



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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Bulletin Edition

May 08, 2009

Aspirant's Retreat

The Aspirant's Retreat held at the Ramada Hotel, South Plainfield, NJ last May 1-3, 2009, brought forth 23 hopefuls as they synchronously said "Yes Lord" to become disciples of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The movement of the whole event was evidently orchestrated by the Holy Spirit and the witnessing of the sharers aided to transform doubts to a firm belief that, with God on our side, we can do all things. Tears of joy started to flow out their eyes as they come to realize the magnanimity of God's love allowing it to swell into their hearts. The sweet serenade of praise open the gates of heaven as the aspirants imbibed the true meaning of discipleship founded on God's love and wisdom.

The retreat was spearheaded by our Spiritual Director, Father Paul Lehman facilitated by the Teaching Ministry with the loving support of the Discipling, Technical and Praise Ministries ; class shepherds and auxies ; BLD sharers, who proclaimed their blessings through witnessing and willingness to serve God.

Among those who received His love, and joy are 23 aspirants; Rollie & Susan Aquino, Rosemarie Ausan, Boi & Tess Booc, Cezar & Pinky Calingo, Carlota Casals, Vito & Beth Guiang, Fred & Ludy Isidro, Nelson & Virgie Mayo, Bob O'Brien, Rey & Nerry Tuason, Jun & Camille Viernes, Gene & Bing Ymbong and Alvin & Myreen Ramirez.

He proclaimed "I am the Good Shepherd" Jn 10:11a. "I must lead, and there will be one flock, one shepherd." Jn 10:16. Jesus is our Shepherd King, and we are His servants.

They rejoiced, and together they felt God's call and are willing to commit their lives to be the Lord's under-shepherds, to witness to others. Indeed, serving Him with sincerity in our minds and our hearts, is how we desire to live.

Proposed Readings for the Year of St. Paul July 2008-July 2009

May 04-09 : 2 Thes 1-3

May 18-23 : 1 Tim 3-4

May 11-16 : 1 Tim 1-2

May 25-30 : 1 Tim 5-6

COUNSELS

Is Your Life Bearing Fruit?

Word: Acts 9:26-31; Ps 22:26-28, 30-32;
1 Jn 3:18-24; Jn 15:1-8

Theme: We have God's own heart when we live the Word that others may hear and understand.

Order: 1. Speak out boldly in the name of the Lord.
2. Remain in me, as I remain in you, so you will bear much fruits for without me you can do nothing

Reflection:

Tonight's gospel reading is one that we have heard many times but oftentimes, we do not see the significance in our lives. If we followed the sequence of events from the last verse of the previous chapter, this teaching happened right after the Last Supper on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane where the Lord's passion begun. Jesus refers to himself as the True Vine. The purpose of the vine is to bring nourishment to the branches in order that they might produce fruit. When separated from the vine, the branches wither and die. Likewise, the vitality of our spiritual life is dependent upon our connection to Christ the "true vine."

Each of us must answer two questions as we reflect on this reading. First, are we connected to the vine, or is the life of Christ flowing within us? Second, if we are connected to the vine and we are joined to Christ, then how much fruit are we producing through our lives; is there no fruit, some fruit, or an abundance of fruit? We have to ask ourselves what areas in our life

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God's Promise for the Week

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you." Jn 15:7

St. Paul ^{the} Apostle

St. Paul, the indefatigable Apostle of the Gentiles, was converted from Judaism on the road to Damascus. He remained some days in Damascus after his Baptism, and then went to Arabia, possibly for a year or two to prepare himself for his future missionary activity. Having returned to Damascus, he stayed there for a time, preaching in the synagogues that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. For this he incurred the hatred of the Jews and had to flee from the city. He then went to Jerusalem to see Peter and pay his homage to the head of the Church.

Later he went back to his native Tarsus, where he began to evangelize his own province until called by Barnabas to Antioch. After one year, on the occasion of a famine, both Barnabas and Paul were sent with alms to the poor Christian community at Jerusalem. Having fulfilled their mission they returned to Antioch.


Soon after this, Paul and Barnabas made the first missionary journey, visiting the island of Cypress, then Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia, all in Asia Minor, and establishing churches at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

After the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem Paul, accompanied by Silas and later also by Timothy and Luke, made his second missionary journey, first revisiting the churches previously established by him in Asia Minor, and then passing through Galatia. At Troas a vision of a Macedonian was had by Paul, which impressed him as a call from God to evangelize in Macedonia. He accordingly sailed for Europe, and preached the Gospel in Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, and Corinth. Then he returned to Antioch by way of Ephesus and Jerusalem.

On his third missionary journey, Paul visited nearly the same regions as on the second trip, but made Ephesus where he remained nearly three years, the center of his missionary activity. He laid plans also for another missionary journey, intending to leave Jerusalem for Rome and Spain. Persecutions by the Jews hindered him from accomplishing his purpose. After two years of imprisonment at Caesarea he finally reached Rome, where he was kept another two years in chains.

The Acts of the Apostles gives us no further information on the life of the Apostle. We gather, however, from the Pastoral Epistles and from tradition that at the end of the two years St. Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and then traveled to Spain, later to the East again, and then back to Rome, where he was imprisoned a second time and in the year 67, was beheaded.

St. Paul's untiring interest in and paternal affection for the churches established by him have given us fourteen canonical Epistles. It is, however, quite

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Christian Discipleship

In Acts 11:19-26, Christ's followers travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch escaping persecution (Acts 11:19). In the case of the early Christians, going to a foreign land is the only way to preserve their life, keep their faith, and evangelize - *"The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord."* (Acts 11:21)

In another paradigm, Filipino Christians and other immigrants of Christian faith travel across the continents of America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East to escape poverty seeking for a brighter future. Although the act of migration serves a different purpose on this two time periods, the decision to leave one's country becomes an individual lifestyle choice.

The early Christians chose to leave their country to preserve their faith and proclaim God's words to non-believers. The news spread to the Church of Jerusalem with Barnabas' confirmation in Antioch *"When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord."* (Acts 11:23-24)

Immigrants, including myself, are fortunate to bring our faith anywhere in the world with no fear of persecution. Unlike the early Christians, I did not nourish the tiny seed of faith and was living the American dream - work, shopping, vacation, socializing with friends. I was a lukewarm Christian and only go to church if I have the time. Then I realized that although we are privileged to live our faith freely, there are circumstances in life where our faith is tested. Infidelities, loss of a loved one, differences with our friends or family are harsh realities that affected me. When infidelity touched my life, I asked God - should I keep this marriage if the trust was broken multiple times? The answer is to forgive not only 7 times but 77! (Mt 18:22) When I was misjudged and accused, I asked God - should I keep this friendship? The answer is *"Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend them without expecting to get anything back."* (Lk 6:35a). When I broke God's commandments, I asked God - am I worthy to be your child? The answer is *"I will not forget! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands"* (Is 49:15-16).

Isaiah 7:9 states *"If you will not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all"* - the struggle to keep the faith and trusting in God's will is not easy. Surrounding ourselves with people of the same Christian faith such as the BLD Community can make our journey easier and less perilous. Let us pray that we can be like the early Christians rising to the occasion each time our faith is challenged and proclaiming our faith daily.

Counsels *(from page 1)*

hinders us from being truly fruitful. It is ironic but true, the one common answer is “Self”. We bear fruit when we abide in Christ, but from time to time, we stop relying upon Christ and rely on our own strength and intellect. Jesus said, “No branch can bear fruit by itself!” In those times when we stop depending on Christ, it is then that the branch is unable to continue to produce fruit. Often, we may fall into sin once again simply because we didn’t depend upon Christ, who is the source of life, to help us.

Do you ever have the feeling that in your life you’re doing more and more and yet, are accomplishing less and less? Maybe we need to learn something from this lesson of the vine. When we just keep running and do more and more, we hamper our fruitfulness. All our energy will go into maintaining our activities so that we won’t have energy to develop fruit that will really make a difference in the kingdom of God.

Sometimes we need to take a look at our lives and our community, let us ask ourselves if we’ve allowed our “growth” to get out of control. Are we doing things because they are fruit producing – or just because that’s the way we’ve done it so far?

What does the Vine Grower do for the branch that produces little or no fruit? Does He cut the branch off and throw it away? No, the Father’s desire is that each branch produces an abundance of fruit; Jesus said “Every branch in me that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.”

What is the Father doing when He prunes the branches? He is causing us to stop depending upon ourselves in order that we might rely fully on Christ the True Vine and be fruitful. PRUNING IS PAINFUL. But have you also noticed that although pruning is painful, PRUNING IS PRODUCTIVE. When the branches are pruned back, more fruit really is produced.

In His wisdom, our personal and communal lives are being subjected to regular pruning by the Lord. It is not to punish us but to correct areas in our lives that are growing farther away from Him and His plan for us. We often do not understand the Vine grower’s intent but we must learn to trust that He knows what is best for us.

Saint Paul in Hebrews 12:7, 11 exhorts us: “Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? . . . No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

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Jesus Never Took the Easy Way Out

It would have been a lot easier if He had just walked out. It’s okay to get mad, but knocking over those tables and spilling coins all over the floor was really bold. Those merchants got awfully mad, but the Master stood His ground. That’s because Jesus never took the easy way out.

It would have been a lot easier if He had sent those people home to eat. It’s okay to be compassionate, but there must have been 5000 of them and only one little kid’s lunch to share. After days of healing and teaching them and answering all their questions, He couldn’t send them away hungry. So, tired as He was, the Teacher blessed the little they had and showed them a miracle they would never forget. That’s because Jesus never took the easy way out.

It would have been a lot easier if He had just told them to come back tomorrow. It’s okay to want to help a blind man or a stooped-over old woman or even a leper, but couldn’t it wait until after the Sabbath? Those temple big shots always got so upset. But He was more concerned with those who were in pain than with those who were in power. So the Lord healed them whenever they came. That’s because Jesus never took the easy way out.

It would have been a lot easier if He had just answered Pilate’s question. It’s okay to be brave, but He could have performed a single miracle in front of that crowd and walked away a free man. Those people were out for blood, but the Christ kept silent. That’s because Jesus never took the easy way out.

It would have been a lot easier if He had listened to the crowd. “Come down off that cross.” “Save yourself.” They never understood until it was finished, that God’s plan was for one incredibly bold, brave, compassionate man to sacrifice Himself for His people day after day and then, finally, to give up His life for them and for all of us. The Savior always knew it was not going to be easy, but He saw it through. “It is finished.” And we can thank God that Jesus never took the easy way out.

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

Directions:

1. All witnessing or sharing should point to the glory of the Lord
2. All sharers, witnesses, facilitators, presentors must submit their sharings to the Witness Development Ministry and DCS for review.
3. Love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 09-08 ME #3 BLD Charlotte

Blowing Rock, NC
Contact: Henry/Aida Koryan
973-709-1387 (H) 973-629-6059 (C)

May 16 Agony in the Garden Washing of the Feet Retreat

St Mary's Library

May 16-17 Youth Facilitators' Training

St. Mary's

May 23 Youth Rally 2009

St. Mary's Auditorium 8:00 am – 6:00 pm
*"A Fun Day to Forge the Bond
Between Youth and Parents"*

Contact Youth Ministry for particulars

May 29-31 ME #33

Mary Immaculate Center, Northampton, PA
Contact: Gary/Mil Camacho 732-821-4507
Dens/Mina Mantes 973-887-5904
Application & directions go to bldnewark.com

May 29-31 SE #22

Graymoor Spiritual Life Center, Garrison, NY
Contacts: Manny/Arlene Mangalanzo
arlenemanny@gmail.com 908-256-2622;
Lita Alfaro litaalfaro@aol.com 201-214-8229;
Glenn Canlas invazian21@yahoo.com 201-
888-6700; Boy/Des Parker 201-823-2230
boydesparker@optonline.net

TEACHINGS

May 15 After Worship

Teaching	Mark 10, John 6, Youth
Intro to Intercessory	Singles

May 16 St. Mary's 1-6 pm

Shepherds Training II	LSS 28
Encounter with Jesus	LSS 31
Growth in Prayer /	LSS 32
New Creation Realities	

For Mass & Adoration schedule within the U.S.A.

www.masstimes.org

St. Paul the Apostle

certain that he wrote other letters which are no longer extant. In his Epistles, St. Paul shows himself to be a profound religious thinker and he has had an enduring formative influence in the development of Christianity. The centuries only make more apparent his greatness of mind and spirit. His feast day is June 29th. (Source: Catholic online)

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

ISAIAH 58

Sagip ka Eskuela Program (Save a School Child)

Bring your old or unused school supplies
to St. Mary Church (Fellowship area).

Contacts: Ruben/Luz Amarante 908-810-1213

rubenluz@verizon.net,

Cez/Pinky Calingo 308-230-3660

Gene/Bing Ymbong 308-406-6955

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit

Hamilton Plaza Nursing Home

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

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

Nong & Tricia Bustos 732-591-1340

nongb601@aol.com; teres202@aol.com.

Soup Kitchen - Missionary of Sisters of Charity

60 Jay Street, Newark NJ

Every 4th Saturday of the month. **May 23 - ME 29**

Contact: Nick & Lita Centeno - 973-857-9315

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service / Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion/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.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bible Study

St. Mary & St. Mark Parish

Every Friday, 7:30-8:00 pm @ St. Mary's, Rm. 104
Conducted by Fr. Dennis Kaelin. Everyone is welcome
to know God better through His Word.

For information on St. Mary's and St. Mark's, visit their
newly designed website: www.stmarystmarkparish.com

Week Ending May 01, 2009

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Tithes, Love Offering,	\$2,137
Mission & Fast for the Poor	
Total Disbursement	\$11,350