



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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NEWS

Forty-one attend the Washing of the Feet / Agony in the Garden Retreat



From one of the participant's at the Washing of the Feet / Agony in the Garden BLD retreat held last Saturday, November 5 at the Divine Mercy Parish School library: "It was a humbling experience to go down on your knees and wash your friends' feet while telling them you loved them or saying sorry for the times you may have hurt them. Washing my friends' feet gave me a new perspective of how it is to serve your fellow human being with love and humility. Having my feet washed by everyone in the group and later being prayed over by somebody younger or someone you just met was such a very humbling and touching experience. It made me realize how Jesus humbled Himself to wash His disciples' feet and taught me how I must change the way I serve my brethren with humility."

Such were the fruits that were gathered after the Washing of the Feet and Agony in the Garden Retreat that was held last Saturday, Nov 5, at the DMP Library. Ed Unay, Nes Vasquez, ...Continued on page 4

COUNSELS

Be Prepared

THEME: Christ is sovereign in our life when we remain in God's Word, and God's Word remains in us.

WORD: Mal 3:19-20 ~ Ps 98:5-6,7-8,9
2 Thes 3:7-12 ~ Lk 21:5-19

ORDER: **"See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name... Do not follow them!"**
(Luke 21:8)

REFLECTION:

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about what will happen when the end is near - wars and insurrections, nation rising up against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes, famines, plagues and persecution. This sounds like our present times. So is the end time near? We cannot tell; only God knows. But the Church in its wisdom wants us to direct our thoughts towards the end of time or as some people would call it the Judgment Day. Why focus on the end of the world? It is to prepare us. Are we prepared to meet our Lord God? For Protestants, salvation comes from faith alone, saying that Jesus is the Lord and one's personal Savior. As Catholics, we believe that it comes from His absolute grace and mercy, but that we also must express faith evidenced by our good works. Is our house in order? Are you saved?

The first reading and the Psalm remind us that God is a God of Justice. Evildoers will be set on fire leaving neither root nor branch, while those who fear His name, will be bathed with His healing rays. In Luke 3:17 it says **"His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."** In Matthew 25:32-33,45 it says **"And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and ...Continued on page 3"**

Promise of the Week

"By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

- Luke 21:19

THE CROWN OF LIFE

In the Book of Revelation, God promises to the Church at Smyrna that if they remain faithful unto death, He **"will give you the crown of life"** (Rev 2:10c). What exactly is the Spirit saying to that Church, and to us today? Revelation is a beautiful, terrifying text that is difficult to understand. Perhaps the following remarks can help us appreciate the richness it offers.

Revelation is an "apocalyptic" text and a prophecy (for John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day"), meaning that it is a text that uses visions, dreams, and symbols that are disclosed from God (apocalyptic) to interpret the situation from God's perspective (prophecy). John seems to have had a remarkable knowledge of scripture, especially the Prophets (including their "apocalyptic" sections and texts, such as Daniel and parts of Isaiah). Today, we tend to think more literally, and for that reason we struggle with Revelation. But in antiquity, both Jews and the first Christians were already quite familiar with the genre of apocalyptic and would have caught all the "layers" of John's message in Revelation. If we are attentive to the "echoes" of other scriptural texts in Revelation, we will discover how truly inspired Revelation is.

Layers in Revelation: Echoes of Scripture

Let us examine the layers in this message to Smyrna. John writes to seven churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), including Smyrna, a city that still exists today (Izmir, Turkey). He wrote at a time when the cult of Emperor-worship in the Roman Empire was growing, and when local persecutions against Christians were beginning, so Revelation is largely concerned with consoling and challenging believers to resist the "beast" and his "false prophet" (the Emperor and his local officials) by turning away from the prevailing culture, or by persevering amidst persecution.

Smyrna was a prosperous port city and a center of Emperor-worship with two major temples (including a new temple to Caesar that was built around 26 AD), and it also housed a prominent Jewish synagogue. Although the city was rich, the Church in Smyrna was poor and vulnerable. Throughout the Roman Empire, Jews enjoyed a special exemption from Emperor-worship. For a time, the first Christians had this protection too. It seems that in Smyrna, there was a "parting of the ways" between the mixed Jewish-Gentile Church and the Jewish community that did not acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, and that the Synagogue was denouncing the Church in Smyrna as false Jews. For this reason, John calls their opponents an "assembly of Satan" (2:9). We must carefully interpret this polemic today, for Paul himself tells us in his most mature Epistle that **"all Israel will be saved"** (Rom 11:26) and the **"gifts →→**

More Lessons from Zaccheus

In this Gospel reading for Tuesday, November 15, Zaccheus represents the worst of Jewish society. He collects taxes for the Roman empire and keeps some of the money he collects for his service to the empire, while oppressing his own people. Everyone hates him yet he carries out his duty. When Jesus comes to Jericho, Zaccheus wants to see Him but is blocked by everyone else. Since he is so small, he has to climb a tree to get to see Jesus preach. Jesus then calls up to him saying that He must stay at his house that night. Jesus stayed with him to send a message. He came for the rejected and the oppressed.

Moved by his faith in Jesus, Zaccheus pledged to repay what he had overcollected and to do so 4 times over if he had extorted anyone. Jesus will save anyone so long as they repent and believe that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Zaccheus doesn't only represent the worst of society, he represents all sinners. He represents sinners who keep trying to be better.

If we make ourselves better for God, He will help us every step of the way. There are many times when we feel that we are not worthy to do this, or not worthy to do that. God will make us worthy to do what needs to be done according to His will. Our faith in Him will be what guides us if we get lost. Our faith in Him will be what speaks when we are at a loss for words. Our faith in Him will guide us to action when we are unable to act. Zaccheus pledged to act faithfully and repair any wrongdoing he had committed as a tax collector. Jesus told him that his faith would save him. Like him we must act on our faith, not only to save ourselves, but for others to see and learn from.

→ **and the call of God are irrevocable"** (Rom 11:29).

So it is not that all Jews are fake Jews and aligned with the enemy. Rather, it is a specific Synagogue in Smyrna that cannot claim to be true to Judaism because of their slander, for **"you shall not bear false witness."** That is the real reason behind John's strong language.

This leaves the Church at Smyrna vulnerable to pressure from the culture and government to comply with Emperor-worship. Although the Church is materially poor and suffering, they are rich in the eyes of Jesus (Rev 2:9). They are rich precisely because the Lord alone is their portion. Moreover, Jesus, **"the first and the last, who once died but came back to life"** knows their poverty and tribulation.

- to be continued in the CN for Nov 18, 2016 (for those interested, one of the most reliable sources available, with more information and insights, is the Sacred Scripture Catholic Commentary volume on Revelation)

From a member of the Youth Ministry:

The Parable of the Ten Gold Coins

The Parable of the Ten Gold Coins was one of the many parables Jesus addressed to the people near Jerusalem. This parable is about a master who gave three of his servants' ten coins each for trade, who then traveled to a distant country to become king. When the new king returned, he called for his three servants to find out what they had done with their coins. The first servant earned ten more coins from his trade and the king put him in charge of ten cities. The second servant earned five more coins and was put in charge of five cities. But the last servant didn't engage in trade and didn't earn any more coins because he feared the king. Instead of being given cities to rule over, the king took away the servant's coin and gave it to the first servant with ten coins.

The Parable of the Ten Gold Coins was one of the many parables that was difficult for me to understand at first. The king represents God, the three servants represent us, and the gold coins represent the many gifts that God has given to us. This parable teaches us that we must stay faithful to God by using the gifts that He has given us in order to fulfill His works and spread His Word. The first two servants used their gifts and were rewarded with great things from God but the third servant didn't use his gifts and his gifts were taken away and given to the first servant. If God has given us gifts to use to fulfill His works, we shouldn't be scared or afraid to use them. We should use these gifts and be faithful to God so that when Jesus returns to Earth, we may be rewarded greatly in Heaven.



COUNSELS (continued from page 1)

the goats on his left. ...And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Jesus is clear on what will happen at His second coming. Are we ready? Or are we risking our souls for all eternity?

In the second reading Paul tells us how to act while waiting for the Lord; he cited the model to be imitated, of working in toil and drudgery, instructing and evangelizing. We know what he meant, as in Mark 16:15, when Jesus commanded ***"Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature."*** And also in Matthew 25:35-36, when Christ said, ***"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."***

There is a lot of work to be done, focused on the tasks to be accomplished, as opposed to just comparing our efforts against those of others. Here in BLD we have our encounters, seminars and our Christian Discipleship Formation program, which we must continue to support and promote, for this is how we proclaim the Gospel in our modern world. That is why it is important to invite our families and friends, our co-workers and acquaintances. Aside from our personal prayers and devotions, we have Friday worships and Sunday Mass; this is how we remain in God's Word and how God's Word remains in us. We keep our eyes firmly focused on our Lord, even when terrible things are happening with us or around us.

In the Gospel, Jesus promised that by our perseverance, we will secure our lives. Perseverance is defined as putting a continuous effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failures, or opposition. In a theological sense, it also means a continuance in a state of grace till the end, leading to eternal salvation.

Jesus said that there will be persecution. We must be prepared, for our future happiness depends on our present efforts to turn to God and live a life of holiness. On the other hand, sin and selfishness cut us off from the grace of God. Do not be deceived; do not be terrified. But be prepared for tension, conflict and difficult struggles ahead. And if persecuted, be ready to give your testimony to the glory of God. For He will keep sending His Holy Spirit to give us wisdom, to equip us to battle with the powers and principalities who will be powerless before the mighty Name of Jesus.

...Continued on page 4

COUNSELS (continued from page 3)

We will testify to the light and to the future resurrection of the body which our Lord assures us of. In the meantime in the here and now we need to persevere and keep the faith. We must not lose hope because of trials, troubles and tribulations. Our God is in control, whatever the future holds. It is a life-long process of daily conversion, but heaven is our final destination - a life of eternal joy with our God. In Romans 12:12 St. Paul says, "*Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.*" Amen

Directions:

1. Conduct yourselves in an orderly way, keep busy and stay focused on doing your ministry work.
2. Soak yourselves in the Word of God, serving in humility, obedience and unity.

NEWS (continued from page 1)



Michael Weiner, Pauline Montemayor, Lelet Quevada, Amor Ferrer, Mike Pepino and Cez Calingo who were called to share greatly helped the participants learn and reflect on their own calling to serve and to intercede.

A total of 41 came to attend the retreat. Those in attendance were: Arnold/Cristy Yanto of ME 36; John Mejorada of ME 44; from ME 45: Carlos/Donna Austria, Nestor/Rosalie Clarin, Antonio/Fe Escoto, Paul/Pinky Martinez, Paule McKenzie, Rey/Elma Pineda, Arnel/Maribel Torres, Pros/Minda Villarica; Solo Parents: Martin Barotilla, Germana Espejon, Rose Go, Yanick Joseph, Violy Lee, Eliza Literato, Evelyn Nuguid, Mariter Ompod, Ester Villaflor; our Singles brethren: Samantha Aglibut, Marc Brillantes, Molly Brillantes, Joshua Cruz, Erika Flores, Jessie Gaudiel, Marielle Go, Faith Ikalina, Jen Ompod, Mikko Pepino, Kathrina Salonga, →→

Please note that a pdf of this Covenant News is also available online at BLDNEWARK.com

LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

| Collections: | Prior Week | YTD |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| Tithes & Love Offerings | \$ 2,212 | \$ 118,507 |
| Mission Collections | \$ 63 | \$ 6,503 |

Financial details are available to all members through treasury@bldnewark.com
Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Marriage Encounter # 47

November 18-20, 2016

Hotel Executive Suites

30 Minue Street, Carteret, NJ

Contact email: MLA@bldnewark.com



**Feast of Christ the King
Sunday, November 20, 2016
Conclusion of the Extraordinary
Jubilee Year of Mercy**



THE POWER OF ONE

**WE WILL
KEEP
FIGHTING
FOR LIFE!**



Medical Mission

February 13-16, 2017

Maasin, Leyte, Philippines

Contact Persons: Ramon/Leonie Mariazeta

rmariazeta@msn.com / lmariazeta@msn.com

| Marshaling | Schedule | Date | Apostolate |
|------------|----------|---------|----------------|
| | | Nov 18 | Evangelization |
| | | Nov 25 | Formation |
| | | Dec 2 | Management |
| | Dec 9 | Mission | |

→ James Santiago, Alyssa Sta. Ana; and Marietta Maceda from LSS 46B

Msgr. Schetelick, who was the Retreat Director, capped the day with a holy Mass, exhorting everyone present to always look at their hands and see and realize that they are Jesus' hands...hands that are called to serve with love and humility... And as if in confirmation of everything that happened that day, at the altar was a statue of Jesus without any hands.