



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 15 Issue 48

Bulletin Edition

Dec. 4, 2009

POPE RECOMMENDS KEEPING DIARY OF GOD'S LOVE

Vatican City, Nov. 30, 2009 (Zenit.org) As the Church begins Advent, Benedict XVI is recalling that it is a season to recall how God comes to visit us. The Pope said this during a homily at First Vespers on Saturday, with which the Church began Advent and the new liturgical year. The Holy Father reflected on the etymology of the word "advent" from the Latin *adventus*.

"With the word *adventus* an attempt was made essentially to say: God is here, he has not withdrawn from the world, he has not left us alone," he explained. "Although we cannot see or touch him, as is the case with tangible realities, he is here and comes to visit us in multiple ways."

The Pontiff added that the expression *advent* also includes "*visitatio*, which means simply and properly 'visit.'" "In this case," he said, "it is a visit of God: He enters my life and wants to address me." Benedict XVI acknowledged that we all experience "having little time for the Lord and little time for ourselves." "We end up by being absorbed in 'doing,'" he said. "Is it not true that often activity possesses us, that society with its many interests monopolizes our attention? Is it not true that we dedicate much time to amusements and leisure of different kinds? Sometimes things 'trap' us."

In this scenario, the Holy Father said, Advent "invites us to pause in silence to grasp a presence." He continued: "It is an invitation to understand that every event of the day is a gesture that God directs to us, sign of the care he has for each one of us. How many times God makes us perceive something of his love! To have, so to speak, an 'interior diary' of this love would be a beautiful and salutary task for our life! Advent invites and stimulates us to contemplate the Lord who is present. Should not the certainty of his presence help us to see the world with different eyes? Should it not help us to see our whole existence as a 'visit,' as a way in which he can come to us and be close to us, in each situation?"

Advent is furthermore a time of joy, the Pontiff said. It is "the time of the presence and the expectation of the eternal. Precisely for this reason it is, in a particular way, the time of joy, of an internalized joy, that no suffering can erase. Joy because of the fact that God became a child. This joy, invisibly present in us, encourages us to walk with confidence." And this joy, he concluded, finds a model and support in the Virgin Mary, "through whom the Child Jesus has been given to us." He prayed: "May she, faithful disciple of her Son, obtain for us the grace to live this liturgical time vigilant and diligent in waiting."

COUNSELS PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

WORD: Bar 5:1-9; Ps 126:1-6; Phil 1:4-6, 8-11; Lk 3:1-6

ORDER: ".....*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*" (Lk 3:4)

THEME: We are vigilant for the coming of Jesus when we repent of our sins.

REFLECTION:

During Advent season, we are confronted with the challenge of preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ. We tend to confuse the spiritual message of the season with the commercial aspects of the celebration. And so we go on frenzied shopping sprees looking for bargains and gifts to give to those close to us – family members, relatives, friends, neighbors, officemates. We over-extend our budget; even over-spend on our credit cards so that no one will be left out in the gift-giving. We buy expensive and colorful ornaments because our neighbors have brighter Christmas decorations. We scour the supermarkets for rich and expensive food – ham, cheeses, imported fruits which we normally don't eat -- just to impress guests. In the midst of all this rush, we overlook our spiritual well-being. Soon the significance of Christmas is lost to us. We no longer yearn for the coming of the Christ Child, let alone look forward to His final coming to us. We become engrossed in endless parties, and forget the reason for the celebration.

We could make Advent a fruitful time for our spiritual lives. The morning chill should remind us of the peace and serenity that is the Prince of Peace personified. His Word says: "*Be still and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme on the earth.*" (Ps 46:10) As we ponder on God and in His Power, He becomes our refuge and strength. As we recall our sinfulness, we lay claim to His mercy and grace, and His river of love will refresh our souls. As we look around us and behold the beauty of His creation, God will still our useless struggles and anxieties. He will gather us in the embrace of His Peace.

Continued on page 2

Promise of the Week

"*Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" (Lk 3:5-6)

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

ISAIAH 58

Sagip Ka Eskuela Program (Save a School Child)

Bring your old or unused School Supplies

St. Mary's Church (Fellowship Area)

Contacts: Ruben/Luz Amarante 908-810-1231

Rubenluz@verizon.net, Cezar/Pinky Calingo 908-230-3660

Gene/Bing Ymbong - 908-406-6955 sifilemon@optonline.com

MARK 10

For the safety of our children, all parents of Mark 10 children are requested to **sign in and sign out** for their children. Please note: **drop off must be no earlier than 8 p.m. and pick-up must be no later than 10:45 p.m.** After 10:45 p.m., parents will be responsible for their children's safety.

We thank you in advance for your full cooperation in this very important matter.

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit

56 Hamilton Plaza, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Sat. of the month. Volunteers are needed.

Audie/Vulet Chong 732-356-9056 audie_chong@hotmail.com

TEACHING CALENDAR

Dec 04 CDFP Overview / Intro to the Word – ME 34

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHEPHERDS TRAINING

For potential Singles and Youth shepherds.

Dec. 5, 2009, Saturday, 12-6pm St. Mary, Room 203

ST. MARY'S ROOF REPAIRS

Help St. Mary's and St. Mark's with its roof repairs by going through the parish website when you do your Christmas shopping and other purchases at amazon.com.

Visit www.stmarystmarkparish.com & go to gift shop page.

Stewardship – A Way Of Life!

SAVE THE DATE

DISCIPLES ASSEMBLY

Please reserve Jan. 9, 2010 for our next Disciples Assembly. All committed and covenanted disciples are highly encouraged to attend. There will be no teachings, or any reunions/parties to conflict with this date RSVP to secretariat for valid excuses.

WITNESS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Jan. 23, 2010, St. Mary's @ 1pm By invitation only

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

LORD'S PROVISION

WEEK ENDING NOV. 27, 2009

| | Actual | YTD |
|-------------------|---------|----------|
| Collections | 3,158 | 179,586 |
| Expenses | 9,551 | 200,158 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) | (6,393) | (20,572) |

Financial details are available to all members through treasury@bldnewark.com

Thank you for your continued support!

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Ondoy Disaster Relief Fund | 17,948 |
| Dinner Dance Net Income (To date) | 12,844 |

COUNSELS (from page 1)

The Classic Christmas songs – like Silent Night, O Holy Night, O Little Town of Bethlehem - remind us of how Jesus came to save us from our sinfulness. These carols should inspire us to ponder on that first Christmas Eve, how Jesus, God the Son, came to us in a lowly manger, surrounded by animals, because they had no room for Him at the inn, reflecting on what St. Paul said in Phil 2:7: ***“Christ Jesus, Who, 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.”***

Spending time and singing Christmas carols with the family could help us realize the humility that was in Christ Jesus. It is something we should emulate. Advent should also encourage us prepare for a good confession so we can truly welcome Jesus in our hearts on Christmas Day. Repentance begins when, in the stillness of our hearts, we acknowledge we are sinners and that we have not yet fully accepted the love of God. When we recall those sins we have failed to confess, we also recall the instances we have hurt others.

St. John instructs us in the Gospel: ***“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain shall be made low.”*** (Lk 3:4b) St. Francis de Sales said this about the Gospel reading: *“in as much as they represent obstruction, “The crooked shall be made straight, many twisting to be found”. It is penance that will fill up the valleys, lay low the mountains, and make straight the crooked paths. Do penance, says St. John, make low the mountains of pride, fill up these valleys, these ditches of tepidity and cowardice. Fill up the valleys, that is to say, fill your hearts with confidence and hope, because salvation is at hand.”*

St. Paul again reminds us in the second reading that God has already begun the good work in us and He will carry it to completion. His prayer, which can be our prayer too during this Advent season, is that our love for one another may abound not only in our hearts but in our deeds. We need to repent and confess our sins, so that with a clear conscience and blameless conduct, we may learn to value the things that really matter, up to the very day of Christ. So let us all be vigilant for the coming of Jesus not only during the Advent season but for the rest of our lives.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Repent and reconcile with God by confessing regularly, receiving Him in the Eucharist daily, visiting Him in the Blessed Sacrament often, and reflecting on His word daily and putting it into action.
2. Discern what is of value.

Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

1. How do I prepare for the coming of Jesus this Christmas and for His final coming?
2. How can I make my celebration of Christmas more meaningful?

For Mass & Adoration schedule within the U.S.A.
www.masstimes.org or call 410-676-6000

“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”