Five couples from North Carolina and a priest from Phoenix, AZ were among the participants during the faith-filled and uplifting weekend.

The class of ME #2 consist of Father Reggie Carreon, Chat & Ray Decena, Gigi & Joey Furigay, Richelle & Gary Stacy, Denise & Anthony Steele, and Joane & Martin Syquia. Bert and Lith Golanco were introduced as the Class Shepherds of ME #2 and Cesar and Ava Gordola as Co-Shepherds. The Pastoral team was headed by Fr. Eustace Edomobi as Spiritual Director with Chito and Arlene Ciocon and Francis and Aytte Pejo as sharers. The joyous occasion was sponsored by the Class of ME #1, BLD Charlotte,

NC who were supported by Auxiliaries from BLD-Newark and BLD-Washington.

Additional Mission Ministry Announcement



Healing Prayer Services

Resurrection Parish
St Bridget Church
372 Montgomery St.
Jersey City, NJ 07302

- **Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration** – Every 1st Monday of the month at 8 pm
- **Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Adoration** – all other Mondays of the month @ 8pm
- **2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration** – every last Saturday of the month except December. Prayer starts @ 8:30am.

Websites: www.bondoflove.org & www.2000hailmarys.org

COUNSELS

Feast of the Ascension of our Lord

Word: Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9; Eph 1: 17-23; Mt. 28: 16-20

Theme: To be a “living” Christ is to be a witness to His commandments.

Order: *“Go make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Mt 28:19-20)*

Reflection:

The Ascension marks the end of Christ’s earthly mission and His glorious return to the Father. He had finished the work He was sent to do. And as our Lord was saying His goodbye, the apostles must have felt very sad. However, He consoled them saying that He will be with them until the end of age and that He is sending the Holy Spirit who will teach them and give them wisdom and revelation. His final words, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,” has great urgency in meaning. Under the guidance of and by the instruction of the Holy Spirit He was entrusting them with the mission of making the love of God the Father known to others. Teaching them to observe all His commandments and to follow Him as His disciples. In Jesus’ absence the disciples were not to remain inactive or idle but to face the future with courage. Knowing that they have a vital and essential role to play in announcing the salvation that Christ had won in Calvary, and the dawning of new life. Although Jesus was no longer to be present in a human body, the Holy Spirit will be there to guide and strengthen them as they journey through life.

(continued on page 4)



God’s Promise for the Week

*“I am with you always until the
end of age.” (Mt 28:20)*

Household: SAVED!

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved." Acts 16:31

Shortly after the beginning of Lent, my firstborn mentioned to me that instead of giving up something for Lent, she had decided to give more of her time to the Lord by hearing mass more than once a week. I thought that was a very meaningful sacrifice, and it made me reflect on the depth of my family's faith in the Lord. I then recalled an instance when my younger daughter proudly kept to her faith. While on vacation with her non-catholic friend's family years ago, she still managed to go to church by herself in the middle of her vacation. At fourteen, she knew well enough to put her faith above everything else. These practices of faith reassure me that the Lord is undoubtedly present in my household. Yet, sinful as we are, the question whether this faith will save my household lingers in my consciousness. For me, the answer lies on the nature of our faith. I have observed different forms of faith. There is the kind of faith wherein we hold true all Catholic beliefs we've been taught believing this is our ticket to salvation. In remarkable instances, we put our faith into practice deeming that faith without works will not save us. Ultimately, there is that faith where we trust the Lord and rely on Him for strength and mercy. I would like to think that the type of devotion my family holds in our hearts is the unwavering trust on God's infinite love while allowing His truth to fill us. Along with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we have certainly come across a multitude of faith-bending experiences . . . serious illness in the family, discord in our relationships, financial difficulty, etc. Sadly, even our teenagers have to face situations which challenge everything they've learned from the bible. Throughout these experiences, we surrender to God's will; we lean on Him for strength and hope. I believe this is the faith that saves my household. Have we been faithful enough to earn God's salvation? The bible says, *"For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God."* (Ephesians 2:8). This verse reminds us that salvation is a gift, not something we've earned, and our faith is the means through which the Lord grants us that gift. Considering this, I am most grateful for God's gift, and will strive at making sure that my family continues to dwell in Him faithfully. In a nutshell, if I were to fill in the blanks to sum up the essence of my home, here's what I would jot down...

Family: Blessed Faith: Renewed Household: SAVED!

*Make the Covenant News
a part of your covenant life.*

Do Not Be Afraid

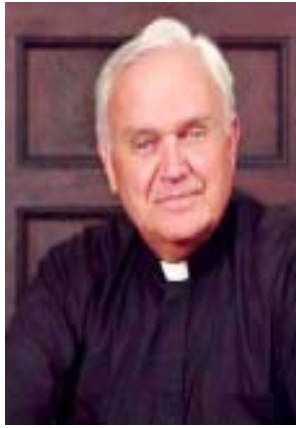


"Do not be afraid. Go on speaking, and do not be silent, for I am with you."
(Acts 18:9-10)

Often times in our lives we are faced with situations at the workplace or in our personal circumstances wherein we are asked to think, do, and say things that we know are not in accordance with the Lord's Word. We could have been reviled as Catholics for believing and obeying the teachings on the sanctity of marriage, the sacredness of our human body, the authority of the Pope to speak on doctrine, the sacraments, respect for human life, love for our parents, and the dignity of labor, among many other issues. We could have been told that we are out of touch with the realities of the modern world where personal and financial success is the main measure of a person's worth, no matter what it takes to achieve it. We could even have been threatened in subtle ways about the security of our jobs or discriminated against when we uphold the truth.

The message of the Lord given to Paul in a vision while Paul was in Corinth truly reinforced Paul's steadfastness in continuing to preach God's Word, even if he was opposed and despised. He forged ahead and continued to work and plant the seeds in the Lord's vineyard, spreading God's word with conviction. Paul was true to his mission as a Christian because he truly loved the Lord. The vision he was blessed with had the Lord's assurance of His presence in Paul's life so this re-affirmed Paul's actions.

The vision given to Paul is relayed to us through this reading so that we too would receive the inner joy and peace of knowing that if we "speak" for the Lord we are assured of His presence in our lives. We proclaim His truth and His love through our actions, our speech and our thought processes that enable us to make sound decisions. In our daily lives let us declare this by our very existence, being true to whatever we are called to do and going beyond our comfort zones. Foremost, we should focus on continually making ourselves worthy workers in the Lord's vineyard by frequently receiving the sacraments, attending Mass, soaking ourselves in the Word and communicating with our Lord in prayer. We must remember in our hearts that it is the Lord's hand that is guiding us in our work and all glory and honor should be given only to Him. Let us go forth in His Name, never afraid to speak what He asks of us, because He has promised us that He is always with us. Amen.



Fr. Paul Speaks

Next Sunday, May 11th we celebrate the great feast of Pentecost, the last day of the Easter season. This should be a special day for us in BLD, because we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always to be viewed as the gift of the risen Lord. The Holy Spirit whose gifts we ponder on this great feast can never be separated from the loving relationship between the Father and the Son which is the Holy Spirit, the greatest Gift. The persons of the Trinity exist as relationships, never isolated from one another. The life of the Trinity is a mystery because the distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit constantly interact with one another in an unspeakable bond of love. It is mystery because in the human experience we can feel love, but never love as a person. When God loves us he gives us a person, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is unity of love between the Father and the Son, and the unity of love between us and God. This is produced by the very person of love, the Holy Spirit. The two wills, God's will and our human will, can be so united with God that there is only one love, one will, which is God's love and will. In St. Paul's letter to the Galatians we read: "Since you are children of God. God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, calling to the Father." (Gal. 4:6)

The Holy Spirit is operative in every aspect of the Christian faith, especially in its sacramental structure. The Sacraments are actions of Jesus who sends the Holy Spirit into the souls of the person who is participating in the Sacrament at that moment. Baptism brings us into relationship with the triune God who begins to dwell in the heart of the Christian, and who makes us part of the large Christian family, the Church. The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens and enables us, as mature members of the church, to live the Christian life more deeply and begin to evangelize others into a deep experience of the Lord Jesus. The Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Jesus, brought into existence by the words of consecration and the work of the Spirit. The Sacraments of reconciliation and the anointing of the sick are health giving Sacraments, touching our minds and bodies with the healing presence of the risen Lord through the touch of the Spirit. Holy Orders and matrimony are Sacraments for the physical and spiritual growth of the whole Body of Christ. We are truly a "Spiritual" people, not because we are holy, but because we are anointed and consecrated by the Spirit.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every **2nd Sat.** of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passiac, NJ - **Volunteers are needed.** Please contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340.

Intercessors needed for the Archdiocese of Newark's Deanery 16 LSS on May 9-10 at Sacred Heart Church in Bloomfield, NJ. Please contact Angel/Aida Calilap, Sal/Marie Russo, Mon/Bingle Chan.

May 09 (Fri) 6:30pm-9:30pm

May 10 (Sat) 7:30am-4:30pm

Pentecost Vigil (BLD-sponsored activity of the CCR) worship and Eucharistic celebration at Sacred Heart Church in Bloomfield NJ. Please contact Angel/Aida Calilap, Sal/Marie Russo, Mon/Bingle Chan. Everyone is invited to participate.

May 10 (Sat) 6:30pm-10pm

WORD

Share your walk, faith, transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max). Email to word@bldnewark.com.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Abraham & Sarah

May 03, 1pm @ Living Waters Theatre, Lancaster, PA

A Journey of Love Sight & Sound

Payments due on April 4.

Ticket + bus fare: Adults \$63.00 Teen (13-18) \$46.00
Child (3-12) \$42.00

For tickets only: Adults \$33.00 Teen (13-18) \$16.00
Child (3-12) \$12.00

Seating arrangements based on date payment is received.

For details, please call Frank or Malou Venadas - 973-562-0055 or send email to bobbitski@hotmail.com.

===== **Traveling Catholics** =====

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times, visit www.masstimes.org.

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Week Ending Apr. 4, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission & Fast for the Poor **\$3,810**

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Counsels *(continued from page 1)*

Jesus could just have vanished into thin air, but He chose to bodily ascend into heaven. Letting us comprehend in our human way that He was leaving alive and that we are to follow Him alive. Jesus shows His confidence in us because just like the apostles, we are called to “go make disciples of all nations”. Our call in BLD is to serve God through others by liberating the family from the forces that work against life, love, and unity; by ministering to the temporal, emotional, and spiritual needs of the elderly, the infirm, the immigrants, and the unemployed; by raising an army of disciplined prayer warriors through worship, instruction and pastoral care; by forming and equipping small communities of faith that will proclaim the kingdom of God in their respective areas; by serving the needs of the Roman Catholic dioceses and parishes through our community programs; and by supporting the community’s breaking the yoke of poverty programs.

Although this may not be exactly what the Apostles did to spread the Good News in their time, it is nonetheless our way of continuing the work of those who have gone before us in helping build up the kingdom of God here and now. With urgency, BLD’s covenantal discipleship calls us to be disciples of Jesus Himself and this mission reverberates from 2000 years ago and transcends time and space. Just like a Eucharistic celebration is not just a memorial of Christ’s sacrifice, this call to discipleship is not just a suggestion to try to make disciples of all nations. In a world full of hopelessness and despair, even within our families, it is important for us to heed the Word of Christ daily and to let the Holy Spirit take control of our lives. Our commitment and covenant pledges remind us and will help us to do that. To some, how we live our lives may be the only way they will see and feel the love of Jesus for them in their time of need. Who we are, speak more loudly and convincingly than what we say or what we do. We are all called by Our Lord Jesus Himself to be witnesses of His Love, Mercy and Grace. May we extend that same love, mercy and grace to all that we come into contact with today and everyday. May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened and know the truth and the hope we have in Christ Jesus. And our prayer is that may He renew within us the fire of His love and through the work of the Holy Spirit we may know what is true and perfect and may we have the strength, perseverance, and discipline to continue the mission in Jesus Name. Amen.

Directions:

1. Live the discipline of our covenant pledges.
2. Extend to all the same love & peace that our Lord has given.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- May 25-26 Prayer Counseling Course**
Sat 9am to Sun 5pm Ramada Limited, NJ for Covenanted Members with group sessions in the evening. RSVP to reserve a space: pmantes@psands.com -Dens & Mina Mantes, Pastoral Ministry. Approximate costs \$40 pp (materials & meals) **excluding** an overnight stay on Saturday, multiple occupancy in a room (approx..\$80 for up to four people). Details to follow.
- May 30- Jun 1 ME#31 - Mary Immaculate Center**
 300 Cherryville Road, Northampton, PA 18067
 Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes (973) 960-3711 and Gary/Mil Camacho MLA (732) 821-450.
Applications available at www.bldnewark.com.
- May 30- Jun 1 SE#20 - Graymoor Spiritual Center**
 Garrison, NY, Contact: Glenn Canlas invazian21@yahoo.com
- Jun 27-29 SPE#10 - Xavier Center, 23 Covenant Road,**
 Covenant Station, NJ 07961-0211
 Contact Vic/Dee Lim (973) 865-4203 (c) or (973) 226-2306 (h)
- Jun 27-29 Youth Encounter#15 - St. Francis Retreat House,**
 Easton, PA, Contact: Mario/Cecil Salonga mcsalonga@optonline.net or Steph Rigor steffuniece@yahoo.com
- Jul 11-13 Family Encounter#15**
 Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA
 Contacts: Gene/Bing Ymbong (732) 254-7743 or Manny/Nette Manguiat (201) 955-0439
Application available at www.bldnewark.com.

TEACHINGS

- May 03 St. Mary’s 1-6 pm**
 Prayer Leadership LSS 28
 Encounter with Jesus LSS 29
 Growth in Prayer LSS 30
 New Creation Realities
 Circle Shepherds Training **cancelled**
- May 16 After Worship**
 Teaching Youth, John 6, Mark 10
 Intro to Intercession Singles & LSS 30
 Growth in Prayer Solo Parents
- May 17 St. Mary’s 1-6 pm**
 Agony in the Garden LSS27
 & Washing of the Feet
- May 23 After Worship**
 Teaching Golden Years
 Formation Intercessory, Service

Covenant News is also available on our website at www.bldnewark.com



News

New Covenanted Disciples

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph3: 17-19)

We welcome our new Covenanted Disciples who were anointed last Friday, May 2, 2008; Trudy Aboyme, Obioma Anyanwu, Ed & Grace Baiola, Gene Bautista, Kim Castaneda, Carlito & Arlene Claricia, Peter & Rose Cruz, Gon & Maria Dauro, JR & Judy Garcia, Ling Garcia, Ronnie & Mila Macaia, Earl and Flo Manguiat, Jerry & Tonette Pagdonsolan, Arthur & Josie Punla, Lally Reyes, Hermie Tenchavez, Ed & Eydie Unay.

We thank you for heeding the Lord's call to serve as His covenant disciple. We praise and thank God for His grace of perseverance and commitment which enabled you to complete the requirements of discipleship formation and residency in the community. The Lord has left us an example that we should follow in His footsteps, *"to do the will of the One who sent Him and to complete His work"* John 4:34.

Ministry Coordinators, SE Class Shepherds Anointed

New Ministry Coordinators were anointed on Friday, May 2, 2008: Witness Development- Richard & Lee De la Fuente; Word- Rene & Ditas Tolentino; Intercessory- George and Maryann McGherin. Earl & Florence Manguiat were also anointed as incoming Class Shepherds for SE # 20.

Singles & Youth Basketball Encounter

Singles and Youth Ministries had its first 'Basketball Encounter' on Sunday, May 3rd at St. Mary's gym. It was such a blessing to watch our male, youth & singles teams & even female Singles teams fellowship in a very healthy way. Welcoming the chance to shake off some 'pounds'. Bringing the 'old & new' members to compete in a very Christian manner. The day began with prayer at 10 :00 A.M. and ended at 7:30 P.M.

COUNSELS

The Spirit's Gift of Unity & Love

WORD: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104: 1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23

ORDER: Receive the Holy Spirit.

THEME: To be a "living" Christ is to share the peace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit

REFLECTION:

In two days time we will be celebrating Pentecost Sunday. On this day, God the Father in unity with Christ Jesus gave to His beloved Church the gift of the Holy Spirit. This very special gift is the essence of God Himself for the Holy Spirit is Divine Love.

We understand the gifts and works of the Holy Spirit to our community by the many wonders He works in us and through us. Yet, the most profound value of this Gift as given to us by God the Father and God the Son is that we have Him to possess. He is ours and we may freely make use of Him. The sweet familiarity with which the saints treat God as well as their confident boldness in drawing near to Him is ours as well.

To enjoy the Holy Spirit is to love; to enjoy the Word is to know. But just as the divine persons are inseparable, those divine joys are intimately bound together... Whoever enjoys the Son and the Holy Spirit attains the joy of the Father, plunging himself so to speak into the bosom of immense tenderness, into the ocean from which all good proceeds. (The Sanctifier, Rev. Luis Martinez)

Therefore beyond the gifts given to us to evangelize, we must recognize that the action of the Holy Spirit in us is to be deeply rooted in unity and love. These two exterior acts easily manifest the interior condition of our heart.

The spiritual health of our community is not the sole responsibility of an individual or a group within community
Continued on page 4

Promise of the Week

"To each the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Cor 12:7)

Follow Me

In the scripture of John, Jesus questioned Peter's love and fidelity three times. How Peter denied Jesus must have caused him a lot of pain and guilt.

Acknowledging such mistake, he humbly admonished his love for Jesus and submitted himself to whatever Jesus asked of him. Jesus even challenged him to abandon his job. After his resurrection, he gave Peter the jurisdiction of supreme shepherd and ruler over the whole flock. He became the leading member of the twelve disciples. He was commissioned by God to be the head of the church.

"Come follow me" the very distinct voice I heard as I recollect the night of my aspirant retreat a few years ago. There's no such coincidence that today I was asked to write this article. Is God evaluating my journey with him as a Christian disciple?

God created us for a special mission. We are meant to know, love and serve him. Our inabilities and differences must not be an obstacle in sharing our God given gifts to our brothers and sisters. Each one of us has given a role to play and every role is important. There is no small service to God. Everything matters to him. "Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 21:28) Therefore we must always be ready to serve Him anytime when asked not out of our convenience.

"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24). It is a fact that to be a Christian is a sacrifice. But the acceptance of sacrifice is the road to holiness. When we were young in the community we were nurtured to be a good Christian according to what God's commanded us to do. As we grow spiritually, we are taught to be a responsible shepherd and be a guide to others particularly those who are walking in darkness so they could see the light, feed those who are hungry so they feel the love of God. Let us be a sensible witness to others in the community. We must be disciplined with our commitment as disciples. Soak ourselves in prayer, love and service for the glory of God.

As we travel to this journey called life, let us always keep in mind to wear the armor of God –the best protection from evil. If God calls us to follow Him now, are we ready?

Lord, inflame our hearts with your love and remove everything that hinders us from following you. Help us to be a good disciple open and obedient to your Divine plan with grateful thanksgiving for Your graces. Amen.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Being a part of the recent YLSS retreat, I've come to experience the marvels of the Holy Spirit on an individual, one-on-one level. At first as a lamb not knowing what there is to expect from such a deep and profound retreat, of course I felt a mixture of anxiety and nervousness. Piled up with schoolwork from research papers to essays and note cards, I could hardly find time to reflect and talk to God. They told us to constantly read our little books and binders every week, but unfortunately the only reading I did was skimming through the pages thirty minutes before heading to BLD every Friday. Luckily, my shepherd understood the situations I was in and only told me to write my thoughts on the readings in a journal. With their help and the guidance of the Spirit deep within me, I came to experience one of the greatest weekends in a long while.

That Saturday, as usual I came in late and I really just felt like sleeping again. Still, there was something telling me to continually wake up and pay attention during the talks. Even when I needed to use the bathroom, it told me to stay put for a little while longer because the talks were important for me to hear. I soon came to the realization that THIS was the day of the Baptism. So, just as anyone caught off guard, I started to get enormously nervous. I was so tense that when they dimmed the lights down to start the whole process, I was still telling myself to relax because this was just the training part, not the real thing. At that point, as I was told to let go and let God take over and release me from all the uncertainties I felt. What essay? What test? These were all small things compared to the mini miracles that were going on around me.

Although at first I had doubts in willingness to accept that we are all worthy of His gift of love and sacrifice regardless of who we are, I came to grasp the fact that we really are valuable to Him. His perfect love is only perfected through us as we eagerly open up to receive it. Don't hold back on anything. A gift of His love won't be perfect if the receiver doesn't accept it, because then what's the use of that gift? Just take His hand and become refreshed through the Spirit. If you don't remember your first Baptism, I'm sure you'll remember this one quite well.

**Make the Covenant News
a part of your covenant life**

**Covenant News is also
available on our website
@ bldnewark.com**

One with the Lord

"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." John 17:20-21

This passage represents the central concern of the event of Jesus. That central concern is unity: oneness with Christ, oneness with others. Jesus' last prayer is that those who celebrate His love come to share it fully in the presence of God here and now and to be lived out in real relationships and real community. Jesus wants His life to be seen as an offer of relationship, characterized by love, a hand stretched out from God. As Jesus prayed, He was teaching the disciples and us about the importance of Christian unity, a unity that will help the world know God's salvation and love.

How can we, as a community, show the world how much God loves us by virtue of the oneness He gives us; the depth of our relationship with Him and each other? We need to love each other unconditionally, seek each other's good, and always see God in each other! We have to bear in mind that the Son dwells in us, and the Father dwells in the Son, which means both the Father and the Son dwell in us. Although we will be disappointed in each other, both because of other's sin and our own sinful expectations, God, nevertheless, dwells in each. Therefore, we can see something of God in each person, no matter how difficult he or she may be. With God's grace, it will not be "who's who" that matters, but "Christ in me and Christ in you". If we are "one in Christ", we can deal with each other on a new level. That implies respect, listening, honesty, trust, real equality. Our oneness as followers of Christ will transform us into the "other-centered" people who foster irresistible oneness. Such "other-centeredness" is what Jesus desires for us.

Indeed, God's glory is present in us for the purpose of oneness. Without His glory, indisputably, our community will fail to hold together. Without His glory, our love for each other will easily degenerate into hate and apathy whenever there is disagreement or misunderstanding. It is oneness in sharing God's life as love that we can stand and tolerate great diversity in our community, and it is through this oneness that we can fulfill our purpose of witnessing to the world God's unfathomable love!

Let us pray that the Lord grant us the grace to bear with one another and forgive one another. If we have a grievance against another, may we forgive them, as the Lord has forgiven us. May His Peace control our hearts, and may our community be a true witness to His everlasting love. This we ask in Jesus' Name, Amen.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.). Email to rguiao@yahoo.com; cblmont@hotmail.com

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit every 2nd Sat. of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ – Volunteers needed contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

MISSION

Intercessors needed for the Archdiocese of Newark's Deanery 16 LSS on May 9-10 Sacred Heart Church Bloomfield NJ

May 9 (Fri) 6:30-9:30pm

May 10 (Sat) 7:30am – 4:30pm

Please contact Angel/Aida Calilap, Sal/Marie Russo, Mon/Bingle Chan

MISSION

Pentecost Vigil (BLD-sponsored activity of the CCR) worship and Eucharistic celebration Sacred Heart Church Bloomfield NJ

May 10 (Sat) 6:30pm – 10pm

Everyone is invited to participate

Please contact Angel/Aida Calilap, Sal/Marie Russo, Mon/Bingle Chan

MISSION

Healing Prayer Services at Resurrection Parish-St. Bridget Church Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration – Every 1st Monday of the month @ 8 PM

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Adoration – All other Mondays of the month @ 8 PM

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration – Every last Saturday of the month except December. Prayer starts @ 8:30 AM

Venue: Resurrection Parish – St Bridget Church, 372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Websites: bondoflove.org and 2000hailmarys.org

Traveling Catholics:
For a nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times, go to
www.masstimes.org

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Note:

Application forms for all encounters are available at bldnewark.com

Friday teachings – after worship

Saturday teachings from 1-6pm at St. Mary's

Counsels from page 1

but by all of us. Anyone who speaks and judges brethren is already guilty of causing division and contributing to the weakness of the body. There is no justification for speaking ill of others for there is only one acceptable speech and that is the utterance of love. St. John of the Cross said: "Never listen to those who speak of the weakness of another. If someone comes to complain about someone, you can ask the person with humility not to say anything." This is indeed difficult to do since we are all broken and constantly struggling between doing what is right, what is not prideful, what is humble and Christ-like.

John Vanier describes sympathies and antipathies in community where "friends" are those who please us, shares our ideas and flatter us while "enemies" are those with whom we do not agree, block us or contradict us. However, depending on how we deal with these relationships, friendship in mutual flattery and approval can be a greater hindrance to our inner healing and growth than enemies who forces us to dig deep into our well-spring of understanding, forgiveness and love.

It is therefore critical for us to immerse ourselves in the company and knowledge of Jesus' most precious Gift to us. The Gift that will empower us to overcome our weaknesses and limitations. Knowledge and intimacy will enable us to move in unity with the Holy Spirit, to be sensitive to His leadings, and consequently discerning the will of God will also flow more naturally in us.

"As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ." (1 Cor 12:13) BLD, our community, was formed by the will of the Father and the action of the Holy Spirit. As in 1st Corinthians 12, spiritual gifts were poured upon us during our baptism in the Spirit, so by faith we know that we are mightily equipped. Equipped to do the work of building up God's Kingdom here on earth.

We must ensure that we remain united in community for this is the direction of our Father and the prayer of His Son for us. We must be committed to community so that each and everyone of us will be a strong link fencing in God's people, that we may be a refuge for those fleeing the assault of the enemy and a healing sanctuary for those desiring God's mercies.

DIRECTION:

1. *Be at peace and be united with one another.*
2. *Utilize the gifts of the Holy Spirit to upbuild the local Church.*

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

**Weekly Collection Report for the Week ending
March 7, 2008**

**Tithes, Love Offering, Mission and Fast for the
Poor \$ 3,743.00**

Thank you for your continued generosity

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 10

DLC Meeting (every Second Saturday of the Month) St. Mary's Auditorium from 1 – 5 pm

May 25 – 26

Prayer Counseling Course for Covenanted Members Saturday 9 am to Sunday 5 pm, with group sessions in the evening. Ramada Ltd, NJ - approx costs \$ 40 pp (materials & meals) excluding an overnight stay on Saturday, multiple occupancy in a room (approx \$80 for up to four people). Details to follow. RSVP to reserve a space to: pmantes@psands.com - Dens and Mina Mantes, Pastoral Ministry.

May 30- June 1

Singles Encounter # 20 Contact: Glenn Canlas Invazian21@yahoo.com, Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY.

Marriage Encounter #31 Mary Immaculate Center, 300 Cherryville Road Northampton, PA 18067

Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes, email: normir01@aol.com

June 1

Mark 10 Summer Field Trip – Land of Make Believe Contact: Reuben/Cherry Vibar (908) 206-8737

June 27-29

Solo Parents Encounter #10 – Xavier Center, 23 Covenant Road, Convent Station, NJ 07961-0211

Contact: Vic/Dee Lim (cell 973-865-4203 or home 973-226-2306)

June 27-29

Youth Encounter #15 St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, PA Contact: Mario/Cecil Salonga (mcsalonga@optonline.net) or Steph Rigor (steffuniece@yahoo.com)

July 11-13

Family Encounter #15 Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA Contact: Gene/Bing Ymbong (732-254-7743) or Manny/Nette Manguiat (201-955-0439)

TEACHING MINISTRY

May 16 Friday

Singles & LSS30 Intro to Intercession

Solo Parents Growth in Prayer

Mark 10 / Teachings

John 6 Teachings

Youth Teachings

May 17 Saturday

LSS27 Agony in the Garden & Washing of the Feet

May 23 Friday

Golden Years Teachings

Service & Formation teachings

Intercessory



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 19

Bulletin Edition

May 16, 2008

NEWS

The Deanery 16 LSS and Pentecost Vigil

Peace, Love, Joy, Unity... reflected among the parishioners and prayer groups of the Archdiocese of Newark as the BLDNewark-Mission selflessly offered and shared their time, talent, and treasure last weekend at The Deanery 16's First LSS and Pentecost Vigil in the Parish of Sacred Heart, Bloomfield.

The LSS was held in the school auditorium on May 9th from 6:30pm to 10:30pm and on May 10th at 8am until 6:30pm. The speakers were Fr Bill Halbing, Sister Pauline Cinquini, Fr Paul Lehman and the sharers were Nong and Tricia Bustos, Norma Lacsamana, Rene and Sally Castaneda, Manny and Judy San Luis, Raffy and Marissa Obrera and Long Cruzada while Mission Apostolate interceded for everyone present. Forty candidates of different ethnic background (Caucasians, Hispanic, Koreans, Nigerians, Filipinos, Vietnamese) were baptized in the Spirit. *"To each the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is given for the common good."* (1 Cor 12:7)

Right after the LSS at around 7pm on May 10th, the Pentecost Vigil was held at the Sacred Heart Church. BLDNewark hosted this celebration in preparation of the 'Birthday of the Catholic Church', joined by the many Charismatic Prayer Groups in the Archdiocese of Newark. Songs of praises and prayers were commenced by the 'Gatekeepers' of Jersey City with the leadership of Bro. Benjie followed by the BLD worship with Mon and Bingle Chan as prayer leaders. All songs, praises and prayers were so anointed and Spirit-filled that we were all united as one body, praising, praying, and singing with hands up giving glory and honor to God. At 8:30pm, Msgr. William Reilly celebrated the Holy Mass. How beautiful it was to be so focused in the Holy Eucharist! I felt like all our petitions and the desires of our hearts were freely given at that very moment. What a wonderful experience/celebration that was proceeded by a fellowship in the basement of the church! The Good Lord provides for everything. "To be a 'living' Christ is to share the peace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit".

"Dear Holy Spirit, we ask that You remain in us. Give us the grace of your presence, so that moved and animated by the truth, we may continue to work to restore compassion to the human family and renew the face of the earth".

Counsels

Interdependence / Unity

Word: Ex 34:4b-6, 8-9; Dn 3:52 - 56;
2 Cor 13:11-13; Jn 3:16-18

Theme: To be a "living" Christ is to be in communion with God and with one another.

Order: Let the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. (2 Cor 13:13)

Reflection:

Today is the feast of the Holy Trinity. We are invited to reflect on the nature of God, the great mystery of one God in three persons.

We as Catholics express belief in the Trinity every time we pray. We begin and end most prayers with the Sign of the Cross, praying in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. During the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, one of the most common greetings used is from St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Cor 13:13).

To help us understand this mystery, some of our teachers say that Trinity is like an ice cube in a pan of boiling water. The ice is solid, the water is liquid and the steam is gas but they are all H₂O. All three things are separate, but they are all the same thing and all at the same time in the same place.

Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

"Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you." (2 Cor 13:11)

Empowered by His Grace

“The Lord works in mysterious ways” – a phrase that we always seem to hear from somebody. His message to you will be delivered either through another person, directly spoken to you, or through the scriptures. In my case, it was the latter. The day can never be forgotten. It was the last day of our Discipling class. Our disciplers are getting us ready to be ‘sent off to the mission of evangelization’. It is also the day when we will make a decision whether to continue on to be a covenanted member and seal my covenant with my God or remain a committed member of BLD. Hm. Tough, right?

That morning, the reflection guide on the book that I was reading was, ‘Am I willing to follow the path of discipleship?’ (Companion – Shepherds Voice Publications dated 04/28/2008). Seems that the Lord is prepared to ask me the question twice – one in the morning reflection and another when I make that decision to sign the Covenant Pledge. As I grope around for answers, I turned to the feature article that was assigned to me on the Covenant News and it says, ‘*It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you...*’ (John 15:16). When I read that, I already knew what my answer will be. All the doubts and fears from my mind were erased because my Lord answered it for me already.

The mission to evangelize admittedly scares me. Am I ready? Should I be brave enough to face whatever is thrown at me? Am I ready to fight the enemy to ensure that the lamb that was entrusted to me will be led to the path of light that only comes from the Lord? Should I doubt myself? In answer, I definitely should because I should know enough that it is not I who will be working but it is the Lord’s. I should hold on to the promise that the Lord has appointed me to go and bear fruit that will remain so that whatever I ask the Father in my name, he may give me (John 15:16). There is no recourse but to hold on to Him tight, cleave onto Him that I can readily do the task at hand because He will do it and use me instead of me doing it for Him.

Lord, the task before me is enormous. Not with my own powers and strength can I do what you have chosen me to do with you beside me. Envelop me in your loving embrace that I can feel your arms of love protecting me always. Never hide your face from me because it is only from You that I can draw my strength to forge ahead. In Jesus name, I pray.

Amen

A Community of Christian Witnesses

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

The Lord fulfilled this promise at Pentecost, when the disciples received the Holy Spirit, and with the Spirit, the power to be His witnesses to all people in every age. As witnesses, the Lord’s disciples were called to become the sign of a new and permanent presence of Jesus. Jesus’ presence is intimate and visible. It is intimate because lives are united with Christ in love of God and love of one another. It is visible because their witness of life is a mirror of the Lord’s own witness: a life devoted to prayer, to teaching and proclamation of God’s Word, to the breaking of bread, to serving one another, to reconciling mankind to the Father.

BLD has been gathered together by the Lord to form a community of authentic Christian witnesses. This is our calling, our identity and our spiritual DNA. Our community’s vision statement commits us “to be a countersign to all that is at war with the teachings of our Lord, and to emerge victorious in living and sharing the values of our Christian faith.” As Christ’s “countersign”, we must faithfully live in accord with His values and teachings – which the world opposes. We must do this whether in active evangelization or silent witness.

For this reason, the District Council of Stewards (DCS) has tasked the Witness Development Ministry to coordinate the implementation of a two-part plan to grow trained and equipped sharers and coaches for our encounter and renewal programs, as well as to grow BLD into a community of authentic Christian witnesses.

The first part of the plan requires a more systematic and effective implementation of the BLD Witness Development Program. Among its key initiatives are: the recommitment and mentoring of current sharers, the development of new sharers and coaches over a two-year period, the review of all testimonies to align with Christian witnessing principles and to adapt to the needs of parish-based evangelization activities.

The second part of the plan aims to bring the spirit of our witness at BLD encounter and renewal programs into every day community life. Here, we hope to develop our members into every day Christian witnesses. In support of this goal, we will introduce a new community norm, as follows:

- Recount God’s goodness - We ask that you share the good news of what God has done for you in the past week to our brethren during our weekly circles and assembly. Doing this, we will truly be “*a people set apart to sing the praises of God*” (1 Pt 2:9).
- Return God’s goodness - In gratitude to God for His blessings, we ask that you do something good to others during our weekly assembly or in mission. Examples: service, prayer/blessing, greeting, hug, introduction, affirmation, encouragement, attention, correction, forgiveness & reconciliation. As the Lord commanded, “*without cost you have received; without cost you are to give*” (Mt 10:8b).

How Holy Are You?

When you meet Fr. Paul and he says, here is a holy man. Do you wonder how holy you are? What should you do to be holy?

The Scripture says that you must be holy as your Father is holy. 1 Pt 1:15-16. Not only that, you must also pursue holiness because without it one will not see the Lord - He 12:14

As members of a covenant community, one way of measuring your holiness is to review and rate yourself against the BLD eight point covenant pledges for the Disciples. Do you still remember your covenant pledges?

Circle the number that describes your performance for each pledge and add all the values of the circled numbers together	Range: 1(<i>poor</i>) to 5(<i>perfect</i>)				
EIGHT COVENANT PLEDGE OF BLD DISCIPLES					
1. Church and Community Life	1	2	3	4	5
2. Prayer Life and Intercession	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sacramental Life	1	2	3	4	5
4. Word of God	1	2	3	4	5
5. Worship	1	2	3	4	5
6. Ministry Work	1	2	3	4	5
7. Stewardship	1	2	3	4	5
8. Mission	1	2	3	4	5
Score: total of all circled numbers					

If you score 8 to 16 points, perhaps you need to re-evaluate your priorities. You cannot overestimate the importance of finding time to be holy and pursuing holiness now.

If you score 17 to 32 points, you are doing well, but need continuous improvements. As you take time to be with the Lord and His people, you should not forget your transformation and pursuit to improve on the quality of your time and service. You should not stop your learning process and continue to attend more teachings of the community.

If your score is 33 to 39 points, you are setting good examples and you should encourage others to be holy.

Counsels (from page 1)

Another analogy is that man is like a Trinity since we are made in the image and likeness of God, but nonetheless one. We are mind, body and soul. The body corresponds to the Son who became man. We being members of the Church are the Body of Christ. The Soul corresponds to the Holy Spirit. God breathed into Adam's nostril making us a living being. And the Mind corresponds to God the Father, where all the thoughts and actions flow from.

Those were good analogy but somehow, they fail to explain the perfect relationship of the three Persons into one God vs. the imperfect relationship of men among men. The relationship of the Trinity is perfect, while the relationship among men, although created in the image and likeness of God is almost always imperfect. Our human relationship – among individuals, family, community, and countries seem to be far from perfect. There is always disunity, competition, selfishness, critical spirit, deceit and many other signs of imperfect relationships.

Addressing this issue on imperfect relationship, from our second reading, St. Paul summons each one of us, as members of this community, just as he exhorts the Corinthians, to be mature, content, and in unity, which has not been a characteristic of the Corinthian assembly. He urges them to enter into a relationship with the Lord and reminds them of the availability of divine love and peace. Such unity was to be exhibited with a "holy kiss," a sign of peace and a gesture of love and fellowship. Finally, St. Paul also included the blessing of the triune God, and the key ingredients for unity - which is **grace** manifested by the Son, the **love** expressed by the Father, and the **fellowship** created by the Holy Spirit might be experienced in our community.

Directions:

- Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace.
- Believe in the name of the only Son of God.

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times, go to www.masstimes.org

**MAKE COVENANT NEWS
A PART OF YOUR COVENANT LIFE.**

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mission

Nursing Home Visit

Every 2nd Sat. of the month
Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ
Volunteers needed contact Nong & Tricia Bustos
(732)591-1340

Mission

Healing Prayer Services

Resurrection Parish - St. Bridget Church
Healing Prayer Service, Eucharistic Adoration and Mass
- Every 1st Monday of the month @ 8 PM
Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Adoration
- All other Mondays of the month @ 8 PM
2000 Hail Marys, Eucharistic Adoration and Mass
- Every last Saturday of the month except December Prayer
starts @ 8:30 AM

Venue: Resurrection Parish – St Bridget Church
372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Websites: bondoflove.org and 2000hailmarys.org

Word

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord
with the community thru an article (450 words max.).
Email to word@bldnewark.com



The Lord's Provisions

Week Ending: May 9, 2008
Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &
Fast for the Poor: \$ 3,203

**Note: Application forms for all encounters are
available at bldnewark.com**



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 25 – 26

Prayer Counseling Course

For Covenanted Members
Saturday 9 am to Sunday 5 pm,
with group sessions in the evening.
Ramada Ltd, NJ

Approx costs \$ 40 pp (materials & meals) excluding an
overnight stay on Saturday, multiple occupancy in a room
(approx \$80 for up to four people).

Details to follow. RSVP to reserve a space to:

pmantes@psands.com - Dens and Mina Mantes, Pastoral
Ministry.

May 30-June 1

Marriage Encounter#31

Mary Immaculate Center
300 Cherryville Road Northampton, PA 18067
Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes (973)960-3711 and Gary/Mil
Camacho MLA (732)821-4507

May 30-June 1

Singles Encounter #20

Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY
Contact: Glenn Canlas (invazian21@yahoo.com)

June 1

Mark 10 Summer Field Trip

Land of Make Believe

Contact: Reuben/Cherry Vibar (908) 206-8737

June 27-29

Solo Parents Encounter#10

Xavier Center
23 Covenant Road, Covenant Station, NJ 07961-0211
Contact: Vic/Dee Lim
(cell 973-865-4203 or home 973-226-2306)

June 27-29

Youth Encounter #15

St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, PA
Contact: Mario/Cecil Salonga (mcsalonga@optonline.net) or
Steph Rigor (steffunice@yahoo.com)

July 11-13

Family Encounter #15

Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA
Contact: Gene/Bing Ymbong (732-254-7743)
or Manny/Nette Manguiat (201-955-0439)

TEACHING MINISTRY

Class

May 16

Mark10/John6/Youth
Singles & LSS30
Solo Parents

May 17

LSS27

May 23

Golden Years
Intercessory/Service

Teaching

Friday

Teachings
Intro. to Intercession
Growth in Prayer

Saturday

Agony in the Garden/Washing of the Feet

Friday

Teaching

Formation Teachings

Note: Friday teachings – after worship

Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's



Washing of the Feet/ Agony in the Garden Retreat



"My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without me drinking it, your will be done."
(Mt 26:42)

Last Saturday, May 17th, the Washing of the Feet/Agony in the Garden Retreat was held. During the retreat, the depth of humility and forgiveness exemplified by Jesus, our Lord and Savior, was evident and well manifested among the group attendees. The attendees were filled with self recriminations related to their spouses and brothers and sisters in BLD, who, in one way or another, had hurt them as they walked with the Lord. Forgiveness, healing, peace and comfort flowed with so much ease and abundance and were the gifts and fruits of this exemplary exercise. The presence, enlightenment and guidance brought forth by the Holy Spirit made the retreat triumphant and brought greater glory and honor to God.

The Washing of the Feet/Agony in the Garden Retreat was offered through the collaborative efforts of the Teaching Ministry, the Intercessory Ministry and the Service Ministry.

The attendees consist of ME27, SE10, SE13, SE16 and SPE5 members: Lee Ann Aguila, Rosemarie Ausan, Audrey Atienza, Magalis Balanguet, Boi & Tess Booc, Michael & Judith Cadavillo, Cezar & Pinky Calingo, Jojo & Amy Clemente, Vino & Beth Guiang, Jules & Emily Laput, Maris Manansala, Ryan Manguiat, Nelson & Virginia Mayo, Rudy & Bebsie Paguio, Bebot & Becca Soquite, Renato & Narcisa Tuason, Algene & Ruby Ymbong.

COUNSELS

Corpus Christi:

Are we worthy to receive it?

WORD: Dt 8:2-3, 14b-16a; Ps 147:12-15, 19-20;
1 Cor 10:16-17; Jn 6:51-58

THEME: To be a "living" Christ is to partake worthily of His Body and Blood.

ORDER: *"Eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood."* (Jn 6:53)

REFLECTION:

The Feast of The Body and Blood of Christ ("Corpus Christi") is celebrated on the second Sunday after Pentecost. The emphasis is on The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated bread and wine. Historically, during the middle ages, people felt unworthy to receive our Lord in Communion and preferred just to look at the Blessed Sacrament. This led to the elevation of the bread and cup during mass.

The special feast devoted to The Body and Blood of Christ was introduced to the universal church in 1264. The word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word "eucharistos" meaning "thanksgiving". This is a thanksgiving for our Lord Jesus, of which we actively are participants.

"Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it." (1 Cor 12:27) Participating in the Eucharist allows us not only to receive His Body and Blood, but also to live a whole lifestyle worthy of actually receiving His precious grace and gift. Msgr. Jose Escriva wrote in "Christ is passing by", "The miracle of the holy Eucharist, which is being continually renewed and has all Jesus' personal traits. Perfect God and perfect man, He offers himself to us as nourishment.

(□ Page 4)

God's Promise for the Week



"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever." (Jn 6: 51)



True Wisdom Comes from Above

In the book of James, he talks about “true wisdom”, wherein one must believe in God as the almighty and should also have faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, true wisdom starts with the “fear of the Lord.”

“Wisdom of this kind does not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.” (Jas 3:15) In this scripture, James condemns the earthly wisdom of things that arise from the physical order that does not consider God or His Word.

There are two kinds of earthly wisdom - one coming from inside the person while the other sees it from outside. Often, such wisdom is not based on truth, but on human opinion in accordance with the ways the world thinks about things.

But there is another view of wisdom that comes down from above, the heavenly wisdom. This is often a different kind of wisdom than others speak of, as this is not simply about oneself, but about one’s relationships with others. So if we are filled with wisdom from above, then our life would be focused on serving others and serving God. In the letter of James addressed to the servants of God, it reminds us that only with real faith that one can live and act like Christians. Our good works and obedient life with humility demonstrate that we are *“wise and understanding”* (Jas 3:13).

The world and worldly wisdom define good life as being successful with lots of money, being on top of the corporate ladder, taking extravagant vacations, accumulating big retirement packages, living in gated communities and so on. Unfortunately, in order to attain this kind of good life, most of the time, envy and selfish ambitions equate to disorder with every evil practice, such as taking advantage of situations in manipulating the weak, which totally disregard other people’s welfare for their own self-satisfaction. So we reckon ourselves to be wise and we must ask ourselves whether such wisdom has been born of envy and selfish ambitions or born of love and humility.

“But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity.” (Jas 3:17) James defines good life not by things, not by position, not by self-interest nor by selfish ambition but by wisdom that comes from above. Therefore, with Heavenly wisdom, there is consistency between what one might say and what one does, as opposed to “What’s In It For Me?” mentality.

In our spiritual journey, let us seek “True” wisdom from above and sow this kind of wisdom in ourselves and in our relationships, and strive to increase in this wisdom as we reap a harvest of righteousness for the Lord. Amen!



God's Grace is to the Humble

“You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. The spirit that he has made to dwell in us tends toward jealousy. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (Jas 4:2b-3, 5b, 6b)

Merely six months ago, my family was in dire straits. The hospital where I worked in was slated to close. A few weeks after, the company wherein my husband worked announced that they have sold off the business unit, which he supported. The prospect of both of us becoming unemployed would have scared any human being. With God’s grace, neither my husband nor I feared job loss. Somehow, we felt confident that the Lord will not let us down.

Amazingly, despite the impending financial threat, our priority of putting the Lord’s work ahead of everything else did not change. Week after week, we poured ourselves in the tasks that were assigned to us in our ministry. With all humility, our personal agendas became subordinate to the Lord’s, both in BLD and our own parish.

Despite this difficult trial, my husband and I were not deterred. We lifted up our concerns to the Lord and prayed incessantly. In Matthew 7:7, it says, *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”* Week after week, we sent out our request for “protection from job loss” to Intercessory Ministry. We were assured that through our brethren’s intercession, our prayers will be answered. We believed that God is faithful and He will not let us be tried beyond our strength but with this trial, He will also provide a way out. (1 Cor 10:13)

Surely, He did! As quickly as my husband’s business unit got sold, he soon found out that he is one of the few who will be retained by the new business owners. He ended up ahead financially because he was given an extra bonus by his former company for staying on during the transition.

For my part, I continued to entertain telephone calls from headhunters, diligently sent out my resume, and braved through interviews. As the hospital closure date approached, I still have not found the right job, one that would allow me to continue working for the Lord. “Jesus I trust in you”, became my constant prayer.

Three days before the hospital closed its doors, I received an urgent phone call from the director of a nearby Surgicenter. She has decided to resign from her position, as she had recently become a nurse practitioner. Her phone call was quickly followed by the managing partner’s. Within a few days, I accepted the position.

Indeed, God does not disappoint! Prayers truly work wonders. In times of hardships, we should not despair. Instead, we should put our trust in the Lord and humbly submit to His will. For by His grace, we have been saved through faith, and this is not from us; it is the gift of God. (Eph 2:8)



Receiving the Holy Communion

Communion more than once a day

Can a person receive Holy Communion more than once a day without special permission?

In earlier times, Communion was to be received only once a day. Several years ago those rules were considerably relaxed, allowing Communion more than once. The Code of Canon Law simply says that anyone who has received the Eucharist may receive it again on the same day only during a Eucharistic celebration (CCL 917). In 1984, the Vatican Commission for Interpretation of Canon Law ruled that even at Mass, Communion should not be received more than twice a day. The Church knows from experience that some Catholics are tempted to treat sacred things, even the Mass, in a superstitious manner. I once knew a lady who proudly and piously claimed she attended 11 Masses — at least the “essential part” — every Sunday.

To prevent people from collecting Communion in a similar fashion was one reason for the Church’s stricter once-a-day rule in the past, as well as for the clear, if broader, policy today. It trusts that people’s deeper and fuller awareness of the meaning of the Eucharist will discourage any abuse and at the same time prompt them to receive Communion whenever it is appropriate — even more than once a day.

Fast before Communion?

What exactly is the present rule for the fast before Holy Communion? Are the rules the same for the entire world?

At the end of the third session of the Second Vatican Council in 1964, Pope Paul considerably simplified the Eucharistic fast. According to this 1964 decree, persons should fast from food and liquids, including alcohol liquids, for one hour before receiving Communion (not one hour before the Mass at which they receive). Water does not break the fast, and may be taken anytime. The same goes for medicine.

The reason for this regulation is simply to aid in preparing oneself spiritually and mentally for participating in the offering of the Eucharist at Mass, and for receiving it in Communion. Basically, this regulation applies to the whole Church, though there are some variations in different part of the world. Because of their special needs, the discipline is considerably relaxed for the sick and aged, as well for the people who take care of them. Thus, the period of the Eucharistic fast is reduced to “about a quarter of an hour” for the sick and aged, and their care-givers.

The *Code of Canon Law* says simply that the sick and aging and those who care for them can receive the Eucharist even if they have consumed something during the preceding hour. (CCL 919) Obviously, the intention is that the sick should be given every possible opportunity to receive Holy Communion.

Source: Catholic Q&A by Dietzen (pp. 167-168)

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit every 2nd Sat. of the month
Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ Volunteers needed

Contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

NJ Catholic Charismatic Conference 2008

Union Catholic High School, Scotch Plains, NJ
June 13-15, 2008

For details contact: Angel & Aida Calilap (973-284-1853), Frank & Malou Venadas (973-562-0055)

HEALING SERVICES

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration

Every 1st Monday of the month @ 8 PM

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Adoration

All other Mondays of the month @ 8 PM

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month except December
Prayer starts @ 8:30 AM

Venue: Resurrection Parish – St Bridget Church
372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Websites: bondoflove.org and 2000hailmarys.org

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.).

Email to word@bldnewark.com

T E A C H I N G S

Venue: St. Mary's Classroom

May 23 (Friday after worship)

Teaching - Golden Years

Formation Teaching - Intercessory/Service

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report

for the Week Ending May 16, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission

& Fast for Poor

\$ 3,177.00

Thank you for your continued generosity.

Traveling Catholics: For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times, go to www.masstimes.org

Counsels

(from page 1)

Receiving the Lord through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist can be compared to accepting an invitation to the Lord's banquet – the Paschal banquet. Just as the king in the parable of the wedding feast sent out his subjects to invite all people to his own banquet, so too, does our Eucharistic Lord summon us to partake of the Living Bread.

In the parable of the wedding feast, it is written, "*But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in wedding garments. Then the King told his attendants – 'Bind his hands and feet and cast him into the darkness outside.'*" (Mt 22:11, 13) As we can see, our Lord requires of us to be prepared before we join His banquet.

St. Paul urges us to examine our conscience: "*Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup.*" (1 Cor 11:27-29) Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.

Before the Great Sacrament, the faithful can only echo humbly the words of the Centurion: "*Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.*" (Mt 8:8) To prepare for worthy reception of this Sacrament, the faithful should observe the fast required in the Church – this includes fasting one hour before going to Mass. Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment when Christ becomes our guest.

In summary, we should always be prepared when we receive our Eucharistic Lord. This includes proper decorum and attitude prior to receiving Him, availing of the Sacrament of Reconciliation especially if we have mortal or grave sins, proper bodily demeanor and conduct, which includes our bodily gestures and even how we dress. This also includes being conscious of all our words and actions that should be deemed fit in meeting The King.

What then, are the fruits of receiving our Lord by the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?

1. **Holy Communion augments our union with Christ**
- The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus.
2. **Holy Communion unites us with the Body, the Church** - Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it, Christ unites them to all the faithful in one Body - the Church. Communion renews, strengthens and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism.
3. **Holy Communion unites us with other Christians**
- together we say our prayers to the Lord that the time of complete unity among all who believe in Him may return.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 25-26

Prayer Counseling Course

for Covenanted Members

Saturday 9 am to **Sunday** 5 pm

With group sessions in the evening

Ramada Ltd, NJ - approx. costs: \$40/person (materials & meals) **excluding** an overnight stay on Saturday, multiple occupancy in a room (approx \$80 for up to four people). Details to follow. RSVP to reserve a space to: pmantes@psands.com (Dens and Mina Mantes, Pastoral Ministry)

May 30 - June 1

Marriage Encounter#31

Mary Immaculate Center

300 Cherryville Road Northampton, PA 18067

Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes (973)960-3711 and Gary/Mil Camacho MLA (732)821-4507

Singles Encounter #20

Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY

Contact: Glenn Canlas (invazian21@yahoo.com)

June 6 - 8

BLD Phoenix - Marriage Encounter#8

Living Water Retreat Center, Cornville, Arizona.

Application forms available at: www.bldphoenix.com

Contact: Chito/Aileen Ciocon at chitoaileen@fatmail.fm or call (732)754-7644.

June 14

Mark 10 Summer Field Trip – Land of Make Believe

Contact: Reuben/Cherry Vibar (908) 206-8737

June 27-29

Solo Parents Encounter#10

Xavier Center

23 Covenant Road, Covenant Station, NJ 07961

Contact: Vic/Dee Lim (cell 973-865-4203 or home 973-226-2306)

Youth Encounter #15

St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, PA

Contact: Mario/Cecil Salonga

(mcsalonga@optonline.net) or Steph Rigor (steffunee@yahoo.com)

July 11-13

Family Encounter #15

Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA

Contact: Gene/Bing Ymbong (732-254-7743) or Manny/Nette Manguiat (201-955-0439)

Note: Application forms for all encounters are available at bldnewark.com

DIRECTIONS:

- Cleanse yourself of all righteousness before receiving the Holy Eucharist.



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 21

Bulletin Edition

May 30, 2008

Prayer Counseling Part I Workshop

Around 70 members from Newark, Trenton, Long Island and North Carolina attended the Prayer Counseling Seminar Part I held last May 24- 25, 2008, held at the Ramada Inn, So. Plainfield N.J.

Our Singles Ministry members were driven with their sincere desire to serve the Lord and be an instrument to bring healing to others. In attendance were Aileen Escobinas, Dave Farinas, Alan Balagot, Justine Bustos, Glenn Canlas, Monica Canlas, Natasha Montesclaros, Rowena Jaico, Lee Ann Aguila, Jay Alarva, Kay Mendoza, Earl Manguiat, Flo Manguiat, Jennifer Mendiola, Dave Gonda, Chris Gonda, Pauline Montemayor, Melissa Martinez, Arlene & Manny Mangalanzo.

The workshop concluded with a Eucharistic Celebration by Fr. Robert Lamirez.


We would like to thank all the Prayer Counseling team who lovingly put this seminar together headed by Dens and Mina Mantes, teachers Noel and Letty Trillana, Lee dela Fuente, Lith Golamco and Aimee Pena, auxies from Praise, Pastoral, Service, Intercessory & Liturgy ministries.

A Memorable Covenanting - Historic and Precious

"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it." (Mk 8:34-35)

Many were teary-eyed and somber. Some were anxious and excited. A few were terrified by what lay ahead of them but everyone was eager and hopeful to finally be able to say "Yes, Lord, here I am."

On a warm, clear Friday in May (16th) 2008, after the celebration of the Eucharist at the altar of Our Lady of the Valley church in Phoenix, AZ, eighteen (18) members of the community formally sealed their covenant pledges with the Lord through the BLD. Officiating priest, Msgr. Paul Schetelick, pastor of St. Andrews parish in Bayonne, NJ,

(continue on page 3, col 2) 

COUNSELS

Make Our Life a House Made of Rock

WORD: Dt 11:18, 26-28,32; Ps 31:2-4, 17, 25;
Rom 3:21-25, 28; Mt 7:21-27

ORDER: *"Take these words of mine into your heart and soul... observe all the statutes and decrees that I set before you..."*
(Dt 11:18a, 32)

THEME: We do the will of the Father when we listen to His words and act on them.




REFLECTION: The Gospel for this week is the conclusion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in which the Lord expounded on His major teachings beginning with the beatitudes, then going on to His two new commandments, the Lord's prayer, instructions on praying, attitudes about money and the Golden Rule.

It is but fitting that the Lord ends His Sermon with an urgent call to action. He says it is not enough to just listen to His teachings. One must actually do them and do them consistently, making them real decision nodes for our actions everyday, true behavioral standards we live by.

We put in a lot of time and energy in making certain decisions: where to live, what schools to attend, what career to choose, what health plan is best for our family. Once we decide, we act on it and stick to it. The gospel requires the same decisive action.

But Jesus knew that the people He was preaching to at

(continue on page 4, col 1) 

GOD'S PROMISE FOR THE WEEK

"I set before you here... a blessing for obeying the commandments of the Lord" (Dt 11:26-27)

Called Out of Darkness




1 Peter 2:9-11 states, “*But you are a ‘chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises’ of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were ‘no people’ but now you are God’s people; you ‘had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.*

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and sojourners to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against the soul.”

Jesus calls us out of our own darkness to step into His light every day, on a regular basis. You may wonder, “when does He call to me?” or “if He does call me every day, why is it that I don’t hear his voice?”. Jesus does not always make a grand entrance into our lives when He makes His presence known to us, like He did to the Apostles by appearing to them after His Resurrection, or in tongues of fire through the Holy Spirit during Pentecost. Most of the time, Jesus calls to us in very subtle ways. When we are still and have peace in our hearts, we can be more sensitive to seeing Him and hearing Him speak to us, even through the most ordinary and mundane times of our daily lives. Sometimes, He may speak to us through a friend, or even a stranger that we meet. Other times, He speaks to us through another person’s actions, for example: a friendly smile, a kind and generous act, or a comforting hug. Jesus can even speak to us through events and trials. One example of this type of conversation that our Lord has with us, is that He may place a person who we don’t like or get along with, in our paths more often than we would prefer to interact with them. In this type of situation, Jesus may be calling you to be more patient, loving, and forgiving. He challenges you to love someone you may feel is unlovable, because He commands us to love and forgive our brothers and sisters in the same way He continuously loves and forgives us, despite our own faults, failings, and sinfulness.

How can you become still and have peace in your heart, so that you are more attentive to Jesus when He is calling to you? Our Lord directs us “*to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against the soul*”. By developing a deeper prayer life, obeying His commandments, and loving others with a “Godly-kind” of love, we can be more sensitive to hearing our Lord calling us out of our own darkness. By making a commitment to love and forgive those who offend

(continue on page 4, col 2) 

The Sacred Heart of Jesus



The Sacred Heart is a religious devotion to Jesus’ physical heart. The Sacred Heart is often depicted in Christian art as a flaming stylized heart, pierced by the lance-wound, surrounded by a crown of thorns, and bleeding. Sometimes the image is superimposed over Jesus’ body with his wounded hands pointing at the heart. The

wounds and crown of thorns allude to the manner of Jesus’ death, while the fire represents love. The heart of Jesus, like all else belongs to His person – worthy of adoration. The worship paid to the Heart of Jesus is directed to the love of which this Heart is the living and expressive symbol.

St. Marguerite Marie Alacoque (July 22, 1647 - October 17, 1690) was a French Catholic nun and mystic, who originated the Catholic devotion of the Sacred Heart. She had a vision in which Christ revealed to her His heart burning with divine love, and bidding to establish on the Friday following the feast of Corpus Christi, a feast in honor of His Sacred Heart. The devotion was propagated under a movement Paray-le-Monial. St. Margaret’s vision was critically examined prior to her beatification.

The devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus does not need justification as it is the person of Jesus that it is directed. The object of the devotion is that the Person of Jesus is inseparable from His Divinity, the living apparition of the goodness of God and of His paternal love. Jesus is infinitely loving and amiable. He is the object of Christian religion. It characterizes the reciprocation of love. Its aim is to love Jesus who has loved us, to return love for love. It assumes a character of reparation and the importance of the acts of atonement, the Communion of reparation, and compassion for Jesus suffering. We can make Jesus live in us, thus by living by it to love God, in union with Jesus, with all His heart, all His soul, all His strength.

“And He [Christ] showed me that it was His great desire of being loved by men and of withdrawing them from the path of ruin that made Him form the design of manifesting His Heart to men, with all the treasures of love, of mercy, of grace, of sanctification and salvation which it contains, in order that those who desire to render Him and procure Him all the honor and love possible, might themselves be abundantly enriched with those divine treasures of which His heart is the source.” — from *Revelations of Our Lord to St. Mary Margaret Alacoque*

DCS TRANSPARENCY

MEMBERSHIP IN A COMMUNITY

Is it a coincidence that I am a member of this community? Do I like where I am now? Is it possible that a better person been given the position I am in? Would I rather be a DCS or not?

When the community or those I am responsible for are doing well and I can sense things are all right, I can say that I like where I am, I am thankful that God allowed me to be a coordinator or a shepherd, or an elder. However, when the community is in uproar or hurting and you hear so many negative rumors, backbiting and un-Christian remarks, then I question my role and why am I even part of this community?

"Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deluding himself. Each one must examine his own work..." (Gal 6:2-4a).

I believe that every person has a role to play in the scheme of God's plan. Each person is important in the life of the community. God, in all His wisdom, will always put us in a situation that will stretch our human limitations, either in patience, in perseverance or on how much we can love.

A community is about relationships. It is about how we deal with each other; how we respond to every situation while trusting that God is in control of every aspect of our lives, giving Him the freedom to reward or chastise. It is also awareness of self, inward looking, introspective, reflective, looking first at one's own flak before the speck in his brother's eye.

Through the years, our Lord always reminds me that He requires excellence in all things, but not to the detriment of a relationship. As long as my motivation is not mine alone, but of God and for others, then I am confident of His approval.

Our spiritual maturity is reflected by our actions and our choice of words. It also reflects the intimacy we have with God. We all believe that God is love. Therefore, He will only use us for the benefit of others, and never for harm. He will use us to lift up and not put down, and He will always introduce situations to reveal our hearts for correction - to become better persons.

God's plan is for me and for each member of this community to know and understand the meaning of unity and sacrifice. Each of us, together with the Apostles is a piece of brick in a foundation - a brick that must be strong and resilient supporting each member for the benefit of the whole, making sure the brick beside us remains strong, able to bear each other's burden for His purpose, to spread His love to all.

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times, go to www.masstimes.org

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| May 30 -
June 1 | Marriage Encounter #31
Mary Immaculate Center
300 Cherryville Road Northampton, PA
Contact: Norie/Miriam Abes (973)960-3711
and Gary/Mil Camacho MLA(732)821-4507 |
| May 30 -
June 1 | Singles Encounter #20
Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY
Contact: Glenn Canlas
(invazian21@yahoo.com) |
| June 1 | Mark 10 Summer Field Trip
– Land of Make Believe
Contact: Reuben/Cherry Vibar
(908) 206-8737 |
| June 27-29 | Solo Parents Encounter#10
Xavier Center, 23 Covenant Road,
Covenant Station, NJ 07961
Contact: Vic/Dee Lim (cp 973-865-4203
or home 973-226-2306) |
| June 27-29 | Youth Encounter #15
St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, PA
Contact: Mario/Cecil Salonga
(mcsalonga@optonline.net)
Steph Rigor (steffunieee@yahoo.com) |
| July 11-13 | Family Encounter #15
Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA
Contact: Gene/Bing Ymbong
(732-254-7743) or Manny/Nette
Manguiat (201-955-0439) |

*Application forms for all encounters are available at
bldnewark.com*

A Memorable Covenanting (cont. from page 1)

accepted and admitted the eighteen aspirants into full membership in the community as covenanted disciples. All the eighteen aspirants had fulfilled the teaching, attendance, witnessing, and discipling requirements, to qualify for invitation to covenanted membership in the BLD community.

The long-awaited covenanting ceremony was indeed a major milestone for the BLD Phoenix community. It not only indicated the rapid and steady growth of the community, but also the willingness, servant-heartedness, and maturity of the new covenanted disciples to follow Jesus more closely and to witness for Him more fully.

Let us continue to pray for each other, but most especially for our newly-covenanted members so that they may remain faithful to their pledges and promises to the Lord and that they may bear much fruit for the Kingdom. Welcome and congratulations to the following covenanted disciples of BLD Phoenix: Cecilia Andaya, Gerry Bautista, Gladdine Bautista, Rey Conopio, Ann Conopio, Crosby Cortez, Mariz Cortez, Denny Custodio, Nina Custodio, Mario de Leon, Harmon Delima, Chit Delima, Arlene Junia, Jonathan Lurenana, Eunice Lurenana, Evan Pangilinan, Joie Pangilinan, and Eden Sebial.

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

the mount were, what we call today and perhaps as with most people in the community, laidback, preferring the ideal to the real, words to action, being to doing.

Jesus challenges us to get out of this reluctance to take decisive action, to rid ourselves of a habit of procrastination, or such familiar lame excuse like '*sapagka't tayo'y tao lamang*' (because we're only human). This is our afterlife in God's Kingdom that's involved here. We can't afford to be indecisive or indifferent.

We cannot be Sunday Christians who make sure we're in church every Sunday but afterwards go to mahjong or drinking sessions, leaving the kids to fend for themselves. Nor can we be outwardly devout: going to Church every day, attending novenas or healing services or lighting candles to a saint. Yet we don't hesitate to pass on judgmental gossip, or tell white lies to cover up our shortcomings thinking these are just venial sins so it's okay. Sin in whatever form corrupts us since they result from a wrong moral choice, so it's not okay even if it's just a venial sin.

In the end, Jesus says it is not enough to be pious or to honor God with praises like the many men in the Gospel who prophesy, cast out demons or perform miracles in His name. One must do God's will and live by his teachings out of a genuine desire to trust Him with our lives and because we truly love Him.

Jesus uses a parable to stress this point. The Christian who hears and lives by His Words builds his house on a rock, a solid foundation for sure. Difficulties and trials may come to his life, as no doubt they will, but he will always stand firm, like a house on a rock can withstand storms and floods. But a Christian who may know His teachings but does not put it into practice, is building his house on sand. It will fall when the first storms come.

Moses presents a similar choice in the first reading: to obey God's words or not, and present the consequences of these choices: a blessing or a curse. The wise choose God and God's commandments, statutes and decrees. But the foolish reject God which is the ultimate folly.

Surely we are not foolish. We have taken the time to know God better in our encounters and LSS's. We have made the choice to be God's disciples and pledged to obey His laws. Let's take a stand and the time to really make God's laws a part of our lives, and make our life truly a house made of rock, a house where the Lord happily and wonderfully resides.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Be reminded that as followers of Christ, conversion of heart and mind is at the center of true discipleship.
2. Be grounded on God's Word that you may know His will.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month - Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home
Passaic, NJ - Volunteers are needed.
Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

NJ Catholic Charismatic Conference 2008

Union Catholic High School, Scotch Plains, NJ
June 13-15, 2008. For details contact:
Angel & Aida Calilap 973-284-1853
Frank & Malou Venadas 973-562-0055

Healing Prayer Services at Resurrection Parish-
St. Bridget Church

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Adoration and
Celebration - Every 1st Monday of the month
@ 8 PM

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Adoration -
All other Mondays of the month @ 8 PM

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Adoration
and Celebration - Every last Saturday of the month
except December. Prayer starts @ 8:30 AM

Venue: Resurrection Parish - St Bridget Church,
372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Websites: bondoflove.org and 2000hailmarys.org

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the
community thru an article (450 words max).
Send to word@bldnewark.com

Called Out of Darkness (cont. from page 2)

us, and loving and forgiving ourselves for all our own weaknesses, we become more open to allowing Jesus to fill us with His abundant mercy and grace.

You may ask yourself, "Who am I, Lord, that You would care so much for me? Why would You choose to call me, someone who is so unworthy of Your love?". He calls us not because we have earned anything or have done anything to make us worthy of His love, but simply because He loves us. His plan for us is to bask in His love for all eternity. If we choose to answer His call to obey His Will for us, then one day, we will live forever with Him, in His wonderful light.

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending May 23, 2008

*Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for Poor* \$ 4,240.00

Thank you for your continued generosity.



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 22

Bulletin Edition

June 06, 2008

Journey in Search of God

THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

Consecrated Life as a witness of the search for God

“Let your face shine upon us and we shall be saved” (Ps 79:4)

“Faciem tuam, Domine, requiram”: your face, O Lord, I seek (Ps 27:8). A pilgrim seeking the meaning of life, enwrapped in the great mystery that surrounds him, the human person, even if unconsciously, does, in fact, seek the face of the Lord. “Your ways, O Lord, make known to me, teach me your paths” (Ps 25:4): no one can ever take away from the heart of the human person the search for him of whom the Bible says “He is all” (Sir 43:27) and for the ways of reaching him.

Consecrated life, called to make the characteristic traits of the virginal, poor and obedient Jesus visible, flourishes in the ambience of this search for the face of the Lord and the ways that lead to him (cf. Jn 14:4-6). A search that leads to the experience of peace - “in his will is our peace” 2 - and which underlies each day’s struggle, because God is God, and His ways and thoughts are not always our ways and thoughts (cf. Is 55:8). The consecrated person, therefore, gives witness to the task, at once joyful and laborious, of the diligent search for the divine will, and for this chooses to use every means available that helps one to know it and sustain it while bringing it to fulfillment.

Here, too, the religious community, a communion of consecrated persons who profess to seek together and carry out God’s will: a community of sisters or brothers with a variety of roles but with the same goal and the same passion, finds its meaning. For this reason, while all in the community are called to seek what is pleasing to the Lord and to obey Him, some are called, usually temporarily, to exercise the particular task of being the sign of unity and the guide in the common search both personal and communitarian of carrying out the will of God. This is the service of authority.

(An excerpt from VATICAN CITY, JUNE 1, 2008 (Zenit.org) Instruction: “The Service of Authority and Obedience” published Wednesday by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. <http://www.zenit.org/article-22765?l=english>

COUNSELS

Leap of Faith

Word: Hos 6:3-6; Ps 50:1,8,12-15; Rom 4:18-25; Mt 9:9-13

Theme: We do the will of the Father when we show love and mercy for those who have wronged us.

Order: *“Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy not sacrifice’.”* (Mt 9:13)

Reflection:

There are lots of things that I enjoy as a father and one of them is when my children drop everything they are doing and rush to the door to greet me after a hard day’s work. When they were younger, I would ask them to jump off from the footboard of our bed where I would be standing a few feet away, waiting to catch them. It didn’t matter to them how far I would stand, as they made the leap of faith as they jumped toward me and trusted that they would be safe in my hands.

In this Sunday’s readings, both Matthew and Abraham had that leap of faith on God, similar to my children’s jumping off the bed, there were no anxieties of the consequences that might have brought them in putting their trust in the Lord.

Matthew, a tax collector, gathered money to put into the coffers of the Roman Empire. The Jews despised the Roman government and were disgusted when paying tribute to Caesar Augustus. Matthew was Jewish and was considered a traitor by his fellow countrymen because of his working ties with the same people who conquered his native land. Despite the nature of Matthew’s work and his unpopularity amongst the Jews, the Lord approached him and offered him a new and higher vocation, that of a disciple and later, an apostle and evangelist, with just two simple words: *“Follow Me.”* (Mt 9:9)

Like Matthew, Christ calls us (continued on page 3) 

God’s Promise for the Week

“...Call on me in time of distress, I will rescue you and you shall honor me!” (Ps 50:15)

Singles Encounter #20

On Friday, May 30, 2008, 57 strangers answered God's calling. Not knowing what would happen, they trusted in Him and came together for the Singles Encounter # 20 weekend. Together they all sat in one room, listened to the facilitators, made skits, etc. Together they laughed and they cried as God's love, grace, and mercy slowly entered their hearts. Little did they know that by the end of that Sunday, they would be transformed by His grace into a beautiful, true, and loving family. Congratulations to the graduates of SE # 20! May all of you continue to grow spiritually as a class and as a family with God as your father and guide.

The following are the new SE 20 family members: Irvin Aglibut, Danah Alburo, Cynthia Arnedo, Kristina Avisado, Katrina Badiola, Julianne Balcon*, Elaine Belmonte, Andrian Bondad, Laura Cancio*, Maklovio Cruz, Julia De Vera*, Almira Mae Dumalang, Elizabeth Encarnacion, Isabelle Encarnacion, Edilrhia Eusebio, Vanessa Fabe, Marie Francisco*, Christine Garcia, Caroline Grabowy, MaryAnne Guinto, Jed Castillo*, Julian Pormentilla, Barnett Koryan, Maan Laxamana, Melissa Lim, Fidelio Lim, Jake Lopina, Carl Maandal, Joseph Madrigal*, Christine Masisado, Jan Medina*, Rev Obrera*, Maria Orejola, Jeanina Perez, Peter Quinio, Asia Raagas*, Jessie Ramos, Paul Reyes, Stefan Rosales, James Sabale, Kevin Salmo, Donato Santangelo, April Santos, Michael Sicat, Nile Solon, Jhoanna Tamayo*, Alaric Tin, Monica Tolentino, Marvin Venadas, Mayumi Verona, Justin Verzosa*, Bryant Nguyen, Cynthia Ghazali, Josh Cruz, Nicolette Pabatao.

Hallelujah and praise God for yet another triumphant and successful SE weekend!

Marriage Encounter #31

"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock."

(Mt 7: 24)

Marriage Encounter #31 was held at the Mary Immaculate Center in Northampton, PA, a newly chosen venue located in the beautiful hills of Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania, from May 30 to June 1, 2008. The beautiful surroundings emulated the wonder and steadfastness of God's Love and Word that showed forth throughout the encounter. Fr. Eustace Edomobi, spiritual director, pointed out to the class that when problems arise in their marriage, the enemy is not their spouse but the forces of evil that will take every opportunity to destroy the bond between husband and wife. He exhorted ME 31 to always put Christ in the center of their marriage and family and find time to pray as a couple and as a family so that they would be strengthened in their daily battle against these principalities. The presenters, Richard and Lee de la Fuente and Chito and Aileen Ciocon, truly evoked the message that, if couples unite their sufferings and concerns to Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, they will prevent the recurrence of these painful events in their lives and will experience the spiritual joy of Jesus' victory over death and sin. Let us congratulate and welcome to the community the following graduates of ME # 31: Fr. John Azarcon, Oscar & Alice Buenafe, Eric & Rose Javier*, Mike & Chris McSpedon, Alec & Bet Mendoza, Marcelo & Michelle Mijares, Gerry & Jazz Navarro*, Tony & Beng Pacho, Pete & Tess Pastor*, Nick & Carrie Perez, George & Gina Trinidad, Mary Ann and Vic San Agustin, and Leo & Tata Tan. God bless ME 31!

* **Coordinators**

Grow in Grace in the Knowledge of God

Our faith is a growing intimate relationship with our Triune God. As Christians, we are called to know God and to learn what He wants from us and for us. God's blessings are poured out abundantly upon us when we grow spiritually in His divine grace and in the knowledge of Him. (2 Pt 1:3-4) It is in the knowledge of Jesus Christ that God's grace and peace are multiplied in our lives (2 Pt 1:2), that all things pertaining to life and godliness are provided (2 Pt 1:3), that we will "*never stumble*" into misery (2 Pt 1:10), and that we will enter the promised "*Eternal Kingdom of our Lord.*" (2 Pt 1:11)

God demands His people to have knowledge of Him: He expected it of Israel (Dt 6:6-9); He foretold that it would be a characteristic of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34); and, that His people must have a knowledge of His *will*. (Col 1:9-10) God is displeased with the lack of knowledge of Him: Israel was destroyed because of lack of knowledge (Hos 4:1,6; 6:4-6) and Jesus will come in judgment against those who do not know God. (2 Thes 1:8-9)

Growing in the knowledge of God is more than simply increasing our intellectual knowledge of God but developing in ourselves the graces and the character of Christ.

St. Peter mentions eight graces that we need to develop to grow in the knowledge of Christ: *Faith, Virtue, Knowledge, Self-control, Perseverance, Godliness, Brotherly Kindness and Love.* (2 Pt 1:5-8) By developing these "Christ-like" attributes in us, the more we will grow in a fuller and personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.

How do we grow in grace in the knowledge of God? We grow in that knowledge by learning the *Holy Bible* which is the true revelation of God, through *prayer* that strengthens us by drawing us closer to Him, through the *fellowship* of witnessing to and sharing with other godly people that affirms God's love and goodness, and by *attendance at Worship*s where the Word of God is proclaimed.

What we have to watch out for, however, is the danger of knowledge. It has the potential to produce arrogance (1 Cor 8:1) and can be destructive when misused. (1 Cor 8:4-11) Such abuses of knowledge can produce sins in our lives. (1 Cor 8:12-13) But, love, humility and meekness should help restrain the misuse of knowledge.

And, finally, if we live rightly in grace in the knowledge of God, we could then build up our faith and grow in deeper intimacy with our Triune God to share in His holiness and to benefit from His bountiful blessings.

Counsels *(continued from page 1)*

to follow Him, to leave our former way of life behind. The Lord is compassionate and desires to dine with us in heaven for all eternity. He sent His Holy Spirit into our hearts to sustain and strengthen our faith because He loves us. **“... I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”** (Mt 9:13b). For us to be open to the Holy Spirit, we have to repent and confess our sins to God, as we take our vows to turn our backs on our sinful ways.

“Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice...’ (Mt 9:13a)

The Lord specifically tells us to live the Christian life taking precedence to the moral law:

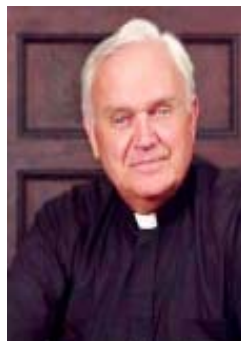
“You Shall Love Your GOD With All Your Heart, And With All Your Soul, And With All Your Mind.” (CCC 2083) and **“To Love Your Neighbor as Yourself”**, which summarizes the Ten Commandments. The Pharisees, were so concerned with fulfilling the ceremonial law and showed no regard for the moral law, they merely put up a show of false piety by being **“perfect”** in their temple worship, and paid no attention to the poor and needy among them.

GOD calls everyone to have a more personal relationship with Him, like a Father to a son, as opposed to a master to a slave. Offering our praises to GOD entails observing HIS sacraments. **“Offer praise as your sacrifice to God; fulfill your vows to the Most High.”** (Ps 50:14) GOD only desires our obedience and love for others which are far more acceptable to HIM than any sacrificial offerings. We should learn to completely entrust our lives to GOD and align our spirit to HIS will, becoming good witnesses to others.

In Romans 4:20, Abraham did not doubt GOD’s promise. St. Paul references the promises of GOD to Abraham, the ultimate fulfillment of which is the restoration of our relationship and fellowship with God. Abraham and his descendants will be heirs of the world (Rom 4:18b). St. Paul clearly points out that it was not obedience that secured this promise to Abraham, but his faith in GOD, as well as GOD’s grace toward Abraham. Works and rewards are utterly opposed to faith and promises. Like Abraham, we do not inherit GOD’s promises by lineage, but we inherit GOD’s promises by our obedience and faith in HIM.

How many times did we take a leap of faith? Think of the unthinkable, just like Sarah & Abraham who totally put their faith in GOD who made things happen. There are so many things to learn in our spiritual journey, but one thing is certain: neither works nor rituals can save us. Instead, we come to GOD as sinners, trusting only in HIM to receive justification. We need to have that **“child-like”** faith and trust in God, so we too can experience restoration of fellowship with HIM and receive HIS compassion, so we may participate in HIS eternal kingdom!

(continued) 



Fr. Paul Speaks

With the very rich liturgical celebrations behind us, we enter the time of the year called “ordinary time”. It does not sound very exciting, but we carry with us the grace of the past celebrations of Easter, Pentecost, Trinity, Corpus Christi, and lastly the

beautiful feast of the Sacred Heart. With all of these rich celebrations we rejoice that we have become truly consecrated as a holy people and a dedicated Priesthood. Consecration is often given to things, like churches or chalices. The great moment of consecration happens during the Mass when the bread and wine are consecrated into the Body and Blood of Jesus. Have we ever thought that people can also be consecrated? We used to refer to the Ordination of a bishop as a consecration. The men and women who take the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience are referred to as consecrated men and women. “Consecration” in its basic meaning means to set apart for holy service. Jesus even referred to himself as consecrated. His consecration was the ultimate act of being set apart, namely set apart for the ultimate sacrifice, his glorious death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit anointed Jesus at the moment of his Incarnation, by joining the humanity of the man, Jesus, to the second person of the Blessed trinity, the Word of God. The Holy Spirit further consecrated the humanity of Jesus when he was baptized in the Jordan River. His consecration at the moment of the Incarnation eliminated the separation between God and our human nature. His death on the cross eliminated the separation between the holiness of God and our sinful humanity. He eliminated the separation between death and life by rising from the dead.

We can, with no hesitation, look upon us ordinary lay people as consecrated. The reference to a holy people and a consecrated Priesthood mentioned above is a reference in the letter of St. Peter to the whole church of the baptized. Even putting aside the special “consecrations” of persons and places, the foundation of all consecration is the Sacrament of baptism.. We are ALL dedicated to a holy service and vocation to worship God and evangelize the world. Unfortunately consecration does not automatically mean holiness. Many consecrated people, including the consecrated assembly of the baptized, do not live up to the challenge of holiness. With every consecration, made by the Holy Spirit, comes the grace to live out the vocation of a consecrated life. The call to radical holiness is the basic vocation of every Christian. A fresh look at our consecrated status will eliminate the temptation to put ourselves down, and to despair of ever growing holy. Open to the Spirit and grow.

Directions:

- 1 Cultivate a deeper relationship with the Lord through prayers, reading the scriptures and Word sharing.
- 2 Reaffirm your covenant pledges and obligations to your ministry work.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Hamilton Plaza

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the month. Volunteers are needed

Nong & Tricia Bustos – 732-591-1340

nongb601@aol.com, teres202@aol.com

NJ Catholic Charismatic Conference 2008

June 13–15, Union Catholic High School

1600 Martine Avenue Scotch Plains, NJ

Angel & Aida Calilap 973-284-1853, aacalilap@gmail.com

Frank & Malou Venadas 973-562-0055,

fvenadas@hotmail.com

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion w/ Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Sat. of the month starts at 8:30am except Dec.

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max.). Send to

word@bldnewark.com.

TEACHINGS

Jun 07 St. Mary's 1-6 pm

Basic Bible Seminar LSS 30

Jun 20 After Worship

Teaching Youth, John 6, Mark 10

Encounter with Jesus Singles

Intro to Intercession Solo Parents

Jun 21 St. Mary's 1-6 pm

Apologetics LSS 24 & 25

Shepherds Training 1 LSS 26 & 27

Encounter with Jesus LSS 28 & 29

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Week Ending May 30, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission & Fast for the Poor **\$2,353**
Thank you for your continued generosity.

*Make the Covenant News
a part of your covenant life.*

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Jun 7

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity

60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103

ME 25 will serve.

Audie & Vulet Chong 732-356-9056

Jun 14

Mark 10 Summer Field Trip

Land of Make Believe

354 Great Meadows Road, Hope, NJ 07844

Reuben & Cherry Vibar 908-206-8737

Jun 27-29

SPE #10 - Xavier Center, 23 Covenant Road,
Covenant Station, NJ 07961- 0211

Contact Vic/Dee Lim (973) 865-4203 (c) or
(973) 226-2306 (h)

Youth Encounter #15

St. Francis Retreat House, Easton, PA

Contact: Steph Rigor steffunee@yahoo.com

Mario/Cecil Salonga mcsalonga@optonline.net

Jul 11-13

Family Encounter #15

Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, PA

Contacts: Gene/Bing Ymbong (732) 254-7743

or Manny/Nette Manguiat (201) 955-0439

Application available at www.bldnewark.com.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sept. 20 (Reserve the date)

"In The Beginning"

1pm show - Millennium Theatre

Sight & Sound Theatres, Lancaster, PA

A spectacular staging of the biblical account of creation.
Be there as the Garden of Eden appears before you.

Experience God's pleasure at his most awesome creation, Adam and Eve, and the complete beauty of their unbroken relationship with God. *In the Beginning* promises an experience beyond your imagination.

May the blessing and favor of the Lord
be upon those who are celebrating their birthdays
and wedding anniversaries this week.

===== Traveling Catholics =====

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times,
visit www.masstimes.org.

Covenant News is also available on
our website at www.bldnewark.com



NEWS

Take God Out of the "Parenthesis", Urges Pope

Speaks to Diocese of Rome on Finding Meaning

"VATICAN CITY, JUNE 10, 2008 (Zenit.org).- If people want to have hope and find meaning in their lives, they need to take God out of the "parentheses," says Benedict XVI.

The Pope affirmed this Monday in the Basilica of St. John Lateran when he inaugurated the ecclesial congress of the Diocese of Rome. The event is under way through Thursday, focused on the theme: "Jesus Has Risen: Educating for Hope in Prayer, Action and Suffering."

The Holy Father referred to the subject of Christian hope, explaining that, "in a certain way, it concerns each of us personally, [...] but it is also a community hope, a hope for the Church and for the entire human family."

"In today's society and culture, and hence also in this our beloved city of Rome, it is not easy to live in an atmosphere of Christian hope," he said. "There is a widespread feeling that, for both Italy and Europe, the best years have passed and that a future of instability and uncertainty awaits the new generations."

"Moreover," the Pontiff added, "hopes for great novelties and improvements are concentrated on science and technology." Yet, "it is not science and technology that can give meaning to our lives and teach us to distinguish good from evil. Indeed, as I wrote in my encyclical 'Spe Salvi,' it is not science that redeems man: Man is redeemed by love, and this applies even in terms of the present world."

Benedict XVI lamented how "our civilization and our culture [...] too often tend to place God in parentheses, to organize personal and social life without him, to maintain that nothing can be known of God, even to deny his existence. But when God is laid aside, [...] all our hopes, great and small, rest on nothing."

"In order, then, to 'educate for hope' -- as we propose in this congress and during the coming pastoral year -- it is necessary, in the first place, to open our hearts, our intellects and all our lives to God, in order to be his credible witnesses among our fellow man."

COUNSELS

God's Call to Labor in His Vineyard

WORD: Ex 19:2-6a; Ps 100:1-3, 5; Rom 5:6-11; Mt 9:36, 10:8

ORDER: "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give." Mat 10:6-8

THEME: We do the will of the Father when we labor in His vineyard

REFLECTION:

The first reading from the Book of Exodus brings us back to the day when God called to Moses from the mountain to tell his people that "if they hearken to His voice and keep His covenant, they shall be to Him, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation". In Genesis 15 and 17, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to make his descendants into a great nation. That promise was being realized as God restated His agreement with the Israelite nation, the descendants of Abraham. God promised to bless and care for them. The people promised to obey Him. The covenant was thus sealed. While God showed His love and justice, the good intentions of the people quickly wore off.

God continues to show us His unfailing love in Psalm 100 and in the second reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans. While we were still sinners, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us, not because we were good enough, but because He loved us. The mission of Jesus, which the Father entrusted to Him, was completely accomplished by our Lord and Savior: Jesus has completely revealed to us who the Father is, the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, who has

Continued on page 4

Promise of the Week

"If you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people." (Ex 19:5)

In the Stillness, His Voice

Some have said that nothing we do as God's creatures can diminish nor add to His greatness and glory. While this is true, since the dawn of creation, man has felt the need to offer sacrifices, to praise and honor his creator. Man has constantly searched for God. And the truth is that He is everywhere...that He is always there. Although it might not seem so - in the midst of tempestuous storms, or as the ground shakes when the earth quakes, or when fire consumes all that is in its path - "But the Lord was not in the wind ... But the Lord was not in the earthquake... But the Lord was not in the fire" (1 Kings 19: 11-12) - the truth, however, is that He is there watching over us, His love for us is always there.

It is us, His creatures, who let the noise and bedlam of our busy lives prevent us from truly hearing and communicating with Him. So we are blinded and made deaf by our worldly concerns... And still, we seek Him out, sometimes desperately...

That is, until we set aside some time and concentrate our attention on His Holy Spirit's soft prodding and gentle touch - "After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound" (1 Kings 19:12). Then we find that YES, He is there, watching over us, waiting for the moment when we free ourselves to claim what He has promised for us. In the stillness and quiet of moments, when we focus on Him, that is when and where we find our God of mercy and compassion. That is when we realize how He cares for us, as in the single set of footprints in the sand, when He carries us through the turmoil that, at times, life challenges us with. So we honor and praise Him - not because He needs it, but YES, because He rightly deserves it - for His love is untiring and unending, and the wonders of His creation never cease to amaze. And YES, because in doing so we fulfill one of our most basic needs - to believe in the truth of God's love. What a gift faith is, if only for the joy that believing brings!

So pray always, and seek God's ear. Make petitions for His assistance, for without Him, we are nothing. And in the end, remember to thank Him - for this miracle we call life. Thank Him for His love. Thank Him for the sacrifice that His Son Jesus made for us. Surrender all to Him and thank Him for allowing us the moments when we find Him - in the times when we feel and hear His Spirit's presence, in the stillness in His Voice.

The Beatitudes

The beatitudes (supreme happiness) are universal call to holiness. This sermon on the mount was a collective teaching most likely taught by Jesus over a period of time, not at one particular event or at one particular occasion. The teaching was so essential that Jesus "sat down" beforehand; this was tradition with Jewish Rabbis speaking with authority, to assume a sitting position when giving a teaching with such preponderance. The eight beatitudes in Matthew are paralleled by four in Luke.

The word "blessed" denotes one who attains favorable standing in the grace of God. According to St. Augustine, each blessing builds upon the one before, thus the beatitude on spiritual poverty is the main crux or foundation. St. Augustine further imparts that morally, the first seven corresponds to the seven sanctifying gifts of the Holy Spirit; the eighth beatitude summarizes the seven: The "poor in spirit" = fear of the Lord; "those who mourn" = knowledge; "the meek" = piety; "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" = fortitude; "the merciful" = counsel; "the pure in heart" = understanding; "the peacemakers" = wisdom.

The "poor in spirit" (Mat. 5:3) speaks of spiritual poverty, not of material deprivation. Let us take caution that Jesus here does not indicate that impoverished existence, like those living in the slums, a blessed state. Physical hunger, living conditions where physical maladies are prevalent are never good things. It is in fact the aim of Christianity to alleviate such sufferings. Christians need to be pro-active, not passive. Christianity is not all about not doing bad things, but actively doing good things. The laudable GK project exemplifies this very nature of Christ by way of lifting the poor through housing projects. The more we desire earthly wealth is inversely proportional to our ability to do God's work. "Those who mourn" (Mat 5:4) speaks of those who grieve over their sins with the spirit of atonement. Take comfort that it is God who seeks us first, not man seeking God. There is no man-made way up to heaven, only God's way reaching down to man through Jesus. We partake in the Eucharist, not for us to ascend to heaven, but for heaven to come down to us. "The meek" (Mat 5:5) does not equal weakness, but humility- the gateway to all other virtues. "The merciful" (Mat 5:7) shares the unmerited grace with others. The rich helps the poor in this world, while the poor helps the rich in the world to come. "The peacemakers" (Mat 5:9) are reconciled with God and others.

The beatitudes are triumphant shouts of true joy to come; it is this inexhaustible bliss that surpasses beyond grief, pain, sufferings & losses. Stand firm, brethren, for Jesus does not disappoint.

Saint Barnabas

If we are to name one in the long list of little known saints, Barnabas could easily come to mind. Yes, we often heard about him as a good buddy and companion of Saint Paul but that's all we often read about him as St. Luke's 'Acts of the Apostles' was focused mainly on Peter and Paul as the spearheading leaders in spreading the Word of God.

St. Barnabas is one of the first prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch. He was born of Jewish parents of the tribe of Levi. His aunt was the mother of John, surnamed Mark, widely assumed to be the same Mark as the person traditionally believed to be the author of the Gospel of Mark. It is interesting to know that when Paul returned to Jerusalem after his conversion, it was Barnabas who took and introduced him to the apostles (Acts 9:27). It is possible that they might have been fellow students in the school of Gamaliel. Though nothing is recorded of Barnabas for some years, the Church, ranked him like St. Paul, with the Twelve, as an Apostle, though not one of them. The apostles and brethren at Jerusalem relied on Barnabas to do mission works. The mission works were usually so extensive and weighty that he always banked on Paul to assist him. Paul often labored with him.

Disputes even during those early times of the Church were pervasive. Paul and Barnabas were not spared of that. Having returned to Antioch and spent some time there St. Paul asked Barnabas to accompany him on another journey. Barnabas wished to take John Mark along, but Paul did not, as he had left them on the former journey. The dispute ended by Paul and Barnabas taking separate ways. Paul took Silas as his companion, and journeyed through Syria and Cilicia; while Barnabas took his younger cousin, John Mark, to visit Cyprus.

St. Barnabas is not mentioned again by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. However, in Gal. 2:13 a little more is learned about him, and his weakness under the taunts of the Jewish Christians is evident; and from 1 Corinthians 9:6 it may be gathered that he continued to labor as missionary.

Certain Jews coming to Syria, where Barnabas was then preaching the gospel, being envious at his extraordinary success, ganged up on him as he was disputing in the synagogue, dragged him out, and, after the most inhumane tortures, stoned him to death. His nephew, John Mark, who was a witness of this barbaric action, privately interred his body in a cave, where it remained till the time of the Emperor Zeno, in the year 485 AD. A monastery built in his name at Salamis, Cyprus, is where a tomb known to hold his remains was found in 488. He is venerated as the Patron Saint of Cyprus. His feast day is June 11.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.). Email to rguiao@yahoo.com; cblmont@hotmail.com

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit every 2nd Sat. of the month, Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ – **Volunteers Needed** contact Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

MISSION

NJ Catholic Charismatic Conference 2008, June 13 –15, Union Catholic High School, 1600 Martine Avenue Scotch Plains, NJ, Angel & Aida Calilap 973-284-1853 (aacalilap@gmail.com), Frank & Malou Venadas 973-562-0055 (fvenadas@hotmail.com)

MISSION

Healing Prayer Services at Resurrection Parish - St. Bridget Church

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration – Every 1st Monday of the month @ 8 PM
Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Adoration – All other Mondays of the month @ 8 PM

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Adoration and Celebration – Every last Saturday of the month except December. Prayer starts @ 8:30 AM

Venue: Resurrection Parish – St Bridget Church, 372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Websites: bondoflove.org and 2000hailmarys.org

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 20 (Save the date)

“In The Beginning” – 1:00 pm show

Millennium Theatre Sight & Sound Theatres, Lancaster, PA

A spectacular staging of the biblical account of creation. Be there as the Garden of Eden appears before you. Experience God's pleasure at his most awesome creation, Adam and Eve, and the complete beauty of their unbroken relationship with God. In the Beginning promises an experience beyond your imagination.

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the

Week ending June 6, 2008

**Tithes, Love Offerings, Mission & Fast for the
Poor \$4,955.00**

Thank you for your continued generosity

Counsels from page 1

helped His apostles to continue Jesus' mission on earth to be spread and communicated throughout the ages, until the return of Christ, the Savior.

Jesus foresaw all things. Therefore, in Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus saw the crowd being harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd, "He was moved with pity". Jesus' response to the crowd's need was to send out apostles to "the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Things have not changed that much since. So many today are still harassed by various forces and helpless, drifting without any real direction in their lives. Perhaps, only 20% of the people in the world know Jesus Christ. This reminds us that being disciples of Christ, our task is to reach out to the remaining 80%, who have not met our Lord and Savior. We have to start by casting out demons from our own hearts first before helping others to true liberation. We have to find the lost, bring healing into people's lives spiritually, physically and emotionally and lead them to the "Kingdom of Heaven." We enter the Kingdom, not by going somewhere, but by aligning ourselves totally with the way of Jesus, when His thoughts become our thoughts, when His ways become our ways.

Our mission, as Jesus' present-day disciples, is to reach out to others as Jesus did, with compassion. Compassion is the ear that hears a cry in need so the lost, troubled and abandoned can be shepherd back to safety. Compassion helps us hear the voice of Jesus' deep love for us which stirs us to act as a shepherd. Living out the Gospel for this Sunday means that we do the will of the Father when we are willing to labor in His vineyard. As Jesus said to His disciples, the harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few. Let us be part of the planting, the nurturing and the gathering, be a laborer for the Kingdom. Like the twelve, without cost we have received (our call), without cost we are to give (our mission).

It does not give us much reason to say, as sometimes people do, that "I am not good enough to do the Lord's work". In the choice of the twelve apostles, Jesus chose very ordinary people. When the Lord calls us to serve, He wants to work through us and in us, through the Holy Spirit, for His greater honor and glory. Having the right relationship with God, self, each other and the world, we can all say: "Here I am Lord, send me".

DIRECTION:

1. Reach out to members who have not been coming regularly.
2. Encourage everyone to pursue his/her discipleship formation.
3. Intercede for the sick and the dying and support the healing ministry.

**Covenant News is also
available on our website @
bldnewark.com**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

June 14

Mark 10 Summer Field Trip, Land of Make Believe
354 Great Meadows Road, Hope, NJ 07844
Reuben & Cherry Vilar 908-206-8737

June 27 -29

Solo Parents Encounter #10

Xavier Center, 23 Convent Road, Convent Station, NJ 07961
Vic & Dee Lim 973-865-4203; 973-226-2306

Youth Encounter # 15

St. Francis Retreat House, 3918 Chipman Road, Easton, PA 18045
Mario & Cecille Salonga mcsalonga@optonline.net, Steph Rigor
(steffunee@yahoo.com)

June 28

Soup Kitchen, Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity, 60 Jay
Street, Newark, NJ 07103, ME 19 will serve
Mosty & Ling Garcia 908-222-0550, Mel & Remy Hernandez 908-
281-5565

July 11-13

Family Encounter #15, Malvern Retreat House,
315 S Warren Ave Malvern, PA 19355
Gene & Bing Ymbong 732-254-7743, Manny & Nette Manguiat
201-955-0439

TEACHING MINISTRY

June 20 Friday

Singles	Encounter with Jesus
Solo Parents	Intro to Intercession
MK 10/JN 6	Teachings
Youth	Teachings

June 21 Saturday

LSS 24 & 25	Apologetics
LSS 26 & 27	Shepherds Training 1
LSS 28 & 29	Encounter with Jesus

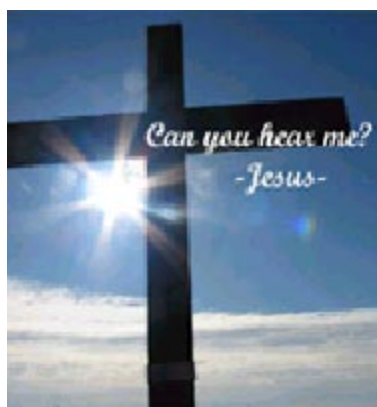
Traveling Catholics:

**For a nationwide listing of Catholic
Churches & Mass times, go to
www.masstimes.org**





2008 NJ CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC CONFERENCE



This year's NJ Catholic Charismatic Conference was held from June 13 to 15, 2008, at Union Catholic High School, Scotch Plains, New Jersey. The theme of the Conference is: "Can you hear me?(Signed-Jesus)"

Hundreds of invitations to the conference were sent out and last weekend, there

were approximately 350 participants from different communities answered God's call to find and reflect on the many ways to listen to Jesus in their daily lives. Twenty-five members from BLD Mission Ministry served with love. The workshops were all very challenging with awesome and great speakers like Fr. Phil Latronico ("Do you hear Me in Community?"), Fr. Bill Halbing ("Do you hear Me in Your labors of evangelization?"), Fr. Claudio Antecini, ("Do you hear Me in your prayer?"), Fr. Bill McCarthy & Dcn. Fritz Kautz ("Do you hear Me in Scripture?"), Fr. John Campoli ("Can you hear Me in your rut?") David Thorp ("Do you hear Me in Church teaching?") Josephine Cacchia, (Do you hear me in Service?) and Robert Valiente. (Can you hear me in your joy?) The challenge is: When we truly hear Jesus, we will have no fear, we will not be afraid, we will get out of the boat, we will break out of our box, we will stretch out, we will explore and give a new dimension into our life, we will look around to see what God has given into our life, we will find and trust others, we will discover what is around us, we will be passionate for the Lord.

Can you hear Me? This is the moment I have created you for. (Signed-Jesus)

We all found JOY that weekend, the auditorium and rooms were not air-conditioned yet we did not feel the heat for we were all focused on God's very interesting messages, plus we met new faces. When was the last time you experienced deep JOY?

COUNSELS

Witness for Christ with Love and Courage

WORD: Jer 20:10-13; Ps 69:8-10; 14, 17, 33-35; Rom 5:12-15; Mt. 10:26-33

THEME: We do the will of the Father when we manifest Jesus in our lives.

ORDER: "Fear no one. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops." (Mt 10:26-27)

REFLECTION: In this Sunday's Gospel, our Lord Jesus calls us to witness for Him and to spread the Gospel by sharing to others our faith in Him. He says, "What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops." (Mt 10:26-27) If we witness for Him, He promises, "Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father." (Mt 10:32) So, by acknowledging Christ in our lives and sharing Him to others, we are also witnessing for the Father and fulfilling His will for us.

Christian witnessing is all about testifying to others of the love and goodness of God that have changed our individual lives. It simply calls us to love and to care for others just as God loves and cares for us. As witnesses, like in a courtroom, we are not called to judge or to criticize but merely to witness and to share. In our relationship with one another in this community, are we quick to criticize and to judge others rather than to show our love for them by affirming and encouraging them? And, how fast are we to spread gossip which may not be true and which could hurt someone than to spread the Word of God?

Christian witnessing does not require us to use our human wisdom, intellect or skills. (continued on page4)

God's Promise for the Week

"Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father."

(Matt. 10:30)

Vengeance Is Not Mine



“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)

It was 14 minutes past 4:00 AM when my wife and I were roused from deep sleep by our phone ringing. My wife picked it up while I waited with bated breath and thumping heartbeat what the call was about. Then

my wife wailed uncontrollably unable to contain what she heard: our eldest son what accidentally shot dead in a bar less 500 meter away from our condo! I jumped out of bed but I did not know what to do next. I was shaking in disbelief. As I drove to the hospital where my son was brought, I was praying in tongues hoping against hope that I heard my wife wrong.

When we arrived at the emergency section of the hospital, I saw more than 10 police cars swarming the entrance. Inside, 6 wounded women were being treated all crying. No one could tell us where our son was until someone looking like the doctor on duty escorted us to a room with curtains closed. I gasped as I saw my wife and my 12 year son ran to a steel bed and I heard them both scream, smothering my son’s lifeless body. I thought I would faint at the nerve rending sight. I died at that moment in excruciating pain.

I sobbed like a child as I hugged and kissed my son unmindful of the blood stains all over his white shirt. After an hour, I went outside to get fresh air praying to God for help in between sobs. I called all of my relatives and BLD friends for prayers. My son has been a God-fearing person, Lord, why have you taken him from us? He has always been a peace-maker and your faithful worshipper, an obedient son, what has he done to deserve this?

As I asked for covering of the precious blood of Jesus and for the intercession of the Blessed Mother, I slowly felt peace settling in my heart. After an hour, calls from my BLD friends started to pour in telling me that the entire community is in prayers for us. I felt the surge of prayers as my whole body seemed to float on air. And after more than an hour, I have accepted God’s will for my son and have forgiven the man who ended my son’s life so that we can move on. I recalled Jesus’ prayer before he died on the cross: “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” St. Mathews Gospel, 5:39 is also like it: “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also”.

God Sees What Man Does Not See

Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing . . . this can be a challenge between our minds and our hearts.

Our Christian life will always be a battle. St. Paul said it and it is true. Our life is warfare and our battles are not of flesh and blood but a spiritual one.

As men, we are driven to achieve perfection. Our minds are trained to perform and seek recognition. This norm of training is deeply ingrained in us, from our childhood, to our years in school, and through our professional lives. All these years of training and quest for perfection are traits we carry for the rest of our lives. We bring this training in raising our families, in our work place, in our churches, and in our community. We call them strength, talent, and core competence. We are taught to use our minds well and be the best in all the things we do.

God revealed Himself to us so that we might desire Him as He really is, as one of whom the Apostle speaks when he says, *“What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him...”* (1 Cor 2:9) For those who desire Jesus and tend towards Him with zeal, knowing that what He is and what He holds in store for us utterly exceeds all that we could ever experience or come to know by our own discovery or learn from another.

As we continue our walk with the Lord, Mathew reminds us of how we should conduct our service to the Lord. He reminds us that we should not serve to be seen but to give glory only to God. We must keep our focus on Him, to keep the heavenly blessings that will enable us to achieve our ultimate goal which is to forever worship at His Holy Throne. As we serve and give of our time, talent and treasures, we should give from our hearts. Our minds tend to measure, quantify, and rationalize our actions; these are the times when the mind gets in the way of our hearts’ intentions. So when we serve, let us serve gladly and without aspiring for recognition. Let us serve without quantifying our role in the endeavor at hand, not expecting to be rewarded, but lifting up to the Lord our deeds as a holy offering of ourselves.

Our Lord Jesus served differently from men. He serves unconditionally and without judgment, desiring only that hearts may turn to Him.

MAKE COVENANT NEWS A PART OF YOUR COVENANT LIFE

Why Love Your Enemy?

Matthew 5:44-45 is clearly a command to *"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust"*

As Christians, our relations with our neighbor which duty imposes cannot distract us in our search for God if we have learned to consider them with a deep spirit of faith. In living by faith, man must always relate his acts to God when dealing with his neighbor. Rather than detain him on outward appearances or conditions, sees, serves and loves God alone in others indiscriminately. For man has only one aspect: the image of God; only one name: child of God.

Unfortunately, vice, sin and faults can more or less disfigure the divine image in man but the image remains which by grace and the virtue of charity ought to recognize, respect and love in every man.

God's love embraces saint and sinner alike that even those who live far from him are still his children, if not effectively by grace, at least by their vocation to grace. God seeks our highest good and teaches us to seek the greatest good in others, even those who hate and abuse us, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us. He might be a rebellious child, an uncaring, non-listening, ill-tempered spouse or one who does things to offend us in community. We may not call them enemies but they resist our will and God's will; they are contrary and antagonistic. Jesus would still insist, Love them. Love your enemies. Keep on loving them. Our love for them must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God has shown us.

Praying for our enemies is one of the deepest forms of love, because interceding in God's presence on their behalf may be for their conversion, their repentance or they could be awakened to the enmity in their hearts. Only by the cross of Jesus Christ can we break the power of revenge and releases the power of love to do well in the face of evil. *"Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."* (Luke 23:34) This was Jesus' prayer as he hung on the cross.

Not only can we endure the mistreatment of the enemy, but we can also rejoice in it and treasure the great reward of heaven that empowers us to love them. (Matthew 5:12) We, the branches are grafted into the vine by faith in the all-satisfying promises of Christ. (John 15:5) And as we abide by the spirit of faith, we become capable of being elevated to a supernatural state, drawing on his power and his enabling. So the fruit that we produce, like loving our enemies, is not produced in our own strength, but by the strength of the vine.

Ministry Announcements

Mission

Nursing Home Visit - Hamilton Plaza
56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the Month
Volunteers are needed

Nong & Tricia Bustos – 732-591-1340
nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm
Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Celebration
Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm
2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month starts at 8:30am
except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church
372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

Word

Share your walk/faitth/transformation in the Lord
with the community thru an article (450 words max.)
Send to word@bldnewark.com



June 20 John 6 Teaching
Mark 10 Teaching
Youth Teaching
Encounter With Jesus - Singles
Intro to Intercession - Solo Parents

June 21 Saturday at St. Mary's, 1-6 pm
Apologetics - LSS 24 & 25
Shepherds Training 1 - LSS 26 & 27
Encounter With Jesus - LSS 28 & 29

The Lord's Provision

Weekly Collection Report for the week ending
June 13, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission and Fast for the Poor
\$3,638.00

Thank you for your continued generosity!

Counsels from page 1

As witnesses, we are not called to be perfect in our human ways but merely to do our best to love and to share. We have the full support of God with all His power, wisdom, goodness and love, when we witness in faith and in obedience to Him. St. Paul addresses the heart of Christian witnessing in his letter to the Corinthians, *"I came to you in weakness and fear ...and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God."* (1 Cor 2:3-5) When we witness to each other and do our work in this community, do we rely solely on our human intellect, skills and intuition rather than seek God's wisdom and love?

As witnesses for Christ, we will face persecution as St. Paul attests, *"In fact, all who want to live religiously in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."* (2 Tim 3:12) Unlike the early Christians, our persecution today comes mostly from the rejection and ridicule of friends, relatives, and employers who are unable to understand why we have changed our former way of life and why we have forsaken the attractions of the world. Very often, we are unable to defend what is good, just and the truth merely because we are afraid of what others will say about us. We are fearful to go against the ways of the world—a culture that is mainly opposed to the ways of God. Despite this grim scenario, our Lord comforts us, *"Fear no one. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

(Mt 10:26, 28, 31) As witnesses for Christ, we are called to be courageous despite all difficulties because God is with us and in control of our lives. In the First Reading, the Prophet Jeremiah despite persecution, has courageously placed his trust in God, saying, *"But the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion; my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph."* (Jer 20:11)

In a world that is full of evil and sin, and its culture mostly opposed to God's ways, our work, as witnesses for Christ, is even more challenging. But, if we take courage and persevere to defend Christ and the Gospel, we shall secure our lives and find happiness and eternal salvation.

DIRECTIONS:

- Witness to and share to others your faith in Christ through your words and actions.
- Strengthen those whose faith is wavering by your example of obedience and humble submission to God's visible Word.

Community Calendar

June 27-29 Solo Parents Encounter #10
Xavier Center, 23 Convent Road
Convent Station, NJ
Vic/Dee Lim 973-865-4203

Youth Encounter # 15
St. Francis Retreat House
3918 Chipman Road, Easton, PA 18045
Mario & Cecille Salonga's email: mcsalonga@optonline.net
Steph Rigor (steffuniece@yahoo.com)

June 28 Soup Kitchen
Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St., Newark, NJ 07103
ME 19 will serve
Mosty & Ling Garcia 908-222-0550
Mel & Remy Hernandez 908-281-5565

July 11-13 Family Encounter #15
Malvern Retreat House
315 S Warren Ave., Malvern, PA 19355
Gene & Bing Ymbong 732-254-7743
Manny & Nette Manguiat 201-955-0439

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN THE BEGINNING

Sept 20 (Save the date)

"In The Beginning" – 1:00 pm at Millennium Theatre
Sight & Sound Theatre, Lancaster, PA
A spectacular staging of the biblical account of creation. Be there as the Garden of Eden appears before you. Experience God's pleasure at his most awesome creation, Adam and Eve, and the complete beauty of their unbroken relationship with God. ***In the Beginning*** promises an experience beyond your imagination.



Oct 11 (Save the date)
Annual BLD – Newark Golf Outing
Riverview Country Club
Easton, PA
Details to follow
Contact: ME 24



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 25

Bulletin Edition

June 27, 2008

NEWS

Bishop Notes Work of Priests and Catechists in Faith

WASHINGTON, D.C., JUNE 25, 2008 (Zenit.org) - The U.S. bishops consider the findings from a Pew Study on religion and public life as confirmation that Americans are identified with religion.

Archbishop Donald Wuerl, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, responded to the results of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released Monday. The survey was conducted between May and August last year and is based on answers from more than 35,000 American adults.

The survey reveals a range of data, including adherence to religious tradition, and the link between frequency of worship and political views. It shows that a vast majority of Americans, nearly 92%, believe in God or a universal spirit.

"History testifies that religious faith is very important to Americans," Archbishop Wuerl noted. "At every juncture of our past, Americans have called upon God for guidance, protection and direction. There is a clear identification with religion in America which, for Catholics, reflects the dedicated efforts of priests, catechists and teachers in our history."

The Pew study also states that 74% of Americans believe in heaven and only 59% in hell. It reports that 63% believe Scripture is the word of God. Another 63% of respondents with children at home say they pray and read Scripture with their children and 60% send their children to religious education programs.

The study also concludes that most Americans have a non-dogmatic approach to faith and that the majority of those affiliated with a religious tradition agree that there is more than one way to interpret the teaching of their faith.

Some 40% see a conflict between modern society and religion, with 42% saying Hollywood threatens their values.

Father Brian Bransfield, specialist in the bishops' Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis, reflected on the numbers, saying "it is hard to quantify the tremendous thirst for truth among families and people of all ages, as demonstrated by the overwhelming response to the recent visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States."

"This thirst is sometimes misdirected through the effects of secularism, with its focus on individualism and consumerism," he added, affirming that the Church's response in any case is an "ever renewed commitment to robust catechetical efforts."

Counsels

Who Do You Say That I Am

Word: Acts 12:1-11; Ps 34:2-9;
2 Tim 4:6-8, 17-18; Mt 16:13-19

Theme: We do the will of the Father when we strengthen each other's faith.

Order: Keep the faith. (2 Tim 4:7c paraphrased)

Reflection:

Don't you love the details of this story? Peter is asleep in prison on the eve of his trial while the local church prays. Suddenly, an angel taps him on the side, tells him to get dressed, and the chains fall from his wrists. They slip by the guards and the iron gate. Finally, Peter finds himself standing in an alley alone, pinches himself and realizes he was not dreaming. When Peter arrives at the house where people have gathered to pray for him, the maid is so surprised to see Peter that she forgets to let him in!

Notice that this first group of Christians seems to be characterized by a spirit of unity, support, care, concern and prayer. In this Sunday's first reading, the story of Peter's arrest and deliverance has a miraculous note to it. God seems to be watching over Peter, while Peter himself was conscious that the Lord was with him in life's ups and downs.

In the second reading, we learn how St. Paul's life similarly took many unexpected turns. He compares his life to, among other things, a race well run, for which he will be rewarded by the crown of immortality. His success was, likewise, due to the loving protection of God.

St. Paul established many communities in different regions of the Roman Empire. He sought to create a community that would endure the ravages and trials of time and persecution. In choosing men to lead these communities, Paul gives us a partial witness of the authority structure that will shape the church for millennia to come. We are privileged to be a part of a reality that is clearly rooted on the teachings of Jesus and His Apostles.

Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

"Blessed the man who takes refuge in the Lord"
(Ps 34:9)

Highest Belief In Life

“A few years ago, someone asked me this question – What is your highest belief in life? What is your most important belief in life?”

I was so intrigued with the question that it kept coming back to my mind. Many times I caught myself pondering on the question – what is my highest belief in life, the one that I will use as the ultimate guide for my life and the lives of my 4 children? I have been searching for ways how to become the best father I could ever be to my children. My renewal through the BLD community brought me to the conclusion that showing and leading them to God righteous path is the best I can do as a father, as their leader.

Finally, I decided to devote time to answer the question. My search led me to the following answers:

- I believe that I am not here by accident or by nature.
- I believe that there is a beautiful reason why I am here.
- I believe that there's someone beyond, a God, who created me.
- I believe that my life on earth is merely a test from God.
- I believe that someday, I will go back to Him and report on how I lived my life on earth.
- I believe that if I pass His test on earth, God will give me so much more, in heaven.
- I believe in Jesus Christ when He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father in heaven except through me.” (Jn 14:6)

It means that there is no other way but only one way. It means that I can attain the fullness of life only thru Him and if I am with Him. Many years before, I did not take this verse seriously because I never read the Bible. My spiritual transformation led me to this verse.

Today, this is my most important belief in life. I am using this verse as the foundation of my life and my family's life. The Bible says that the devil can take the form of pride, anger, vanity, lust, greed, sloth and gluttony.

Fear of God is the foundation of all wisdom, says the Bible. Jesus said: “Those who do not believe that I Am Who I Am, will die in their sins” (Jn 8:24)

We are all seekers in this world. We all search for meaning. Different people seek different things. I hope you will find what you seek in this world, as a new creation, as God's children. If we seek to live a new life by faith in Jesus, we will find God's power at work in our hearts.

***Make Covenant News
a Part of Your Covenant Life***

Thy Will Be Done

By prayer we can discern “what is the will of God” and obtain the endurance to do it. (CCC 2826)

One of the most important things we have to do in our spiritual life is to do the will of God. We cannot achieve salvation without following His will.

One of God's gift to man which He cannot violate is our freedom. Therein lies the problem. Because of this freedom we can follow His will or follow ours. As it is quite often very difficult to follow His will, especially trials and crosses, so it is also difficult to die to ourselves and submit to God's plan.

Herewith are some encouragement and comments by holy people of our faith:

“I no longer have any desire but to what He has told me many a time: leave it to me to act.”

“I was equally pleased whether what I asked for was granted or refused; provided that I obeyed I was satisfied.”

“When we give ourselves up entirely to His guidance and allow Him to do as He pleases with us, He enables us to make great progress in a short time.”

“Make an effort to unite yourself always and in everything to divine will, both in happy and sad events.”

“True love does not consist in receiving many consolations at the service of God, but rather in always having a ready will to do all that God is pleased to order for our spiritual advantage and His glory.”

“My God, give me the feeling of your presence in me and around me, and at the same time that fearful love which we experience in the face of the one we love passionately, and which makes us want to do everything that pleases Him and avoid everything that displeases Him.”

“In doing the will of God, we are justified and are ready for heaven.”

“The abandonment of our own ways, the emptying of our heart permits the Lord to fill us with His gifts.”

“The Lord's ways are not ours, and He demands that we leave all to follow Him.”

“It takes only a second. Before starting anything ask yourself: What does God want of me in this? Then, with divine grace, do it.”

“Abandonment to the will of God is the secret of happiness on earth.”

“The will of God is our peace.”

(Quotations from Sts. Margaret Mary, Padre Pio, Jose Maria Escriva, Bernard, Blessed John XXIII & De Foucauld).

Lord, I put what little I have into Your hands. Pay all my debtors, rescue me from their hands, because You are my God and I followed Your will.

Visit our website at www.bldnewark.com

Apologetics: Indulgence

What is an indulgence? – An indulgence is a remission or taking away of the temporal punishment due to the sins that have already been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance. When we commit a mortal sin, we are subject to eternal punishment. Contritely confessing our sins to a priest takes away the eternal punishment, but the temporal punishment remains and can only be removed by prayer, acts of devotion, and works of charity.

Why do we need indulgences? – Bishop Fulton Sheen once said that sins were like nails driven into a block of wood. Confession removes the nails, but the holes in the wood remain. Prayers, acts of devotion, and works of charity help to fill in those holes. If they are not filled in during this life, the repair work will have to be done in Purgatory. Indulgences provide a repair kit or framework for making up for our sins. We can also apply the indulgences to the souls in Purgatory to help them get to Heaven.

Where do we get the grace for indulgences? – The death of Jesus on the cross and the “virtuous deeds” of the Blessed Mother and the saints (Revelation 19:8) have built up a treasury of grace and merit that the Church can open up to the faithful. Since we are all linked together in the Communion of Saints, those of us pilgrims on earth can pray to the saints in Heaven and for the souls in Purgatory so that one day all of us will be together in Heaven.

How many kinds of indulgences are there? – There are two kinds of indulgences: Plenary, which takes away all temporal punishment due to sin, and partial, which takes away some of the punishment. A person who fulfills all the conditions for an indulgence perfectly will receive a plenary indulgence, but only a partial indulgence if something is lacking. A plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day.

But haven't I heard that indulgences were a bad thing? – Several hundred years ago, some Catholics abused indulgences, saying that they could be obtained by giving money to the Church. This was a misuse by some individuals of worthwhile source of grace and was never countenanced by the Church herself. Indulgences are a good thing when obtained through the strict set of conditions described below.

Why should I seek indulgences? – To make it possible for you to go directly to Heaven when you die (that's what a plenary indulgence means) or to help a soul in Purgatory get to Heaven.

What are the conditions for getting an indulgence? –

- (1) You must worthily celebrate sacramental Confession before performing the indulgenced work and seek true conversion of heart.
- (2) You must participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and receive Holy Communion, preferably on the same day that the indulgenced work is performed.
- (3) You must pray for the intentions of the Holy Father by devoutly reciting one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and a profession of faith (the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed).
- (4) Those who are infirm or unable to leave their homes can gain the indulgence by spiritually uniting themselves with those carrying out the prescribed work in the ordinary manner and by offering to God their prayers, sufferings, and discomforts.

(Source: Catholic Replies 2 by James J. Drummey)

Counsels (from page 1)

Did you ever notice how the lives of these two apostles are full of surprises and unexpected answers to prayers? Just like in our own lives or even our community encounters, which majority of us have served, it is the same activity each year but we still experience new surprises and challenges.

How often are we like Peter and Paul, praying hard for something - and then failing to recognize God's answer because it comes in an expected form? We pray for a relative or a friend to be delivered from addiction but try to shield them from facing consequences that may bring him to repentance. God is full of surprises! He does not always answer our prayers in the way we want, but he always accepts our intention to follow him in the way he taught us.

Though the Gospel is Peter's story, it is very much our own because it contains perhaps the most important question ever asked by Jesus. “But you, who do you say that I am?” Peter spoke directly from the heart in his great profession of faith. Each of us is challenged to answer this question on a personal level during our lifetime: “But you, who do you say that I am?”

Looking at St. Peter and St. Paul, we can see that their life of faith was just that - Life! Far from being a to do list with tasks to be checked off, our walk of faith is much more the process of living our lives for Jesus - not just in active ministry but also in everyday, even mundane interaction with others!

Who knows how God might be working in our hearts through our friendship or camaraderie as we encourage each other through our daily trials, celebrate each other's joys, and share our victories or struggles? We all have people with whom we are comfortable sharing the love of Christ - usually people who resemble us in age, education, social and economic class. But many of us have been pleasantly surprised when we reached out of our comfort zones and found new friends in unlikely places!

Our Lord is a God who works in so many ways: He can work just as powerfully, although difficult to understand or perceive, in Christian fellowship as in Bible study. We can find him in time spent with others no less than when we are sitting in a Church in silent prayer.

Let's ask ourselves, “How have I been conscious of God's presence in my life? Is there any ‘prison’ from which God has rescued me?”

As we reflect on those questions, let us trust that as we remain open to the Holy Spirit throughout our days, He will deepen our FAITH!

Directions:

- Encourage one another.
- Lift one another up.
- Listen to one another.

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A spectacular staging of the biblical account of creation. Be there as the Garden of Eden appears before you. Experience God's pleasure at his most awesome creation, Adam and Eve, and the complete beauty of their unbroken relationship with God. **In the Beginning** promises an experience beyond your imagination.

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Frank/Malou Venadas (973)562-0055 fvenadas@hotmail.com
Payment deadline: August 8, 2008

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Riverview Country Club
Easton, PA
Details to follow
Contact: ME 24

The Lord's Provisions

Week Ending: June 27, 2008
Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &
Fast for the Poor: \$ 2,978.00

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

June 27-26

Solo Parents Encounter #10

Xavier Center,
23 Convent Road, Convent Station, NJ 07961
Vic & Dee Lim (973)865-4203; (973)226-2306

Youth Encounter # 15

St. Francis Retreat House
3918 Chipman Road, Easton, PA 18045
Mario/Cecille Salonga mcsalonga@optonline.net
Steph Rigor steffunee@yahoo.com

June 28

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103
ME 19 will serve
Mosty/Ling Garcia (908)222-0550
Mel/Remy Hernandez (908)281-5565

July 11-13

Family Encounter #15

Malvern Retreat House
315 S Warren Ave Malvern, PA 19355
Gene/Bing Ymbong (732)254-7743
Manny/Nette Manguiat (201)955-0439

Note

**Application forms for all encounters
are available at bldnewark.com**



TEACHING MINISTRY

Date/Class

Day/Teaching

June 27

Friday

Golden Years
Intercessory
Service
LSS29

Teaching
Formation Teachings
Formation Teachings
Intro to Commitment

July 18

Friday

Mark10
John6
Youth
Singles
Solo Parents

Teachings
Teachings
Teachings
Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit
Growth in Prayer

Note

**Friday teachings – after worship
Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's**

NEWS

Fr. Paul Lehman Celebrates 80th Birthday

After weeks of preparation with participation of all members from each ministry, this past Saturday, July 5, 2008 the community celebrated Father Paul Lehman's 80th birthday in a very simple way. Despite the long holiday and rain, many came to partake in celebrating with Father Paul another year of blessings and good health. This joyful occasion began with a Eucharistic Celebration concelebrated by Father David Sison and Father Robert Lamirez along with Deacon Bong David and Deacon Serge Bernachez. Members of the Single's Ministry and their praise ministry beautifully participated throughout the mass.

A luncheon immediately followed in the auditorium. During that time a slide show presentation filled with memoirs of Father Paul from his childhood until present entertained all those that came. A video presentation of Mark 10 brought a smile in Fr. Paul's face as he watched intently. The banner that the John 6 prepared nicely decorated the stage. There after the Youth Ministry presented their two songs actively allowing Fr. Paul to participate with the action song. A closing presentation by John P. Balingit wooed the crowd as the rest of the Single's Ministry joined him to lead Fr. Paul and Fr. Dave to blow the candles in ending the eventful day.

Happy Birthday Father Paul, may God continue to shower upon you more blessings and good health. Many thank you for your unending dedication and service to all of us through these years. You've taught and guided us with your wisdom and knowledge to live and lead a Christ-like life. We cannot thank you enough. We love you!



COUNSELS

Fruitfulness (Communitarian Value)

Word: Is 55: 10-11; Ps 65: 10-14; Rom 8:18-23; Mt 13:1-23

Theme: In the meekness and humility of Jesus, we shall hear the Word of God and bear fruit.

Order: Hear the word of God and understand it and bear fruit

Reflection:

"Just as from the heavens the rain and snow comes down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to him who sows and bread to him who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it." (Is 55:10-11). Just as physical laws govern and determine the course of nature, so are spiritual laws of God govern and determine the course of our spiritual lives.

Our hearts need to and must be fertilized by the constant leading of God's word to be able to stay holy and focused on Him who sustains. "Start the day with God's word" is a saying that is both full of wisdom and practicality, because of our human weakness and frailty, without the watering of God's word we will be dead, like a dried up potted plant. There are a lot of challenges facing us today, as an individual, as a family, as a society and our response to the challenges vary. In every stage in life, be it being entangled with the thorns of lust and materialism or being in a rocky barrenness of pride and sloth, we all need the intimacy with Jesus that we get when we pray, when we soak ourselves in His Words, or when we bask in the rays of his glory in worship. When we choose to spend time with God in prayer, it is a decision to love God at its core. When we resist and avoid reading the word of God, when we justify our thinking with worldly reasoning, and arguing with the Word of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit, we are easily closing up our hearts to the healing and cleansing waters of life.

Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

"My word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it." (Is 55:11)

FAITH !

FAITH is something I lost for many years. It was difficult for me to understand faith because it was something without logical proof and my heart, mind and spirit were pre-occupied and focused on personal ambitions. That is, making a name for myself and getting ahead in this world. I had a successful career, made a decent living and had a lavish life style but there was a void. Something was missing but I could not figure out what it was that could not be fulfilled. So I thought to myself I needed a change. As recently as 4 years ago, my personal goal was to provide my children a college education and then call it quits with my wife. We have not been getting along as a couple and I felt that the only reason we were together was because of our kids. So I figured that once the kids were done with college and living independent lives, it made plenty of sense, at least to me, to go our separate ways. During this stage of my life, honoring, glorifying and thanking the Lord were afterthoughts and something that rarely came to mind. I solely relied on my abilities and know-how, and was arrogant enough to believe that my good fortune was achieved by my own doing.

It was not until three years and some months ago that my heart, mind and spirit were renewed. God called on me and brought me to community where I can learn from others and witness first-hand His abundant blessings and grace. After this rebirth in Christ, I look back at those years and realized how blessed I really am. He blessed me with a warm-hearted and faithful wife, and beautiful, loving children. My lack of faith almost cost me God's most precious gifts to me: my wife and children. I know now that in having faith in God and putting Him in the center of my life and family affairs, my daily trials became simpler, peace of mind easier to achieve, and the void is fulfilled!

God will never give up on me as I did with Him. I know that I have a long way to go and will need His help and guidance. I am in no means close to what He intended me to be. He is still molding and polishing me to be a better husband, a loving father and a faithful Christian. Faith in the Lord is the most important thing that I regret not instilling in my children early on and is the one thing that my wife and I are eagerly trying to pass on to them now that I have a better appreciation of His sustaining love for all of us. I know God works in mysterious ways and that through prayers, trust and faith in Him our children will also be renewed as I was. I know that because He said so. *"Your faith has saved you."* (Mt 18:22)

***Make Covenant News
a Part of Your Covenant Life***

"Covenanting Jitters"

Fears and uncertainties seem to escalate as some BLD members undergo series of preparation and the sealing of our covenant as disciples draw near. While some BLD members feel the strong desire to say "yes"; others are agonizing on what decision to take.

"Covenant", from Latin "convenire", means to agree, be of one mind, come together. In BLD, covenant commands a solemn agreement to live in continual interaction with our brethren in community and commitment to spread God's Word through service and ministry work. Being a covenanted BLD member calls for an enormous commitment, it is not surprising to find yourself experience a phenomenon I would call "covenanting jitters". Think about the more common "wedding jitters" wherein the couples experience cold feet and nervousness about the upcoming life-changing event.

How many times did we ignore that inner voice saying "Behold I am sending you"? Reflect on those days, weeks, months, or years when we had 101 excuses of why we didn't want to obey the Lord's command. What thoughts of discord are holding us back? Do we suppress the voice of conscience because other voices appeal to our self-interest? Could it be the lure of money, prestige, and power while advancing our careers or climbing up the corporate ladder? Could it be the small children or the elderly parents you need to take care of, the sons and daughters we need to put through college, or the mounting house bills and mortgage we are obliged to pay?

"Do you not know that God created us for His good purpose?" (Phil 2:13). Everything on earth is secondary and if we "Seek His kingdom first, all these things will be given you besides" (Mt 6: 33-34). Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life span? When God leads you to the edge of the cliff, trust Him fully and let go. Only one of two things will happen, either He'll catch you when you fall or He'll teach you how to fly.

When Jesus called, the disciples left their nets and followed Him. Jesus instructed the disciples to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick - no food, no sack, no money in their belts. Lord, let us travel light as You send us Your way unburdened by useless baggage. Let us especially pray for those who have grown cold and discouraged in obeying the Lord's call. You will not forsake us, O Lord - keep us from forsaking You. We are Your people, called to follow Jesus the Lord - make us steadfast disciples, freed from all that would hold us back.

The next time we hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?" let us all answer with a firm and heartfelt: "Here I am Lord, send me!"

St. Benedict

Benedict of Nursia (also called **Bennet**) (c. 480 - c. 547) was an Italian Saint, the founder of Christian monastic communities and a rule giver for monks living in community. His purpose may be gleaned from his Rule, namely that "Christ ... may bring us all together to life eternal" (RB 72.12). The Roman Catholic Church canonized him in 1220.

Benedict founded twelve communities for monks, the best known of which is his first monastery at Monte Cassino in the mountains of southern Italy. There is no evidence that he intended to found also a religious order. The Order of St Benedict is of modern origin and, moreover, not an "order" as commonly understood but merely a confederation of congregations into which the traditionally independent Benedictine abbeys have affiliated themselves for the purpose of representing their mutual interests, without however ceasing any of their autonomy.^[1]

Benedict's main achievement is a "Rule" containing precepts for his monks, referred to as the Rule of Saint Benedict. It is heavily influenced by the writings of St John Cassian (ca. 360 – 433, one of the Desert Fathers) and shows strong affinity with the Rule of the Master. But it also has a unique spirit of balance, moderation, reasonableness (*επιεικεια*, *epieikeia*), and this persuaded most communities founded throughout the Middle Ages, including communities of nuns, to adopt it. As a result the Rule of St Benedict became one of the most influential religious rules in Western Christendom. For this reason Benedict is often called "the founder of western Christian monasticism".

In April 2008, Pope Benedict XVI discussed the influence St. Benedict had on Western Europe. The pope said that "with his life and work St. Benedict exercised a fundamental influence on the development of European civilization and culture" and helped Europe to emerge from the "dark night of history" that followed the fall of the Roman empire.^[6]

The influence of St. Benedict produced "a true spiritual ferment" in Europe, and over the coming decades his followers spread across the continent to establish a new cultural unity based on Christian faith.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI named St. Benedict as patron saint of Europe.^[7]



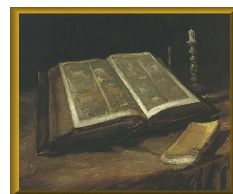
Counsels (from page 1)

Just as Jesus is the altar, the priest, and the sacrifice, so too are we the field, the plant, and the laborer at the same time. As we serve others, so too we are served. As we minister to others, so too we are ministered to. As we till and water others, so too we grow in holiness. No one can say that he or she is mature spiritually, lest we are cut down by our own high estimation of ourselves. When we struggle and experience pain in our walk with the Lord, our heavenly gardener sees that we need more pruning to be able to put out more branches and fruits. To grow spiritually in God's vineyard, we have to be deeply rooted in the virtues of prayer, humility and openness. Letting the word of God do the will of the Father in our lives.

I remember the first time I heard of the community called "Bukas Loob sa Diyos". My first thought was "Wow; they have the audacity to call themselves "open in spirit to God". I was truly intrigued what it meant? They probably are like monks and priest who exudes holiness, I said to myself. But then it was my own brother telling me about this and how he & his wife joined and that I should join too. I told myself that the idea is a very good one. To be open to God is like to be in heaven for me. I have not been open to anything then. I did not go about trusting people and God back then. But the more I attended worship the more I realize that the key is being open to the grace of God. To let Him forgive me, to let Him heal me, to let Him teach me, to let Him mold me, to let Him comfort me, to let Him break up my stony heart and let his seed germinate and grow in me. To let His love shine upon me and to love Him and please Him in return. And maybe one day, when the time is right, He will probably let me bloom and bear fruit worthy of his calling. Brothers and sisters, BLD Newark is being prepared for even greater missions, she is in need of laborers, open in spirit to God. She is in need of servants who are good intercessors and intercessor who are humble servants. She is in need of teachers who are good students and students who can teach. To bear fruit a hundred fold starts with just a patch of dirt open to receive a humble seed dying to itself.

Directions:

- Water the earth, make it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to one who sows and bread to the one who eats.



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Carlito & Arlene Claricia (908) 902-9829

Ed & Grace Badiola (908) 313-5522

The Lord's Provisions

Week Ending: July 4, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &

Fast for the Poor: \$ 2,818.00

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Community Day

When: August 9, 2008

Where: Johnson Park, Piscataway, NJ

Time: 8:30AM - 6:00 PM

Mass Schedule: 11:30AM

July 11-13

Family Encounter #15

Malvern Retreat House

315 S Warren Ave Malvern, PA 19355

Gene/Bing Ymbong (732)254-7743

Manny/Nette Manguiat (201)955-0439

July 26

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity

60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103

ME 22 will serve

Louie & Choly Relucio (201)483-8715

Nick & Lita Centeno (973)857-9315

Note

*Application forms for all encounters
are available at bldnewark.com*



TEACHING MINISTRY

Date/Class

Day/Teaching

July 18

Friday

Mark10

Teachings

John6

Teachings

Youth

Teachings

Singles

Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Solo Parents

Growth in Prayer

July 19

Saturday

LSS 25

Apologetics

LSS 26 & 27

Shepherds Training 2

LSS 28

Christian Maturity Program 2

LSS 29

Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Note

*Friday teachings – after worship
Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's*

NEWS

FRUITFUL HARVEST

“The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.” (Luke 8:8)

The Lord yielded a fruitful harvest to grow in His love and their love for one another at the Family Encounter #15 on July 11-13, 2008. He called Fr. Joseph Kim and nine families to gather at the beautiful Malvern Retreat House in Pennsylvania. It was truly a joyful time with singing, reflecting, fellowship, and building up of relationships. The families opened their eyes and ears to see and hear the Lord's prompting for them. The seed on good ground blossomed in each family, and they all reaped a rich harvest and gained abundant fruit. The families welcomed the Lord as the Head of their household, allowing Him to pour upon them amazing graces, healing, and reconciliation with Him and each other. Families embraced one another as Jesus embraced them.

Continued on page 4

Festival of Praise (FOP)

While the Singles Ministry is privileged to belong to a community with Catholic Young Adults, many Singles are meeting more Young Adults outside of the community who share the same faith! The Young Adult Council, led by Sr. Loretta, creates events for the generation in their 20s and 30s to fellowship with one another. Sr. Loretta has set up a Festival of Praise (FOP) every second Saturday of the month in different parishes and communities in the Archdiocese.

On July 12, Singles had the honor of hosting this month's FOP which started with silent adoration. This was followed by a short ACTS worship led by Bernadette Rama, Cynthia Arnedo, Walter Wade, Ike Amador, and Brian Atienza. This allowed people outside of BLD to experience how we worship every Friday while providing the Singles with the unique experience of having worship while the Blessed Sacrament was exposed.

Guests were then entertained with an open mic and feasted on Filipino food! Many enjoyed trying foods, such as buko pandan and pancit. We enjoyed the musical talents of Yen Arnan, Rowena Jaico, Pauline Montemayor, Chris Gonda, Ron Bernal, Allan Balagot, and Pepa Mendiola.

Continued on page 4

COUNSELS

MAKE GOD'S KINGDOM GROW

WORD: Wis 12:13, 16-19; Ps 6, 9-10, 15-16;
Rom 8: 26-27; Mt 13:24-43

ORDER: *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart.”*
(Mt 11:29)

THEME: In the meekness and humility of Jesus, we hope for the Kingdom of heaven.

REFLECTION:

In Jesus teaching, Jesus is telling us that there are different ways to reach the Kingdom of God and that there are two ideas at the time of judgment. The one in the Gospel is terrifying and decisive. The wicked are bound together into bundles and readied for burning, but the wheat, representing the righteous are to be gathered into the barn.

Jesus is telling us: “There are evil things we must learn to tolerate for sometimes the immediate removal of that evil may result to worse consequences.” Our Lord is also telling us that there is virtue in tolerating evil. There are some evil which we should tolerate for the sake of a greater good. It is very important for our leaders to discern when to move against evil immediately or when to tolerate it. In the meantime we must be patient and work diligently to reap the fruits of salvation.

“This parable (Matt 13:24-43), explains the co-existence and the frequent mingling of good and evil in the world, in our lives and in the very history of the church. Jesus teaches us to see these things with Christian realism and to handle every problem with clear principles, but also with prudence and patience.” (Pope John Paul II, General Audience, 9/25/91)

Continued on page 4

Promise of the Week

*“The righteous will shine like the sun
in the kingdom of their Father.”*
(Mt 13:43)

Contemplation

What is contemplation? Contemplation is a specific meditation exercise to turn our attention fully and clearly to something – to open our heart to it as it is. However, in classical Christian spirituality, contemplation has mainly been regarded as a “supernatural state” of prayer, distinguished from “discursive prayer” or “meditation.” Contemplative prayer is an encounter with the Holy Mystery, with God’s reality and then it is the leap of faith by which we encounter God beyond anything perceptible. Nemeck and Coombs define the classical Christian contemplation touching its core. “Contemplation is the immediately transforming and directly consuming activity of God within the soul calling forth its voluntary undergoing of that transformation and purgation in love and faith. It is a silent, imageless and loving communion with God which transcends all discursiveness.”

Contemplative prayer is the advanced stage beyond discursive prayer. Thus, how can we recognize the beginning of contemplation? There are many signs of contemplation beginning such as the inability to pray as before - reflecting, talking, or expressing feelings - desire to and contentment with entering into solitary prayer more frequently, the disinclination to do something else, and so on. These signs mean not only the experiences of contemplation but also one’s transformation. Ultimately, contemplation is an experience of God’s transforming our loving and desire in a Godward whole humanity direction. In other words, the soul who is in the stage of contemplative prayer comes to experience various transformations in terms of the depth of experience of the presence of God, the response of each inner faculty, the intensity of love toward God, and the extent of union with God. These transformations are caused by purgative and illuminating experiences. St. John of the Cross says, “Contemplation is none other than a secret, peaceful and loving ‘infusion’ of God which, if the soul allows it to happen, ‘enflame’ it in the spirit of love.” Since any deficiency in the union of love is due to the soul and not to God, he says that the soul must be completely purified in all of its faculties and powers – those of the ‘sensory’ and ‘spiritual’ order – before it can be fully illuminated by the light of God. On the other hand, according to St. Teresa of Avila, without purgative and illuminating experiences, the soul can never arrive at the state of the highest contemplation (“mystical marriage”). In a word, contemplation is an experience of God’s transforming us through the illumination of God and the purgation of the soul.

Growth into contemplation, which is an encounter with God’s reality, is organic and based in a growing awareness of God and deepening relationship with God.

Hence, to prepare for contemplation, one needs to be fostered by the following: by practices that develop strengthen concentration (attention) and intention (will, surrender, and love), relational prayer, receptivity to Divine action/ presence, and so on. To conclude, contemplation is the course of purgation and illumination through which one is transformed in order to be in union with God Himself.

Cause of Division

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. For I have come to set a man against his father....”(Mt 34-11:1)

Is Jesus a cause of division? Yes. In this gospel reading, he is clearly, without any doubt, telling us either we are with him or not with him, nothing in between. He elucidates on his conditions of discipleship in Christ. In short, he is telling us not only to carry our crosses but also his cross, His passion, death and resurrection. This is really a tough one for most of us.

The cross of Jesus symbolizes the glory of Christian martyrdom. At this point of our spiritual walk with Jesus, can we truly understand what it takes to be a disciple? Do we really have a passion for Jesus? Did we really die, burying our old self, for Jesus? Are we resurrected, meaning, are we truly a new creation in Christ?

How often do we excuse ourselves from Friday worship because we have better things to do or do we excuse ourselves worshipping Jesus on Friday because we do not like the worship leader? How many times have we said no to God’s calling for new ministry work in the community because we do not want to leave our comfort zones? Do we take the liturgy of the Word and reflect on His will? Are these our passion, death and resurrection?

The reality is Jesus created this community for us because by ourselves we cannot truly be with Him. This community, no matter how we envision the leadership is, is still a big help for us in our spiritual walk with Jesus. Remember, we are all broken people in the community.

If we allow the remnants of our old self to linger in our spiritual walk, then we allow the evil one to gain a grip on us, pulling us back to our old self before our encounters, and this grip could gain a foothold and by the time we realized it, we are lost again.

What we need is to die slowly to ourselves by killing the self-righteousness that lingers in us. This righteousness is not of God but translated as an extension of our pride. We cannot place one foot forward and the other foot lagging behind in our renewal.

Unity, understanding our own and the brokenness of the members of our community, together with forgiveness of any hurts must predominate our attitudes and feelings in our community life. Peace and the love of Jesus must prevail in our hearts. It doesn’t mean that we follow for the sake of obedience to all community undertakings. Discerning the will of God is a must and we will know it right away if it is God’s will because the fruits of the Holy Spirit will be manifested early even before we realized the outcome of the endeavor.

Hence, it is imperative for us to follow and exercise prudence that is divinely inspired, not the prudence of the wise men in our community. To be able to separate the two, we need a very prayerful lifestyle, incorporating the liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist in our daily lives, and truly living as a New Creation in Christ.

Our MESSAGE FROM ECSL FR. PAUL'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

Dear Fr. Paul,

The Peace and Love of Jesus Christ is with you!

We are so blessed that we have in you, a True Servant of God, in our midst. In your patient, humble, and fatherly ways, you have shown us Jesus Christ. You never rested on what you have done for and with Jesus.

How many young people would have gone astray if you have not given your valuable time to understand them; to be with them; to give them compassion? Most have grown up and are still steadfast in their faith in Jesus. Some have even followed the religious vocation.

How many couples would have separated if you did not lend them your listening heart? Many couples are still testifying in their lives that the love of God truly endures.

How many others would not have known Jesus if you have not touched them with the Word of God and your life? Yes they still continue to witness Jesus in their lives.

We praise and thank God for bringing you to BLD. We thank you for what you have done in building up BLD in North America together with all the pioneers.

We pray for more blessed years for you that our Lord Jesus will continue to use a holy man like you in building up BLD and His kingdom in North America.

A Blessed and Happy 80th Birthday!

In Christ Jesus,
The Executive Council of Servant Leaders,
Eliang and Leah Sison
Presiding Servant Leader

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

The Brown Scapular is a symbol approved by the Church and regarded as a sign of devotion to Mary under her title as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The Carmelite Order to which the Scapular belongs originated on Mt. Carmel in the Holy Land and it is a reflection in miniature of the habit which the monks wear as a sign of their vocation and devotion.

The Scapular was presented by Our Lady to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251. In 1251, St. Simon prayed to Our Lady for her special intercession, counsel and guidance. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him with a multitude of angels, holding the child Jesus in one arm and the brown scapular in the other. She said to Simon, "Take, my beloved son, this scapular of thy order as a badge of confraternity and for thee and all Carmelites a special sign of grace: whoever dies clothed in this shall never suffer eternal fire...It shall be a sign of salvation, a protection in danger, and a pledge of peace and of the covenant.

Pope John XXII, in a papal letter, recounted a vision that he had, that the Blessed Virgin said: "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death and whomsoever I shall find in Purgatory, I shall free, so that I may lead them to the holy mountain of life everlasting.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.).

Email to WORD@bldnewark.com

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit - Hamilton Plaza

56 Hamilton Avenue Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Sat. of the month

Volunteers are needed contact

Nong & Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month starts at 8:30am except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

TEACHINGS

July 18

John 6 Teaching

Mark 10 Teaching

Youth teaching

Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit – Singles

Growth in Prayer – Solo Parents

Friday after worship

July 19

Apologetics – LSS 25

Shepherds Training 2 – LSS 26 & 27

Christian Maturity Program 2 – LSS 28

Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit – LSS 29

Saturday, 1:00-6:00pm

July 25

Golden Years teaching

Intercessory Formation Teaching

Service Formation Teaching

Friday after worship

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week ending

July 11, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission and Fast for the

Poor \$3,249..00

Thank you for your continued generosity

Counsels from page 1

We received another teaching on both the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the yeast. We have to be small, docile and unassuming in order for the life of Christ grow within our hearts and we can use them to lead others to Him. In the end there will be harvest, a large bush, and a loaf of bread.

My dear friends, we are challenged to do our part no matter how small to make the Kingdom grow - to be the good seed, good citizens, and to overcome evil by doing good. The "heart" of our community is not all in the number, IT IS IN US!!! More than ever, we need to come together now to keep our spirits hopeful and our community thriving! With the grace of God we will persevere and be the source of hope to others.

It is never too late to start growing. We have to start thinking of doing things God's way... not our way. Is our field ready for sowing? If not, what should we do to get it ready? What are the weeds in my life? What am I going to do about them? Would I be a "mustard seed" or a "yeast" that the Lord can use according to His will?

A transformation has to take place within us. To grow spirituality is not automatic. It takes our total commitment. We must want to grow, decide to grow, make an effort to grow, and persist in growing through holiness, frequent reception of the sacraments, dedicated service to the poor, the sick, and the orphans. We are to live with care, leniency, clemency, justice, kindness, and hope for all people. Our deed must be consistent with our creeds, and our belief must be backed up with Christ-like behavior. Thinking of others is our best evidence of spiritual growth. Thinking of others as what St. Paul says, is a mark of maturity. *"We please God by what we do, and not only by what we believe."* (James 2:24)

Spiritual maturity is not measured by how much biblical information we have acquired. It is good to be knowledgeable but that is not everything. The mark of growth and maturity includes conduct and character. In (Matt 7:16), It says; "You can tell what they are by what they do."

The power of God is demonstrated not as punishment for evil done, but in mercy. God, as we all know is said to be *"merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in kindness and fidelity."* (Psalm 86:15).

We need confidence in God and the Holy Spirit to dwell in us. The Spirit helps us in our weakness, in our inability to pray, and in our difficulty following the greatest commandment of loving God and our neighbor. The Spirit enlightens us. It is the Spirit who help us to interpret the teaching of Jesus and to be receptive to the challenges that they bring. Through the Spirit our weakness in prayer is overcome. He searches our hearts and makes true intercessions in our behalf. As we give in our lives to the Holy Spirit, He helps us to understand ourselves and show us how to live. He intercedes for us as what it says in (Rom 8:26) *"The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness, for when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words."*

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) Judge with clemency
- 2) Govern with leniency
- 3) Always search our heart to know the intentions of the Holy Spirit

Fruitful Harvest from page 1

Many thanks to the Spiritual Director for the weekend, Fr. Pete Literal; the Presentors, the Raagas family and the Calilap family; the Praise Ministry; the Sponsoring Class FE #14; Sponsoring Class Shepherds, the Manguiat family; and all Auxies. They all served the Lord with a humble and gracious heart. All praise and thanksgiving to the Lord who made this a victorious weekend! Congratulations to the FE #15 class: Bustos family, Calingo family, Enciso family, Etcubanas family, Fr Kim, Ompod family, Olasso family, Sia family, Sta. Ana family, and Unay family, and their class shepherd, the Arribe family. Welcome to the family!

Festival of Praise from page 1

We were also delighted by Dave Gonda's recital of his original poem and Bryan Atienza's and Melanie Dibella's ballroom performance. In addition to adult performances, Nio Escobinas adorably sang "Lord, I Love You" alongside sister Geli while their father, Richie, played the keyboard. The night also included performers from other communities from Spirit and Truth in Linden, Our Lady of Victories in Jersey City, and St. Michael in Netcong.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

July 20 - YE#15 Grand Reunion

St. Mark's Basement from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

July 26 - Soup Kitchen -

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103 - (ME 22 will serve)
Louie & Choly Relucio 201-483-8715
Nick & Lita Centeno 973-857-9315

July 27 SPE#10 Reunion

St. Mary's Library, Rahway

August 9 - Community Family Fun Day

Johnson Park Piscataway, NJ from 8:30 am-6:00 pm
Eucharistic Celebration at 11:30 am

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Sept 20 (Save the date)

"In The Beginning" - 1:00 pm show, Millennium Theatre
Sight & Sound Theatres, Lancaster, PA.

Tickets and bus fare - (adults) \$85.00; (ages 13-18)

\$59.00; (ages 12 below) \$47.00

Tickets only - (adults) \$54.00, (ages 13-18) \$28.00, (ages 12 below) \$16.00

Contact: Frank/Malou Venadas - (973)562-0055;

fvenadas@hotmail.com

Payment deadline: August 8, 2008

Oct 11 (Save the date)

Annual BLD - Newark Golf Outing

Venue & other details to follow

Contact: ME 24 Family- Carlito & Arlene Claricia (908)

902-9829/ Ed & Grace Badiola (908) 313-5522



COVENANT NEWS

BUKAS-LOOB SA DIVYOS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 29

Bulletin Edition

July 25, 2008

Pope: Church Can Be Hopeful For Tomorrow

Benedict XVI says World Youth Day showed that the Church can rejoice in today's youth and be hope-filled for the world of tomorrow. The Pope affirmed this Monday morning at his last farewell before boarding the plane that would take him back to Rome.

"The principal actors on the stage over these last few days, of course, have been the young people themselves," he said. "World Youth Day is their day. It is they who have made this a global ecclesial event, a great celebration of youth and a great celebration of what it is to be the Church, the people of God throughout the world, united in faith and love and empowered by the Spirit to bear witness to the risen Christ to the ends of the earth.

Benedict XVI said the days of this last week were "stirring" and he said that many scenes stand out in his mind. *"The Stations of the Cross in the streets of Sydney were a powerful reminder that Christ loved us 'to the end' and shared our sufferings so that we could share his glory,"* the Holy Father continued.

Referring to his meeting with youth who have histories of drug addiction and other problems, the Pontiff said: *"The meeting with the young people at Darlinghurst was a moment of joy and great hope, a sign that Christ can lift us out of the most difficult situations, restoring our dignity and enabling us to look forward to a brighter future."*

The Pope was welcomed Thursday on a boat-a-cade at Barangaroo. And the Southern Cross Precinct was the site of the Saturday evening vigil and Sunday closing Mass with some 400,000 people.

"Those experiences of prayer, and our joyful celebration of the Eucharist, were an eloquent testimony to the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit, present and active in the hearts of our young people," he said. "World Youth Day has shown us that the Church can rejoice in the young people of today and be filled with hope for the world of tomorrow.

(Excerpted from ZENIT.org)

COUNSELS

A Good And Wise Servant Leader

WORD: 1 Kgs 3: 5, 7-12; Ps 119: 57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130 (97a); Rom 8: 28-30; Mt 13: 44-52 (17th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

ORDER: *"Have an understanding heart to judge your people to distinguish right from wrong."*
(1 Kings 3:9A)

REFLECTION: As we reflect on the readings for this Sunday, we are led to understand what makes a good and wise servant leader. The First Reading shows us the great desire of King Solomon, who, at a young age, wanted to learn how to lead his people wisely and justly. He learned not to be afraid of responsibilities because of his belief and trust in God, that He would equip those he calls. *"...but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act. I serve you in the midst of the people whom you have chosen..."* 1 Kings 3:8. To fear responsibility or work circumvents God's plan in our lives and prevents us from fully growing into the person Jesus wants us to be. King Solomon's love for God's law eliminated all of these obstacles. *"For I love your command more than gold..."* Psalm 119:76. He trusted the Lord and believed that it is God's plan.

The Second Reading tells us that God is in control, He has called us by name so He may teach us His ways. He called us into community that we may be transformed into His likeness. All of us were "predestined" to be servant leaders, to witness to God's righteousness compassion and understanding.

☞ (page 4)

God's Promise for the Week

"I give you a heart so wise and understanding." Kings 3:12A

LEAVING RIGHT AFTER COMMUNION

By Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum University

Q: Could you provide a theological discourse on why leaving the Mass right after communion is not appropriate behavior?

A: This is a perennial problem, but one which must be faced with patience, insisting, as St. Paul would say, "Opportune et inopportune" (in season and out of season), until the message reaches home.

This question reminded me of the story of a saintly priest who had the same problem with one of his devout parishioners who attended daily Mass but left immediately after Communion. He solved the problem by ordering two altar boys with lighted tapers to walk on either side of him as soon as he started to leave the church and accompany him all the way to his carriage.

When, after three days repeating this action, the somewhat flustered and embarrassed gentleman asked the priest for an explanation, he was told that since Christ was still present in him as he left the church, his presence had to be honored by lighted candles. Needless to say, he never left early again.

This anecdote could serve as a starting point for the priest to reflect with the people on the importance of giving thanks for the gift of Mass, of being spiritually nurtured by God's word, of participating in his unique sacrifice, and by receiving Communion.

This also requires that there is effectively a period of silence after the Communion song and that the priest, deacon and other ministers lead by example, dedicating two or three minutes to silent reflection at the chair.

On occasion the priest may assist the people by directing a brief meditative prayer of thanksgiving. This is especially effective at so-called children's Masses for, while the prayer is ostensibly directed toward the children, it often serves adults just as much.

Another point to be emphasized is the importance of assisting at the entire Mass. There are many plastic images to illustrate this, but most can grasp that if their boss, or the local mayor, summons them to a meeting, they would not dare leave before their host has formally brought it to a close. Even more is this true when a beloved parent, sibling or lifelong friend invites us to spend time with them.

If we behave thus before mere human authority and relationships, then how much more should it be true when our host is the Father who created us, the Son who died and rose for us, and the Spirit who gives us life.

Finally, the Mass is intimately united to Christian life and mission. The final blessing and dismissal send us forth to transmit what we have received to our brothers and sisters. If we leave directly after Communion, then we lose this important component of our spiritual life. (Excerpted from ZENIT.org)

Using Classrooms for Mass

A question on classroom Masses was on file from a Filipino correspondent. He asked: "Here in the Philippines, some of the shopping malls have a practice of having the Eucharist celebrated in them, most especially during Sundays. Coming to Mass in malls has been a practice of some of the families who frequent them, especially during Sundays. Some of these Masses are even televised. Could you comment on this? Is it really allowed?"

As with all habitual Masses outside of sacred spaces, such celebrations would have to be authorized by the bishop. There are several things to be taken into account. There is no particular difficulty in having a chapel within a mall, just as they are found in other places with large conglomerations of people, such as airports, where people may take a spiritual break before the Blessed Sacrament and employees with irregular work shifts can attend Mass.

There is at least one religious congregation that specializes in setting up chapels in busy city areas so that Mass, confession, and adoration are available close to where people spend most of their time. If this is the case with a mall Mass, then it is something worthwhile.

But herein lies the difficulty. Making Mass available at a mall on a Sunday could easily be seen as cooperating with a prevailing cultural trend that empties the Lord's Day of its sacredness and converts it into just another shopping day.

One could argue that it is best to offer the Mass where people are to be found, but the question remains if this is best for the common good. Sunday has a social as well as a religious function in predominantly Christian societies: It permits as many families as possible to be together for prayer and social interaction.

Although it will always be necessary for some people to work on Sundays, the commercialization of those days ties down an ever-growing number of families and thus weakens already fragile social bonds.

Another difficulty is the venue. If Mass is held in some public part of the mall, as seems to be implied by our correspondent, then the necessary separation from the profane cannot be achieved. It is hard to imagine serenely attending or celebrating Mass while people carry on business as usual all around you. This would hardly be a situation worthy of the Lord.

Things might be seen under a different light if commercial activities are suspended during the Mass. But the problem of respecting the integrity of Sunday as the Lord's Day still remains. (Excerpted from ZENIT.org)

Parable of the Sower

New Jersey is the Garden State. Here, the summers are warm and sunny, the soil is rich, and the rain is frequent. Even the winter snow helps prepare the ground for the many kinds of fruits and vegetables that are planted every year. So when Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower, we know what He is talking about.

In our little backyard garden, all the rocks have been removed so the plants can develop strong roots that will reach down deep for moisture even on the hottest days. We turned over the hardened soil and dug in some compost so that the little plants would flourish and yield a harvest that can be shared with our neighbors and friends. Then we laid down thick mulch to keep away weeds that can choke the young plants. We put cages around tomato plants and wire fence over strawberries so they won't be trampled or nibbled by kids, pets and neighborhood creatures.

But Jesus wasn't talking about gardening. It is the very nature of a parable to describe a powerful message in everyday terms and to make a little story convey a great truth.

"The disciples approached him and said, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?' He said to them in reply, 'Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted.' " (Matthew 13:10-11)

The footnote to verse 11 says, "Since a parable is figurative speech that demands reflection for understanding, only those who are prepared to explore its meaning can come to know it. To understand is a gift of God, granted to the disciples but not to the crowds." "Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: 'You shall indeed hear but not understand, you shall indeed look but never see.' " (Matthew 13:14)

Later, Jesus begins to explain the parable to His disciples with this command: "Hear then the parable of the sower."

Hear it, not just with your ears but with your heart as well. Hear it as a disciple blessed by God with the gift of understanding. Many of those who sat at the feet of the Master never really heard Him. The Word of God always carries a message full of wisdom and power. They heard a story about soil and rocks and seeds but they were not open to the message. They missed the voice of God. For us to hear the voice of God today we must open our ears to the reading of His Holy Word and open our hearts in prayerful reflection. Then in silence, we must wait patiently for the Holy Spirit to open our eyes.

Ministry Announcements

Nursing Home Visit – Hamilton Plaza

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the Month

Volunteers are needed

Nong & Tricia Bustos – 732-591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com



Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion

with Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month

starts at 8:30am except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

TEACHING:

JULY 25

Golden Years teaching

Intercessory Formation Teaching

Service Formation Teaching

Friday after worship

(Teachings Venue is St. Mary's Classrooms)

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord

with the community thru an article

(450 words max.)

Send to word@bldnewark.com

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report

for the Week Ending July 18, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &

Fasting for the Poor \$3,797

All good giving and every perfect gift is from above.

Counsels (continued from Page 1...)

We are called to witness all these within our homes, in and outside our community. He called us by name and we accepted His call to be with community where each one of us was transformed and changed for the better. Take as example our formation program, which has been approved by the Archdiocese of Newark. This fact, however, will not be success story unless each one of us is willing to step up to the plate and fulfill our predestination. Similarly, when His call comes, we need to get rid of our doubts that we cannot act as coordinators, sharers or shepherds. We must understand that the reason we are not capable is because it is God who makes it all possible. Conversely, if we think we are very capable, we are then bound to fail. We have a tendency to do it our way and not God's way, thinking that we no longer need God. This community grew and thrived these past 16 years because it is not man made, but God made.

Sometimes we feel reluctant when we are given a new assignment in community, because this means new responsibilities for us. But being reluctant is different from not accepting what is offered. The wonderful thing about God's call is that the Lord provides the gifts that will help us do the work and develop to be the person the Lord wanted us to become. If we are open to God's plan and trust that our Lord will equip and teach us, we place our hands in His to fulfill His plan for us. *"We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."* Rom. 8:28.

Finally, we cling to God's word in the Gospel that to be a good servant and leader, we must have that unbounded joy of finding the treasure, *"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy sells all that he has and buys that field"* Mat. 13:44.

We must always pray that God may always grant us this joy of serving Him, always looking to help others, learning along the way, and witnessing to God's victory in our lives. We must know how to distinguish right from wrong, how to choose what to apply from the old or from the new. To be wise servant leaders, we must all learn to die to self, to sacrifice our own desires -- for the glory of the God's kingdom. The purpose of life on earth is to prepare us for God's kingdom, for we know that at the end of time, Jesus will come and separate the righteous from the wicked -- who will be thrown into the fiery furnace.

DIRECTION:

1. Pray and ask for God's wisdom to be able to serve others.
2. Each Friday seek to know someone new in the community.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

July 26

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103
ME 22 will serve
Louie & Choly Relucio 201-483-8715
Nick & Lita Centeno 973-857-9315

July 27

SPE#10 Reunion

St. Mary's Library, Rahway

August 9

Community Family Fun Day

Johnson Park
Piscataway, NJ 8:30 am-6:00 pm
Eucharistic Celebration 11:30 am

August 15

Community Friday Worship

St. Mary's auditorium, Rahway

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sept 20 (Save the date)

"In The Beginning"

1:00 pm show, Millennium Theatre
Sight & Sound Theatres, Lancaster, PA

A spectacular staging of the
biblical account of creation.

Be there as the Garden of Eden appears before you.

Experience God's pleasure
at his most awesome creation,

Adam and Eve, and the complete beauty of their
unbroken relationship with God.

In the Beginning promises
an experience beyond your imagination.

Tickets and bus fare –

(adults) \$85.00: (ages 13-18) \$59.00;
(ages 12 below) \$47.00

Tickets only – (adults) \$54.00, (ages 13-18) \$28.00,
(ages 12 below) \$16.00

Oct 11 (Save the date) **Annual BLD – Newark Golf Outing**

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem, Pa.

Contact: ME 24 - Carlito & Arlene Claricia (908)
902-9829/ Ed & Grace Badiola (908) 313-5522



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 30

Bulletin Edition

August 1, 2008

FR. PAUL LEHMAN SPEAKS

The Gift of Healing

Allow me to comment and perhaps give a caution as we welcome our friend, Fr. Fernando Suarez, into our midst to lead us again in prayers for healing. I've said many times over the years when addressing the giftedness of many of our brothers and sisters, that the emphasis must be on the Giver of gifts, Jesus. Even though this is universally accepted I often sense in the attitudes of many, the identification of the possessor of the gift with the gift itself. We do not know why one individual in the Body of Christ may have certain gifts or charisms while others do not. God is free to distribute His gifts as He sees fit. It is His choice. We may not know why, but we trust in His wisdom and power. Therefore we do not attribute any special supernatural power to Fr. Fernando whom God may use as He may use you. Give all the glory to God.

It is obvious that not everyone gets "*healed*". Even Jesus did not heal everyone in Israel during His public ministry. We must also *not* attribute a lack of healing to a lack of faith. God's healing power depends upon God not directly upon our faith, even if faith is an "*opener*". It must also be said that everyone receives some kind of healing during a healing service even if the healing may be imperceptible.

There is also the temptation to be healed so that we can "*feel good*". There is nothing wrong with feeling good. In fact I often pray over people to free them from pain so that they would be able to pray without the painful distraction of suffering. Pain can be used to help us grow in patience and holiness. I like to remind people not to "*waste*" suffering by complaining, but to unite it to the sufferings of Christ for the salvation of the world. If we are not healed, we can be strengthened to accept the pain and even turn it into the raw material for great holiness.

We also have at our disposal three powerful Sacraments of Healing: The Sacrament of the Eucharist, The Sacrament of Reconciliation, and The Sacrament of the Sick. The Mass and Holy Communion during Mass often refer to the healing of mind and body. Fr. Fernando regularly refers to the healing power of the Eucharist during His introduction to prayers for healing.

May I also remind us that the collection or money received during these healing services have nothing directly to do with healing. You can't buy healing. It is always "*gift*". Fr. Fernando uses the monies to construct his Marian center in the Philippines.

May God continue to heal each one of us from the greatest evil of all, *SIN*.

COUNSELS

God's Grace Multiplies

Word: Is 55:1-3; Ps 145:8-9, 15-18;
Rom 8:35, 37-39; Mt 14:13-21

Theme: We participate in God's miracles when we respond to the needs of others.

Order: "*Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life.*" (Is 55:3a)

Reflection:

God promised that His Word never returns to Him void and always achieves His purposes (Is 55:12).

We are often impatient; we want to see instant results on the work God calls us to do, whether it is with ourselves, our family and children, even our community's mission. We tend to be discouraged by opposition, the slow turn of events and few visible results.

But God's promise stands, even though the benchmarks of a successful mission may not become visible until years later. He works in a mysterious way that what we have becomes a testimony to His faithfulness. It consoles us that nothing done in His Name is ever wasted, not even a cup of cold water (Mk 9:41).

In today's gospel, the disciples realized that they did not have enough to feed the five thousand men, not counting women and children. The question that troubled them is exactly the very question that most of us have failed to answer in community: What is enough in pursuing our work for the Lord? Just like the five loaves and the two fish, no amount will ever be enough.

What can we do to have enough?

Just what will be enough has eluded most of us that a part of our activities are centered on what will ensure the temporal satisfaction of our work. We continue to say just a little more this year but we are still at it in the next and the year after. Today God want us to respond to this question: "*Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy?*" (Is 55:2a)

Continued on page 2

Promise of the Week

"The eyes of all look hopefully to you, and you give them their food in due season; you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." (Ps 145:15-16)

Counsels (from page 1)

Jesus came into this world for a reason. If we give our all to Him and allow Him to do His job in us, we will always be full and sufficient. With Jesus, we have more than enough and all things are possible. With Jesus, we can do all things and achieve our mission which is actually His work and not ours. As His grace overflows in our hearts and multiplies His gifts in us, He equips and strengthens us, enough to make us grow physically and spiritually, sufficient to make us fruitful as His Church.

Today God brings us to the truth that when we, as community, respond to the needs of others, all that we need is His grace, not the material and temporal, not what is utterly beyond us, as they will never bring the joy of being with Him. Why focus on what we can do when we are always limited and handicapped?

God wants us to concentrate on prayer, communion and full dependence on His Divine Providence. He is asking us to place ourselves in His Hands, just as the apostles placed the little basket of five loaves of bread and two fish in the Hands of Jesus. With Jesus, they were full with a lot of surplus! With Jesus, we too will have more than enough. With Him, we have everything. With Jesus, we become truly fruitful amidst our lack!

Thus says the LORD: *"Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare."* (Is 55:2)

As we engage ourselves in God's work amidst the seeming collapse of the financial world, God is telling us not to make our hearts to dwell on material things that will always fail to satisfy, but to come to Him heedfully. He promised to be near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He is asking us to spend our lives with Him and give our all to Him. When we do that, we have done what is needed. The impossible becomes possible and we are blessed to our amazement. The Hand of the Lord feeds us; He answers all our needs.

With God we are more than sufficient. His grace MULTIPLIES!

Directions:

- Give our time, talent and treasure to Jesus and He can multiply whatever we give Him.
- When burdened with trials and difficulties turn to our Lord and trust in His love for us.
- Persevere in our faith and trust in the Lord's perfect plan in our life.

The Lord's Provisions

Week Ending: August 25, 2008
Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &
Fast for the Poor: \$ 4,002.00

BLD-Newark Website

www.bldnewark.com

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

August 9

Community Family Fun Day

Johnson Park, Piscataway, NJ

8:30AM - 6:00PM; Eucharistic Celebration: 11:30AM

August 23

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity

60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103

ME 27 will serve; Ency/Babie Alberto (973)584-0370

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mission

Nursing Home Visit

Every 2nd Saturday of the month

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ

Volunteers needed

Nong/Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Mission

Healing Prayer Services

Every Monday at 8:00PM

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

Every 1st Monday of the month at 8:00PM

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month starts at 8:30AM

Resurrection Parish - St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sept 20 (Save the date)

"In The Beginning" – 1:00PM show

Millennium Theatre; Sight & Sound Theatres, Lancaster, PA

A spectacular staging of the biblical account of creation. Be there as the Garden of Eden appears before you. Experience God's pleasure at his most awesome creation, Adam and Eve, and the complete beauty of their unbroken relationship with God. *In the Beginning* promises an experience beyond your imagination.

Tickets & bus fare – (adults) \$85.00; (ages 13-18) \$59.00; (ages 12 below) \$47.00

Tickets only – (adults) \$54.00; (ages 13-18) \$28.00; (ages 12 below) \$16.00

Frank/Malou Venadas (973)562-0055 fvenadas@hotmail.com

Payment deadline: August 8, 2008

Oct 11 (Save the date)

Annual BLD – Newark Golf Outing

Riverview Country Club, Easton, PA

Details to follow; Contact: ME 24 Family

Carlito & Arlene Claricia (908)902-9829

Ed & Grace Badiola (908)313-5522

God the Father's Day (God's Day)

August 3, 2008 (Sunday)

St. Antoninus RC Church

337 So. Orange Ave. Newark, NJ 07103 (Corner of 8th St.)

Rectory: (973)623-0258

9:00AM – Marian Rosary / Rosary of God the Father

(Vigil Room)

10:00AM – Healing Mass,

followed by Healing Service and Fellowship



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 32

Bulletin Edition

August 15, 2008

COMMUNITY NEWS

BLD Community 16th Year Celebration

"This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad". (Ps 118:24)

Families and friends gathered together to spend time with each other and enjoy the perfect weather at Johnson Park, Piscataway, New Jersey. Committee members started as early as 7:00 AM to set-up the place, the food center, grilling station, etc. The morning Worship was led by the Gongob Family and the Eucharistic Celebration started at 11:30 AM, the main celebrant was Fr. Danny Canceran, concelebrated by Fr. Paul and Fr. Robert.

The grace of God is bountiful and He provides for all our needs, specially this weekend, like genuine amusement, relaxation and recreation. The Green Team came out on top at the Community Day's highly-entertaining sports and games. The Red, Blue and Yellow Teams all came in tied at 2nd place. The events were all competitive but played in a friendly spirit of sportsmanship and fair play.

Stunning presentations were given by each ministry, from Mark 10, John 6, Youth, Singles, Solo Parents, Golden Years as they shared their very impressive talents in singing, acting and dancing. Everyone had a real good time. Donated door prizes for children and adults added to the excitement and fun for the day. Everyone enjoyed the native lunch with succulent grilled food and native desserts.

Our sincere and deep appreciation to the organizing committees for their dedication and love and service that made this Community Day a great success.

To our Lord, we give glory, praise and thanksgiving for a wholesome relaxation, time of unity, and harmony as one big family.

COUNSELS

Witness Always as Servants of the Lord

Word: Is 56:6-7; Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8;

Rom 11:13-15, 29-32; Mt 15:21-28

Theme: We participate in God's miracles when we inspire others to persevere in faith.

Order: 1. Observe what is right, do what is just. (Is 56:1a)

2. Keep the Sabbath free from profanation and hold to the Lord's Covenant.

(Is 56:2, 4)

Reflection:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church 2472 says: "The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as witnesses of the Gospel and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds. Witness is an act of justice that establishes the truth or makes it known."

As members of this community, we all started as lambs - observing, following, yielding to every order our shepherds asked of us because we trusted in the Lord and in them. At their behest, we attended Friday worships, and ME class reunions with the same dutiful diligence we put to our Sunday obligations. We strived to strengthen and at times acquire new knowledge of Christian doctrine and community norms through the rigorous weekend teachings it felt like a struggle to attend.

Through it all, YES LORD! reverberated in our hearts and minds as our focus was set on the Lord and only on the Lord. Perseverance and humility were ingrained in us at every turn. And as we all took each difficult step on this "walk with Our Lord," we found ourselves lessening in numbers. With each couple/classmate fallout, we asked; Why? How Come? What Happened?

Continued on page 2

Promise of the Week

"...great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." (Mt 15:28)

Counsels (from page 1)

Thankfully we endured and we moved forward towards commitment, each step testing our capacity for true devotions. All our shrouds of comfort and desire were being stripped and as we come to terms with our spiritual selves, many of us declined the invitation to commit. In the course of our long journey to discipleship, we remained observant and faithful to the values of the community and found ourselves as members of one big family.

We all know that the family is a basic unit of a society. As parents, we have obligations to our children that go beyond providing them food clothing and shelter. We also have to show them what to do and what not to do not just in words but in action. As parents, we have to be vigilant and consistent in showing examples, because our children bear witness to our actions. If we decide not to go to a Friday worship, they do ask, Why? How come? What happened? We have to explain to them truthfully the reasons for our action, if we wish them to consider us as persons of integrity and honesty, worthy of their respect and emulation.

Over the years, we have witnessed the victories and shortcomings of our community. But as members, our faithfulness remains because of our fierce trust in God. We strive to be a true witness, both as an observer of the people who came before us and as a model to the people who come after us. We assume these two major roles, guided by the community's defining value: SERVANTHOOD and its essence, HUMILITY.

In our community, we are formed to become servants, mere servants of the Lord. We have to keep reminding ourselves of the fact, that this is the Lord's community not ours, and it is the Lord we serve when we do anything for and in our ministries. When we say "Yes Lord," and Hallelujah!!!, we affirm this obedience to His will and the greatness of our Master.

But we likewise have to validate these virtues in the conduct of our lives. Otherwise it is all lip service, nothing more, but a noisy gong because "Out of our lips is the overflow of our hearts." Matt 15:18. Our prayers and praises should spring from the fullness of our faith and love for the Lord and its overflow wash over the intentions, decisions and actions that define our lives inside and outside of the community.

Directions:

1. Show reverence in the house of the Lord
2. Obey God's call to holiness
3. Persevere in your prayers
4. Encourage members to pursue their Christian Discipleship Formation Program

***Make Covenant News
Part of Your Covenant Life***

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

August 23

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103
ME 27 will serve; Ency/Babie Alberto (973)584-0370

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mission

Nursing Home Visit

Every 2nd Saturday of the month
Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ
Volunteers needed
Nong/Tricia Bustos (732)591-1340
nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Mission

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Every Monday at 8:00PM

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

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Every last Saturday of the month starts at 8:30AM

Resurrection Parish - St. Bridget Church
372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

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Millennium Theatre; Sight & Sound Theatres, Lancaster, PA
A spectacular staging of the biblical account of creation. Be there as the Garden of Eden appears before you. Experience God's pleasure at his most awesome creation, Adam and Eve, and the complete beauty of their unbroken relationship with God. *In the Beginning* promises an experience beyond your imagination.
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Frank/Malou Venadas (973)562-0055 fvenadas@hotmail.com
Payment deadline: August 8, 2008

Oct 11 (Save the date)

Annual BLD – Newark Golf Outing

Riverview Country Club, Easton, PA
Details to follow; Contact: ME 24 Family
Carlito & Arlene Claricia (908)902-9829
Ed & Grace Badiola (908)313-5522

The Lord's Provisions

Week Ending: August 8, 2008
Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &
Fast for the Poor: \$ 3,160.00

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches &
Mass times, go to www.masstimes.org



NEWS

CAN'T GIVE WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE, PONTIFF RECALLS

Urges Christians to Stay Close to Holy Spirit

BRESSANONE, Italy, AUG 18, 2008 (Zenit.org).-

Benedict XVI says that Christians have to stay close to the Holy Spirit if they want to be able to transmit him to others.

The Pope affirmed this Aug. 6 when he met with priests, deacons and seminarians of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone and answered six questions they asked him. The Holy Father was on vacation in the Dolomites, where he stayed at the major seminary of Bressanone.

The first question, posed by a seminarian, Michael Horrer, regarded living the gifts of the Holy Spirit in one's daily life.

Horrer recalled his experience at July's World Youth Day in Sydney, led by Benedict XVI, and dedicated to the theme of the Holy Spirit.

"Holy Father, how can we live the gifts of the Holy Spirit in practice, here in our country and in our daily lives, in such a way that our relatives, friends and acquaintances feel and experience his power, and how can we exercise our mission as Christ's witnesses?" the seminarian asked.

The Pope answered by recalling that participants and spectators at the Sydney event saw "that faith today is a force that is present, a force that can give people the right orientation. This is why there was a moment in which we truly felt the breath of the Holy Spirit who sweeps away prejudices, who makes people understand that yes, here we find what closely affects us; this is the direction in which we must go; and in this way we can live, in this way the future unfolds."

Benedict XVI acknowledged, however, that in daily life, "it is far more difficult in practice to perceive the action of the Holy Spirit."

"In the end, it is the Lord who helps us but we must be available as instruments," he continued. "I would say simply: No one can give what he does not personally possess; in other words we cannot pass on the Holy Spirit effectively or make him perceptible to others unless we ourselves are close to him."

Only if we are continually touched within by the Holy Spirit, if he dwells in us, will it be possible for us to pass him on to others."

The Pontiff said the secret to staying close to Christ is meditating on his word. Recalling an expression he used in Sydney, the Pontiff proposed that speaking with God through his word is "as if we were to find ourselves strolling in the garden of the Holy Spirit; we talk to him and he talks to us."

The Bishop of Rome affirmed such a relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit would give shape to daily life, structuring it in such a way that "God has access to us all the time. [...] We are in continuous contact with Christ and [...] we are continuously receiving the breath of the Holy Spirit."

COUNSELS

Upon This Rock, I will Build my Church

WORD: Is 22:19-23; Ps 138:1-3, 6, 8;
Rom 11:33-36; Mt 16:13-20

ORDER: Build My Church. (Mt. 16:18)

THEME: We participate in God's miracles when we respect and obey our governing authority.

REFLECTION: Thus the Lord grants principal authority in His church to His rock, Peter. Thus He prophesies what He promised; "The power and teachings given those who sits on Moses' seat shall pass on to this new leader, He appoints to guide the flock of the New Jerusalem". And is this designation of power, foreshadowed in our first reading; "I will place the key of the house of David on Eliakim's shoulder: when he opens, no one shall shut: when he shuts, no one shall open"? For the Lord has said to Shebna, master of the palace, "I will thrust you from your office and pull you down from your station. . . and give over to Eliakim your authority." The same declaration, Jesus has made to the chief priests and leaders of the people and here He indicates its fulfillment; "He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah". Is this not the case with our pope whom the Lord has assigned in His "inscrutable" judgment to feed the sheep?" O' the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God, whose mind no man has known. For see the authority, He gives to man, He who has all power to give; even unto heaven does the reign of the apostles now extend, with Peter in the fore. And the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it, for it is granted by the Christ, the Son of the living God, through the revelation of the Heavenly Father; "I will fix him like a peg in a sure spot", the Lord states of Eliakim; and now no surer peg is there than Peter, through whose care all worship at the Lord's holy temple.

We have to learn how to obey people who have been anointed and appointed to responsibility according to the constitution even if we do not feel any friendship or affection for them. Obedience to authority is an important quality in community life and is a sign of

Continued on page 2

Promise of the Week

"I will clothe him with your robe, and gird him with your sash, and give over to him your authority" (Is 22:21)

Counsels from page 1

maturity. If there is no obedience, the community will fail, because obedience is trust. It is not necessary to have total trust in the individuals with authority. But we should trust the people who elected them and the constitution, the community's structure, dialogue and first and foremost the Almighty God who is watching over the community. God knows how to use even those who appear simple in the eyes of men. God knows how to give them grace to achieve their tasks without too many mistakes. We have to believe that the people with responsibility will find grace necessary to accomplish their tasks.

In "1 Thess 5:12-22" St. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians, "We beseech you brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord; and admonish you, and to esteem them highly in love because of their work. Be at peace amongst yourselves. And we exhort you brethren, admonishing the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak and be patient with them all. See that none of you repays evil for evil. Rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstance; for this is the will of God in Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil"

"Your kindness O Lord endures forever, Your love for your sons on earth reaches to the heavens. And so grant us blessings beyond our imagining. You strengthen us beyond our weak frame, and as to the apostles you deliver authority, so one in grace all become. How can we repay you of your kindness toward us? How shall we care for the gifts you give? How shall we maintain your presence amongst us, except that in your love remain? Bless this house and its leaders; may in the presence of the angels we sing your praise and your glory. As you declare "you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church", we proclaim you Lord as the Rock of our salvation and we submit ourselves to all authority for we are called to yield the Spirit that He may form in us, Amen.

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) Recognize, obey and cooperate with the Lord and with one another.
- 2) Continue to help and support your local Church.

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times, go to www.masstimes.org

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

**Weekly Collection Reports for the Week Ending,
August 15, 2008**

**Tithes, Love Offering, Mission & Fast for Poor
\$2,492.00**

Community Day (Aug 9, 2008) - \$541.00

Thank you for your continued generosity

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AUG 23

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity

60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103

ME 27 will serve/Contact: Ency & Babie Alberto (973) 584-0370

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORD:

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.). Email to WORD@bldnewark.com

MISSION:

Nursing Home Visit - Hamilton Plaza

#56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the month. Volunteers are needed.

Pls contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos - 732-591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service w/ Eucharistic Celebration

- 1st Mondays of the month at 8:00 pm

Healing Prayer Service - other Mondays at 8:00pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Celebration

- every last Saturday of the month at 8:30am

Resurrection Parish - St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oct 11 (Save the date)

Annual BLD - Newark Golf Outing

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem PA (NEW Venue)

Contact: ME 24 Family- Carlito & Arlene Claricia

(908) 902-9829/ Ed & Grace Badiola (908) 313-5522

Share your talent - St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting "I.T." VOLUNTEERS (Network Specialists & Database Developers). For further details, contact Casey Tanseco (caseytanseco@hotmail.com) or the parish office

TEACHING MINISTRY

AUG No Teachings

SEPT 6 Christian Maturity Program 2 (LSS 27 & 28)

Christian Parenting 1 (ME31)

**MAKE COVENANT NEWS A PART OF YOUR
COVENANT LIFE.**

Visit our website at www.bldnewark.com



Papal Message Points to Road to Fulfillment

Cardinal Bertone Writes to Annual Rimini Meeting

In a world where youth often find their heroes among athletes and TV personalities, a message sent on behalf of Benedict XVI suggests that it is time to ask what happiness really is.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Pope's secretary of state, considered the truth of happiness and fulfillment in a message sent on behalf of the Holy Father to an annual meeting sponsored by the Catholic lay Communion and Liberation movement and held in Rimini, Italy.

This year's theme is taken from a phrase from the founder of Communion and Liberation, Monsignor Luigi Giussani: "Either Protagonists or Nobodies." In a social and cultural climate in which "more and more the new generations aim at an ideal represented by film actors, by television and entertainment personalities and myths, by athletes, by soccer players, etc.," Cardinal Bertone wrote, "the true question that lies hidden beneath the word action is: what is happiness?"

The cardinal then recalled the example of St. Paul and his radical conversion. "All of us, 2,000 years later, can consider ourselves 'sons' of his preaching, and our civilization knows that it is indebted to this man for the values that are present at its foundation, and yet, Paul's existence is far from...public recognition. Paul's existence is much more typically full of tribulation, afflicted by hostility and danger, full of problems to face, rather than consolations and joys," he said.

Then, can Paul's life be considered truly successful, Cardinal Bertone asked. "What does it mean, in fact, for the Christian to 'succeed'? What does the life of so many saints who spent their existence in convents tell us?"

Responding to these questions, the secretary of state recalled Benedict XVI's observation that "man is made for the eternal fulfillment of his existence." "The fulfillment of the human," Cardinal Bertone affirmed, "is the knowledge of God, for which every person was created and toward which he moves with every fiber of his being. To follow this, neither fame nor success with the crowds is of any use." "This is the action that the title of this year's edition of the Rimini meeting aims to propose: Whoever gives his life to God, who calls him to cooperate in the universal project of salvation, is the 'protagonist' of his existence," he explained. "It does not matter if God's design foresees a reduced sphere of action for us. It is not important whether we (☞ Page 2)

COUNSELS

Following Jesus, His Way!

WORD: Jer 20:7-9; Ps 63:2-6, 8-9;
Rom 12:1-2; Mt 16:21-27

THEME: We participate in God's miracles when we willingly take up our cross and follow Jesus.

ORDER: Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus.

REFLECTION:

The readings for this week point us to the discipline required to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Our first Pope, St. Peter, was a strong and impulsive man. Of all the characters mentioned in the New Testament, Peter's name (Simon/Cephas) was listed 154 times, more than anyone, except for the Name of the LORD.

The faith journey of Peter contained so many highs and lows. When he was introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew, he left everything and followed the LORD. During the Eucharistic discourse in John 6, the followers of Jesus could not fathom the meaning of eating His flesh and drinking His blood in order to have life, so many of them left and went back to their old way of life. When asked by Jesus if His apostles also wanted to leave, Peter answered, "To whom shall we go Lord, you have the words of eternal life and we have come to believe that you are the Holy One of God."

In the beginning verses of this week's reading, Peter was to experience another important moment of his spiritual journey near Caesarea Philippi when Jesus asked the disciples a precise question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Mt 16:13) They replied, Some say you are Elijah, Jeremiah..., but for Jesus, hearsay did not suffice. (☞ Page 2)

God's Promise for the Week



"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Mt 16:25)

Counsels (from page 1)

Since He was personally involved with them, He wanted a personal statement of their position. Consequently, he insisted: "*But who do you say that I am?*" (Mt 16: 15) It was Peter who answered on behalf of the others: "*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*" (Mt. 16:16) Peter's answer was not revealed to him by "flesh and blood" but was given to him by the Father who is in heaven (cf. Mt 16:17). However, Peter had not yet understood the profound content of Jesus' Messianic mission.

Peter wanted as Messiah, a "Divine Man", who would fulfill the expectations of the people by imposing His power upon them all: we would also like the Lord to impose His power and transform the world instantly. Jesus presented Himself as the Servant of God, who turned the crowd's expectations upside-down by taking a path of humility and suffering. Peter, impulsive as he was, did not hesitate to take Jesus aside and rebuke him. Jesus' answer demolished all his false expectations, calling him to conversion and to follow him: "*Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does but as human beings do.*" (Mt 16:23). Peter, thus, learned what following Jesus truly means. "*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it: and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*" (Mt 16:24-25) This is the demanding rule of following Christ: one must be able, if necessary, to give up the whole world to save the true values, to save the soul. And though with difficulty, Peter accepted the invitation and continued his life in the Master's footsteps.

These conversions of St. Peter on different occasions, and his whole figure, are a great consolation and a great lesson for us. We, too, have a desire for God. We, too, want to be generous, but we expect God to be strong in the world and to transform the world on the spot according to ideas and needs that we perceive.

God chooses a different way. God chooses the way of the transformation of hearts in suffering and in humility. And we, like Peter, must convert, over and over again. We must follow Jesus and not go before him: it is He who shows us the way.

Sometimes in our zeal, we think we have the recipe and that it is up to us to transform Christianity, but it is the Lord who knows the way. It is the Lord who says to me, who says to you: follow me! We must have the courage and humility to follow Jesus, because He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

DIRECTIONS

1. Serve the Lord cheerfully.
2. Discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

**Weekly Collection Report
for the Week Ending August 22, 2008**

**Tithes, Love Offering, Mission
& Fast for Poor**

\$ 3,636.00

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nursing Home Visit

Every 2nd Saturday of the month
Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ
Volunteers needed
Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

Healing Prayer Service

Every Monday at 8:00 PM

Healing Prayer Service & Eucharistic Celebration

Every 1st Monday of the month at 8:00 PM

2000 Hail Marys Devotion w/ Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month, starts at 8:30 AM
Resurrection Parish – St Bridget Church
372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Soup Kitchen - September 27

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St., Newark, NJ 07103
Singles Ministry will serve
Ency & Babie Alberto (973) 584-0370

Prospective New Sharers/New Coaches Orientation

September 13, 2008 (5:00 - 7:00 PM)
St. Mary's School Library, Rahway, NJ
Please see list of new sharers and new coaches
c/o Richard/Lee De La Fuente or
George/Cathy Del Fierro

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Annual BLD - Newark Golf Outing - October 11

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem PA
Contact: ME 24 Family - Carlito/Arlene Claricia
(908) 902-9829 or Ed/Grace Badiola (908) 313-5522

Share your talent!

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting
"I.T." VOLUNTEERS
(Network Specialists & Database Developers)
For further details, contact Casey Tanseco
(caseytanseco@hotmail.com) or
the parish office.

TEACHING

September 6, Saturday
Christian Maturity Program - Part 2 - LSS 27 & LSS 28
Christian Parenting 1 - ME 31

Papal Message (from page 1)

live within the walls of a monastery or are immersed in multiple and diverse activities of the world; it is not important whether we are fathers or mothers, consecrated or priests. God makes use of us according to His plan of love, according to the modality that He establishes.



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 35

Bulletin Edition

September 5, 2008

NEWS

Archbishop: Mankind Needs the Church

RIMINI, Italy, SEPT. 1, 2008 (Zenit.org).- Mankind needs the Church because the Church has the answers to life's toughest questions, says the president of the Pontifical Academy for Life. Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella is also rector of the Pontifical Lateran University. The archbishop participated in the forum titled "Church and Modernity: The Necessary Dialogue."

"Modern man needs the Church precisely because he is a disoriented man: he doesn't know where he comes from or where he is going," said Archbishop Fisichella. "He continues to wonder about the reason for pain and death."

The university rector said the currents of thought in vogue today and the tendency to reduce all questions to matters of science and technology isn't providing the answers man needs.

The Church, on the other hand, is "an expert in humanity, and knows the great questions that are in man's heart," continued the prelate. Archbishop Fisichella said the Church proposes "the question of truth, that is, of the meaning of life."

"There is no genuine liberty without truth or love," he added. He then made reference to Christ's crucifixion, where he said love "reached its summit."

Martyrs – "In the course of her 2000 years, the Church is still important in people's lives" and Christians are still "capable of being martyrs." The prelate added that the Church is still living "the time of martyrs. In a world that progresses and believes it has acquired the values of democracy and liberty, we witness unheard of instances of violence and intolerance."

"We are living, perhaps, through the most critical phase of Western culture," continued Archbishop Fisichella, "in which there is a lack of profound respect for Christianity, which is the very root of Western civilization itself. It is as if a child repudiated his own mother."

"Given that we make up only one body, the wounds and death of other Christians touch us personally, as if we ourselves were martyred."

COUNSELS

Christian Responsibility and Accountability for the Lives of Others

Word: Ez 33:7-9; Ps 95: 1-2, 6-9;

Rom 13:8-10; Mt 18:15-20

Theme: As the center of our lives, God will bring us to reconciliation and unity.

Order: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Rom 13: 9b)

Reflection:

Today's reading comes from Ezekiel, God's appointed watchman over Israel, warning them for the Lord against their sins. As a prophet he was accountable to the Lord for those who died in guilt without correction. Those who died in guilt whom he corrected were accountable for themselves. In this reading, Ezekiel must correct and challenge all who would stray from the covenant. This is an awesome responsibility since God holds him accountable for speaking out boldly. The person who hears God's word and refuses to repent will die in his or her guilt. If the prophet refuses to speak God's word (because of fear, love of human respect, money) he or she will suffer the same consequences as the wicked person who refuses to change.

Prophets like Ezekiel were the watchmen over the spiritual dangers that threatened God's people. The prime qualities of such lookouts, then and now, are a meaningful presence to others and a personal responsibility. Ezekiel is often called the prophet of individual responsibility. In his views, individual responsibility includes our responsibility for each other.

The lesson of today's liturgy is that, in a time when it's fashionable to say that we must not impose our own moral beliefs on others, we must be meaningfully present to and take personal responsibility for other people. Regardless of how well or ill others receive our message, like Ezekiel we must keep our integrity by speaking out. In our role as lookouts, we must act on the moral threats of everyday life. This means helping people discover the

Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt 18:20)

Rest Your Faith on God's Power

You may notice a few changes within Covenant News. Beginning this month with a new format. Instead of the usual three scriptural reflection articles, you will find:

- one scriptural reflection
- one formation article
- one of the following articles: Ministry Corner; Spirit of Transparency; Fr. Paul Speaks

In doing so, it is our hope in the Word Ministry that we may include the concerns and interest of our growing community, and entice more community members to share their faith by writing for the CN. All these changes come with our prayerful hope that we will continue to serve all of you, according to the will of our Father, with Jesus as our example, and the Holy Spirit as our guide.

And so therefore, with the September issues, it has been discerned that we share with you excerpts of three speeches delivered by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, OFM at the recently concluded World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia. The first of this three-part series speaks of the Holy Spirit as the soul of the Church. This is timely and appropriate, for the readings of this coming week show us glimpses of the Holy Spirit's work within the Church, relayed to us through the words of St. Paul. Let us listen...

In this Monday's first reading, we are reminded by St. Paul, of the manner in which we as followers of Jesus must conduct ourselves. *"For I resolved to know nothing...I came to you in weakness and fear and much trembling, and my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power..."* (1Cor 2:2-4) In utter humility and great trust in the Lord's power, this is the way in which he exhorts us to witness in Christ.

Later in the week, we read, *"No one knows what pertains to God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God."* (1 Cor 2: 11b-12) Therefore, we invoke the Holy Spirit to guide us and teach us along the way. We must empty ourselves of our worldly wisdom, so that we may freely receive that which is from God. In 1 Cor 3:7 we hear, "Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth." Brothers and sisters, let us all fervently pray that in the coming weeks and months those in the community who have received (and are receiving) God's holy gifts become emboldened so as to share their gifts with the community. I invite you to continue to help build His community in words and action.

"For we are God's co-workers, God's field, God's building." (1Cor 3:9) Let us all share the gifts He has poured upon us because *"All belong to you, and you to Christ, and Christ to God."* (1 Cor 3: 18-23) Let us all go forth and build His Church, through the power that is within us, the power of the Holy Spirit. May we all rest our faith in His power. Amen.

The Holy Spirit, Soul of the Church

by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, OFM

"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13)

How many of you have heard people from your own generation or older say something like this: "I believe in Jesus, but I don't need the Church." Or: "I'm a spiritual person, but I'm not religious."

Without Jesus, there's no Church. It's that simple. And it's also true the other way around: Without the Church, there's no way we can have a lasting, personal relationship with the true Jesus Christ. The original Greek word for the Church is *ekklesia*, which means a gathering of those who are "called out" — called out of the darkness of the world by God for a new life in Jesus Christ. The whole reason for Jesus' incarnation was to bring salvation to all humanity, not just his contemporaries. So He had to form a community of believers that would preserve his mission and continue it for all the generations to come. This is why He founded the family of faith we call the Church. He then made sure that his Church would become God's people forever, by sending the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

No matter how flawed or sinful individual Catholics may be, the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and guarantees that she will always remain the sacrament of Salvation. In other words, the Church is the only certain way by which all men and women can find the gift of salvation brought by Jesus.

In the words of Pope Benedict, "Jesus identifies Himself with the Church as one single object. It is this revelation of the Risen Christ that transformed Paul's life, and in which is contained all of the teachings about the Church as the body of Christ . . . The Church is not an organization that wants to promote a certain cause. [The Church] is not about a cause. It is about the person of Jesus Christ, who, even though He is risen, has remained 'flesh'."

Who keeps the Church alive, and who guarantees her mission? The Holy Spirit. No one else. The holiness of the Church ultimately depends on the Holy Spirit, not on us.

To love Jesus Christ is to love the Church. This is also true the other way around: To love the Church is to love Jesus Christ. We need to have a true passion for the Church, a love that moves us to a deeper zeal for her mission, a love that makes us eager to explain and defend her. We need to rediscover the kind of unabashed love for the Church we find in the early Fathers of the Church and the great Catholic saints. Their fidelity to the Church was not abstract. Many gave their lives to prove their love.

A strong Catholic sacramental and prayer life is indispensable. But it's not good enough. We also need on-going Catholic formation — intellectual, spiritual and human formation. This kind of formation is almost impossible to find outside the context of a living Catholic community, be it a parish, a renewal movement or some other type of Catholic association to which we deeply commit ourselves.

Our connection to the Church is never an abstraction. It always comes alive through our engagement with a community of believers. That's why, from the beginning, the Church was organized into territories, what today we know as parishes or dioceses. That's also why the Church has always encouraged many different forms of Catholic spirituality and community life.

Remember that each one of you is precious to Jesus Christ as an individual, as a son or daughter of the Church. No one is a minor player in the history of salvation, and none of you is just a number in the Church. You have a purpose that only you — in all of human history — can fulfill. You are loved by God and needed in God's plan in a unique and irreplaceable way.



Fr. Paul Speaks

Not a Marriage!

In the April 2007 edition of the CN, I reflected on the attitude we should have regarding pregnancies that unfortunately happen to single couples even in our counter-culture BLD community. I would like to repeat part of that article, and add a PS. There is a mind set that says when a pregnancy happens, the couple should marry. After all, so the mind set goes, the man is responsible for the consequences of his action, and has an obligation to care for the woman and child. Is marriage, even a Catholic marriage, a solution? Let me quote the core of the article that I wrote in April of last year.

As you know a civil marriage between catholic couples is not recognized as valid in the Catholic church. People get confused on this, and think a couple can get civilly married now (for whatever reason) and get Sacramentally married sometime in the future. The reality is that the couples are no more married after the civil marriage than they were before the civil marriage. If they are living together as man and wife after a civil marriage they are not to receive Holy Communion because this is fornication is implicitly included in 6th commandment that explicitly mentions adultery.

What is the loving and pastoral approach that we, and especially parents, should take when a single girl gets pregnant? Often when this happens the parents panic, and in a desire to save face, rush the young couple into a marriage. **NOTHING COULD BE MORE DISASTROUS!** Not only are they putting the couple into an occasion of sin, but they are taking the chance of ruining three lives. How about a Catholic marriage? What has been said about civil marriages can also be applied to couples who seek to be married by a priest.

The problem with a young couple with a pregnancy is the presumed lack of freedom to enter into marriage with full consent. In annulment proceedings, the Church tribunals will often presume a lack of freedom, and look for grounds to grant the annulment in the case of a 'shot-gun marriage'. There is a culturally conditioned mind set that expects a couple to do the 'right thing', i.e. get married. In most instances, not only is the couple lacking the maturity to make such a serious decision, but the priest witnessing the marriage could be witnessing a marriage, that in the sight of God is null and void. Considerations about financial support, decisions about the future, and many pastoral issues have to be looked at. But, please do not look at marriage as an immediate option or solution.

Counsels (from page 1)

unique talents with which the Lord has blessed them, encouraging their gifts and putting all at the service of the whole body of Christ that is the Church.

Meaningful presence to others and personal responsibility for them are also what today's Gospel is about. It is from Matthew's "Sermon on the Church", which deals with the relationships of members of the church. The most painful obligation of watchful love is fraternal correction. Because this is so difficult, we use many escape hatches. One is the languid tendency to live and let live. Another is a preponderance of fear over hope. We are afraid of anger, or rejection, or another blow from the wrongdoer and we cannot arouse enough hope of improvement to approach the offender.

Relationships are never free of disagreements, faults or hurts. Neither should our relationships be without the debt we owe to love one another. Jesus reminds us in our Gospel reading that fraternal correction is necessary. We show great love when we take time to correct and discipline. We show great maturity when we are able to accept correction. The need for fraternal correction is important for parents, pastors, spouses and friends. Today we are often told that love means you never impose your values on or have any expectation for the other. Each individual is free to be and do what he or she feels like. This is tragically false. True love demands that we speak out and stand up for what we believe is true and good. We are not a friend, if we silently watch our friend sink deeper into alcohol, drugs or destructive relationships. We are not a good parent if we seek peace at any price, and so don't "nag" our children about their grades, dates or friends. We are not a responsible pastor if we fail to challenge our congregation to love and forgive. We are not a good spouse, if we fail to bring out the best and expect the best from the other. Love demands that we take risks because we value the other and our relationship.

Jesus came to pay a debt He did not owe, because we owe a debt we cannot pay. St. Paul, writing to the Romans, indicates that life has its debts to pay. Through the baptism into Christ we are under the obligation to love as he loved. As a member of the community of faith - which proclaims Jesus as Lord, we must show the kind of love - which gives public witness, that we are his disciples. Such love fulfills and perfects all the requirements of the law. Our love for one another must be beyond fraternal correction, and must work towards the reconciliation and salvation of our souls, for which Christ came into this world.

Directions:

- Harden not your heart.
- If your brother sins, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.



MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mission

Nursing Home Visit

Every 2nd Saturday of the month
Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic NJ

Volunteers needed

Nong/Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Mission

Healing Prayer Services

Every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

Every 1st Monday of the month at 8:00pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month starts at 8:30am

Resurrection Parish - St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

Word

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord
with the community thru an article (450 words max.).

Email to: word@bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oct 11

Annual BLD – Newark Golf Outing

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem PA

Contact: ME 24 Family

Carlito & Arlene Claricia (908) 902-9829

Ed & Grace Badiola (908) 313-5522

Share Your Talent!

Information Technology Volunteers

Network Specialist & Database Developers

Contact: Casey Tanseco caseytanseco@hotmail.com
(732) 388-0088

The Lord's Provisions

Week Ending: August 29, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &

Fast for the Poor: \$ 4,204.00



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sept 13 (5:00-7:00pm)

Prospective New Sharers/New Coaches Orientation

St. Mary's School Library, Rahway NJ

For list of new sharers and coaches, please contact

Richard/Lee De La Fuente or George/Cathy Del Fiero

Sept 27

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity

60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103

ME 27 will serve

Cris & Ampy Escobinas (973) 338-1821

Note

*Application forms for all encounters
are available at www.bldnewark.com*



TEACHING MINISTRY

Date/Class

Day/Teaching

Sept 6

Saturday

LSS27 & LSS28

Christian Maturity Program 2

ME31

Christian Parenting 1

Sept 19

Friday

Mark10

Teaching

John6

Teaching

Youth

Teaching

Singles

Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Sept 20

Saturday

LSS30

Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit

ME31

Christian Parenting 2

Note

*Friday teachings – after worship
Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's*





COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 36

Bulletin Edition

Sept. 12, 2008

A Pastoral Letter from Fr. Paul

As we approach the presidential election, the question obviously comes up: "Whom should I vote for?" We can get some help from the bishops who during their last US Conference of Catholic Bishops' meeting in November published "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship". Bishop Di Marzio (previously from the archdiocese of Newark) was the chairman of that committee. We quote him: "It calls us bishops to help form consciences for political life, not tell people how to vote or whom to vote for or against." The bishops indicate that they are not single-issue voters: "A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support." YET they also explicitly say: "A candidate's position on a single issue that involves an INTRINSIC evil, such as SUPPORT for LEGAL ABORTION, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support." In addition to abortion, the bishops said euthanasia, assisted suicide, and EMBRYONIC cell research should form the panoply of pro-life issues that guide Catholic voters.

The document also says that Catholics should put their pro-life values ahead of devotion to a particular party and urges more Catholics to run for office. "Instead they should be focused on the dignity of every human being and the protection of the weak and vulnerable... When necessary, our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths."

On other issues such as same sex marriages, questions should also be asked about the values of the candidate. The Church has never condemned persons with homosexual tendencies. But that moral stance can never justify the mind set that a "gay" marriage should be an option in the line up of different family models. Apart from moral considerations it is obvious that there is a political homosexual agenda in the U.S that seeks to imitate the disastrous Canadian law that can penalize bishops, and all preachers of the gospel for speaking the truth of Scripture that condemns homosexual activity.

There has also been a contentious political issue regarding the reception of the Sacraments by pro-abortion politicians. The direction from the Vatican has been to encourage local diocesan bishop to dialogue with pro-abortion political leaders to warn them to change their position or refrain from receiving the Eucharist.

There is also a false mind set that can affect not only politicians, but all of us. It is a separation of our religious values and convictions from our public life. We are ONE person, not two, one of whom is the public figure, the other a private individual. We can never put the Ten Commandments on the back burner when we go public.

COUNSELS

The Cross - Our Life

Word: Nm 21:4b-9; Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38; Phil 2:6-11; Jn 3:13-17

Reflection:

The cross is the principal symbol of our Christian faith - the instrument of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. As Jesus triumphed over death, the cross, therefore, is a sign of victory although its original image originated from the executions of criminals and slaves of the Roman Empire during Jesus' time. Christian depictions of the cross adopt either the common "t-shaped" or the "tau-shaped" (where the traverse beam is seen to be carried by Jesus to Calvary). The "true cross", which was thought to be used during the actual crucifixion of the Lord was said to be discovered during the time of Constantine by St. Helena.

In the first reading, God ordered Moses to make a representation of the serpent and mount it on a pole. Moses, then, mounted a bronze serpent into a long pole so that it could be seen by everyone in camp and that anyone stung by the fiery serpent would be healed just by looking at the bronze serpent. The Jews, themselves, said that it was not looking at the serpent that healed them - but rather, that they looked up to God who did.

Let us look at some parallels between the Jews during those days and ourselves today:

1. The disease - The devil is the old serpent and sin is the biting of this fiery serpent.
2. The remedy - It was God Himself who prescribed an antidote against the fiery serpent, just as it was God who sent His only son to save us. "...and just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." (Jn. 3:14-15) *(continued on page 3)*

God's Promise for the Week

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that he who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life." (Jn 3:16)

Called to Live in the Holy Spirit

by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

“If we live by the Holy Spirit, let us be guided by the Holy Spirit” (Gal 5:25)

Describing the Holy Spirit isn't easy. One of the great minds of early Christian history, St. Augustine, wanted to write a book explaining the Holy Trinity, the fundamental Christian belief that God is one God in three Divine Persons. There's a legend that one day Augustine was walking along the beach at Hippo, his diocese in North Africa. He was trying to figure out the mystery of the Trinity. And as he moved along, he saw a boy running back and forth from the surf, carrying water in a bucket and pouring it into a small hole in the sand.

Augustine was curious. He asked the child what he was doing. The boy responded: “I'm pouring all that water” — meaning the ocean — “into this hole.” Augustine said: “That's impossible. The ocean is huge, and your hole in the sand is tiny.” The boy responded: “Then how can you expect to put the mystery of the Holy Trinity into that little head of yours?” And then the boy disappeared.

Augustine didn't stop thinking about the Trinity. { . . . } He learned that no matter how hard he thought about mysteries like the Trinity, he would never fully understand them. The same is true for us. We'll always need faith to guide us in our lives. In all our searching for God, we need to remember what Pope John Paul the Great taught us: Our minds need to fly on two wings — faith and reason. We need both. They're meant to go together.

Pope John Paul, wrote a letter to the Catholic bishops and people of the world about the Holy Spirit. He entitled it, quite sensibly, *The Lord and Giver of Life*. In his letter, John Paul reminded us that Jesus revealed Himself with these words from Scripture: “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

So if the Holy Spirit is the giver of life, it means He's the one that brings us to a full understanding and union with the real Jesus Christ. Catholic imagery usually shows the Holy Spirit as a dove. Why a dove? Maybe one of the reasons is that there's nothing threatening about a dove. A dove typically embodies purity, beauty and gentleness. The kindness of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives is exactly the opposite of the violence that the world and the devil rely on.

God acts in a completely different way. That's why the Holy Spirit is shown as a dove: He reveals to us the truth, helps us understand who Jesus really is, and calls us to a radically new life in Christ. But He never forces us or deceives us into doing anything we don't willingly choose to do. That's real freedom: when we choose, against our shortcomings and temptations from the world, to live the true life brought to us by Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit is not floating around “somewhere out there.” We received Him into our lives at our Baptism and our Confirmation. Beginning with those sacramental moments, He has always been dwelling within us. Someone may be tempted to ask: “Well, where is He, because I don't feel Him.” If you don't perceive Him, it's probably because you're not letting Him act in your life. Remember: He will not violate your freedom.

The Holy Spirit is the one who brings us “rest and relief” in the midst of our toils; the one who provides “rest and ease” in our

struggle with the anxieties of every age, especially this age which is our own, so filled with hopes and fears. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings consolation when our hearts grieve, and when we're tempted to despair.

With such a gift, the gift of God Himself in the person of the Holy Spirit, it really doesn't matter how hard the challenges might be that we face. God is stronger, Love is stronger. Grace is stronger. So, like every generation of Christians before us, and even in the midst of this difficult age, we have every reason to take joy in the phrase that Pope John Paul turned into his motto: “Be not afraid!”

Justified in the Eyes of God

“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.” (Rm 8:28)

Let's ask ourselves, do we really think that all things work for our good? We can't just answer with a simple ‘Yes’ to this question without a qualification.


As exhorted by St. Paul to the Romans, God's promise does not apply to just anyone but rather it is specifically for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Within the verse captures the essence of what a Christian absolutely must have “*faith*” in God without subjecting to our own unstable convictions, opinions and decisions. At times, we are not in control over other people's decisions that may have some negative impact in our lives that may seem unfair. But we Christians cannot lose our perspective because God's promise are both encouraging and comforting.

But in order to receive God's promise, we Christians must respond to God's grace, to His gift, to His calling, to His gift of the Holy Spirit, thus **loving** God in return. We must also be one of the “called according to His purpose,” one of the elect. This does not apply to those who have merely received an invitation from God, because the summons went out to a lot more than who actually responded as in Mt 22:14.

If we meet these conditions, God is with us, and we can be encouraged and take comfort in that assurance. It is important to note that St. Paul connects the conditions of loving God and being called according to His purpose in this verse. From beginning to end, the Bible declares that the very reason we are able to love God in the first place is because we have been called according to His purpose.

Now, to give a qualified answer to the former question, “Do all things really work for our good?” the answer is “**Yes**” if we are called by God.

What then, does it mean to be “called by God?” The *effectual* call of God has the power to produce what it commands. This understanding of the call of God is also confirmed for us in Rm 8:30 “**And those HE predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified.**” This is an ‘inward call’ that comes from God and cannot be resisted. The inward call of God is not just an invitation. When God calls you, He also justifies you, and when He justifies you, He also glorifies you. St. Paul is promising that God, who began the work of salvation in us, is governing our life in such a way, that every event is

(continued on page 3) 

In the Spirit of Transparency

The recent document of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops: *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, is a remarkable guide for Catholics at arriving at a decision in the coming elections not only for its comprehensiveness but also for the level-headed and even-tempered way it approaches a subject that is so often rife with heightened emotions. It also encourages us to view our political life as Catholics not only in the context of periodic elections but as part of our life-long moral obligation to promote the common good.

The bishops forthrightly say that they do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. Rather, they say that the Church wants us to develop well-formed consciences so we're equipped to address social and political questions. Conscience is not a mere "feeling" about what we should or should not do. It is the voice of God resounding in our hearts, revealing to us the truths of our faith and the moral quality of an act or situation. It requires us to make serious attempts to use sound moral judgment and act in accord with what we have considered to be just and right.

Along with forming our conscience, the Church also asks us to develop the virtue of prudence. Prudence informs our ability to choose from available alternatives, discern the true good in a specific context and act decisively. The exercise of our conscience should always be aided by prudence especially in issues in the political field.

The Church's defense of human life and dignity often come up in public forums during elections. The bishops cite two distortions in public life on the stand of the Church on this matter. First is the moral equivalence that makes no distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity. The intentional destruction of human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong, is not just one issue among many and must always be opposed.

The second is the misuse of these necessary moral distinctions to ignore other threats to human life and dignity. Racism and other unjust discrimination, resorting to unjust war, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care and an unjust immigration policy are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act. These are not optional concerns that can be dismissed and Catholics should seriously consider Church teachings on these issues. The bishops cite the point of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: ***The Christian faith is an integral unity and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine***

Catholics often face difficult issues about how to vote. Every one is encouraged to read the bishops' document to better appreciate the full scope of their discussion. Next issue: Part Two: the seven key themes of Catholic social doctrine to consider in assessing who deserves our vote.

Please visit: www.faithfulcitizenship.org

Justified in the Eyes of God

(continued from page 2)

preparing us for heavenly glory.

Justification is the result of faith. And just as faith leads to justification, justification leads to peace with God. **AMEN.**

Counsels

(continued from page 1)

3. The application – Those who were stricken looked and lived. *If we believe in His only begotten son, we will not perish but will have life everlasting (Jn. 3:16)*

This Sunday's second reading, in many ways, is the greatest and most moving passage

St. Paul ever wrote about Jesus. "*Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.*" (Phil 2:6-8)

This passage expounds the verse: "... for your sake, he became poor although he was rich..." (2Cor.8:9). There are no passages in the New Testament which sets the godhead and manhood of Jesus, as He makes a vivid sacrifice for mankind. This is the mystery of LOVE so great, although we cannot fathom nor understand all of it, yet we are truly blessed to experience it.

God's love is personified in what may well be mankind's favorite bible verse in

John 3:16. The verse that practically summarizes the gospel stories and mystery into one: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only son so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish.*"

The communitarian value for this week, as provided by the ECSL, and obtained from John's gospel story, is "self-giving". To confirm God's word to the community for this week:

Theme: As the center of our lives, God will bring us to the triumph of the Cross.

Orders: Do not forget the works of the Lord.

Hearken my people to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

Our Catholic teachings tell us: "The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and man." He thus, calls all His disciples to *'take up his cross and follow me.'*" (Mt.16:24). This is truly so, as confirmed by St Rose of Lima, when she said: "Apart from the cross, there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven."

St Paul confirms this in his first letter to the Corinthians: "*The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*" (1Cor 1:18). The messages of the cross to us are three-fold: dying to self, giving up all, and obedience to God's will.

Directions:

1. Follow Christ's example of humility
2. Be obedient to God's Word

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Hamilton Plaza

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the month. Volunteers are needed

Nong & Tricia Bustos – 732-591-1340

nongb601@aol.com, teres202@aol.com

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion w/ Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Sat. of the month starts at 8:30am except Dec.

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max.). Send to

word@bldnewark.com.

TEACHINGS

Sep 19 After Worship

Teaching Youth, John 6, Mark 10

Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit Singles

Sep 20 St. Mary's 1-6 pm

Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit LSS 30

Christian Parenting 2 ME 31

After Worship

Sept 26 Formation Teaching Intercessory & Service

Teaching Golden Years

Basic Bible Seminar Solo Parents

PLEDGE OF LOVE

Week Ending Sept. 5, 2008

\$3,027

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Week Ending Sept. 5, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for the Poor **\$3,349**

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sep 13

Disciples' Assembly - 1-5pm

St. Mary's Auditorium, Rahway, NJ

For ALL Committed and Covenanted members. *Please make time to attend.*

Prospective New Sharers / New Coaches Orientation - 5-7pm

St. Mary's School Library, Rahway, NJ

For list of new sharers and coaches, please contact Richard/Lee De La Fuente or George/Cathy Del Fiero

Sep 27

Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity

60 Jay Street, Newark, NJ 07103

ME 27 will serve

Contact Cris & Ampy Escobinas

973-338-1821

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oct 11 - Annual BLD Newark Golf Outing

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem, PA

Contact: ME 24 Family

Carlito/Arlene Claricia 908-902-9829

Ed/Grace Badiola 908-313-5522

Share Your Talent!

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting

Information Technology Volunteers

Network Specialists & Database Developers

Contact: Casey Tanseco (caseytanseco@hotmail.com)

or call 732-388-0088

May the blessing and favor of the Lord be upon those who are celebrating their birthdays and wedding anniversaries this week.

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times,

visit www.masstimes.org.

Covenant News is also available on our website at www.bldnewark.com



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 37

Bulletin Edition

September 19, 2008

The Duty of Fraternal Correction

Gospel Commentary for 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time by Father Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap, Father Raniero Cantalamessa is the Pontifical Household preacher.

The readings for this Sunday Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 18:15-20.

ROME, SEPT. 5, 2008 (Zenit.org).- In the Gospel this Sunday we read: "Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother sins, go and admonish him privately; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother.'"

Jesus speaks of all sins; he does not restrict the field to sins committed against us. In this latter sort of case, it is hard to know whether what moves us is zeal for truth or our own wounded pride. In any case, it would be more of a self-defense than a fraternal correction. When the sin is against us, the first duty is not correction but forgiveness.


Why does Jesus say to admonish your brother privately? Above all, this injunction has respect for your brother's good name, his dignity in view.

The worst thing would be to want to correct a husband in the presence of his wife or a wife in the presence of her husband, a father in front of his children, a teacher in front of pupils, or a superior in the presence of inferiors; in other words, in the presence of those whose esteem is important for the person in question? The situation will soon become a public trial. It would be very difficult for the person to accept the correction well. His dignity would be compromised.

Jesus says that the admonishment should take place privately to give the person the chance to defend himself and explain his actions in complete freedom. Many times what appears to an outside observer to be a sin is not in the intention of the person who committed it. A frank explanation clears up many misunderstandings. But this is no longer possible when the person is publicly redressed and the incident brought to the awareness of others.

When, for whatever reason, fraternal correction is not possible in private, there is something that must never be done in its place, and that is to divulge, without good reason, one's brother's fault, to speak ill of him or, indeed, to calumniate him, proposing as fact something that is not, or exaggerating the fault. "Do not speak ill of one another," Scripture says (James 4:11). Gossip is not something innocent; it is ugly and reprehensible.

A woman once went to St. Philip Neri for confession, accusing herself badmouthing people. The saint absolved her but gave her a strange penance. He told her to go home, get a hen and come back, plucking the bird's feathers as she walked along the street. When she had returned to him he said: "Now go back home and, as you go,

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COUNSELS

Serving Under His Grace

WORD: Is 55:6-9; Ps 145:2-3,8-9,17-18; Phil 1:20c-24,27a; Mt 20:1-16a

ORDERS: 1. Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ
2. Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call Him while He is near

THEME: As the center of our lives, God will lead us to life in Christ.

REFLECTION: St. Gregory the Great, the Doctor of our Church comments on the parable of the laborers in the vineyard: "Keep watch over your manner of life, dear people, and make sure that you are indeed the Lord's laborers. Each person should take into account what he does and consider if he is laboring in the vineyard of the Lord." [2]

Andrew was the disciple privileged to have met the Master Teacher first. Among the first 4 disciples whom Jesus called, Peter, James and John formed an inner core group who witnessed incidents not seen by the other disciples. Although it was Andrew who introduced his brother Simon to Christ, he was not a member of the inner core. So little was written about Andrew in the scripture. It was he who introduced the boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish that fed the 5 thousand, and in another occasion, when he introduced some Greeks to Christ, it was in that event when Jesus declared His hour has come. He was God's first laborer impassioned by his encounter with Christ. Andrew was first but he never became the rock. He was prepared to take the second place. It was a humble disciple's story.

There are many faces in our community who simply come to love the Lord and serve his fellowmen. Many of you can easily qualify to be servant leaders, coordinators and worship leaders. You live simple lives, you serve quietly far from the limelight without recognition or accolade.

Observe the way in which the sons of Zebedee, James and John and their ambitious mother came to seek the highest place

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GOD'S PROMISE FOR THE WEEK

"The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all his works." (Ps 145:9)

Wait...For One Another!



"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another" (1 Cor. 17:33)

A secular mind would think of this passage as a reminder about the basic table manners of waiting until everyone is seated then you can all eat together. As a spiritual reflection, it is about the importance of the Lord's supper, and the need to understand it with its full meaning. Most of us have this scene as a constant reminder through a painting or picture hanging on the wall of our dining room.

Today, we observe as what Paul pointed out the abuse connected with the liturgy, the neglect of basic tradition concerning the meaning of the Lord's supper. Paul also explains: of 'those who are approved among you may become known': Paul situates their divisions within the context of eschatological separation of the authentic from the inauthentic. The notion of authenticity testing recurs in the injunction of self-examination in view of present and future judgment (1 Cor. 11:19; 28-32). Some of us go to Communion regularly with little or no preparation because we have seldom or not gone to Confession. We lost the sense of the **NEED to go to Confession, to REPENT** before receiving Holy Communion worthily. We are unreconciled with a family member or brethren in ministry or community.

We fool ourselves when we hide our own serious sins, or maybe known to one or two people. But when we do not monitor and discipline ourselves regarding this, we lose the sense of connection between the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance. Each time we approach to receive Holy Communion; we should have a profound sense of our own unworthiness. We can never say that we have the right to Him, that we can demand to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. To receive the Body and Blood of Christ is an act of God's immeasurable love. Our Lord makes Himself available to us in His Body and Blood for Holy Communion

Nowadays, we are aware that a high percentage of Catholics do not believe that the Eucharistic species are the Body and Blood of Christ. This is due to the lack of emphasis on Eucharistic devotion through Adoration and Benediction. Therefore we lose the Eucharistic faith.

"Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:27). Jesus' action of self-giving is expressed in the words over the bread and the cup and His double command to repeat his own action. The Body and Blood of Christ is a gift of God's love to us. The Holy Eucharist is a gift freely given out of love and that is what God is doing for us every time we participate in the Mass and receive Communion.

"We, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread"-(1Cor. 10:16-17) is a reminder that the Eucharist is not only for each man's soul but for the unity of the Mystical Body. It is a mystical union brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Features...

On the 40th Anniversary of Humanae Vitae
by Fr. John Corapi, SOLT (Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity)

This year, the Catholic Church is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the prophetic and landmark encyclical of Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, on human life. At the time the Holy Father promulgated the encyclical there was a general spirit of dissent in the air. This inspired document put the dissenters into yet a new orbit, even further from the center of Church teaching. Their lack of humility resulted in disobedience, ultimately resulting in moral death for them and countless others.

What has resulted from the rejection of the principles contained in this great document is a catastrophe of unprecedented proportions. "Life begins at conception. Abortion begins at artificial contraception." Pope Paul VI prophetically predicted that if artificial contraception were to become generally acceptable in society, then abortion would inevitably become just another means of artificial contraception. Today, not only do we have what is approaching one billion children murdered in the name of "choice" worldwide, but a host of incredible evils have followed in the wake of the rejection of the Holy Father's teaching on life.

Pope John Paul II called abortion murder in the clear and inspired language of his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. If a single abortion is homicide—and it is—then the cumulative result of abortion on demand is genocide. The number of innocent and helpless children totaling more than the population of large countries have been annihilated. Can a society that elevates such an outrage to the noble status of the law be pleasing to God? Or, will God's patience soon run out and send an avalanche of natural disasters, wars, chaos, and economic collapse on the perpetrators of such violence and evil?

The Western world's wholesale rejection of the teaching of "*Humanae Vitae*" ushered in a death wish that is even now well on its way to completion. Pseudo-Christian Europe has had an extremely low birthrate for decades, while the burgeoning Muslim population is growing exponentially. With the average European family having less than 2 children and the average Muslim family having 8-10 children, it won't be long until Europe as we know it will be no more. Muslims vote and they will vote to radically alter laws that facilitate gross immorality. God may use them to chastise a decadent West. I assure you they will not need bombs and bullets; mathematics will more than suffice.

The unspiritual person cannot see reality as it is. Hence they cannot discern the advancing disaster of our rejection of both common sense and proper morality. The spiritual person must pray fervently for the Spirit of God to discern reality as it is. (1 Cor 2:12-16). Things such as artificial contraception, abortion, homosexual sex, and euthanasia all have something in common. They have no life in them. They are part of a death wish that when brought to its inevitable conclusion will result in the annihilation of the West as we know it, if something isn't done to change course immediately.

Every one of us, as a disciple of Christ, must pray and sacrifice for the cause of life, and do so with earnest. The hour is late and time is now short. The battle between truth and lies, good and evil, life and death rages on toward its consummation. We know the ultimate outcome—truth, the good, and life is victorious in Christ the Conqueror. We, however, must fight the good fight. How we shall live forever is determined by how we live now. We are being called upon by the Spirit of God to be the saints of these times. How we respond to the call will dictate the rise and fall of nations, and the eternal salvation of many.

"Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

APOLOGETICS

CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

How does the Charismatic Movement coincide with the teaching of the Catholic Church and the teaching of Jesus Christ? Many priests and bishops go along with it, while many do not approve of it because it's too emotional. Jesus said we must become like little children and little children surely do not become emotional.

I'll pass over your last sentence. You must be acquainted with children different from the ones I know.

The Charismatic Movement takes its name from the Greek word *charisma*, which means a free gift, a favor. In the church, it has meant a special talent or power given to certain people by God for the service of the rest of the Christian community, the church.

Some charisms are for service in the church (governing, for example), others for teaching or preaching, and others for more spectacular purposes such as healing, speaking in tongues, and prediction of the future.

These gifts of the Holy Spirit were especially necessary in the early days of the church when Christian people had not yet experienced many of the signs of Christ's presence that intervening history has offered. But such charisms are still useful even today as a source of faith and hope to those who experience them and use them well.

They are also important to the institution of the church, with which they will nearly always be in tension, as a reminder that the Holy Spirit "blows where he will" and that His actions are not limited to popes, bishops and leaders of the church.

Already in the New Testament, St. Paul warned against two main dangers in the charismatic activities in the church. An individual may easily fool himself about the genuineness of his special gifts, especially the more spectacular ones. Also, every gift is suspect if it does not serve the whole community by aiding the spirit of co-operation, love and mutual support. If the Charismatic Movement or any other movement becomes divisive or elitist, that's the best proof that there is something wrong with it.

One reason that bishops, priests and others may differ on their view of charismatics is that they can differ on their vision of the church. Charismatic groups themselves differ in their spirit and in their understanding of where they fit into the rest of the Christian community.

Read First Corinthians, chapters 12-14, for St. Paul's comments on charisms. As St. Augustine said once in a homily, God gives different charisms such as healing, tongues and others, to different people. As different parts of our body have different functions, people in the church have varying gifts. Whether or not one has the gift of healing or any other charism, has nothing to do with personal holiness. All various gifts of the Spirit, working together, make us the living Body of Christ.

(Source: Catholic Q&A pp. 417-418 by Dietzen)

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times,
go to www.masstimes.org

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

at the moment when the Lord was preparing unreservedly to take the very lowest.

They were the first laborers who work hard from the dawning of the gospel day. They are elders who have direct access to the Lord and believe they have political clout to get positions of honor in His kingdom. Christ does not play politics and He immediately crushed the vanity and ambition of their request. He leads them to the thought of their sufferings. It is a bitter cup to drink. Pride is a sin that most easily beset us; it is a sinful ambition to outdo others in pomp and grandeur.

Simon Peter knowing that he left everything by the sea of Galilee asked Jesus, "*We have given up everything and followed you.*" (Mk 10:28). He became the Rock and took the lead of apostleship but ultimately at the end Peter left an indelible mark of servanthood and humility by dying on the cross upside down.

Following the order of our worship tonight, we are commanded to conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ. May the Gospel become incarnated in our lives...that as we all labor for the Lord, people do not see us but they see Christ.

St Teresa of Avila spoke of the awesome dignity that Christ has given us as His coworkers. "Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which He looks, compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world."

Working in the God's vineyard does not depend upon wordly success. As Blessed Mother Teresa often said God does not ask us to be successful; just faithful. What is primary is that we work with God's hands, with the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). Needless to say, we should always do the best we can because nothing less than our best is worthy to be placed on the altar for God.

A book entitled "Community and Growth" by Jean Vanier, comes a beautiful aphorism. "He who loves community destroys community and he who loves the brethren, builds community. Community is about belonging and openness. It is people not functions that matter most, to love and care for the people that are there, just as they are, to respect even those we do not agree with. And it is not just caring and loving in a passing way but in permanent way".

We were dead to sin and we desperately needed a savior. Jesus Christ was first on the job. He labored until He was bruised, His body marred with stripes. He did not grumble. There was no recompense. He did not demand for anything in return. What is amazing is He became a ransom and paid for many. This is simply grace.

As His co-workers we do ordinary works with an amazing grace.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Let us continue to labor in love of Christ by praying for each other, reaching out, seeking reconciliation with one another thru compassion

2. In everything you do, seek God's presence & will before your own

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- Sept 27** **Soup Kitchen**
Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St. Newark, NJ 07103
ME 27 will serve.
Contact: Cris & Ampy Escobinas – 973-338-1821
- Oct 3** **LSS #31 Invocation Mass**
- Oct 4 - 5** **LSS #31 Proper**
St. Mary's Church, Rahway, NJ
- Nov 1 - 2** **Prayer Counseling Seminar II**
Ramada Limited, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080
*Contacts: Pastoral Ministry, Romy/Leni Chan,
Jun/Fely Escobar, Ed/Nanie Reyes,
Boy/Des Parker, Ver/Baby Nacion, Tino/Aida Garcia,*
- Nov 21-23** **John 6 Crossing #9**
Ramada Limited, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080
Contact: Boyet/Zita Cruz – 908-378-5182

TEACHINGS

- Sept 19** Mark 10; John 6 and Youth Teaching
Friday Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Singles)
- Sept 20** Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit (LSS30)
Saturday Christian Parenting 2 (ME31)
- Sept 26** Golden Years Teaching – Golden Years
Saturday Intercessory Formation Teaching –
Intercessory Track Class
Service Formation Teaching –
Service Track Class
Basic Bible Seminar – Solo Parents
- Note: Friday teachings – after worship
Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's*

Duty of Fraternal Correction (cont. from page 1)

pick up each feather that you plucked on the way." The woman told him that it would be impossible since the wind had almost certainly blown them away in the meantime. But St. Philip was prepared: "You see," he said, "just as it is impossible to pick up the feathers once the wind has scattered them, it is likewise impossible to gather gossip and calumnies back up once they have come out of our mouth".

Returning to the theme of the correction, we should say that the good outcome of the correction does not always depend on us; despite our best intentions, the other may not accept the correction, he may harden. But this can be compensated for: When we ourselves are corrected, the his conduct. Instead, use the correction to point out all the good things that you see in the child and how you expect much better from him, in such away that the correction becomes encouragement rather than disqualification. This was the method that St. John Bosco used with children.

It is not easy in individual cases to know whether it is better to correct something or let it go, speak or be silent. This is why it is important to remember the Golden Rule, valid in all cases, that St. Paul offers in the second letter: "Owe each other nothing but the debt of mutual love. [...] Love does evil to no one." Augustine synthesized everything in the maxim, "Love and do what you will."

You must make sure above all that in your heart there is a fundamental disposition of welcome toward other persons. If you have this, then whatever you do, whether you correct or remain silent, you will be doing the right thing, because love "does evil to no one." [Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic]

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month - Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home Passaic, NJ - Volunteers are needed.
*Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340
nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com*

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00 pm
Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration
- Every 1st Monday of the month at 8:00pm
2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Celebration
- Every last Saturday of the month, starts at 8:30pm except December. Prayer starts @ 8:30 AM
*Venue: Resurrection Parish – St Bridget Church,
372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302*

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max).
Send to word@bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oct 11 - Annual BLD Newark Golf Outing

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem, PA
*Contact: ME 24 Family
Carlito/Arlene Claricia 908-902-9829
Ed/Grace Badiola 908-313-5522*

October 19 - BLD 16th Anniversary Dinner Dance

St. Demetrius Ukrainian Community Center, Carteret, NJ
4 - 10 PM; Black and White Attire
*Contact: ME 23 Family
Mon /Dulce Samonte 732-574-1552*

October 31 – Deadline for 2009 Magnificat Subscription Payment

Give your individual payments to your Ministry Coordinator/Class Shepherd
Only One Check should be given to Liturgical Ministry for your Ministry/Class

Share Your Talent!

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting Information Technology Volunteers
Network Specialists & Database Developers
*Contact: Casey Tanseco (caseytanseco@hotmail.com)
Or call 732-388-0088*

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending Sept 12, 2008

*Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for Poor* **\$ 3,640.00**

Pledge of Love **\$ 4,446.00**

Thank you for your continued generosity.



NEWS

Inter District Conference

The Newark Inter District Conference was recently concluded in St. Mary's (Sept.20-21). This conference was a summary sharing of the teachings of the global inter district conference at Covenant house, Philippines (Feb.20-24). We also used the opportunity here in St. Mary's to also apply the principles learned there to our American scene. The needs that were originally expressed during the global conference were: the need for a greater spirit of contemplative, passive prayer in our worship; a reminder that we are stewards and servants to the community and the wider church; a deepening reminder of the plight of the poor; an awareness that much of the focus of community work is on the inner workings of the community with consequent neglect of the wider diocesan Church which needs movements like BLD; the recognition that most of our people are not aware of the full richness of the social teachings of the Church as expressed in the social encyclicals.

There were 150 persons present in St. Mary's, representing the following districts besides Newark: Albany, Allentown, Camden, Charlotte, Long Island, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Rockland, Trenton, Washington DC. The sessions on the encyclicals were for many the first time that the themes of the social encyclicals were outlined. The nine themes that were shared were taken from "Living Justice" by Father Thomas Massaro, S.J. The nine themes can be outlined as follows: Dignity of every person; Solidarity; Family life; Subsidiarity; Property ownership; Dignity of work; Colonialism; Peace; Option for the poor. Our plans are to present one of these themes in the CN once a month over the next nine months.

One of the beauties of a weekend like this is the encouragement that districts can share with each other. Sometimes we think that the difficulties and challenges are unique to a district like Newark. Human nature and the American culture are universal throughout the country, not to mention the reality of original sin. These very human realities remind us of the necessity of evangelizing cultures, as well as absolute necessity of a deeply spiritual life based on daily prayer. Like all powerful and enthusiastic weekends, there is a joyful "high" following the experience. The counsel given is that the problems, internal and external, will be the same, but the grace following that communal experience should enhance the thrust of evangelization not only to the members, but also to the wider diocesan Church. We should also be reminded that BLD is a global movement. We are all in this together. May I encourage all of us who are disciples of the community to look in to the presence of God dwelling within our hearts, and to look out to a world starving for our love and ministry...?

COUNSELS

JESUS - The Son We Want To Be

WORD: Ez 18:25-28; Ps 25:4-9; Phil 2:1-11; Mt 21:28-32

ORDER: Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others.

THEME: As the center of our live, God will strengthen us to do His will.

REFLECTION:

This Sunday's Gospel shows us Jesus telling this parable: "A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not,' but later changed his mind and went. The man went to the other son and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go..." "Which of the two did the father's will? (Matt. 21: 28-31) They answered, 'The first.'" Jesus then reveals the supernatural significance of the lesson: "... I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you ... and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him." (Matt. 21:32)

John the Baptist had shown the way of salvation, yet the Scribes and the Pharisees did not believe him. They were like the second son who said, I go, sir, but did not go to the vineyard. They were very rigorous in their observance of the Law. Yet when shown the moment of truth by the testimony of John the Baptist, they were not obedient to the divine will and to the fulfillment of the Law. On the other hand, the tax collectors and prostitutes, even though they were sinners, responded to the Baptist's call for repentance. They are like the son who at first said I will not, but later obeyed quietly, thus pleasing his father enormously.

Continued on page 4

Promise of the Week

"But if...he...does what is right and just, he shall preserve his life." (Ez 18:27)

“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it.”

Going through the readings of this past week, I found several very striking scripture passages, to the point that I had some difficulty in trying to discern which verse to use as the basis for this article. To illustrate my point, Wednesday’s first reading included what I thought is one of the most beautiful prayers that I’ve ever come across; *“Give me neither poverty nor riches; (provide me only with the food I need); lest being full, I deny you, saying, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or, being in want, I steal, and profane the name of my God”* (Proverbs 30:8-9).

Then, on Thursday the first reading included what could be one of the most recognizable passages from Ecclesiastes; *“vanity of vanities! All things are vanity. What profit has man from all the labor which he toils at under the sun? One generation passes and another comes, but the world forever stays...”*

And who is not familiar with Friday’s first reading, also from Ecclesiastes, *“There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens; a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance...etc., etc., etc...”*

Although as beautiful & profound as these readings were, what struck me the most were the words of our Lord Jesus from Tuesday’s Gospel, *“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it”*, Luke 8:21.

St. Francis of Assisi had a famous quote that has always been one of my favorites. He used to say, *“Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words”*. I guess that is really the point, isn’t it?

Here I was trying, with much difficulty, to discern which one of these readings I should use for my reflection and it suddenly struck me...Jesus’ message is really quite simple...No matter how profound or beautiful we think the Scriptures are, it won’t mean a thing if *“we don’t hear the word of God”*, take it to heart, and *“act on it”*.

If we truly are hearing the word of God, then how we go about our daily lives, no matter how ordinary we think it is, whether it’s raising our families, doing our jobs, participating in community activities such as P&W, or anything else that we do during our day, should be the fulfillment of Jesus’ words.

PRAYERS FOR THE COMING ELECTIONS:

LORD JESUS, WE ASK YOU AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME TO SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OUR AID DESPITE OUR UNWORTHINESS. ENLIGHTEN THOSE WHO WILL VOTE AND FOR THEIR DECISION TO CONFORM ACCORDING TO YOUR WILL. GRANT THIS COUNTRY THE WISDOM TO PROCLAIM THAT GOD’S LAW IS THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH THIS NATION WAS FOUNDED, AND THAT GOD IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF OUR CHERISHED RIGHTS TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. AMEN!

Sent Out into the World: the Holy Spirit, the Principal Agent of Mission

by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8)

How many of you think of yourselves as a spiritual father or spiritual mother? Or to put it another way, how many of you can claim, by your actions, to have knowingly brought someone closer to Jesus Christ and the Church? The reason I ask is simple. By our baptism, we have received the right and the obligation to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ — that’s what the word Gospel means, *“good news”* — to every nation on earth.

But here’s the problem: Some Catholics, even young people like yourselves, live in a kind of a *“Catholic ghetto.”* It’s a way of life that could be commendable in terms of personal piety; but it’s shaped by an implicit acceptance that we Catholics are a besieged minority — that we need to be well shielded to *“survive”* the surrounding world. But that’s the opposite of what God calls us to be as Christians. Let me explain.

First, there are those Catholics who feel *“almost ready”* to evangelize... Almost, but not quite. They’re typically looking for the *“ultimate”* Catholic training program and never stop preparing themselves because they’re never *“quite there yet.”* Sometimes they think they’re being humble because they *“admit”* that they’re *“not ready.”*

I always remind them about the passage in the first chapter of the Book of Jeremiah; the one where Jeremiah is called by God:

“Ah, Lord God!” I said, “I know not how to speak; I am too young.” But the Lord answered me: Say not, “I am too young.” To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord . . . For it is I this day who has made you a fortified city, A pillar of iron, a wall of brass, against the whole land.”

So much for God thinking that any of us is *“too young”* to witness to Jesus Christ.

I could go on and on about the excuses we make for not evangelizing. But let’s go straight to the heart of the matter: We are, all of us, called to be Apostles. That’s our vocation. That’s our right and our duty. In a sense, evangelizing is in our Christian DNA from the moment we received the Holy Spirit in our Baptism and our Confirmation. The word *“Apostle”*, comes from the Greek apostolos which means *“one who is sent forth;”* someone who is entrusted with a mission.

The nature of the Apostles’ mission is powerfully explained in Chapter 10 of the Gospel of Mathew. I urge you to re-read that Gospel passage and make it the basis of an honest examination of conscience. *(To be continued next week)*

ISAIAH 58 MINISTRY

"This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; Sharing your bread with the hungry, Sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own." (Isaiah 58:6-7)

"Isaiah 58" is a confidential program of assistance of the BLD-Newark District. Its thrust is to find ways and means to help members of the community in their time of extreme need. Its objectives are:

1. To help community members who are in financial difficulty in meeting obligations because of loss of employment; prolonged sickness/hospitalization or death in the family.
2. To assist individuals in removing money as a barrier to full devotion to Christ and Restore relationships torn by conflict over money.

The 3 major interventions are: Financial Assistance; Poverty alleviation and livelihood program Category 1 -Financial assistance-given as stop gap solution to an emergency situation per meritorious cases, bereavement assistance to members who lost their loved ones. Category 2- cases which are likewise considered urgent but require long term solutions other than stopgap measures. Certain conditions are required, such as:

- a) A pay- back plan
- b) Financial counseling and supervision
- c) Spiritual guidance

Beneficiaries of category 1 are not required to pay back; however, a donation or love offering may be given in the future when they are financially sound. Category 2 beneficiaries - no interest is charged on the amount received. However, it is anticipated that the goodwill extended to them be reciprocated through a pay-back plan, as agreed upon. Members who wish to avail of the program may visit our website BLDnewark.com - Management.

Over time, Isaiah 58 assisted members according to their needs as categorized. The far reaching benevolent arms of Isaiah 58 is limited to 5% funding from Tithes and Love offerings, pledges and donations from benevolent community members. Repayments are based on the notion of trust as per pay back plan and Isaiah 58 Ministry strongly believe and rely on God's words "If you can be trusted with very little, Then God will reward you by trusting with great things" (Luke 16:10). Recently category 2 applications increased; sadly we have to reduce the benefits so that other members who are financially in trouble can still avail of the program.

Pursuing a new frontier, helping break the yoke of poverty through "SAGIP KAESKUELA" Collection of old school supplies, clothes, etc. for the poor children in the Gawad Kalinga project (Fr. Paul Lehman village). "For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you" (Lk: 7:38).

A wellness program will be implemented soon; medical volunteers are needed for this project. Currently the DCS has for review an approval the following proposed programs: Poverty relief, educational support, calamities and disaster, financial planning, employment, business development and legal assistance.

'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matt.25:40)

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

LITURGY:

Magnificat Subscription Deadline: OCT 31

Give your individual payments to your Ministry Coordinator/Class Shepherd / Only One Check should be given to Liturgical Ministry for your Ministry/Class

WORD:

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.).

Email to word@BLDNewark.com

MISSION:

Nursing home visit - Volunteers needed

Every 2nd Saturday of the month.

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ 07055

Please contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos
(732)591-1340 / nongb601@aol.com;
teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion and Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month, starts at 8:30am
except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

TEACHING MINISTRY

Sept 26 – Friday

Golden Years Teaching – Golden Years Ministry
Intercessory Formation Teaching – Intercessory Track Class
Service Formation Teaching – Service Track Class
Basic Bible Seminar – Solo Parents

NOTE:

Friday Teachings – after worship

Saturday Teachings – 1-6pm at St. Mary's

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Reports for the Week Ending
Sept 19, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission & Fast for Poor
\$ 3,928.00

Thank you for your continued generosity.

PLEDGE OF LOVE

Week Ending September 19, 2008
\$ 4,721.00

Counsels *from page 1*

In the Second Reading, St. Paul emphasizes how Jesus revealed his love for us, how the Lord Himself teaches us by example when *"He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."* (Phil. 2:8) This obedience was not a matter of mere passive submission to the Father's will. He chose to follow even to His brutally painful and humiliating death out of love for the Father and all of mankind.

In our Covenant Community, every disciple is under the pastoral care of those in authority. These leaders carry the responsibility bestowed on them through the prayer and discernment of the community. Anyone who carries authority which comes from God is accountable to God. Our ECSL, DSL, DCS and DLC all serve to promote our personal growth and spirituality. Theirs is purely a work of love and personal sacrifice. Just as God watches His children to see them grow in love and truth, our leadership strives to do the same for us in the service of God.

Jesus went to the Cross fully trusting and obeying the will of the compassionate and perfect Father. In an imperfect human community, is it possible to completely trust and obey the leadership? Do we submit only to leaders who have our total trust and confidence? Is it possible for us to obey broken and imperfect individuals? We can as long as have trust on the people who emerged them and full confidence in God who watches over our community. God has chosen effective leaders who were very broken; men like Moses, Peter and Paul who might not have seemed trustworthy at first but their brokenness made them more humble and better instruments of God. God knows how to give those He entrusts to do His will the grace to achieve their tasks and fulfill their responsibility. Our task is to pray for our leadership incessantly, maintaining full trust in our Lord and for ourselves to develop humility and obey them out of love for Him.

St. Paul tells us, *"Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also for those of others."* (Phil. 2:2-4) When we find it difficult to obey, who do we have in the center of our life? Pride inclines us to do our own will and to seek what exalts us. Obedience is opposed to this pride. St. Thomas Aquinas said that a very good sign of one's being on the right road in the spiritual life is one's willingness to obey others. The only Son of the Father came down from Heaven to save us and to cure our pride. The calling is for us to empty ourselves and be more like Christ as He now lives in us and to be the true sons and daughters that our Father wants us to be.

Direction:

Cultivate in yourselves the same attitude that is also in Christ Jesus.

**MAKE COVENANT NEWS A PART OF
YOUR COVENANT LIFE.**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sept 27 - Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay Street Newark, NJ (ME27 will serve)
Contact persons: Chris & Ampy Escobinas 973-338-1821

Sept 27 - Singles Ministry Day of Recollection

"Date with Jesus" @ St. Mary's (8am to 6pm)

Oct 3 - Invocation Mass

Oct 4-5 - LSS#31 Proper

Oct 31-Nov 2 - Singles Encounter #21

Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY
Contact: Glenn Canlas- Invazian21@yahoo.com
Earl & Flo Manguiat: Ffudalan@gmail.com

NOV 1-2 - Prayer Counseling Seminar II

Ramada Limited, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080
Contact: Pastoral Ministry - Romy/Leni Chan,
Jun/Fely Escobar, Ed/Nanie Delos Reyes,
Boy/Des Parker, Ver/Baby Nacion, Tino/Aida Garcia

NOV 21-23 - John 6 Crossing #9

Open to ages 12-14 years.
Ramada Limited, South Plainfield, NJ 07080
Email: boyetzita_cruz@yahoo.com
For application form go to www.bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oct 11 - Annual BLD Newark Golf Outing

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem, PA
Contact: ME 24 Family
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St. Demetrius Ukrainian Community Center Carteret, NJ
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Contact: Casey Tanseco (caseytanseco@hotmail.com)
Or call (732) 388-0088



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 39

Bulletin Edition

Oct. 03, 2008

A Date with Jesus

Jesus Christ, our Lord, God, and best friend blessed the Singles Ministry with another inspiring Recollection. After weeks of preparation and prayer, the Lord worked through a discerned committee to put together a day for our Singles to “retreat” from the world, and from our daily lives, to once again focus on the true and powerful love of our Lord and Savior.

The retreat was given the title, “A Date with Jesus,” to emphasize the presence of our Lord, and the personal commitment to the appointment. This “Date” called us to get to know our One True Love- Jesus Christ even more. To know that Jesus was personally inviting each of us there, it was too hard to say, ‘no.’


The day started off with a powerful worship, while Jesus was directly in front of all of us through the Blessed Sacrament. The Physical Presence of the Lord stirred His Spirit in us to pray with more passion and a deeper hunger and thirst for Him. Each of us felt the power of His Spirit burning for Him in our prayers. The experience was amazing, but it wasn’t for us- the worship was to recognize and give glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The day continued with talks from our Spiritual Director Fr. Paul Lehman and Deacon Bong David which helped nourish the hunger and thirst we felt at worship. We wanted to know, we wanted to seek God that day, and through His ministers, He didn’t disappoint. After the talks from our ministers, we were given time to allow the Spirit within us to speak as we wrote our reflections and shared in small groups.

Being able to share with one another was a very moving experience with our groups. We discovered of our lives where we really desired God and we had the opportunity to pray for each other and relate on our brokenness and really come together as a community, and see and understand why God brought us together that morning.

The Spirit continued to move that day through three sharers who gave their heartfelt testimony to God’s undying love in their lives. One shared about how God inspired her transformation which magnified and deepened her love for God. Another shared about how God’s Love ignited a greater love for herself and her gift of purity. The last testified to God’s Love inspired him to love others with the Love of the Lord.

Close to the end of our date, the Pillars of the Singles Ministry performed a moving

(continued on page 2) 

COUNSELS

A Fruitful Servanthood

Word: Is 5:1-7; Ps 80:9,12-16,19-20; Phil 4:6-9; Mt 21:33-43

Theme: Fruitful servanthood in God’s vineyard is living out our formation in Christian discipleship.


Order: *“Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:9)*

Reflection:

“Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:9). What have we learned, received, heard and seen? Do we keep on doing them? Are we producing good fruit?

From the time we entered the BLD community, we have been through a school of formation in faith. The community has designed a formation program that is geared towards helping us become better disciples of Christ. We put to practice what we had learned through our assignments, from service to discipling, until we reach our Covenanting. All throughout these stages, we learned about Jesus, we received and heard His word and we saw the doing by our fellow community members in their service of the Lord through their work.

St. Paul’s call for us to continue doing what we have learned is not theoretical but rather a learning of deeper & meaningful knowing of God, of His Word, Church teachings and to eventually be able to act on what we have learned. While we all have one and the same formation, learning does vary from one individual to another. Some learned fast, some slower. In the eyes of God this will not matter at all, for He sees our heart not our intelligence or accomplishments. God measures our greatness in the little things that we do if done with love.

(continued on page 3) 

God’s Promise for the Week

“The Kingdom of God will be...given to a people that will produce its fruit.” (Mt 21:43)

Spiritual **WAIT** Reflection

In my witnessing experience, I have observed that a lot of our brothers and sisters encounter decisive moments in their spiritual growth unsure of how to proceed in giving service to the Lord. In the recent past, my classmates and I in ME 25 have been going through our Discipling training formation including subjective and objective discernment of our individual gifts and talents to discern ministry assignments. The most prejudiced way was to use subjective criteria, and thanks to our shepherds, teachers and leaders in the community for their objective guidelines and input, the process has been fair and well-accepted. I have heard several of our classmates saying “My spouse and I leave it up to the Lord to tell us how we can best serve Him.” I believe that this period is a good time to pray and ask for God’s wisdom and judgment to tell us how to lead our lives and best serve Him for His glory. If we wait and remain steadfast, our prayers will be answered to our satisfaction.

The virtue of waiting, I believe, goes with the Christian virtues of patience, perseverance and humility. When any person in the community is possessed by doubts and indecision, he should admit human weakness and pray to ask for the Lord’s help and guidance. I have often heard that many in their prayers ask for a “signal from the Lord” that what they are about to do is right or wrong under their personal circumstances. Invariably, after a period of waiting, they get a “signal” or clue from God convinced that He has answered their prayers.

The period of waiting may be short and good, or long which challenges our patience and perseverance. During this waiting period, we should control our pride and have humility to accept the loving and great power of God. In recently published books about Mother Theresa by her confessors and religious friends, we read that she had “long periods of darkness” in which she felt discouraged in her mission to help the poor and sick in Calcutta, India because of overwhelming difficulties. She, however, persevered and continued to pray and wait. She had been very steadfast, courageous and very faithful in the Lord, living like a saint. Her mission has been doing well even after her departure from earthly life, thanks to Mother Theresa’s intercession and the Lord.

A Date with Jesus (continued from pg 1) dramatization depicting the distractions we face, and the determination and never-ending Sacrifice of Jesus.

Our date with the Lord ended with the highest form of worship—the Eucharistic Celebration. We were reminded how Jesus continually offers Himself to us, not because we deserve it, but because He Loves us.

“For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16)

What’s in **BLD?** the name

This begins a series of five articles on discernment that will be published in Covenant News this October. The first article discusses what BLD’s name means to our spirituality and discernment.

Bukas-Loob sa Diyos or its English translation **Open in Spirit to God**, is more than just the name or identity of our faith community. It also expresses our **spirituality** and our **discernment**.

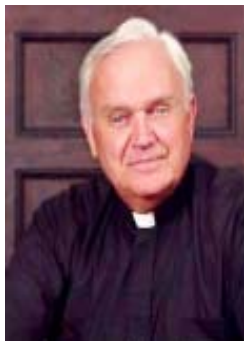
Our identity is of children in quest of Father God, in journey towards the highest union with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Our spirituality is of sinners needing continuing conversion. Hence our hearts are open to God, a sign of our utter reliance on grace for the fulfillment of our God-ward quest. Our discernment flows from our openness and responsiveness to the movement of the Holy Spirit within us, who guides us to faithfully follow Jesus’ footsteps, to lovingly obey the Father’s will and to fruitfully serve His Church.

“Bukas-Loob sa Diyos” is the quality of our heart, the state of our spiritual disposition that is a necessary for an ever-deepening experience of God. When our heart is open to God, we awaken to His Spirit, aware of His presence and amazed by His love. The heart broken by sin and hardened by hurt recognizes that it has been visited by grace, free and unmerited. It allows itself to be disturbed and moved by God into repentance and conversion.

“Bukas-Loob sa Diyos” is our open invitation to God to make His dwelling in us. When our hearts are open to God, every day is a moment of the Spirit’s visitation, to teach us about Jesus and to guide us to a deeper communion with Him. The Spirit clears our vision so that we see Jesus more distinctly, whom He reveals to us in prayer, in Scripture, in the sacraments, in other people, in our sufferings and joys. The more we know Jesus, the more we grow in love with Him. To do His will becomes our greatest desire.

The Holy Spirit is the sure guide of the Christian disciple to discernment of God’s will. We may ask, we may be “Bukas-Loob sa Diyos”, but how do we know that it is the Holy Spirit’s moving us and not our inner motivations? After all, do not evil inclinations remain in us due to original sin? Don’t we have the freedom to choose good or evil? Our confidence comes from God’s word: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” Jn 10:27. “You belong to God, children, and you have conquered them, for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1Jn 4:4). “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rm 5:20). We can trust the Holy Spirit, who speaks to our deepest center, to lead us to God.

Next topics: *Discernment Methods- Appraising the Word, LWG, Ignatian Discernment, Waiting on the Lord.*



Fr. Paul Speaks

Counsels *(continued from page 1)*

As faithful & fruitful disciples of Christ, we do only what pleases God, we serve glorifying not ourselves but our God.

After our formation program, we should be more equipped spiritually and be more understanding towards one another. We must be able to guide & encourage our brethren who have become discouraged due to various reasons. For some, could be job loss, loss of a loved one or health concerns. Others maybe due to difficulty in adjusting to their assigned ministries. St Paul says, we must think of whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise. When we have grown in His knowledge, in a real sense, the fruit that we bear surpasses any other achievements we may have had in our entire life. We must continue to do good works. Let us put to good use our knowledge of God and being soaked in His Word by sharing it not limiting to our own but to reach out to others as well. Our learning of Servanthood, Humility and Obedience must go hand in hand to proclaim the greatness and goodness of God working in us. Let us love and serve each other extending to our Parishes not for duty, not for self gratification or appreciation but purely for the love of God.

This brings us back to the theme of the Gospel which “is *Fruitful Servanthood* in God’s vineyard is living out our formation in Christian discipleship.” For BLD to be truly fruitful, we the members, must be faithful in our service in and out of community. This was best exemplified in the just recently concluded Inter District Conference. The gathering of the leadership of the different districts in the Newark cluster and the theme of the weekend, the talks and the team workshops were all focused towards the fruitfulness of servanthood. To mention some of the questions - How actively have I advocated the causes of life, family and poverty alleviation in and out of BLD? How can my apostolate/ministry work serve my parish, diocese or the wider church?

Have we been a fruitful servant? Let us pause and ask ourselves. Have you done what the Lord has asked us to do in Matthew 25:35-36 “*for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.*”

Directions:

1. In whatever we do, think of what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and gracious.
2. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving make your requests known to God.
3. Strive for excellence in worship, work, word, warfare, & witness.

The first sharing in the IDC conference (Sept.20-21) here in St. Mary’s was “Stewardship and Servanthood in the Context of Community.” During the global IDC conference in the Philippines in February, Archbishop Lagdameo gave a preliminary teaching on stewardship and servanthood. He reminded us that authority and servanthood are intricately intertwined. In the gospels, Jesus is presented both as a suffering servant and an authoritative one. Jesus claimed to have all authority in heaven and earth (Mt 28, 18). This claim of authority was exercised by acts of power. Healings, exorcism, and miracles are manifestations not only of his power, but of servanthood. Even though the sacramental authority of forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation is given only to the ordained Priesthood, everyone in the Church shares in this ministry of servanthood and stewardship. The object of Jesus’ ministry are the people in the lowest level of the society. The handicapped, the isolated, children, lepers, discriminated, the unclean, the rejected, these were the objects of Jesus’ ministry. This ministry of Jesus is reflected today in the Church’s “preferential option for the poor”. This emphasis was discussed during the weekend as one of the nine themes manifested in the social encyclicals of the Church.

The notion of stewardship is intrinsically connected with authority and servanthood. God has given us all gifts that are not only for personal development, but for the common good of all. God has a triple title over us by his creation, redemption, and sanctification. These gifts, given to us by a merciful Lord, must be received gratefully and applied in a way that recognizes the ownership of God. The whole Church of Jesus is called to stewardship. We use the term, stewardship, as applied to our own DCS, but the challenge also includes all the baptized. If we are all called to this ministry we are also called to great holiness, as the source of our power. We must be reminded of the absolute necessity of personal daily prayer. If we are not praying every day, we are drawing from the “flesh”. Our ministry flows as an extension of the ministry of Jesus. We make the invisible visible. The challenge of service within the community must now turn more outward, looking toward the wider diocesan Church. We must believe that the grace of the Spirit takes us beyond our competency. Know your gifts. Perfect them, and let the leadership both in and out of community recognize those gifts and challenge you to use them for wider community service. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, and depend upon him to take beyond our limitations we will never fear to move into the deep and see a great harvest for the Lord.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Hamilton Plaza

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the month. Volunteers are needed

Nong & Tricia Bustos – 732-591-1340

nongb601@aol.com, teres202@aol.com

NJ Catholic Charismatic Conference 2008

June 13–15, Union Catholic High School

1600 Martine Avenue Scotch Plains, NJ

Angel & Aida Calilap 973-284-1853, aacalilap@gmail.com

Frank & Malou Venadas 973-562-0055,

fvenadas@hotmail.com

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion w/ Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Sat. of the month starts at 8:30am except Dec.

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max.). Send to

word@bldnewark.com.

TEACHINGS

Oct 17 After Worship

Intro to Intercession Basic LSS 31

Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit Singles

Teaching Youth, John 6, Mark 10

Oct 18 St. Mary's 1-6 pm

Apologetics LSS 24 & 25

Prayer Leadership/ LSS 26 & 27

Understanding Corporate

Worship

Christian Maturity Program I LSS 28 & 29

*Make the Covenant News
a part of your covenant life.*

Week Ending Sept. 26 , 2008

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Tithes, Love Offering, \$3,628
Mission & Fast for the Poor

Thank you for your continued generosity.

PLEDGE OF LOVE \$6,101

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Oct 04-05 LSS #31 Proper

St. Mary's Church, Rahway, NJ

Nov 01-02 Prayer Counseling Seminar II

Ramada Limited, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contacts: Pastoral Ministry, Romy/Leni Chan,

Jun/Fely Escobar, Ed/Nanie Reyes, Boy/Des

Parker, Ver/Baby Nacion, Tino/Aida Garcia

Nov 21-23 John 6 Crossing #9

Ramada Limited, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contact: Boyet/Zita Cruz 908-378-5182

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Oct 11 - Annual BLD Newark Golf Outing

Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem, PA

Contact: ME 24 Family

Carlito/Arlene Claricia 908-902-9829

Ed/Grace Badiola 908-313-5522

Oct 19 - BLD 16th Annivesary Dinner Dance

St. Demetrius Ukrainian Community Center, Carteret, NJ

4-10 pm: Black and White Attire

Contact: ME 23 Family

Mon/Dulce Samonte 732-574-1552

Oct 31 - 2009 Magnificat Subscription

Payment Deadline

Give individual payments to your

Ministry Coordinator/Class Shepherd

Give one check to Liturgical Minsitry for your Ministry/Class

Share Your Talent!

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting

Information Techonology Volunteers

Network Specialists & Database Developers

Contact: Casey Tanseco (caseytanseco@hotmail.com)

or call 732-388-0088

May the blessing and favor of the Lord
be upon those who are celebrating their birthdays
and wedding anniversaries this week.

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times,
visit www.masstimes.org.

Covenant News is also available on
our website at www.bldnewark.com



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 40

Bulletin Edition

October 10, 2008

God's Mighty Power Manifested

Last LSS #31 weekend, we witnessed the bountiful harvest in God's vineyard. Our Lord Almighty has manifested His Mighty Power so we may understand that He is always with us when we work in His vineyard. He gave us an experience that will embolden our faith no matter what level of spirituality we are in. He called us to serve His army who would proclaim His Kingdom, declare His Word and reveal His glory. The Lord is victorious and reigns forever.

The Lord's harvest numbers 100, composed of graduates from Allentown (DIP), Rockland (DIP), Newark's ME, SPE, SE and others. The graduates are blessed to listen to the wisdom, knowledge and experiences of presenters and sharers led by Fr. Paul Lehman and Fr. Pete Literal; God's Love was shared by Eric/Claire Macalintal, New Life by Tess Montemayor, Healing and Reconciliation by Lito and Gigi Vibar, Exhortation by Nestor and Becbec Laxina, Growth by Boyie and Stella Huelgas and Transformation by Eve Alcruz.

The graduates were commissioned to be disciples and became part of God's Army. With this commissioning, we can surmise that the Life in the Spirit Seminar #31, is truly an instrument of God, unifying all of His workers to labor in humility, to be obedient to His Truth, to love each other unconditionally and to yield to Him always and forever. As faithful servants, we must know Him, love Him and serve Him to the best of our abilities for it is in offering our best that we can relate to His Perfection. TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches & Mass times, go to www.masstimes.org

God's Promise for the Week

"Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come." (Ps 23:6)

COUNSELS Called... And Sent

WORD: Is 25:6-10a; Ps 23:1-6; Phil 4:12-14, 19-20; Mt 22:1-14

ORDERS: *"Go out... and invite to the feast whomever you find." (Mt 22:9)*

THEME: Fruitful servanthood in God's vineyard is responding to His invitation to evangelize.

REFLECTION: Twice in our Gospel reading, the King sends servants to bring His invitation to the Feast. The invitation is urgent: *"Everything is ready... I have prepared my banquet."*

Why does this magnanimous call often receive such cold and negative reception, now as then? The calves and fattened cattle are killed. *"Come to the feast."* (Mt 22:4) It is a feast of juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines. There is a promise of rejoicing and gladness in the presence of the Lord of hosts. (Is 25:6-9) But the excitement is not shared: rather, the servants who are sent to call the invited guests meet refusal and indifference, mistreatment and violence.

This parable of Jesus is all about the Kingdom of God. It's about the call for us to set our eyes on it, for it is our true home and final destination. We who are Christ's disciples in the BLD community have in a true sense been called, responded with one degree of enthusiasm or another, and have *entered* the Kingdom which is already present here and now. But the Kingdom is said to have a second aspect. It will be *possessed* only by those present members who can stand the scrutiny of the final judgment.

Why are many so cold or even hostile to the Lord's invitation, and found to be *not worthy to come*? Why are many, having made it to the feast, seen *not dressed in a wedding garment* and cast out, back again *into the darkness outside*? (Mt 22:12-13) The parable easily brings to mind the sacred Eucharistic Feast that we regularly partake of, and the need for propriety in conduct and appearance in church. Yet, we can see how the banquet can also take other forms, for instance, in community life especially when we

(continued on page 3, col 2)

One With The Lord

"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (Jn 17:20-21)

This passage represents the central concern of the event of Jesus. That central concern is unity: oneness with Christ, oneness with others. Jesus' last prayer is that those who celebrate His love come to share it fully in the presence of God here and now and to be lived out in real relationships and real community. Jesus wants His life to be seen as an offer of relationship, characterized by love, a hand stretched out from God. As Jesus prayed, He was teaching the disciples and us about the importance of Christian unity, a unity that will help the world know God's salvation and love.

How can we, as a community, show the world how much God loves us by virtue of the oneness He gives us; the depth of our relationship with Him and each other? We need to love each other unconditionally, seek each other's good, and always see God in each other! We have to bear in mind that the Son dwells in us, and the Father dwells in the Son, which means both the Father and the Son dwell in us. Although we will be disappointed in each other, both because of other's sin and our own sinful expectations, God, nevertheless, dwells in each. Therefore, we can see something of God in each person, no matter how difficult he or she may be. With God's grace, it will not be "who's who" that matters, but "Christ in me and Christ in you". If we are "one in Christ", we can deal with each other on a new level. That implies respect, listening, honesty, trust, real equality. Our oneness as followers of Christ will transform us into the "other-centered" people who foster irresistible oneness. Such "other-centeredness" is what Jesus desires for us.

Indeed, God's glory is present in us for the purpose of oneness. Without His glory, indisputably, our community will fail to hold together. Without His glory, our love for each other will easily degenerate into hate and apathy whenever there is disagreement or misunderstanding. It is oneness in sharing God's life as love that we can stand and tolerate great diversity in our community, and it is through this oneness that we can fulfill our purpose of witnessing to the world God's unfathomable love!

Let us pray that the Lord grant us the grace to bear with one another and forgive one another. If we have a grievance against another, may we forgive them, as the Lord has forgiven us. May His Peace control our hearts, and may our community be a true witness to His everlasting love. This we ask in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Sent Out Into The World: **The Holy Spirit, The Principal Agent Of Mission (Part 2)**

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8)

First, the Apostle is aware that his mission has been entrusted to him by Jesus Himself. Each of you has been summoned: *"Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits."*

Second, the Apostle is called to trust in God without preconditions, and especially without placing his trust in structures or methods. This is what Jesus tells us: *"Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick."* Of course, good methods and structures can be helpful. What Jesus tells us is that we should not place our confidence primarily in them, but in the person of Jesus Christ.


Third, hardships and even persecution come with "the territory" of being an Apostle: *"Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of people, for they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues, and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake as a witness before them and the pagans."*

We live in a world that sees suffering as a curse to be avoided at any price. But remember Jesus' warning that hardships, rejection and persecution by the world can't be avoided. These sufferings are precisely God's sign that his followers are doing the right thing. You and I should feel encouraged, not defeated, by the trials that inevitably come our way.

Fourth, in this passage from Matthew, Jesus says that He will not fail in being with us to protect us: *"When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say . . . do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul . . . Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

Never lose your focus on this truth: Jesus is always there for you. After 38 years of ministry as a priest, I can assure you that Jesus never fails; He never fails.

Fifth: Jesus calls us to be very vocal, brave and explicit when we announce the Gospel; He also reminds us that we can't betray or hide the Gospel's radical demands: *"What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops . . . Whoever*

(continued on page 4, col 1) 

Discernment: Definition & Method

(This is the second of five articles on discernment. Last week, we learned how being “Bukas-Loob sa Diyos” allows us to respond to the gracious movements of the indwelling Holy Spirit in us. This article defines discernment and begins explanation of various discernment methods.)

Discernment comes from the Latin word “*discernere*”, which means to sift, as grain from chaff. It has a close correlation to “*discere*” or disciple, which means to learn, to follow. This etymology suggests a similar correlation between discipleship and discernment. Jesus said, the true disciple is “*the one who does the will of my Father in heaven*” (Mt 7:21). Christ’s disciple seeks the Holy Spirit’s help to find and do God’s will in his life.

Discernment is unnecessary when choosing between good and evil. God commanded that we are to choose good, not evil. Discernment is necessary when we are confronted with decision choices which are all good, and what God wants is unclear to us. God has endowed us with faculties essential for discernment: our natural gifts of mind, feeling and will, and the supernatural gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit who “*scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God*” (1 Cor 2:10).

God planted us in a community where the praxis of discernment is encouraged through formation in prayer, scripture and ministry service. Our formation includes teachings in Christian discernment, discernment of spirits and Ignatian discernment, which we have applied in individual and group decision-making. Beginning with *Appraising the Word*, this series of articles will explain the various discernment methods we have used over time.

Appraising the Word

Clarifying stage -The member initiating discernment formulates the question for decision. The question is framed either as open-ended, multiple option, distinctive alternatives, or go/no go. The member clarifies the relevant issues by answering the questions why, what, who, when, where, how, so what. If sufficiently detached, he conducts a pros & cons analysis.

Awaiting stage – The member then selects 2-3 spiritually mature disciples as co-discerners and provides them the clarifying information, pros/cons analysis and mass readings, usually for the date when decision must be made. Discernment is done separately. The co-discerners pray for spiritual freedom, for God’s glory in the outcome. They pray, fast, and immerse their minds and hearts in the mass readings. They lift up the pros/cons analysis for illumination by the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit guides them to specific words and phrases in the readings which point to God’s response, they write them down. Over several days or weeks, they “brew” on these words and phrases until confirmation is received.

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

gather in our Friday worship and Word sharing circles. It is the disposition of our hearts that we need to examine if we measure up to what would please our benevolent Host. Are we clad in the Love and Unity that are the hallmarks of a Christian community? Do we build up and wish only the good for each other, or do resentments, grudges, pettiness and sniping mark our speech and behavior toward our brethren, including our servant leaders?

This week, our theme directs us to examine the parable from yet another viewpoint: to *evangelize*, and share the good news of the Kingdom with others. Consider the servants sent by the King to carry out His invitation. Twice, they went out to bring the good news of the marvelous feast and were rejected; worse, some were seized, mistreated and killed. A third time they were sent, to extend the privilege to a new group. This affirms the need for a servant’s *commitment*, which is the community value that our leadership stresses for this week. Christ’s disciple should expect but not be fazed by the difficulties and contradictions that he will meet in obeying the Lord, in bringing the good news of salvation and God’s Kingdom here on earth.

No difficulty should deter us, for *the hand of the Lord will rest on our community*. (Is 25:10a) *The Lord our Shepherd guides us in right paths for His Name’s sake*. (Ps 23:3b) *God will supply whatever we need, in accord with His glorious riches in Christ Jesus*. (Phil 4:19)

Finally, let us take note of 3 little words in Christ’s parable that are a directive to the BLD disciple in our on-going task of evangelization. As those who were invited were found unworthy, the King said to His servants, “*Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.*” (Mt 22:9)

DIRECTIONS

- Be bold in inviting “whomever” the Lord sends your way to our Encounters and Seminars, not confining the call to relatives and friends.
- Always witness to the victories of the Lord in your life, whether big or small.
- Do all things in Christ who strengthens you.

Confirmation stage - Confirmation could come as a clear conviction of the heart, consistency between pros/cons analysis and Word appraisal, an abiding feeling of peace, a confirming outward sign, etc. The co-discerners then submit the discernment outcome, including scripture basis and confirming signs, to the member. Agreement in outcome is taken as further confirmation. Disagreement results in repeat of the process, until unanimity is reached.

(Next topics: Discernment Methods- LWG, Ignatian Discernment, Waiting on the Lord)

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- Oct 25 Soup Kitchen**
Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St. Newark, NJ 07103
Youth Ministry will serve.
Contact: Oliver & Flo Santos (201) 653-9268
- Oct 31, Nov 1 - 2 Singles Encounter # 21**
Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY
Contacts: Glenn Canlas *Invaszian21@yahoo.com*
Earl & Flo Manguiat - *Ffudalan@gmail.com*
- Nov 1 - 2 Prayer Counseling Seminar II**
Ramada Limited, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080
Contacts: Pastoral Ministry, Romy/Leni Chan,
Jun/Fely Escobar, Ed/Nanie Reyes,
Boy/Des Parker, Ver/Baby Nacion, Tino/Aida Garcia
- Nov 14-16 Marriage Encounter # 32**
Mary Immaculate Center, Northampton, PA
Contacts: Emil & Baby Canlas (551) 265-0720
Gary & Mil Camacho (732) 642-1889
- Nov 21-23 John 6 Crossing #9 Retreat**
Open to ages 12-14 years old
Ramada Limited, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080
Contacts: Boyet/Zita Cruz – 908-378-5182
Email: *boyetzita_cruz@yahoo.com*

**Applications for encounters/retreats are available at
www.bldnewark.com*

TEACHINGS

- Oct 17** Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Singles)
Friday Mark 10, John 6, Youth Ministry teachings
- Oct 18** Apologetics - LSS 26, LSS 27
Saturday Prayer Leadership/Understanding Corporate
Worship - LSS 28
- Christian Maturity Program I - LSS 29, LSS 30
- Oct 31** Introduction to Intercession - LSS 31
Friday
- Note: Friday teachings – after worship
Saturday teachings 1-6pm at St. Mary's*

The Holy Spirit (cont. from page 2)

loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Chapter 10 of the Gospel of Mathew, is a great start for a good examination of conscience. It also shows us that the worst enemy of the Apostle is fear. Pope John Paul II's amazing ministry — after more than 25 years of papal leadership...can be summarized in the words with which he opened his pontificate and which became his unofficial motto: Be not afraid.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month - Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home
Passaic, NJ - Volunteers are needed.
Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340
nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00 pm
Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration
- Every 1st Monday of the month at 8:00pm
2000 Hail Marys Devotion with Eucharistic Celebration
- Every last Saturday of the month, starts at 8:30pm
except December. Prayer starts @ 8:30 AM
Venue: Resurrection Parish – St Bridget Church,
372 Montgomery St, Jersey City, NJ 07302

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max).
Send to *word@bldnewark.com*

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Bethlehem Golf Club, Bethlehem, PA
Contact: ME 24 Family
Carlito/Arlene Claricia 908-902-9829
Ed/Grace Badiola 908-313-5522

October 19 - BLD 16th Anniversary Dinner Dance
St. Demetrius Ukrainian Community Center, Carteret, NJ
4 - 10 PM; Black and White Attire
Contact: ME 23 Family
Mon /Dulce Samonte 732-574-1552

October 31 – Deadline for 2009 Magnificat Subscription Payment
Give your individual payments to your
Ministry Coordinator/Class Shepherd
Only One Check should be given to Liturgical Ministry
for your Ministry/Class

Share Your Talent!

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting
Information Technology Volunteers
Network Specialists & Database Developers
Contact: Casey Tanseco (*caseytanseco@hotmail.com*)
Or call 732-388-0088

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending Oct. 3, 2008

**Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for Poor**

\$2,925.00

Pledge of Love

\$6,876.00



NEWS

2008 BLD GOLF OUTING

“And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to the promise.” (Gal 3:29)

The Lord has shown us once again His love and faithfulness to all who persevere in His name. This year, our community fundraising drives were announced and subsequently started late. This has posed some challenges for the Fundraising team members, most specially the Golf Outing Fundraiser, since booking of golf courses are usually done one year ahead. Additionally the autumn chill usually begins in early October and creates the risk of very low attendance due to the weather.

But the Lord had other plans for our community, and October 11, 2008 proved to be a glorious, sunny day! There were 56 golfers who showed up, out of the committed 70. In a wonderful show of support and brotherly love, some members of the Mission Ministry came in as dinner patrons. Our Mission stewards, Mon & Bingle Chan were also there to cheer us on. What we lacked in golfer revenue, we made up in unsolicited sponsorships. Up to the time of this write-up, checks are still coming in, and it fills our heart to see how great and magnificent our God works!

Great and wonderful are Your works O God, and highly to be praised! We thank you for blessing Your BLD community with ardent workers, and providing them with all the grace they need to serve You. We thank You for all Your gifts, spiritual and material. Continue to abide in us, dear Master. Guide us, enthuse us, refresh us, as we work in Your vineyard. May all the glory be Yours, Lord now and forever!

**MAKE COVENANT NEWS
A PART OF YOUR
COVENANT LIFE.**



COUNSELS

God Calls Us to Fruitful Servanthood in His Vineyard

WORD: Is 45:1,4-6; Ps 96:1,3-5,7-10; Thes 1:1-5b; Mt 22:15-21

ORDER: *“Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:9)*

THEME: Fruitful servanthood in God’s vineyard is giving what is due to His Name. [*Tithing*]

REFLECTION: (Taken from ECSLWSC Reflection Guide)

It is wrong to think that in today’s gospel, Jesus is referring to a two-fold allegiance, one to the civil authorities and one to God. All authority comes from God, including that which is wielded by the State, for God has full claim on all men. If the government, that has been properly set up wields authority over its citizens, it does so in God’s name. If citizens obey the just laws of the State, they are giving homage to God and offering Him a true sign of worship. If they pay just taxes, they are likewise giving honor and glory to God. If they evade just and reasonable taxes imposed by the government, they are also offending God. Jesus clearly states that we should pay whatever is due to whoever is in authority.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells us to give to God what belongs to Him. Do not God’s claims upon us take precedence over all? Indeed, they do. We belong entirely to God. He is our Creator, Savior and Redeemer, our Lord and Master. We are indebted to Him for everything - our very existence, our health, our abilities, our senses, our mind and heart with which we think and love. It is He who nurtures us from our earliest years through loving parents and dedicated mentors; He who blesses us with talents and capabilities so that we could be of use in this world to

Continued on page 4

Promise of the Week

“I have called you by name, giving you a title....” (Is 45:4b)

Lambs among Wolves

“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves.” (Lk 10:2-3)

Difficult times are imminent and there is no immediate relief or resolution in the near future. Due to the irresponsibility of a relative few who decided to follow mammon, we are faced with high gasoline and food costs, dire straits in the financial and housing industries, and world economy turmoil. Thousands of years later, this passage from Luke 11:29b ***“This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given.”*** is an understatement. These relatively few are guided by the wrong spirit.

I’m certain that it is not just us feeling the pinch! While discussing these issues with my spouse, we agreed that at the very least, we have the Lord to lift these burdens to, to minimize if not alleviate our apprehension and anxiety. What about the many innocent but faithless victims and the non-believers that are affected? Who do they turn to? Many may interpret these as unfortunate situations but to our all-knowing Lord these are favorable circumstances, an opportune time to harvest lost souls. ***“Those who follow you, Lord, will have the light of life.”*** (Jn 8:12)

The 28th week of ordinary time readings’ theme is an invitation from God to evangelize. The readings are appropriate for the current state of affairs: hopelessness and helplessness. God is ordering and directing us to invite everyone to share His love, faithfulness, mercies and compassion with those who have not witnessed what we have witnessed. For many of us, our Lord has already provided us with the knowledge and understanding. He has equipped us with the gifts through our baptism in the Spirit and has strengthened those gifts through our community formation teachings. God would like us to proudly declare His victories in our lives and to be advocates of the fruits of the Spirit to help abolish the works of the flesh. God is asking us to encourage others to be lead and guided by the Holy Spirit in all their decisions and actions. To instruct others to faithfully follow His will and commands so that they may slowly but steadfastly become more and more like the Jesus day after day, just like they way He is molding us to be like Him. ***“Blessed the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor walks in the way of sinners, nor sits in the company of the insolent. But delights in the law of the LORD and meditates on His law day and night.”*** Ps (1:1-2)

Can you imagine a world where all the inhabitants are all Christ-like? Heaven on earth!

PRAYERS FOR THE COMING ELECTIONS:

LORD JESUS, WE ASK YOU AT THIS CRUCIAL TIME TO SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OUR AID DESPITE OUR UNWORTHINESS.
ENLIGHTEN THOSE WHO WILL VOTE AND FOR THEIR
DECISION TO CONFORM ACCORDING TO YOUR WILL.
GRANT THIS COUNTRY THE WISDOM TO PROCLAIM THAT
GOD’S LAW IS THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH THIS NATION
WAS FOUNDED, AND THAT GOD IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF
OUR CHERISH RIGHTS TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF
HAPPINESS. AMEN!

Living Word Group

(This is the third of five articles on discernment. In the first two articles, we learned how being “Bukas-Loob sa Diyos” allows us to respond to the gracious movements of the indwelling Holy Spirit in us. We also learned what discernment and Appraising the Word are. This week we will discuss the Living Word Group.)

The Living Word Group (LWG) is primarily used for group discernment of God’s will. Ministry circles gather for LWG monthly to discern the Lord’s directions for their ministries. The DCS meet for LWG weekly to discern the Lord’s directions for the community. For effective LWG, circle members should be active discerners in their personal life.

“And He by His living Word quickens all men, and gives Him to be food and life to the saints...” St. Athanasius

Preparation: Since LWG involves Scripture meditation, spiritual preparation is necessary. Our first prayer is to become “Bukas-Loob sa Diyos”: spiritually free from attachments and open to grace. We ask God to enrich the soil of our hearts, that we may hear and understand His Word (Mt 13:23).

Sunday Mass readings are used for discernment. We prayerfully read the readings several times, pausing frequently to review them in our mind and to sink them into our heart. We frame the discernment question as clearly as possible. We use the mind of Christ to analyze the situation for resolution, identify the root cause, and list alternative solutions with their advantages & disadvantages.

Given the limited time allotted to our Friday night LWG, spiritual preparation should be undertaken 2-3 days before.

Presence: Our next prayer is for God’s presence. We aid our plea by creating a condition conducive to meditation: a quiet place, a relaxed body position, eyes and ears closed to external movements and noises, minds relieved from all the worldly concerns, attention focused only on Jesus. We ask God to breathe the Holy Spirit into us (Gen 2:7).

Praise and worship is integral to the LWG. Our Friday night worship and LWG form a continuum. The fruit of worship is the grace of communion with His Spirit, which we should reverently nurture as we move into our LWG.

Prayer of meditation: We petition the Lord to reveal His will in Scripture. We re-read the Mass readings prayerfully, following the movement of the Holy Spirit as He directs us to specific passages. We meditate on these passages and how they illumine God’s response to the question for discernment. During LWG, we share our intellectual and spiritual appreciation of the Spirit’s guidance. We pay attention to the areas where individual inputs come together as indications of God’s will.

From these, we identify the Order- a command taken literally or paraphrased from the Scripture readings. The Order is then applied to the situation for resolution to derive the Directions. Directions are specific actions (or alternative solution) intended to eliminate the problem’s root. Directions are selected based on their conformity to God’s will, consistency with God’s word, conviction of the heart it elicited, and confirming signs. The Promise is chosen from the readings, providing Word assurance that God is pleased with those who do His will.

APOLOGETICS: NEW AGE LIES

Definition

The "New Age" Movement (NAM), sometimes also referred to as the "Human Potential Movement", is a loosely connected network of people, groups, activities and practices which, according to its adherents, purportedly foster and produce a vast array of beneficial results such as "spiritual" and personal growth, financial success, improvement in relationships, physical and psychological healing, individual and global peace, stabilization of the environment, etc.

Background

The NAM was born in the U.S. during the rebellious 1960's when all traditional institutions and values, especially in relation to the Church and the family were under attack. The forerunner and vanguard of the New Age was the "Peace Movement" of the 1960's which condemned traditional morality. The NAM also drew from Radical Environmentalism, Radical Feminism and Feminist spirituality of the 1970's while it gained popularity around the world. Today the NAM has been able to successfully infiltrate almost every major institution, both religious and secular.

Appearance of Good/Reality of Evil

The NAM, on the surface, appears to be a good thing. It promises global peace, health, personal and spiritual growth, and environmental stability. However, the methods it promotes to achieve these goals are cleverly hidden beneath this benevolent surface appearance. A closer scrutiny reveals a dark, sinister methodology for drawing people away from the Jesus Christ and towards individualism, and the religious practices of pagans, belief in reincarnation, and the power of the "Self".

Nevertheless, the NAM, on the surface, does not deny the existence of Jesus Christ - to do so would scare off most Christians in an instant. Instead, clever syntax is applied, while traditional aspects of our faith are redefined. Jesus Christ becomes less than what He is, God, and instead is relegated to becoming one of a number of "Spiritual Guides" or "Ascended Masters" who were mere humans who "evolved" into higher beings after discovering and using "ancient wisdom." Indeed, the NAM promises that any individual can attain this status through "Self Realization" or "Higher Consciousness" of the fact of one's own "Higher Self", "God-Self", or "Divinity". Essentially, each individual can become God.

Forbidden Fruit

The NAM is riddled with occult and other forbidden practices which make up the "ancient wisdom", including mediumship, channeling, divination, astrology, consulting spirits of the dead, tarot cards, crystals, palm reading, ouija boards, psychic powers, Yoga, transcendental meditation, rose poetry, past-life regression, etc. God spoke to Moses about such practices:

"Let there not be found among you anyone who immolates his son or daughter in the fire, nor fortune teller, soothsayer, charmer, diviner, or caster of spells, nor one who consults ghosts and spirits or seeks oracles from the dead. Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord" (Deut 18:10-12)

"Do not turn aside to idols, nor make molten gods for yourselves. I, the Lord, am your God." (Lev 19:4)

"The Spirit says clearly that some men will abandon their faith in later times. They will obey lying spirits and follow the teaching of demons." (1 Timothy 4:1)

Despite the clear implications of such practices, an increasing number of people are abandoning their true faith to follow some or many aspects of the NAM. People today are replacing God with evil spirits and pagan gods, just as the ancient Israelites and Egyptians did during the time of Moses. The seductions are subtle, but at its core is Satan himself. He is promising, just as he did in the Garden of Eden, that the forbidden fruit will make us gods.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORD:

Share your walk/fait/h/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.).

Email to word@BLDNewark.com

MISSION:

Nursing home visit - Volunteers needed

Every 2nd Saturday of the month.

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home, Passaic, NJ 07055

Please contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos

(732)591-1340 / nongb601@aol.com;

teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion and Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month, starts at 8:30am
except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

TEACHING MINISTRY

OCT 17 – Friday

Introduction to Intercession – LSS31

Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit – Singles

Mark 10/ John 6/ Youth Ministry teachings

OCT 18 - Saturday

Apologetics – LSS26, LSS27

Prayer Leadership/Understanding Corporate Worship – LSS28

Christian Maturity Program I – LSS29, LSS30

NOTE:

Friday Teachings – after worship

Saturday Teachings – 1-6pm at St. Mary's

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

**Weekly Collection Reports for the Week Ending
October 10, 2008**

**Tithes, Love Offering, Mission & Fast for Poor
\$ 3,404.00**

Thank you for your continued generosity.

PLEDGE OF LOVE

Week Ending October 10, 2008

\$ 7,176.00

Counsels *from page 1*

our family and fellowmen. To whom else can we possibly belong, if not to God, creator of all things!

Yet, the good Lord expects voluntary response and willing service from us in return. If the image on the coin in today's gospel was that of the Roman Caesar, then let the coin be returned in tribute to him. But the image of God himself, holy and triune, is imprinted upon each and every one of us, his children. For man "was made to the image and likeness of God." Therefore, we ought to recognize that we belong wholly to God, and give Him the praise, thanksgiving and worship that is his due. We do this with a sincere disposition to please him and to do His will in all things, despite our human weaknesses and shortcomings.

In a special way, we render adequate worship to God when we come to the Eucharistic sacrifice and offer ourselves to Him in His own beloved Son. This is the supreme and unique sacrifice of the New Covenant. We can give God no greater honor and pleasure than by uniting with the Lamb of God in this sacrificial act of offering. Our sincerity will also prove itself in our efforts to live as true children of God in the way we deal fairly and honestly with our fellowmen, including our servants and employees, and in letting God shine through in our care for the homeless and helpless, in practicing brotherly correction in our family and in community, and in faithfully paying our tithes and supporting our Community objective of 'breaking the yoke of poverty' and funding the BLD District's Poverty Alleviation Programs.

God honors us in His promise this week, "***I have called you by name, giving you a title...***" (Is 45:4b) Can we not return the favor and, with self-imposed obedience, truly love Him in our neighbor?

As a prayer and reminder to give God all the honor and glory, let us end this reflection by using the prayer we pray at the end of each decade of the Rosary:

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end." And may my life give glory and-honor to my God as I live it daily. In my Lord Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

1. What is my attitude in paying the correct taxes to the government?
2. Have I really started my true and regular tithing to God through the BLD Community, and my parish, and in enabling my family to appreciate more deeply the Catholic-faith that I profess?
3. Do I join/participate and respond to the needs of the least of my brethren in our Community Outreaches/ Missions?

**For Traveling Catholics
Churches & Mass schedules**
<http://www.masstimes.org>

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Oct 25 - Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay Street Newark, NJ (YM will serve)
Contact persons: Oliver & Flo Santos 201-653-9268

Oct 31-Nov 2 - Singles Encounter #21

Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY
Contact: Glenn Canlas- Invazian21@yahoo.com
Earl & Flo Manguiat: Ffudalan@gmail.com

NOV 1-2 - Prayer Counseling Seminar II

Ramada Limited, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080
Contact: Pastoral Ministry - Romy/Leni Chan,
Jun/Fely Escobar, Ed/Nanie Delos Reyes,
Boy/Des Parker, Ver/Baby Nacion, Tino/Aida Garcia

NOV 14-16- Marriage Encounter #32

Mary Immaculate Center, Northampton, PA
Contact: Emil & Baby Canlas (551) 265-0720
Gary & Mil Camacho (732) 642-1889

NOV 21-23 - John 6 Crossing #9

Open to ages 12-14 years.
Ramada Limited, South Plainfield, NJ 07080
Email: boyetzita_cruz@yahoo.com
For application form go to www.bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

October 19 - BLD 16th Anniversary Dinner Dance

St. Demetrius Ukrainian Community Center Carteret, NJ
(4pm to 10pm) - Black and White Attire
Contact: ME 23 Family
Mon/Dulce Samonte (732) 574-1552

October 31 – 2009 Magnificat Subscription Deadline

Give your individual payments to your Ministry
Coordinator/Class Shepherd / Only One Check should
be given to Liturgical Ministry for your Ministry/Class

Share Your Talent!

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting
Information Technology Volunteers
Network Specialists & Database Developers
Contact: Casey Tanseco (caseytanseco@hotmail.com)
Or call (732) 388-0088



Visit our website at
www.bldnewark.com





(This is the fourth of five articles on discernment. This week's topic is Ignatian Discernment, based on Fr. Pascual Adorable's teaching and lessons learned from experience since then. The Reno discernment 13 years ago is used as an example for illustration purposes.)

Ignatian Discernment

Ignatian discernment is based on St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, which has as one of its major goals "to conquer oneself and to regulate one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment." Its underlying principle is attentiveness and responsiveness to God (Bukas-Loob sa Diyos) who is actively drawing us into the fullness of life (Jn 10:10). It is a discernment method to free us from our passions, appetites, desires and other attachments so we may freely choose God's will for us.

Ignatian discernment involves a prayerful reflection over our decision choices, using our God-given faculties of mind, feelings and will. It encompasses discernment of spirits, to distinguish interior movements of the heart which either draw us toward God or push us away from Him. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16). By their fruits, we will know whether the origin of our interior movements is from the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-24), or from the flesh (Gal 5:16-21).

Consolation is an experience of the Spirit's fruit, the fulfillment of Jesus' promised joy (Jn 15:11) and peace (Jn 14:27). St. Ignatius said that consolation is "every interior movement that leaves the soul consoled in the Lord." The highest level of consolation is a deep communion with God, where our heart is "inflamed with the love" for Him and His creatures. The next level is an authentic gift of tears arising from sorrowful compassion or from loving joy in serving God. The foundation level is "every increase in faith, hope and love", virtues that deepen our relationship with God.

Desolation is the opposite of consolation, coming "from the evil spirit and his gifts, such as war against peace, sadness against spiritual joy... wandering of the mind in base things against lifting up the mind." It is marked by the absence of love, faith, hope, and peace in our heart. It is an unsettling experience of negative thoughts and feelings. Even when such negative experience originates from our human weaknesses, the devil exploits the opportunity to dishearten and sway us away from God.

COUNSELS

The Greatest Commandment: Loving God and One Another

WORD: Exodus 22:20-26, Ps 18: 2-4,47,51
Thes 1:5c-10 , Mt 22:34-40

ORDER: You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Mt 22: 37b, 39

THEME: Servanthood in God's vineyard is loving him in our neighbor.

REFLECTION: In the Gospel of St. Matthew, a Pharisee approached Jesus with a question which is the greatest commandment of the law. Jesus' answer was brief but a fully comprehensive summary of everything that God has to say on the matter. *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.* Then He said the 2nd greatest commandment is like the first, *love your neighbor as yourself.*

God's special concern for people and not just for worship of Himself is expressed in the First Reading from the Book of Exodus. Compassion is to be shown in particular to the stranger, the widow, the orphan. *If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me I will surely hear their cry* Ex 22: 22. Further, money lent to the poor should not require interest, a garment taken as a pledge must be given back before sunset if that is all its owner has to cover himself during the cold night. *If he cries out to me, I will hear him for I am compassionate.* Ex 22: 26b.

Undoubtedly many people would have felt little compunction in not doing these things to others provided they themselves were fulfilling their obligations of worshipping God through prayer, fasting and alms giving. Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, affirms that

continuation : page 4

Promise of the Week

*If he cries out to me,
I will hear him for I am compassionate. (Ex 22:26b)*

Listen ... and Obey

Luke 12:47 says *‘that servant who knows his master’s will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely’*.

Listening. Even in our daily life, we have a hard time listening. We do hear what is being said but listening to them is not easy. The dictionary defines listening as ‘to pay attention’. People love to speak instead of being spoken to. We love to tell our stories but find it hard to listen to somebody else’s stories. Kids have been diagnosed with ADD (attention deficit disorder) but looking back, this ‘diagnosis’ can be applied to each one of us. However, what is being taught by the scripture is to know who your Master is and be able to listen to Him regardless. It is this directive that we have to strictly follow and for us to listen, we have to learn how to pray in silence and letting the Lord, our Master do the talking instead of us. Learn how to sit still, be immersed in His words and we will be able to listen to His words.

Discernment – a word constantly heard in teachings or personal reflections. We have been running a series on discernment to help out the members practice it. Discernment is to be able to distinguish from the words that we receive from our Master what is from Him and what is ours. We need not be alone in discerning what the Lord’s message is, but our friends can help us. We pray together and by reading the scriptures discern what is God’s response to our question. If there is confirmation from somebody else what is God’s response and we are peace with it, then we know that it is from the Lord. We have discerned His directive. A true follower of God is one who will ask Him anything, make Him part of our daily lives that we can not act without consulting Him first. The Lord should be our confidante, our friend, our savior and our partner.

Obedience. Growing up in a Catholic family, we all have been trained to obey our parents, obey the law, obey the elders and those who are in the know. In the course of our spiritual growth, we are being taught how to listen and know that it is the word from God and then follow, whether it is in accord with human decision or not. This is the hardest part. We have all seen the cost of disobedience – the punishment from God. However, knowing the mistake, we are given the chance to come back and reform.

Abba Father, I know who is the One and True Master of my life. Teach me your ways. Open my eyes that I can see. Open my ears that can listen to your word. Melt my selfish heart to always follow your will no matter what. I do not want to be ‘beaten severely’. Let my life be a reflection of being one of Your followers. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Possible Discernment Format:

Decision-Making

- **Fast and pray for spiritual freedom** – Place ourselves in God’s presence. Pray for openness, wisdom and understanding to choose what is in accord with God’s will for us in our lives. Be honest about our inordinate attachments which impede the Spirit’s movements in us. Pray for detachment and for transformation of our affections, desires and fears.
- **Clarify the decision to be made** – Ensure that there is common understanding of the problem and the underlying issues/concerns. Formulate the decision question concretely. *Example: Problem – CSL offer to BLD Newark to support start of new BLD community in Reno. Issues: BLD Newark only 2.5 years old with a handful of fast-tracked covenant disciples; Reno almost 3,000 miles away; no experience as admin district and no manuals available; Newark financial resources very limited. Question: Should BLD Newark agree to become administering district for Reno?*
- **Check assumptions/determine criteria** – Explicitly identify the “givens” or the conditions that accompany a decision. *Example: administering district commitment is at least for 3 years until new community is self-sufficient. Newark will shoulder cost of sending outreach shepherds, sharers, teachers and LSS shepherds to Reno monthly to support their development. Follow community policies, guidelines, values.* Determine the decision criteria, which form the basis for the decision. *Example: unanimity (or consensual majority) of Tricord and Board of Coordinators .*
- **Formulate the possible answers** – Examine the various possible solutions, then prioritize these possibilities. Using a table such as the one below is helpful. State each solution clearly followed by its contrary. Do this for each alternative solution in order of priority.

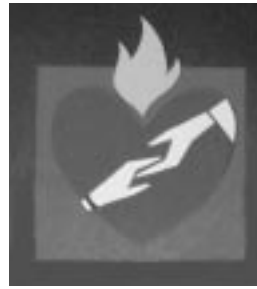
Priority:	Alternative Solutions	
1 – Consider	Positive Statement	Opposite Statement
2 – Consider		
1	We will accept the CSL offer to administer BLD	We will not accept the CSL offer to administer
2 (Alternative solution if CSL offer is declined)	We will propose to jointly administer BLD Reno with BLD Toronto	We will not propose to jointly administer BLD Reno with BLD Toronto

- **Gather the data and pray over them** - Write down all the facts from following perspectives: Spiritual - the effect of the decision on the welfare of one’s soul. Covenantal - the effect on serving the people and on the community’s Vision/Mission. Economic - the effect on one’s financial well-being. Social - the effect on the family, home community and others.

Write down the reasons in favor of positive action (Pros), then present these reasons to the Lord. Meditate on the Gospel, wait on the Lord and see how you feel inside – whether there is consolation or desolation. Next, write down the reasons against the action (Cons), then present these to the Lord. Follow the same procedure to see whether there is consolation or desolation. Use the table below for this exercise.

	We will accept...		We will not accept...	
Area	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Spiritual	Grace of giving	Lacking maturity	Time to mature	Reliance on own strength
Covenantal	Fulfills mission	Sustainability	Focus on home	Inward focus
Economic	Generous members	Funds enough for venue only	Will not tax own resources	Reliance of money for God's work
Social	Evangelizing families	Absence from own families	Evangelize own families first	How about Reno families?

- **Make the decision** - Present both the Pros and Cons and ask the Lord which one He wants us to select. "Weigh" each one carefully. Find out where God wants us to proceed.
 - If a choice emerges, find out again if we are at peace, if our conscience is accepting the decision.
 - At this point, make a projection. Ask ourselves three questions: (1) Having made the decision and if I die at this moment, will I be able to face God in judgment? (2) If I had chosen yes or made the decision and I lived my life as such, can I face God and stand before Him on Judgment day and justify myself as having made the right decision? (3) If a friend comes and seeks our advice on the same question, what will we advise him?
 - If there is unanimity of answers to these projections, then present the decision again to the Lord for confirmation.
- **Seek confirmation** - Lay down the scope or breadth of the work of discernment before the Lord and pray for confirmation. Confirmation is a sense that God's presence is manifested through the discernment process and in the decision itself. The experience of confirmation is shared by the discerning group and by the community. There is a sense of harmony overall, such that even those with reservations give their blessing to the decision. There is fitness with our community's gifts and history. There is satisfaction that the discernment process was soundly followed. Confirmation should be sought in prayer before the decision is implemented. Without confirmation, then re-discernment should be undertaken beginning at some point in the process. With confirmation, we praise and thank the Lord for His wisdom, light and compassion



- Implement the decision - The "end product" of the decision should be spelled out specifically to ensure that community support & engagement is obtained and all the necessary steps are taken to achieve proper implementation of the decision. Some questions to ask: What is to be done? Who is to do it? When must it be done? How? Where? How much?

Definitions:

Unanimity: all members of the discernment group agree to the decision.

Consensus: there is no unanimity but there is a universally - felt agreement in each other's heart that the decision is in harmony with God's will and thus beneficial.

Consensual majority: there is a greater than 50% consensus level within the discernment group (acceptable level is pre-determined when setting decision criteria)

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Volunteers Needed

Every 2nd Saturday of the Month

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion and Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month, starts at 8:30am except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.)
Send to word@bldnewark.com

TEACHING

Oct 24 – Friday

Golden Years Teaching – Golden Years Ministry
Intercessory Formation Teaching – Intercessory Track Class
Service Formation Teaching – Service Track Class
Basic Bible Seminar – Solo Parents

Oct 31 - Friday

Introduction to Intercession – LSS31

NOTE:

Friday Teachings – after worship

Saturday Teachings – 1-6pm at St. Mary's

Counsels from page 1

religious observance is not enough. Jesus identifies himself with those in most need of love and compassion. Love is not love unless it is free and spontaneous. What Jesus proposes are not just commands or rules but as whole approach to life and to our relationship with others. There is only one commandment consisting of two inseparable parts. The key word is *love* but there are really three loves involved: love of God, love of others and love of self. Ultimately, love of God the source of all being and life, comes first. Then comes, as a natural outcome, love for all those in whom God dwells and whom God creates. Because they are the objects of God's love, they must also be the objects of mine. Lastly, there is the love of self, and I also am worthy of being loved.

Saying *I love you God* is one of the easiest things in the world. But it is difficult to speak realistically of loving God if I have no real experience of what love is. But if I give and receive love, I begin to see that God is present in all truly loving experiences. *Whenever there is love, there is God.* My whole life can be lived in a sea of love, given and received. Then the commandment of Jesus begins to be realized. I begin to be aware that when I am being deeply loved by another person, it is in fact God's love that I am experiencing. *Where there is love, there is God.* Most of the time, God shows His love for me through the people that enter my life. He loves me when they love me and I am loving Him when I love them. In the end, there are not three kinds of love but only one.

Finally, we need to say that this love is not necessarily an emotional and romantic love. It is a love, as the First Reading indicates, which involves treating every single person with deep respect, with justice, with compassion. It reaches out even to those who behave badly or wish to harm me. It is a deep down desire that wishes that every person experience what is the very best for them. It is a way of relating to people that helps them also to become more caring and loving – of themselves, of others and of God. As Paul tells the Thessalonians in the Second Reading, *You know what sort of people we were among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord.* This is the core of evangelization. It is gently leading them so that they find the God who loves them and find God in loving those around them.

DIRECTION:

- * **Be compassionate for the needs of the immigrants, orphans, widows and the poor.**
- * **Increase awareness of advocacy for immigrants by studying the social teachings of the church.**
- * **Look past our differences and see the face of Jesus in everyone.**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October 25 - Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St. Newark, NJ 07103

Youth Ministry will serve

Contact: Oliver & Flo Santos (201) 653-9268

Oct. 31, Nov. 1-2 Singles Encounter # 21

Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY

Contact: Glenn Canlas- Invazian21@yahoo.com

Earl & Flo Manguiat: Ffudalan@gmail.com

Nov 1-2 Prayer Counseling Seminar II

Ramada Limited, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contact: Pastoral Ministry

Romy/Leni Chan, Jun/Fely Escobar,

Ed/Nanie Delos Reyes,

Boy/Des Parker, Ver/Baby Nacion, Tino/Aida Garcia

Nov 14-16 Marriage Encounter # 32

Mary Immaculate Center, Northampton, PA

Contact: Emil & Baby Canlas (551) 265-0720

Gary & Mil Camacho (732) 642-1889

Nov 21-23 John 6 Crossing #9 Retreat

Open to ages 12-14 years

Ramada Limited, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contact: Boyet/Zita Cruz – (908) 378-5182

Email: boyetzita_cruz@yahoo.com

*Applications for encounters/retreats are available at

www.bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

October 31 – Deadline for 2009 Magnificat

Subscription Payment

Give your individual payments to your

Ministry Coordinator/Class Shepherd

Only One Check should be given to

Liturgical Ministry for your Ministry/Class

November 7 FIRST FRIDAY MASS

(venue change)

Officiated by: His Excellency, Bishop Paul Bootkoski

St. Francis Cathedral, Metuchen, NJ

*Rosary will be prayed at 8:00 pm

Share Your Talent!

St. Mary's/St. Mark's Parish is soliciting

Information Technology Volunteers

Network Specialists & Database Developers

Contact: Casey Tanseco (caseytanseco@hotmail.com)

Orcall (732) 388-0088

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report

For the Week Ending October 17, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &

Fast for the Poor **\$ 2,886.00**

PLEDGE OF LOVE

Week Ending October 17, 2008

\$ 7,176.00



(This is the fourth of five articles on discernment. This week's topic is Ignatian Discernment, based on Fr. Pascual Adorable's teaching and lessons learned from experience since then. The Reno discernment 13 years ago is used as an example for illustration purposes.)

Ignatian Discernment

Ignatian discernment is based on St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, which has as one of its major goals "to conquer oneself and to regulate one's life in such a way that no decision is made under the influence of any inordinate attachment." Its underlying principle is attentiveness and responsiveness to God (Bukas-Loob sa Diyos) who is actively drawing us into the fullness of life (Jn 10:10). It is a discernment method to free us from our passions, appetites, desires and other attachments so we may freely choose God's will for us.

Ignatian discernment involves a prayerful reflection over our decision choices, using our God-given faculties of mind, feelings and will. It encompasses discernment of spirits, to distinguish interior movements of the heart which either draw us toward God or push us away from Him. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Mt 7:16). By their fruits, we will know whether the origin of our interior movements is from the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-24), or from the flesh (Gal 5:16-21).

Consolation is an experience of the Spirit's fruit, the fulfillment of Jesus' promised joy (Jn 15:11) and peace (Jn 14:27). St. Ignatius said that consolation is "every interior movement that leaves the soul consoled in the Lord." The highest level of consolation is a deep communion with God, where our heart is "inflamed with the love" for Him and His creatures. The next level is an authentic gift of tears arising from sorrowful compassion or from loving joy in serving God. The foundation level is "every increase in faith, hope and love", virtues that deepen our relationship with God.

Desolation is the opposite of consolation, coming "from the evil spirit and his gifts, such as war against peace, sadness against spiritual joy... wandering of the mind in base things against lifting up the mind." It is marked by the absence of love, faith, hope, and peace in our heart. It is an unsettling experience of negative thoughts and feelings. Even when such negative experience originates from our human weaknesses, the devil exploits the opportunity to dishearten and sway us away from God.

COUNSELS

The Greatest Commandment: Loving God and One Another

WORD: Exodus 22:20-26, Ps 18: 2-4,47,51
Thes 1:5c-10 , Mt 22:34-40

ORDER: You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Mt 22: 37b, 39

THEME: Servanthood in God's vineyard is loving him in our neighbor.

REFLECTION: In the Gospel of St. Matthew, a Pharisee approached Jesus with a question which is the greatest commandment of the law. Jesus' answer was brief but a fully comprehensive summary of everything that God has to say on the matter. *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.* Then He said the 2nd greatest commandment is like the first, *love your neighbor as yourself.*

God's special concern for people and not just for worship of Himself is expressed in the First Reading from the Book of Exodus. Compassion is to be shown in particular to the stranger, the widow, the orphan. *If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me I will surely hear their cry* Ex 22: 22. Further, money lent to the poor should not require interest, a garment taken as a pledge must be given back before sunset if that is all its owner has to cover himself during the cold night. *If he cries out to me, I will hear him for I am compassionate.* Ex 22: 26b.

Undoubtedly many people would have felt little compunction in not doing these things to others provided they themselves were fulfilling their obligations of worshipping God through prayer, fasting and alms giving. Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, affirms that

continuation : page 4

Promise of the Week

*If he cries out to me,
I will hear him for I am compassionate. (Ex 22:26b)*

Listen ... and Obey

Luke 12:47 says *'that servant who knows his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely'*.

Listening. Even in our daily life, we have a hard time listening. We do hear what is being said but listening to them is not easy. The dictionary defines listening as 'to pay attention'. People love to speak instead of being spoken to. We love to tell our stories but find it hard to listen to somebody else's stories. Kids have been diagnosed with ADD (attention deficit disorder) but looking back, this 'diagnosis' can be applied to each one of us. However, what is being taught by the scripture is to know who your Master is and be able to listen to Him regardless. It is this directive that we have to strictly follow and for us to listen, we have to learn how to pray in silence and letting the Lord, our Master do the talking instead of us. Learn how to sit still, be immersed in His words and we will be able to listen to His words.

Discernment – a word constantly heard in teachings or personal reflections. We have been running a series on discernment to help out the members practice it. Discernment is to be able to distinguish from the words that we receive from our Master what is from Him and what is ours. We need not be alone in discerning what the Lord's message is, but our friends can help us. We pray together and by reading the scriptures discern what is God's response to our question. If there is confirmation from somebody else what is God's response and we are peace with it, then we know that it is from the Lord. We have discerned His directive. A true follower of God is one who will ask Him anything, make Him part of our daily lives that we can not act without consulting Him first. The Lord should be our confidante, our friend, our savior and our partner.

Obedience. Growing up in a Catholic family, we all have been trained to obey our parents, obey the law, obey the elders and those who are in the know. In the course of our spiritual growth, we are being taught how to listen and know that it is the word from God and then follow, whether it is in accord with human decision or not. This is the hardest part. We have all seen the cost of disobedience – the punishment from God. However, knowing the mistake, we are given the chance to come back and reform.

Abba Father, I know who is the One and True Master of my life. Teach me your ways. Open my eyes that I can see. Open my ears that can listen to your word. Melt my selfish heart to always follow your will no matter what. I do not want to be 'beaten severely'. Let my life be a reflection of being one of Your followers. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Possible Discernment Format:

Decision-Making

- **Fast and pray for spiritual freedom** – Place ourselves in God's presence. Pray for openness, wisdom and understanding to choose what is in accord with God's will for us in our lives. Be honest about our inordinate attachments which impede the Spirit's movements in us. Pray for detachment and for transformation of our affections, desires and fears.
- **Clarify the decision to be made** – Ensure that there is common understanding of the problem and the underlying issues/concerns. Formulate the decision question concretely. *Example: Problem – CSL offer to BLD Newark to support start of new BLD community in Reno. Issues: BLD Newark only 2.5 years old with a handful of fast-tracked covenant disciples; Reno almost 3,000 miles away; no experience as admin district and no manuals available; Newark financial resources very limited. Question: Should BLD Newark agree to become administering district for Reno?*
- **Check assumptions/determine criteria** – Explicitly identify the "givens" or the conditions that accompany a decision. *Example: administering district commitment is at least for 3 years until new community is self-sufficient. Newark will shoulder cost of sending outreach shepherds, sharers, teachers and LSS shepherds to Reno monthly to support their development. Follow community policies, guidelines, values.* Determine the decision criteria, which form the basis for the decision. *Example: unanimity (or consensual majority) of Tricord and Board of Coordinators .*
- **Formulate the possible answers** – Examine the various possible solutions, then prioritize these possibilities. Using a table such as the one below is helpful. State each solution clearly followed by its contrary. Do this for each alternative solution in order of priority.

Priority:	Alternative Solutions	
1 – Consider	Positive Statement	Opposite Statement
2 – Consider		
1	We will accept the CSL offer to administer BLD	We will not accept the CSL offer to administer
2 (Alternative solution if CSL offer is declined)	We will propose to jointly administer BLD Reno with BLD Toronto	We will not propose to jointly administer BLD Reno with BLD Toronto

- **Gather the data and pray over them** - Write down all the facts from following perspectives: Spiritual - the effect of the decision on the welfare of one's soul. Covenantal - the effect on serving the people and on the community's Vision/Mission. Economic - the effect on one's financial well-being. Social - the effect on the family, home community and others.

Write down the reasons in favor of positive action (Pros), then present these reasons to the Lord. Meditate on the Gospel, wait on the Lord and see how you feel inside – whether there is consolation or desolation. Next, write down the reasons against the action (Cons), then present these to the Lord. Follow the same procedure to see whether there is consolation or desolation. Use the table below for this exercise.

	We will accept...		We will not accept...	
Area	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Spiritual	Grace of giving	Lacking maturity	Time to mature	Reliance on own strength
Covenantal	Fulfills mission	Sustainability	Focus on home	Inward focus
Economic	Generous members	Funds enough for venue only	Will not tax own resources	Reliance of money for God's work
Social	Evangelizing families	Absence from own families	Evangelize own families first	How about Reno families?

- **Make the decision** - Present both the Pros and Cons and ask the Lord which one He wants us to select. "Weigh" each one carefully. Find out where God wants us to proceed.
 - If a choice emerges, find out again if we are at peace, if our conscience is accepting the decision.
 - At this point, make a projection. Ask ourselves three questions: (1) Having made the decision and if I die at this moment, will I be able to face God in judgment? (2) If I had chosen yes or made the decision and I lived my life as such, can I face God and stand before Him on Judgment day and justify myself as having made the right decision? (3) If a friend comes and seeks our advice on the same question, what will we advise him?
 - If there is unanimity of answers to these projections, then present the decision again to the Lord for confirmation.
- **Seek confirmation** - Lay down the scope or breadth of the work of discernment before the Lord and pray for confirmation. Confirmation is a sense that God's presence is manifested through the discernment process and in the decision itself. The experience of confirmation is shared by the discerning group and by the community. There is a sense of harmony overall, such that even those with reservations give their blessing to the decision. There is fitness with our community's gifts and history. There is satisfaction that the discernment process was soundly followed. Confirmation should be sought in prayer before the decision is implemented. Without confirmation, then re-discernment should be undertaken beginning at some point in the process. With confirmation, we praise and thank the Lord for His wisdom, light and compassion



- Implement the decision - The "end product" of the decision should be spelled out specifically to ensure that community support & engagement is obtained and all the necessary steps are taken to achieve proper implementation of the decision. Some questions to ask: What is to be done? Who is to do it? When must it be done? How? Where? How much?

Definitions:

Unanimity: all members of the discernment group agree to the decision.

Consensus: there is no unanimity but there is a universally - felt agreement in each other's heart that the decision is in harmony with God's will and thus beneficial.

Consensual majority: there is a greater than 50% consensus level within the discernment group (acceptable level is pre-determined when setting decision criteria)

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Volunteers Needed

Every 2nd Saturday of the Month

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion and Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month, starts at 8:30am except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max.)
Send to word@bldnewark.com

TEACHING

Oct 24 – Friday

Golden Years Teaching – Golden Years Ministry
Intercessory Formation Teaching – Intercessory Track Class
Service Formation Teaching – Service Track Class
Basic Bible Seminar – Solo Parents

Oct 31 - Friday

Introduction to Intercession – LSS31

NOTE:

Friday Teachings – after worship

Saturday Teachings – 1-6pm at St. Mary's

Counsels from page 1

religious observance is not enough. Jesus identifies himself with those in most need of love and compassion. Love is not love unless it is free and spontaneous. What Jesus proposes are not just commands or rules but as whole approach to life and to our relationship with others. There is only one commandment consisting of two inseparable parts. The key word is *love* but there are really three loves involved: love of God, love of others and love of self. Ultimately, love of God the source of all being and life, comes first. Then comes, as a natural outcome, love for all those in whom God dwells and whom God creates. Because they are the objects of God's love, they must also be the objects of mine. Lastly, there is the love of self, and I also am worthy of being loved.

Saying *I love you God* is one of the easiest things in the world. But it is difficult to speak realistically of loving God if I have no real experience of what love is. But if I give and receive love, I begin to see that God is present in all truly loving experiences. *Whenever there is love, there is God.* My whole life can be lived in a sea of love, given and received. Then the commandment of Jesus begins to be realized. I begin to be aware that when I am being deeply loved by another person, it is in fact God's love that I am experiencing. *Where there is love, there is God.* Most of the time, God shows His love for me through the people that enter my life. He loves me when they love me and I am loving Him when I love them. In the end, there are not three kinds of love but only one.

Finally, we need to say that this love is not necessarily an emotional and romantic love. It is a love, as the First Reading indicates, which involves treating every single person with deep respect, with justice, with compassion. It reaches out even to those who behave badly or wish to harm me. It is a deep down desire that wishes that every person experience what is the very best for them. It is a way of relating to people that helps them also to become more caring and loving – of themselves, of others and of God. As Paul tells the Thessalonians in the Second Reading, *You know what sort of people we were among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord.* This is the core of evangelization. It is gently leading them so that they find the God who loves them and find God in loving those around them.

DIRECTION:

- * **Be compassionate for the needs of the immigrants, orphans, widows and the poor.**
- * **Increase awareness of advocacy for immigrants by studying the social teachings of the church.**
- * **Look past our differences and see the face of Jesus in everyone.**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October 25 - Soup Kitchen

Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St. Newark, NJ 07103

Youth Ministry will serve

Contact: Oliver & Flo Santos (201) 653-9268

Oct. 31, Nov. 1-2 Singles Encounter # 21

Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY

Contact: Glenn Canlas- Invazian21@yahoo.com

Earl & Flo Manguiat: Ffudalan@gmail.com

Nov 1-2 Prayer Counseling Seminar II

Ramada Limited, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contact: Pastoral Ministry

Romy/Leni Chan, Jun/Fely Escobar,

Ed/Nanie Delos Reyes,

Boy/Des Parker, Ver/Baby Nacion, Tino/Aida Garcia

Nov 14-16 Marriage Encounter # 32

Mary Immaculate Center, Northampton, PA

Contact: Emil & Baby Canlas (551) 265-0720

Gary & Mil Camacho (732) 642-1889

Nov 21-23 John 6 Crossing #9 Retreat

Open to ages 12-14 years

Ramada Limited, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contact: Boyet/Zita Cruz – (908) 378-5182

Email: boyetzita_cruz@yahoo.com

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Singles Encounter # 21

“So then, my beloved, obedient as you have always been, not only when I am present but all the more now when I am absent, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work.” (Phil.2:12-13)

The Singles ministry is once again blessed with the latest addition of 22 new members who attended the Singles Encounter # 21 this past weekend at the Friars of the Atonement Spiritual Center, Garrison, New York. While this retreat happened to fall during Halloween, over 30 members from the sponsoring class, along with many faith-filled auxies, organized and prayed for the success of the Encounter. Their prayers were surely answered as many of the candidates shared that they had initial resistance in attending the weekend; but the Lord was victorious as they expressed how fruitful the retreat was in moving their hearts and spirits.

The Singles ministry would like to congratulate SE 21 graduates Elgin Amador, Rosanne Balasabas, DJ Benitez, Rosedy Bernal, Elaine Canlas, Abigail Casals, Edward Casals, Roy Eustaquio, Danielle Galan, Alex Izer, Seg Ogang, John Opilac, Perry Padilla, Elaine Parker, Jhoanna Rama, Jaden Rementilla, Therese Reyes, Steve Rodrigues, Kate Ros, Jennifer Trinidad, Connie Trinidad, and Nina Rica Union. This class will be led by class shepherds Walter and Lourdes Parker who plan to unite the class through reunions as they continue on their spiritual journey. The weekend was facilitated by Chris Gonda, Justin Bustos, Lee Ann Aguila, and Pam Pascual who shared their life stories and guided the candidates as they grew a deeper spiritual connection with Christ.

Prayer Counseling Seminar II

The Advanced Prayer Counseling Seminar (PCSII) held last Saturday and Sunday, Nov 1 & 2 brought together community members into a gathering of intense learning in the areas of inner healing and prayer counseling. Forty six participants from the BLD communities of Newark, Rockland, Trenton and North Carolina attended teachings on How We See God, Generational Sin, Inner Healing & Deliverance, Healing Life's Common Sexual Experiences, Healing Victims of Sexual Abuse, Slumbering Spirit & Captive Spirit, Spiritual Rebellion & Dyslexia, Emotional Abuse, and Parental Inversion & Substitute Mate.

(continued on page4)

COUNSELS

The Vocation of Chastity

WORD: Ez 47:1-2,8-9,12; Ps 46:2-3,5-6,8-9; Cor 3:9c-11,16-17; Jn 2:13-22

THEME: We work with God's grace to inherit His Kingdom when we take care of our body, the temple of the Spirit. (Holiness)

ORDER: Keep your body, the temple of God, holy.

REFLECTION:

The gospel provides us with a vivid image of Jesus, driving away the merchants and money-changers away from the temple area. Jesus said: *“Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace.”* (Jn 2:16) Fast-forward to today and you will discover that the marketplace surrounds us. We need not travel to acquire some of the goods and services. Technology provides us with the virtual marketplace, not only at home through our cable televisions and computers, but now the virtual marketplace is in our pockets and pocketbooks through our cellphones. We may find that this virtual marketplace is inescapable. This modern convenience may provide the means to stay connected with one another, but this also binds us into a virtual chain.

We have been warned that through cable televisions and through the Internet, strangers will invade our very homes and offices. Families and individuals have knowingly and unknowingly been tempted and violated by these strangers. We have been led to believe that when we consume more, we will be filled. We have been led to believe that when we adapt certain looks, lifestyles and relationships, we will be happier and be more acceptable to our peers. Television and video scenes are now available in some cellphones or can be downloaded to iPods. YouTube, picture and video messages have virtually stripped the walls from our homes.

The common English language has been twisted. The era of the 60's brought us slogans like “Make love, not war” to celebrate sexual freedom and to protest the Vietnam War. The 70's brought us “Roe v. Wade” and the terms “pro-life” and “pro-choice”. Advertisements on contraception are delivered to our living rooms today. *(continued on page4)*

Random Acts of Love



Recently, a neighboring parish sponsored a mission given by a Franciscan friar. On the first night, Father Kevin spoke of God's love for us, how perfect it is and how imperfect are our attempts to

repay His love. That night Father gave us a homework assignment... to carry out one random act of love before the next session. It didn't seem like a difficult task since husbands and wives perform countless acts of love every day. Anytime we do a chore we would rather skip, we perform an act of love. Cooking, cleaning, ironing, taking out the garbage, mowing the lawn ... done in the right spirit they are all acts of love. This spirit of loving sacrifice is seen throughout the New Testament. Luke 14: 12-14 gives us some insight into Jesus' definition of an act of love.

"Then he said to the host who invited him, 'When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friend or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'"

I decided that in order to complete the mission assignment as Jesus would, I had do something unnoticed, not expecting any thanks for my effort. I would love to tell you that I made some grand and glorious sacrifice though actually it was just a small gesture of helpfulness for a neighbor who wasn't home. It was a simple act of love but knowing that only God was watching made me smile.

With Thanksgiving and Christmas approaching, we know there will be many opportunities for hospitality and random acts of love in our homes, our parishes and our community. We look forward to spending time with relatives and friends, but we must remember that Jesus calls us to step out in faith and in love to welcome the stranger, those who are alone, and those who are new to the community. In Matthew 25: 34-35, Jesus described the final judgement in this way:

"Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.'"

As baptized Christians and Spirit-filled Catholics, we know that whoever welcomes a stranger, welcomes Jesus.

Eucharistic Adoration

"Beloved, proclaim my truth and spread my love." These words came to me in one of the LSS weekends I had served several years ago. I believed it's the truth we need to live by when we follow His Word and the way that leads to eternal life when we follow the cross as Christ's disciples.

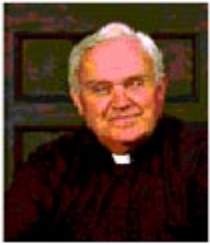
However, the same words came back to me in one of the Eucharistic adoration services I attended. This time, it gave me a more profound meaning. As I gazed on the small white Sacred Host exposed in the monstrance, my eyes were opened to the absolute Truth — His Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament-Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. The Holy Eucharist is Jesus Himself in the fullness of His Divine and human nature. During consecration at the Holy Mass, when the priest says, "This is my Body", the bread and wine we offer, truly and really becomes Our Lord Jesus through the miracle of transubstantiation.

Coming to His Eucharistic Presence in the Blessed Sacrament is a prayer of faith. The Holy Eucharist is the "Living Bread that came down from heaven, the Bread of Life, the Bread of Angels", our Hidden God, the Risen Savior, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. Our Lord said, *"Amen, amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drinks His blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."* (Jn 6:53-54) The greatest treasures of our Catholic faith are the many centuries-old Eucharistic miracles in which the species are still preserved and these events are well documented. Years ago, I went on pilgrimage to Portugal where the miraculous bleeding Host in the 13th century is still venerated today in the Church of the Holy Miracle in Santarem. What an awesome wonder in Lanciano, Italy, the place of the 1st Eucharistic miracle where the host turned to flesh and the wine turned to blood in the 8th century. Truly, the Holy Eucharist remains a visible sign of the Lord's unwillingness to be physically separated from His children. As He promises, *"I'll be with you always, until the end of the age."* (Mt 28:20)

But, how many would leave and turn their backs as the Blessed Sacrament is exposed? Didn't Our Lord ask *"Could you not watch one hour with Me?"* (Mt 26:40) Spending holy hours of adoration to our Eucharistic Lord is one of the fruitful ways to grow in the love of the Lord. Pope John Paul II says, "Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Jesus and ready to make reparation for the great evils of the world. Let your adoration never cease." Pope Paul VI wrote, "How great the value of conversation with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament . . . nothing more efficacious for advancing along the road of holiness."

Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, "God with us" in the Blessed Sacrament. He invites us, *"Come to me all who labor and are burdened, and I'll give you rest."* (Mt 11:28) He waits for us in the Sacrament of Love. It is our duty to honor and adore the Blessed Host — the Incarnate Word. St. Augustine says, "Our hearts are made for Thee, O Lord, and it is restless until we rest in Thee".

Spiritual Warfare



When we face, as a community, the inevitable differences and even conflicts that face any normal relational activity, we should not be surprised that tensions happen. To expect any group of people joined together, whether a couple in marriage or in any close contact as we see in BLD, and to presume that everything is operating smoothly, is the height of unreality. In fact conflict can show that there is life. Those of you who took the ME remember the rules for fighting. Married couples can and will fight, but to make the fight productive, couples have to learn to make their disagreements result in light and open the doors to deeper loving intimacy.

May I quote something from a rather philosophical book recently read: "Real friendship will endure to the degree that the friends have given themselves to a transcendent third, to the good, or the true, or the beautiful that surpasses both of them, and that both seek together. As long as their love is centered upon one another it will dissipate. When it is directed beyond them, it will, paradoxically, thrive." (The Reality of Christ by Robert Barron) What is he saying except that this transcendent "third" is the person of Jesus? He says further that "two or more people locked in antagonism, each trying to refute the other, will rarely move toward the truth, since concern for the truth has become subordinate to their animosity and egoism."

May I suggest that truth is not an abstract, but a living Person who said "I am the way the truth and the life." When decisions are to be made, the underlying question is where will the Lord be most served. In many instances the important and underlying reality is the motivation that dominates the decision process. If the decision is based solely on the "objective" logic and argumentation, then the personal respect for the person with whom I am dialoguing, can become blurred.

May I further suggest that in my perception the reality of spiritual warfare has become too abstract. We say our "prayer to take authority" rather casually, not realizing that we are really in a battle. Satan is out to get the leadership, and to destroy the powerful weekends that identify the Charism of BLD. We need not be afraid even though we are well aware of our sinfulness. Our power does not lie with our abilities, but from the power that comes from prayer and humility, from him who *"though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped at, but emptied himself taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men"* (Phil.2: 6-7).

Ministry Announcements

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Volunteers Needed

Every 2nd Saturday of the Month
Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home,
56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic NJ 07055
Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340
nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm Healing Prayer Service and Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion and Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Saturday of the month,
starts at 8:30am except December

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

Notice of Change for Soup Kitchen Assignment

November 22 - Singles Ministry

January 2009 - Solo Parent Ministry

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord
with the community thru an article (450 words maximum)
Send to word@bldnewark.com

TEACHING

November 14 - Friday

Mark 10 Teaching
John 6 Teaching
Youth Teaching

Introduction to Intercession - Singles

November 15 - Saturday

Agony in the Garden/ Washing of the Feet Retreat - LSS 28
Shepherds Training – 10:00 a.m. – 6 P.M.

NOTE:

Friday Teachings – after worship

Saturday Teachings – 1-6pm at St. Mary's

For information on St. Mary's and St. Mark's
visit their newly designed website:

www.stmarystmarkparish.com

God's Promise for the Week

*"God is our refuge and our strength,
an ever-present help in distress." (Ps 46:2)*



MAKE COVENANT NEWS A PART OF YOUR COVENANT LIFE.

Counsels from page 1

Same-sex marriage is the political battle of the day. All these seem very democratic and very progressive. Yet the fruitfulness (or lack thereof) proves that all these so call freedom brought about the breakdown in relationships and in the family life. It was recently published in the medical journal Pediatrics, teens that watch sexual scenes on television are twice as likely to get pregnant.

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwell in you?" (1 Cor 3:16) How do we counteract the forces of the secular world? Jesus said: *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."* (Jn 2:19) He tells us that the saving grace can only come from Him and that He can redeem us. This weeks promise, invites us to dwell with our Lord. In times of our weaknesses, we can only draw strength from Him. When all else fails, call on our Lord.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church provides us the guidelines to lead chaste lives. "Charity is the *form* of all the virtues. Under its influence, chastity appears as a school of the gift of the person. Self-mastery is ordered to the gift of self. Chastity leads him who practices it to become a witness to his neighbor of God's fidelity and loving kindness." (2346) "All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has 'put on Christ,' the model for all chastity. All Christ's faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life. At the moment of his Baptism, the Christian is pledged to lead his affective life in chastity." (2348)

Chastity for Singles – "People should cultivate chastity in the way that is suited to their state of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others live in the way prescribed for all by the moral law, whether they are married or single. Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practice chastity in continence." (2349) "Those who are *engaged to marry* are called to live chastity in continence. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the hope of receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love. They will help each other grow in chastity." (2340)

Chastity in Marriage – "Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament." (2360) "The spouses' union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple's spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family." (2363)

DIRECTIONS:

- Constantly ask for God's grace, that we may be reconciled with Him and with one another.
- Do not defile the body with any form of vice or addiction.

Community Calendar

Nov 8 - Mark 10 Nursing Home Visit

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Center

Parents please come with the children dressed in their favorite Saint costume.

Contact: Cherry Vibar (M) 908-209-6468

Nov 14-16 Marriage Encounter # 32

Mary Immaculate Center, Northampton, PA

Contact: Emil & Baby Canlas (551) 265-0720

Gary & Mil Camacho (732) 642-1889

Nov 21-23 John 6 Crossing #9 Retreat

Open to ages 12 - 14 years

Ramada Limited, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contact: Boyet/Zita Cruz – (908) 378-5182

Email: boyetzita_cruz@yahoo.com

***Applications for encounters/retreats are available at**
www.bldnewark.com



THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report

For the Week Ending October 31, 2008

Tithes, Love Offering, Mission &

Fast for the Poor **\$ 3,539.00**



Prayer Counseling Seminar from page 1

The weekend gave the participants an overview of the above topics to stimulate a greater desire in each one to learn, study, and grow their gifts in these areas.

The BLD Prayer Counseling Team who conducted the weekend is composed of mature community disciples who are graduates of the Elijah House School of Prayer Ministry. Through the direction of the Holy Spirit, the Team is trained to help individuals discern the spiritual components of past experiences and present problems and behaviors. It is a loving, healing ministry using the scriptural principles of sanctification and transformation to bring wholeness and healing in individuals. *"The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners..."* (Is 61:1)

To learn more about the weekend and/or the BLD Prayer Counseling Team, please contact:

BLDNWK.pastoralministry@yahoo.com



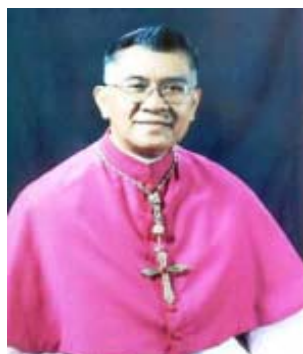
COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 50

Bulletin Edition

Dec. 19, 2008



Angel N. Lagdameo
+ ANGEL N. LAGDAMEO
Archbishop of Jaro &
BLD Spiritual Director
December 1, 2008

Advent & Christmas Message

Even in Advent Season, we can already greet one another Merry Christmas, Malipayon nga Paskwa, Maligayang Pasko. Indeed we are not preparing for the arrival of God in our world; we are in fact celebrating the anniversary of His birth into our

world more than two thousand years ago. Since then Jesus Christ has been with us, He has never left us. The present Advent and Christmas are indeed a continuation of our celebration.

The arrival of Jesus Christ into our world is called Advent, or coming. And so Advent is Christmas and Christmas is Advent.

Christmas is an invitation for us to experience what is untouchable, whereby you can hear what cannot be heard, see what cannot be seen and know what cannot be known. That is the presence of God, of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, is like salt in the water. If you put salt in the water today, tomorrow morning it's gone and dissolved. Taste the water at the top, it tastes like salt. Taste the water at the middle, it tastes like salt. Taste the water at the bottom, it also tastes like salt. The salt remains in the water even though you do not see it, and though you do not see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, They are fully present in you and everyone else, everywhere.

That is the essence of what Jesus Christ has said: "Whatever you do, good or bad, to one another, you do unto me." Everyone becomes Christ! Everyone is the face of God!

It took Jesus Christ to be born more than 2000 years ago to make us realize and live that essential truth.

Advent-Christmas comes around to remind us that eternal truth.

COUNSELS

Authority & God's Will

Word: Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Rom 16:25-27; Lk 1:26-38

Theme: We prepare for the revelation of our Lord when we humbly accept the will of the Father.

Order: Do not be afraid. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Reflection:


Man's Will vs. God's Will

Victorious in his wars and established as king of all Israel, David offered to give thanks to the Lord by building for Him a house. The prophet Nathan, who knew that David was the Lord's anointed king, encouraged him to do what was in his mind. After all, what could be wrong with the king's plan to build a house for God? That same night, the Lord corrected Nathan. He asked the prophet to tell David that it will be the Lord who will build a house for the king. That house will not be a physical but spiritual; it will not be temporal but eternal. It will be ruled by a king who will reign forever.

God can never be outdone in His goodness. David proposed to undertake something good in this world for the Lord. The Lord told David that was not His will. Instead, the Lord promised that it will be He who will give David what is supremely good for all eternity.

God's Promise and Mary's Response

A thousand years later, the Lord sent the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to announce that God's promise to David will be fulfilled in her. She was to conceive and bear a son – Jesus.

(continued on page 3) 

God's Promise for the Week

"My kindness is established forever; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness." (Ps 89:3)

Advent & Christmas Messages

BLD Global: Executive Council of Servant Leaders

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Like our Blessed Mother, may all of us have the total trust and obedience to God’s plan for each of us and for our Community. As we acknowledge our Father’s love in sending His Son Jesus to be born on earth, may we always share His love with our family and with all our brothers and sisters in Christ. A blessed Christmas to all! **Bogie & Margie Lorenzo**

During this season of hope and joy, may our faith and our genuine desire to follow Jesus build up everyday as Jesus, the Word of God, reveals himself more deeply and more clearly to us, to our family and to our Community. May the message of the angels “Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom His favor rests” come upon our hearts and be the guiding light of unity, peace and reconciliation in our family, our Community, and the world. A peaceful Christmas to all! **Lito & Jasmin Abastillas**

The birth of the child Jesus in a humble Bethlehem cave is truly unexpected, that God should come to us as a helpless child of poor parents, born away from the limelight and riches of the world. It is in this utmost simplicity that we find peace, love and happiness. “Exult in the Lord, lift up your hearts in spiritual joy, for the day of redemption is being renewed, the day of age long expectation of the announcement of happiness that has no end” May the love and peace of Christmas be upon us, for God is born in the stable of our hearts. Maligayang Pasko at Mapayapang Bagong Taon po sa inyong lahat! **Dan & Ludy Andres**

“Sing to the Lord a new song...the Lord has made His salvation known; in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.” This is truly a season of rejoicing and thanksgiving in remembering that Jesus is God’s love for us. Through and in Him, we are gifted with fullness of life. God loves, He gave, we receive, and we live (Jn 3:16). Well-wishes for a blessed Christmas and New Year to all! **Alfred S. Kudemus**

This Christmas 2008, let us make ourselves a true gift to God, and we can do it by becoming true servant to the members of our own family, brother or sister to the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lonely, the widow, the prisoners and the homeless! In doing so we have our Lord Jesus’ everlasting assurance for all seasons, “What you do to these least brothers of mine, you do unto Me” Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon sa inyo, sa inyong mga mahal

sa buhay at sa inyong BLD District. **Jun & Baby Delarmente**

As we celebrate the humble birth of Jesus, may we be faithful to our Covenant with Jesus; may we witness the Peace of Jesus in our lives and to others; may we look with favor on the poor who is in Jesus - May you, your family, and your district have A Blessed, Peaceful, and Joyful Christmas! **Eliong & Leah Sison** - Presiding Servant Leaders

To our beloved Community,

We are blessed with a name, *Bukas-Loob sa Diyos* (Open in Spirit to God), that reveals who we are and how we are to God.

We are first and foremost a community belonging to God – *sa Diyos*. The Lord gave Himself freely and fully to us in the new covenant of His blood (Lk 22:20). In response, we have given ourselves freely and completely to the Lord in our Baptismal covenant, whose pledges we renewed in express ways through our community covenant.

Because we are *sa Diyos*, we are *Bukas-Loob* to Him. As His servants, “our eyes are on the LORD our God, till we are shown favor” (Ps 123:2), our docile hearts are open to Him in obedience (Ps 119:32). This openness of heart expresses our invitation and connection to the Lord. Our heart’s hospitality to God invites the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, who teaches us about Jesus and guides us to a deeper communion with Him.

We are a community in quest for God in His fullness. He has planted the seed of faith that continues to grow in us. We “have tasted that the Lord is good” (1 Pt 2:3). We desire to know Him more and more, and we long to dwell in His goodness all the days of our life (Ps 27:4).

Our being *Bukas-Loob sa Diyos* is our fervent prayer to be joined to Christ, to become one Spirit with Him (1 Cor 6:17).

May we live up to the name given us by our God – *Bukas-Loob sa Diyos* - every day of our lives. May our experience of counting the days until our next community worship be as Advent, and may our weekly gathering to give homage to our God in the Eucharist and in worship, in Word and in fellowship be as Christmas. May Christ be found in us always!

We give you the love of Christ in our heart. Thank you for your love. We wish you all a blessed Advent and Christmas.

For the Newark District Council of Stewards,

Mon & Bingle Chan - Presiding Stewards
“Lift up your heads, O gates; rise up, you ancient portals, that the King of Glory may enter.” (Ps 24:7)

*Make the Covenant News
a part of your covenant life.*

Counsels (continued from page 1)

"He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of David, His father, and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom, there will be no end" (Lk 1:32-33). Mary, who did not have relations with a man, wondered: *"how can this be?"* (Lk 1:34) Gabriel replied that she will conceive and bear a son by the power of God through the Holy Spirit. A person of ordinary faith would have responded with derision to this incredible information. Yet this *"revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages... manifested... according to the command of the eternal God."* brought about in Mary the *"obedience of faith"* (Rom 16:25, 26). Mary declared: *"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to thy word"* (Lk 1:38.)

God's plan of salvation for man needed the cooperation of a woman named Mary. Because of Mary's humble acceptance of God's will, our Savior, Jesus Christ, was born to her and through her, to all mankind. It is Jesus who is to build a house for the Lord—the Church (Mt 16:18), which is not a physical structure but God's spiritual kingdom, "against which the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail."

Applications to Community

The question asked most often in Christian communities like ours is this: *How do we know if the leaders' discernment is based on human motivations or guided by the Holy*

Spirit? The answer is we usually don't, especially if it involves a good or even a morally neutral choice. Consider the example of David. He was living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remained in a tent. David wanted to build a house for the Lord who had been so good to him. There was one other reason why David (and Nathan) thought he should: since David was the king, **he can**. But as scripture tells us, this was not what the Lord wanted, so David didn't.

In a covenant community like ours, where authority is exercised by leaders in God's name, those leaders have the duty and responsibility to affectively seek and do His will.

Because they are responsible, they are accountable—to the Lord. This thought should send any leader with a decision to make on his knees before God! As to the members, they should remember that it is the will of the Lord to entrust His flock to our leaders. He did this knowing fully well what is in their heart, for nothing is concealed from Him (Heb 4:13). If the Lord can trust our very human leaders with His very work, who are we to distrust God's judgment? Besides trusting God, what else can members do? According to St. Paul, *"offer supplications, prayers, petitions and thanksgiving...for all in authority"* (1 Tm 2:1-2). What should they pray for? Pray that the Holy Spirit will come upon our leaders and that the power of the Most High will overshadow them. Then, like Mary, let us humbly accept the will of the Father expressed through their decision.

Fit for the Lord

But the angel said to him, *"Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord."* (Luke 1:13-17)

The readings of Advent are full of words like "Wait" or "Watch" or "Prepare". John would be the one to "prepare a people fit for the Lord." These Advent Scriptures made me think back to my childhood. I tried to recall what Advent meant to me and my family as I was growing up. The idea of Advent being a time of waiting, watching, and preparing for the coming of Jesus was not foremost in my mind. We knew the story of Christmas and we had a large nativity scene set up in the living room. On Christmas Eve we would all go to Midnight Mass. But for me, Christmas seemed to be more about gifts and Santa Claus and big family gatherings. My mother came from a large family so when a holiday came, our house was full of aunts and uncles and cousins. There was lots of cooking and eating, singing and laughing.

As an adult I have come to see Advent differently. While my family still makes lots of plans to celebrate the "holiday", we try to remember that above all Christmas is a "holy day." During Advent, while we prepare our homes for the coming of Christmas, we also prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus. We continue the work of John the Baptist, *"to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord."* (Luke 1:17) John's message calls us to repentance, to turn our hearts. Sometimes that message is drowned out by the noisy festivities of this busy season, but it is important to hear what he tells us. Repentance and prayer, fasting and alms-giving help us to spread the light that Christ brings into our lives. What better way to make our hearts fit for the Lord "as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ".

For information on St. Mary's and St. Mark's
visit their newly designed website:

www.stmarystmarkparish.com

Directions:

1. Do not be afraid to say yes to the Lord's call for renewal.
2. Keep Christ in Christmas.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Hamilton Plaza

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the month. Volunteers are needed

Nong & Tricia Bustos – 732-591-1340 nongb601@aol.com

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max.). Send to word@bldnewark.com.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- Dec 27 Christmas Soup Kitchen**
Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St. Newark, NJ 07103
Parish Mission/Youth Ministry will serve
Contacts: Frank/Malou Venadas 973-562-0055
or Sal/Marie Russo 973-338-1050
- Mar 7-8 YLSS #14 (Salubungan on Jan 2)**
Accepting applications for youth ages 15 to 19
For info: email youthministry@bldnewark.com
or call Alan/Tess Cam 201-889-4238; 201-233-699

Traveling Catholics

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times, visit www.masstimes.org.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVE THE DATE!

Medical Mission - February 9-12, 2009
Barangay Guba and neighboring barangays in Cebu City.
Nong & Tricia Bustos 732-591-1340 Nongb601@aol.com

BEHOLD THE LAMB

The greatest words ever spoken...the greatest miracles ever done...and the greatest sacrifice ever given. Let the greatness and glory of the life of Jesus Christ fill you with His life changing love. *Behold the Lamb* is a powerful presentation of the timeless message of the Savior, that *"whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have eternal life!"* (This season only)

Sight & Sound – Millennium Theatre Lancaster, PA
Mar. 21, 2009 (Sat) 1pm Payment Due: Feb. 6, 2009
Tickets only Adult \$54, Teen \$28, Child \$16
With transportation Adult \$85, Teen \$59, Child \$47
Trip includes stops at Tanger Outlet & Kitchen Kettle Village
Contact: Frank/Malou Venadas (973) 562-0055



This poem is written by a member formerly in Mark 10 Ministry and now of John 6. It won 2nd Place in the Catholic Daughters of the Americas 2008 National Poetry Competition. We are sharing it with you that we may rejoice in the the knowledge that the fruits of Christian community live well in our children; our future shines brightly!

Jesus, The Light of the World

*Jesus, Son of God, our Light
Bring an end to our darkest night.*

*Jesus soar on beam and ray,
Give me strength and light the way.*

*Jesus, strong as wave or stone,
Keep your light radiant in our homes.*

*Brighter than a lamp or sun,
Light and power eternal, You are the One.*



Merry Christmas

*from the
Word Ministry*

Week Ending Nov. 7 , 2008

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Tithes, Love Offering, \$1,919
Mission & Fast for the Poor

Thank you for your continued generosity.

PLEDGE OF LOVE \$10,676

Covenant News is also available on
our website at www.bldnewark.com



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 14 Issue 51

Bulletin Edition

December 26, 2008

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI FOR THE
CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE

1 JANUARY 2009

(First of Three Parts)

FIGHTING POVERTY TO BUILD PEACE

Once again, as the new year begins, I want to extend good wishes for peace to people everywhere. With this Message I would like to propose a reflection on the theme: *Fighting Poverty to Build Peace*. Back in 1993, my venerable Predecessor Pope John Paul II, in his Message for the World Day of Peace that year, drew attention to the negative repercussions for peace when entire populations live in poverty. Poverty is often a contributory factor or a compounding element in conflicts, including armed ones. In turn, these conflicts fuel further tragic situations of poverty. "Our world", he wrote, "shows increasing evidence of another grave threat to peace: many individuals and indeed whole peoples are living today in conditions of extreme poverty. The gap between rich and poor has become more marked, even in the most economically developed nations. This is a problem which the conscience of humanity cannot ignore, since the conditions in which a great number of people are living are an insult to their innate dignity and as a result are a threat to the authentic and harmonious progress of the world community"

In this context, fighting poverty requires *attentive consideration of the complex phenomenon of globalization*. This is important from a methodological standpoint, because it suggests drawing upon the fruits of economic and sociological research into the many different aspects of poverty. Yet the reference to globalization should also alert us to the spiritual and moral implications of the question, urging us, in our dealings with the poor, to set out from the clear recognition that we all share in a single divine plan: we are called to form one family in which all – individuals, peoples and nations – model their behaviour according to the principles of fraternity and responsibility.

This perspective requires an understanding of poverty that is wide-ranging and well articulated. If it were a question of material poverty alone, then the social sciences, which enable us to measure phenomena on the basis of mainly quantitative data, would be sufficient to illustrate its principal characteristics. Yet we know that other, non-material forms of poverty exist which are not the direct and automatic consequence of material deprivation. For example, in advanced wealthy societies, there

COUNSELS

Christ's Light

WORD: Sir 3:2-7, 12-14; Ps 128:1-5; Col 3:12-21; Lk 2:22-40

ORDERS: As God chosen ones, put on love put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body.

THEME: We prepare for the revelation of our Lord when we are a community of love.

REFLECTION: "We'll leave the lights on for you."

This is a slogan used by a motel chain to express the establishment's desire to assure travelers that if they stay in their motel, their tired bodies will be rested, for they promise comfort with a warm welcome, a soft bed in a clean room complete with hot water for a nice invigorating bath that will soothe their aching bodies.

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, let us try to go back to that night when Jesus was born. His parents could barely find a room. They accept whatever is made available to them and stay in a dark and cold cave where animals are sheltered. Joseph, after finding the warmest spot for Mary, improvises a crib for Jesus. These were the only comforts Joseph could afford his family.

We have visited this cave in Bethlehem, Israel last year. Even with the church built over it, you still feel the coldness of the dark and dank cave. It makes you ponder on the circumstances of Jesus' birth and how terrible it must have been for Joseph and Mary to settle for this uncomfortable place after a long, tiring journey. However, as parents who have witnessed the birth of our own children, we can relate to the warmth and joy that Joseph and Mary felt with Jesus' birth. The fragile God-given gift of life leaves us in wonder and in awe. We see hopes and dreams of a beautiful tomorrow which instantly banishes all the struggles and pains that come preparing for a young family.

(continued on next page) 

GOD'S PROMISE FOR THE WEEK

*"You shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed shall you be, and favored." (Ps 128:22)*

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- Dec 27** **Christmas Soup Kitchen**
Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charity
60 Jay St. Newark, NJ 07103
Parish Mission/Youth Ministry will serve
Contact: Frank/Malou Venadas (973) 562-0055
Sal/Marie Russo (973) 338-1050
- Jan 17** **Theology of the Body-Natural Family Program**
2009 Seminar St. Mary's Gym – 1-5pm Auditorium
Fr. Lehman and Assigned Couples
- Mar 7-8** **YLSS #14**
2009 Accepting applications for youth ages 15 to 19
For more info contact: Alan/Tess Cam
(201) 889-4238; (201) 233-6991
or email: youthministry@bldnewark.com
Salubungon is scheduled on Jan 2, 2009

Fighting Poverty... (cont. from page 1)

is evidence of *marginalization*, as well as *affective, moral and spiritual poverty*, seen in people whose interior lives are disoriented and who experience various forms of malaise despite their economic prosperity. On the one hand, I have in mind what is known as "moral underdevelopment", and on the other hand the negative consequences of "superdevelopment". Nor can I forget that, in so-called "poor" societies, economic growth is often hampered by *cultural impediments* which lead to inefficient use of available resources. It remains true, however, that every form of externally imposed poverty has at its root a lack of respect for the transcendent dignity of the human person. When man is not considered within the total context of his vocation, and when the demands of a true "human ecology" are not respected, the cruel forces of poverty are unleashed, as is evident in certain specific areas that I shall now consider briefly one by one.

(next issue: Poverty and moral implications)

Counsels (cont. from page 1)

As the song goes, "A house is not a home" when there's no love. It takes more than nails, wood, brick and mortar to turn a house into a home. An architect designs a beautiful house and a carpenter must follow the blueprints to build it. Likewise as we build our home, we must follow the design of God who is the Great Architect, to ensure that that our home remains standing through the test of time. In a home the floor represents the "Sacrament of Matrimony". In a home God's presence through Christ is the all encompassing protection of the roof over our heads. A home has four walls through which God radiates the warmth of His love and keeps away the tears when pain and hardships come during life's storms. We find the formula of a home from this verse which is also our direction: "*Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another; if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection*" (Col 3:12-13).

DIRECTIONS:

1. Affirm your love for each other by treating each other with respect, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another.
2. Consecrate your natural family and your spiritual family to the Lord.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing home visit is scheduled every 2nd Saturday of the month - Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home
Passaic, NJ - Volunteers are needed.

Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

MEDICAL MISSION - February 9 - 12, 2009

Barangay Guba and neighboring mountain barangays in Cebu City

Contact: Nong & Tricia Bustos (732) 591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community thru an article (450 words max).

Send to word@bldnewark.com

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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www.stmarystmarkparish.com

SAVE THE DATE

BEHOLD THE LAMB

(This season only)

The greatest words ever spoken...the greatest miracles ever done...and the greatest sacrifice ever given. Let the greatness and glory of the life of Jesus Christ fill you with His life changing love. **Behold the Lamb** is a powerful presentation of the timeless message of the Savior, that "**whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have eternal life!**"

Sight & Sound – Millennium Theatre
Lancaster, PA

March 21, 2009 (Sat) 1:00pm show

Adult \$85.00, Teen \$59.00, Child \$47.00

Tickets only Adult \$54, Teen \$28, Child \$16

Contact: Frank/Malou Venadas (973) 562-0055

Payment Deadline: Feb. 6, 2009

Trip includes stops at Tanger Outlet &
Kitchen Kettle Village

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Weekly Collection Report for the Week Ending Dec 19, 2008

*Tithes, Love Offering,
Mission & Fast for Poor*

**No Community
Mass**

PLEDGE OF LOVE

Week Ending Dec 19, 2008

No Collection

Thank you for your continued generosity.

**Covenant News is also available
on our website at www.bldnewark.com**