



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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## NEWS

### YE #25 changes lives - A New Family; A New Home

by Matthew Vergel



From the funniest of ice breakers to the deepest reflections in their sharing circles, Youth Encounter #25 permanently changed the YE candidates' lives for the better. The word *encounter* does not sufficiently capture the thrill of the journey that Bukas Loob sa Diyos (BLD) provided. The more accurate word would be *adventure*. As the candidates entered the retreat center, they were immediately immersed in an environment that was filled to the brim with pride for our Catholic religion.

The ingeniously planned weekend flew by for the youth as they were constantly participating in activities that were designed to develop their self-worth and enhance their zeal for the Lord. By taking part in this spiritual encounter, the candidates joined a family that is held together by the strong bond of faith. ...Continued on page 2

## COUNSELS

### Taking Care of Our Faith

THEME: Unshakeable faith enables us to lead others to a deeper understanding of Christ's teachings.

WORD: Jer 23:1-6 ~ Ps 23:1-3,3-4,5,6  
Eph 2:13-18~ Mk 6:30-34

ORDER: "...gather the remnant of my flock... and bring them back..." (Jer 23:3)

REFLECTION:

*T*oday's society is so divided and confused. If an organization is divided, it is always the consequence of a lack of a strong leadership. When leaders are weak, they fail to provide the correct purpose and vision for people to follow; then those with wrong values might impose theirs on others, resulting in disunity and division.

Our life, like that of the Apostles must be one of service to Christ, to our family and to society. Jesus is the strong Leader Whom we need to remain connected to; we must also bring others to Him and into a deeper understanding of His teachings. Only God can provide us with absolute and lasting values. If our faith is anchored on Jesus as the ROCK, then, with Him as our foundation, we become unshakeable because we have stability, strength, and durability. The Prophet Isaiah says, "*Trust in the Lord forever! For the Lord is an eternal Rock.*" (Is 26:4) Our faith in Jesus Christ is not just an intellectual or verbal assent but a commitment of the heart to His person, His works, and His words.

In Jeremiah's time, there was a lot of confusion and much heartache for the Jews. The Kings and leaders did not prove to be true shepherds. ...Continued on page 3

### Promise of the Week

*"I will raise up shepherds for them... so that they need no longer fear..." (Jer 23:4)*

## **NEWS: YE #25 changes lives**

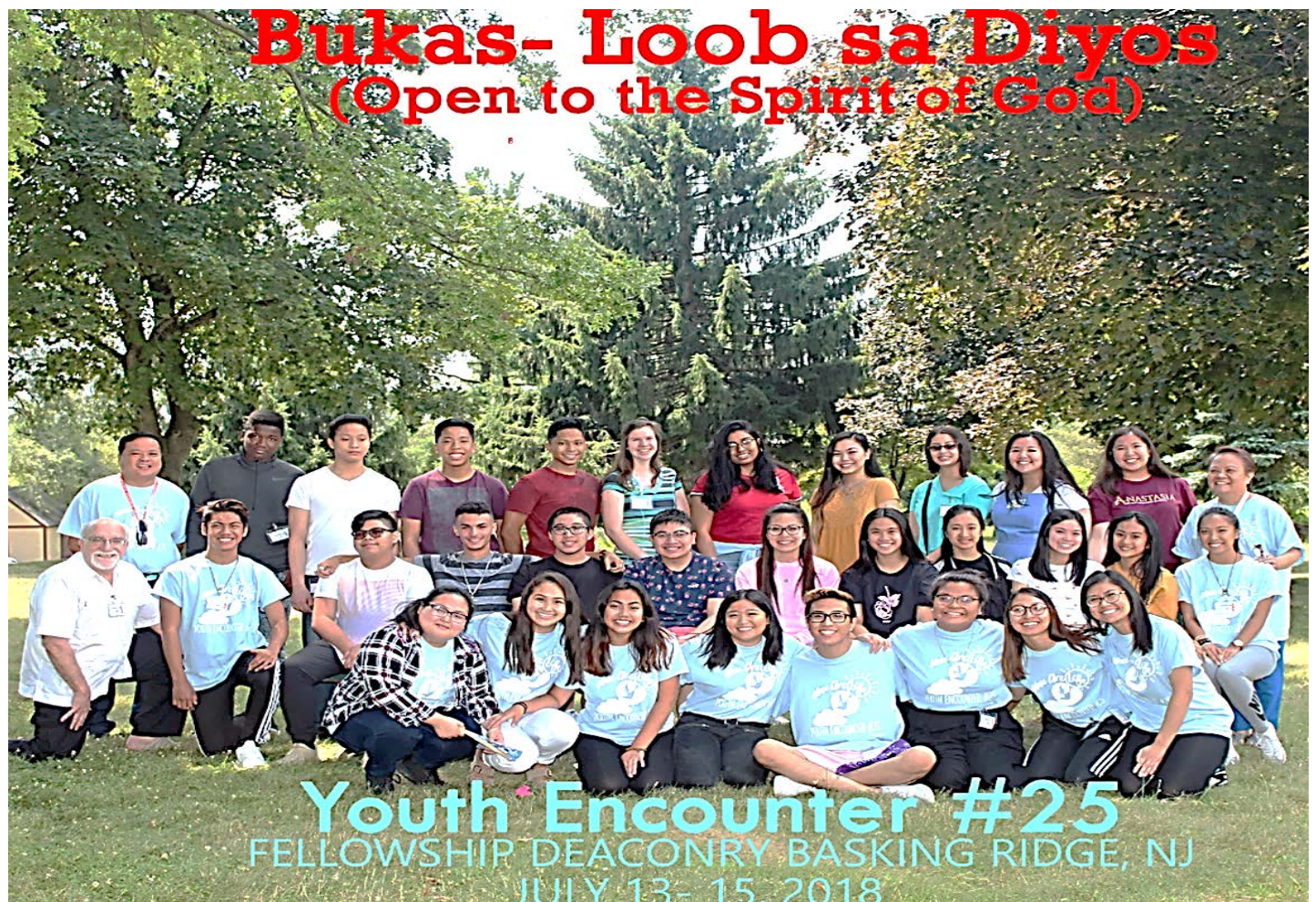
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While society values faith less and less, BLD serves as a beacon of faith; better yet, BLD makes faith enjoyable. While to some, religion conjures up monotonous images of hours spent just sitting in church, BLD helps to open minds and hearts (“bukas loob”) to the Lord by opening eyes to appreciate the beauty of Catholicism; and BLD makes faith fun. Having taken the encounter, I can testify that from the moment I entered that retreat center, I became fully engaged in what it means to be a Catholic. With a musical blast from the Praise Group and a spiritual blast from the Holy Spirit, my soul felt rejuvenated while I could barely hide my happiness. While swaying to “O Come to the Altar” and jumping to “Unstoppable God,” I felt proud to be part of a religion that is inherently joy-filled. I felt at ease while being my true self, with a family who understood me and my experiences. I felt enlightened by this year’s theme, which was “Eyes Blind; Open Mind;” I felt loved by all the affirming people around me; and, most importantly, I felt at home.

Joshua Mendoza, Kathryn Guiang, and Tito Gerry and Tita Marie Somera have been chosen to be the Class Shepherds. They are tasked with guiding the lambs and assisting them in their spiritual growth.

Thank you to all - our Spiritual Director, Monsignor Schetelick and the Facilitators: Michael Rangel, Camille Martinez, Issa Somera, & Pochie Brillantes. Special thanks also to the Understudies: Rheanne Reyes, Jay Pascual, Bernadette Tam, and Juliana Yanto; the sponsoring class, praise, auxies, adults, and everyone that made this weekend happen! It was truly a blessing!

The YE #25 members are: Ariana Arakelian-Gonzalez, Danie Avisado\*, Reese Brillantes\*, Cristian Canillas, Chad Cebedo\*, Jules DeCastro, Catheryn Duarte, Julia Duarte, Kevin Ezirim, Talitha Fernandes, Matthew Franco, Alexa Larobis, Brienna Malamug, David Marcelo, Ryan Martinez\*, Karylle Torres, Erin Twohig, JJ Vergel, Matthew Vergel\* (\* denotes Class Coordinator)



## LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT

After a relaxing week spent on the beaches of North Carolina, my family was traveling back to New Jersey when a text from a friend popped up on my phone. My friend was asking if we knew the Trinidad family that had been involved in a horrible fatal accident on a Delaware highway the previous day, and she wondered if they were part of BLD. Not knowing them personally and then later finding out that they were not acquainted with the Community did not lessen the shock I felt. Now, more than another week later, I'm still compelled to try to make sense of it.

A father and his four daughters died while on the way home from another beach, and part of my shock came from knowing that what happened to them could have very easily happened to anyone else traveling, on any given day, and on any given highway. Given that we too were on the road that weekend, I shuddered at the thought that it could have been my family in an accident, anywhere along the six-hundred-plus miles that we were in the car for, on the ride back from North Carolina.

The big question of course is why did it happen? Unfortunately, I don't think that anyone can ever come up with a satisfactory answer. The tragedy defies human logic; I dare say that it defies God logic too. I cannot imagine that the accident that Friday afternoon was in any of His plans. Because they were a God-fearing family, I firmly believe that God meant for them to get home safely to Teaneck, New Jersey. But it happened, as have many other road tragedies that I've read about in the news recently.

So, should I even try to make sense of why accidents happen? Natural disasters and incurable diseases also stir up similar questions. Although it will almost forever be elusive, somehow, I suspect that I won't be able to stop myself from searching for an answer. Death, it seems, is just a part of life. But life isn't just about eventually surrendering to its final act.

At Mass this morning, I started wondering about what should be man's final thought when the inevitable happens. And as I prayed for the Trinidad family, Jesus' warning in Matthew 24 dominated my thoughts (about the "**day and hour**" that come unexpectedly, *like a thief in the night*). Then I arrived at two answers to what that final thought should be; but I still wasn't sure which one the very last thought should be, this side of heaven. Is it, "Lord, I'm sorry for my sins, please forgive me.?" Or should it be "Lord I still praise and love You.?" →→

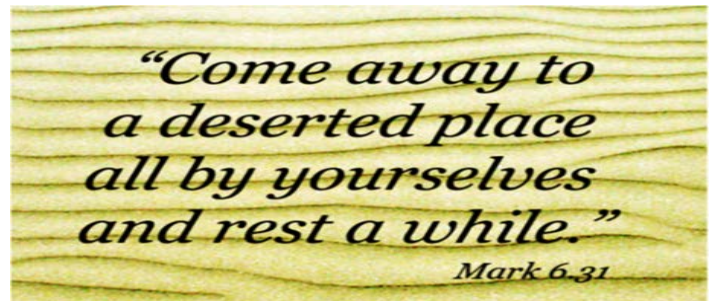
## COUNSELS

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The Prophet spoke of hope despite the chaotic situation. God was to raise a new Shepherd Who would rule justly and unite Israel and Judah. Thus, God made this promise: "***I will raise up shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they need no longer fear.***" (Jer 23:4).

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul said that since we were in sin, we were once "far off" from God. But through Christ's redemptive work of salvation and through His blood, we have been brought near to God. Those who are far off and near are now brought together through Jesus, our Source of Peace, Who gave us new access to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

After the Twelve Apostles returned from their first missionary journey, they reported to Jesus all that they had done and taught. They told Him about how they had preached repentance, cured the sick and expelled demons, and that they were so successful that people were coming to them in great numbers; so many that the twelve did not even have time to eat. And so, our Lord Jesus told the Apostles:



They took a boat to go to a solitary place where they could have time for themselves to regain their strength, as well as prayerfully internalize their experiences. But this did not happen as the crowd followed them and intruded upon their retreat. Seeing the people, Jesus felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. There and then Jesus made it His priority to provide for their spiritual and physical needs. He taught them many things; He gave them nourishment by His teachings; He fed them God's wisdom and words of direction on how to do God's will.

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→ Then in his homily, the priest started citing the very first of the Ten Commandments, and I realized that no matter what happens in life, loving and praising God above everything is the only thing that gives life its truest meaning. And that includes that very last moment when He calls us home to be with Him in Heaven.



Now, where can we find a place where there is silence and hardly anyone around to bother us? At Church in front of the Blessed Sacrament is one place; much better too if we receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. Then there are the many ways that we get to know Jesus; here in BLD this happens via our Teaching Formation and ministry endeavors.

When God gave the Ten Commandments, He specified that one day of the week was a rest day – the Lord’s day. To accomplish great things in our spiritual lives, just as Jesus invited the Apostles to do, we too must devote some time and attention to “rest a while.” If we want to continue to be good shepherds to our families and to one another, we should remember that we must be healthy – physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

*Self care  
is a  
divine  
responsibility*

Whether busy or at rest, we know and believe that God touches our lives most powerfully, and that ultimately, we are victorious over our troubles because of our unshakeable faith in Christ Jesus.

**Directions:**

- Attend teachings regularly.
- Reach out and encourage members of the community to participate in continuing formation for their spiritual growth.

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**PLEASE SUPPORT THIS YEAR’S FUNDRAISERS:**

- **Dinner Dance on Saturday, Sept 22, 2018**  
**PLEASE PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018**  
**\$50 for adults; under 12 years old - \$40**
- **26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Christmas Journal**

The Fundraising Committee will have a table during Fellowship every Friday. If you would like more information about the journal or dance, please stop by. More information will also be available on the ‘bldnewark.com’ website under the ‘Events’ tab.

**LORD’S PROVISION**

Previous Week’s

Collections:	Last Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 1,377	\$ 36,086
Love Offerings	\$ 1,147	\$ 27,200
Mission Collections	\$ 80	\$ 10,566

Financial details are available to all members through [treasury@bldnewark.com](mailto:treasury@bldnewark.com)

Thank you for your continued support!

**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**Community Day**



“... love one another as I have loved you”

August 18, 2018  
Johnson Park, Grove 4  
Piscataway, NJ

**Wear your Team Color!**  
A - C Red Team  
D - G Blue Team  
H - P Green Team  
Q - Z Yellow Team

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Jul 27	Formation
		Aug 3	Management
		Aug 10	Mission
		Aug 17	Pastoral