



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 17 Issue 8

Bulletin Edition

Feb. 25, 2011

STUDY: Women Who Attend Church Are Happier

Also Show More Immunity to Negative Events

ARLINGTON, Virginia, FEB. 18, 2011 (Zenit.org). - A recent study shows that women who are regular church attendees are more immune to the ups and downs of life, and are happier overall. Alexander Ross of the Institute for the Psychological Sciences authored the study that examined a phenomenon of decreased self-reported happiness in American women over the past 36 years. Ross found that church attendance was a significant factor in the reported happiness of women. In general, a drop in church attendance in the time period from 1972 to 2008 was seen to directly affect the happiness of the women in the study.

Ross noted that "the shift over time to lower attendance, a behavior that is associated with decreased general happiness, explains in part the decline in women's happiness."

The study, published in the most recent volume of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion, noted that church attendance declined for men as well during this period, but there was no significant drop in overall happiness for males.

Ross explained that this could be due to the fact that women changed their churchgoing habits over the years more drastically than men, with females reporting a greater drop in attendance than males.

As well, he noted that "although role expectations for both men and women have changed over the past few decades, it could be argued that they have changed more dramatically for women."

"In the context of a greater sense of social disruption," Ross explained, "perhaps women benefited more than men from the stabilizing influence of regular church attendance."

"To the extent to which it provides a transcendent meaning to life and opportunities to form close personal ties," Ross theorized, "regular church attendance ought to increase a person's sense of well-being and satisfaction with life." *Continued on page 2*

COUNSELS

Stewards of God's Mysteries

THEME: Our heavenly Father is glorified when we trust in His divine providence.

WORD: Is 49:14-15; Ps 62:2-3,6-7,8-9; 1Cor 4:1-5; Mt 6:24-34

ORDER: *"Trust God at all times. Pour out your hearts before him."* (Ps 62:8-9)

REFLECTION:

God, through the prophet Isaiah, wanted His people in Zion to walk in His ways. Zion provoked the Holy One of Israel by turning away from Him, by venerating their idol gods. They mocked, persecuted and killed God's prophets. But God remained faithful by sending them words of comfort when they were in the hands of their enemies far from Jerusalem and the Holy Temple. He continued to assure them of His everlasting love, that He would not forsake them: *"Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you."* (Is. 49:15) Similarly, God continues to give His church the same assurance of love today.

In Psalm 62, King David reaffirms his trust in God to be his rock, salvation and stronghold. We should do the same today, for when we rest in God's love, nothing can shake us. As servants of God we have to trust like David did for there is nothing we can do without His help. Those who believe that they can do ministry, evangelization and mission work based on their own human strength and abilities are fooling themselves. The easiest way to fail and commit mistakes and other wrongdoings is to go before God.

St. Paul in 1 Cor. 4: 2 exhorts us: *"Now it is of course required of stewards"* *Continued on page 3*

Promise of the Week

"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides." (Mt 6:33)

Trust Him! Jesus Can!

“If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Jesus said to him, “If you can!” Everything is possible to one who has faith.” Then the boy’s father cried out, “I do believe, help my unbelief.” (Mk 9:22b-24)

This story of the healing of the epileptic demoniac is more than a story of a father trying to help his son. It is a story about Jesus calling forth deeper faith. Jesus did indeed cast out the demon and healed the afflicted boy. But the whole healing episode seems to be a mere afterthought tacked on to the real story- that of the boy’s father and his growing faith. It was the father’s faith that was the catalyst for Jesus’ cure of the boy’s affliction.

There are times when all our comfortable theorizing is challenged and we are left with nothing but to call and trust in God’s goodness in the face of a crisis. It is when the father’s prayer becomes our prayer, ***“I do believe, help my unbelief.”*** (Mk 9:24) When a friend of mine was diagnosed with cancer, she was at a stage in her life when her faith was at a very low point. Our family and some friends prayed with her, and as we did, we were able to reinforce some simple basic truths of our faith: God is alive, He loves us, and He knows what’s going on in our lives. All the love and prayers she received helped her faith to grow stronger. Physically, she grew stronger, too, and had a remission at one time. Throughout her ups and downs, one thing remained constant: her faith continued to grow stronger than her fears and anxieties even in the midst of this ordeal.

Each of us can choose faith over worry, doubt, and fear because it is a gift from God. It is not something we have to conjure up ourselves. It is a powerful grace that helps us hold the ground when we encounter life’s difficulties - sickness, loss of job, family problems. Our faith should not only be in Jesus’ ability to do things for us because, without a doubt, He can! Our challenge rather, is in our ability to trust Him who can do what is humanly impossible! Prayer is an effective way to address our doubts, fears, anxieties, and other trials that we face in life. But rather than simply stating our needs and waiting for God to work, let us completely SURRENDER everything to Him - our philosophies, agenda, and intentions. Let us BELIEVE and TRUST in His infinite goodness! Let us BELIEVE AND TRUST that He will help our unbelief and grant the miracle we pray for because indeed, ***“everything is possible to one who has faith.”*** (Mk 9:23)

Open My Eyes, Lord

As limited as my vision is, if I had to open my eyes without God’s help, I might as well be blind. How many times did I wander aimlessly without a purpose? How many times did I make the wrong judgments based on what I saw? How many times did I stumble and fall because my very own eyes failed me? Many times, I was a victim of deception – by my own self, by others, or by the devil. Many times I told myself, “My eyes lied to me.” I have also asked myself, “Why did I not see it coming?” Equally bad is that my eyes cause me to sin. Countless times I have confessed to priests that I watched things I should not- in the movies, television and internet. Worst of all is that I see the sins of others while I do not see my own. My eyes render me a most hypocritical person. Jesus is right, I am like the Pharisees - I have eyes, yet I cannot see, hence, I become like a blind person.

But the Lord’s vision is perfect. He sees everything from the inside out, from top to bottom, from the back to the front, and on the sides, from the past to the future. He can see even in the darkest of nights. He is the Light of the world, the Perfect Visionary, the Perfect Guide, the Perfect Navigator, the Perfect Prophet, the Perfect Seer, my All-Seeing-and-Knowing-God who waits for me to ask Him to see things the way He sees them.

The psalmist prayed to the Lord, ***“Open my eyes to see clearly the wonders of your teaching.”*** (Ps 119:18) ***“Give me insight to observe your teaching, to keep it with all my heart.”*** (Ps 119:34)

Whenever I ask the Lord to open my eyes, he also opens my heart. At this stage of my life, I am finally seeing the beauty of God’s creation. My journey on this earth finally has meaning and purpose. He leads me as I take His hand and gives me direction in my day to day walk with Him. The Lord is indeed my pair of eyes, the Lamp upon my feet. I’ve begun to see the beauty of love, the joys of sacrifice, and the value of selflessness. The joy of others is now my own. Others’ pain is likewise mine. All His teachings stay with me and in my heart forever. I do not know if I would ever survive without the Lord’s help ever again.

Lord, open my eyes for my heart to see

The perfect love that you sacrificed for me

Teach me to live my life unselfishly

Help me live my life for others unconditionally.

STUDY: Women Who Attend Church...(from page 1)

He concluded, "St. Augustine would not be surprised at our findings, for he taught that mankind's chief good is God, and the happy life exists when that which is man's chief good is both loved and possessed."

Apologetics CONFESSION:

via iPhone Application vs. Going to a Priest

Q. Does the “iPhone confession” application substitute for the sacrament?

A. Nowadays, everyone seems to be in a “microwave” state of mind trying to get things done in the shortest possible time. Man has become so dependent on advanced technology in order to accomplish multiple tasks with efficiency and less effort. And now with the introduction of iPhone’s Confession application, some recent press reports have suggested that this application could replace in-person confession, which has been the subject of discussion amongst Catholics.

The Vatican’s statement on the new iPhone application is that it does not substitute for the sacramental encounter between a penitent and a priest. It is simply a tool that can assist Catholics to make an examination of conscience. In the past, Catholics would sometimes use written questions and answers to prepare for confession, and that’s something that could be done today with the aid of a digital device. Nevertheless, one cannot speak of a “confession” via iPhone.

Q. Why do we confess our sins to a priest? Why not confess them directly to God?

A. There are several reasons. First, because that is what Jesus wants us to do. On Easter Sunday night, our Lord told the Apostles, His first priests, ***“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive men’s sins, they are forgiven them; If you hold them bound, they are held bound.”*** (Jn 20:22-23) Since “hold them bound” means not to forgive them, the Apostles, and their successors, could not know what sins to forgive or not to forgive unless they were first told the sins by the penitent.

Second, telling our sins to a priest teaches us humility, something we would not learn if we confessed our sins privately to God.

Third, we receive graces from the sacrament of Penance.

Fourth, by absolving us of our sins, the priest, who is representing Christ, gives us the assurance that our sins have been forgiven.

And fifth, the priest can give us some sound advice on how to avoid sin in the future, while the person praying privately receives no helpful instructions or necessary counsel.

In his 1984 statement on Reconciliation and Penance, Pope John Paul II urged Catholics to confess their sins often to a priest, saying that it would be “foolish ... to disregard the means of grace and salvation which the Lord has provided and ... to claim to receive forgiveness while doing without the sacrament which was instituted by Christ precisely for forgiveness.”

COUNSEL (from page 1)

that they be found trustworthy.” As the Father is trustworthy, we, His servants must also be trustworthy to become vessels for lofty use by the Lord, beneficial to the Master, and ready for every good work. The Father is glorified when we put our trust in Him; we become trustworthy and others can trust us, too. When we are trustworthy, the Son of God abides in us, discernible to everyone to whom the Lord sends us. Trustworthy stewards who love unfailingly inspire others to trust in God whose love is so much more unfailing and faithful. To become trustworthy is to be true to our God, ourselves, our covenant, our family and our calling.

In this Sunday’s Gospel, Jesus says: ***“No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*** (Mt 6:24) We live in a materialistic society, where many people serve money. We spend all our lives collecting and storing it, only to die and leave it behind. Our desire for money and what it can buy, many times far outweigh our commitment to God and our spiritual well-being. Let us ask ourselves, “can we honestly say that God, and not money, is our master?” What or who occupies more of our thoughts, time and effort?

Jesus also contrasts heavenly values with earthly values explaining that our first loyalty should be to those things that do not fade, cannot be stolen or used up, and never wear out. He does not want us to be fascinated with our possessions, lest they possess us. We are asked to make a decision to choose whatever is eternal and lasting. ***“So, do not worry and say, ‘what are we to eat?’ or...‘what are we to wear?’...all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.”*** (Mt 6:31-34) We should not worry about those needs that God promises to supply. Worry may damage our health, cause the object of our worry to consume our thoughts, disrupt our productivity, negatively affect the way we treat others and reduce our ability to trust in God.

To “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness,” means to give Him first place in every area of our life- to turn to Him first for help, to fill our thoughts with His desires, to be like Him, and to serve and obey Him in everything. We must decide what is really important to us - people, objects, goals and other desires. Any of these can quickly bump God out of first place, if we don’t actively choose. Truth is only in Christ; Christ is the Truth. As stewards and servants, we must examine

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BLD Vision & Mission

BLD VISION

We are a community of disciples inspired by the Holy Spirit to be living witnesses for transformation in Christ to bring about a world of justice, human development and true peace.

BLD MISSION

In response to the challenges of our particular place, time, and culture:

For Our Families

We will evangelize families and build communities of faith through encounters, Life in the Spirit Seminars and discipleship formation. We will give formation on personal and family prayer, pro-life values, catholic social teachings, and stewardship.

For Our BLD Communities

We will actively participate in the life and mission of the church in accord with our God-given gifts.

For Our Country

We will work on poverty alleviation through scholarships, housing for the poor, and advocacies for life, environment, and good governance.

**Ignorance of the Bible
is Ignorance of Christ.
Read your Bible daily!**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Youth LSS #16

Mar. 4-6 • St. Mary's Auditorium

Contact: Youth Tricord @ ycs@bldnewark.com

LSS #36

Apr. 1-3 • St. Mary's Auditorium

Contact: Joven/Lisa Soriano @ lsa@bldnewark.com

Marriage Encounter 37

May 13-15 • Radisson Hotel located in Carteret, NJ

Contacts: Nick/Island Raagas @ nlraagas@yahoo.com

• MLA @ mla@blenewark.com

SAVE THE DATE

Catholic Men's Conference

Mar. 5 (Saturday) • Seton Hall University

Online registration: www.rcan.org/menscommission

Disciples Assembly/DLC Meeting

Mar. 12 • 1-5pm • Venue TBD

For all: Committed and Covenanted Disciples

Community Retreat

Mar. 26 • 9am-7pm • St. Mary's

Contact: Pastoral Ministry pastoral@bldnewark.com

COUNSEL (from page 3)

ourselves daily to see how truthfully we abide in Christ. Can we really say that we are one with the Lord, that it is Him that we seek? Is the good we are seeking for His glory or ours? To become trustworthy is to trust God and God alone as the Sovereign Master who will direct our life, work and ministry, and who alone can produce the good fruit of faith and eternal life in us. Only by completely trusting God can we be true servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God!

DIRECTIONS

1. Choose God above all other worldly attachments.
2. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit

56 Hamilton Plaza, Passaic, NJ 07055

Monthly, every 2nd Sat. Volunteers are needed.

Mar. 12 • Singles • Contacts

soloparents@bldnewark.com Audie/Vulet Chong 732-356-9056

SECRETARIAT

Replacement IDs and database updates, will take place every 4th Friday at the Auditorium

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

www.masstimes.org or call 410-676-6000

TEACHING CALENDAR

2/25 Golden Years & Intercessory Formation

3/11 Youth Teaching

3/18 Mark 10, John 6 & Service Formation

3/19 Christian Maturity I • LSS 33 (ME33/SPE11)
Gifts & Fruit of the Holy Spirit • LSS 34 & 35, SPE12

Respect For Human Life • Community

3/25 Golden Years & Intercessory Formation

Fri: after worship; *Sat: 1-6pm @ St. Mary's, + At Reunion

Special Announcement

June 4 • 1-5pm • Witness Development Program

St. Mary's, Room 205

LORD'S PROVISION

WEEK ENDING FEB. 18, 2011

	Actual	YTD
Collections	7,271.00	33,290.53
Disbursements	10,341.14	49,319.87
Surplus/(Deficit)		

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

Thank you for your continued support!

Stewardship - It's a way of life!

CN archives are available at www.bldnewark.net, click on Covenant News.