



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 22 Issue 21

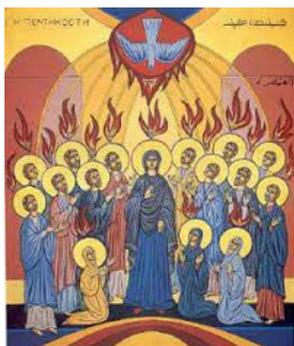
Bulletin Edition

May 20, 2016

NEWS

COUNSELS

Church celebrates its birthday



Last Sunday, May 15th, the Catholic Church celebrated the Feast of Pentecost. It is also known as the Birthday of the Church, when the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles, ten days after Christ's Ascension, which itself was forty days after

His Easter Resurrection (thus the name "Pentecost" meaning fifty). In many area Churches, vigils were held to welcome the Holy Spirit the day before (Saturday). Among the extra events at masses were a sprinkling of Holy Water upon all congregants and the singing of special songs invoking the Holy Spirit to come fill us and the world.

In his own Pentecost Mass homily, His Holiness Pope Francis stressed the mission of the Church which was set in motion by the gift of the Holy Spirit. The mission, founded by Jesus Himself "was to renew our relationship with the Father." According to the Pontiff, "We were made to be God's children, it is in our DNA."

The Church is now also, about mid-way through the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Several area Churches have been designated with Holy Doors, where pilgrims are granted plenary indulgences for going through Holy Doors, receiving the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation (so as to be in "a state of grace") and performing Corporal/Spiritual Works of Mercy. One of those doors, of course, is the main door of Divine Mercy Parish in Rahway (where BLD meets every Friday evening). As summer plans are made, everyone is encouraged to search for Holy Doors of Mercy at their various destinations, to experience His mercy even more. ...Continued on page 4

Most Holy Trinity, The Glory of God

THEME: We keep the word of God when we speak of the glory of God.

WORD: Prv 8:22-31 / Ps 8:4-5,6-7,8-9
Rom 5:1-5 / Jn 16:12-15

ORDER: Boast in hope of the glory of God.

REFLECTION:

The glory of God is manifested in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. It is the greatest mystery of our faith and it challenges our understanding of the greatest love of all. It is the love that transcends time, from the creation to infinity.



The love of God lives in us when we believe that we are the beauty of His creation as He placed us above all things. God further expressed His great love for us in John 3:16 "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.*" By sending His only Son, God wants humanity to see and believe that He truly exists.

In addition to God's expression of His love, our Lord Jesus exemplified humility from the time of His birth up to His death. He was born in a manger which is a box in a stable or barn from which horses or cattle eat. "*He humbled himself to death, even death on the cross*" (Phil 2:8) to make Himself an offering for our salvation.

After the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, this has happened: "*the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the holy Spirit*" (Rom 5:5b). The Holy Spirit made us His temple in order for us to realize

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Promise of the Week

"...the Spirit of truth, he will guide you..." (Jn 16:3a)

Born Anew

The reading for Wednesday, May 25th is taken from the first chapter of the First Letter of Saint Peter. Peter writes to the early Christian communities, encouraging them to live holy lives and turn away from their former ways of living in ignorance. To fully understand the message that St. Peter had for the early Christians and for us, we need to examine some of the references he made to the Old Testament.

“You were ransomed” (1 Pt 1:18) implies that we were once held captive. This applies to all of us. We all inherited original sin from our first ancestors, Adam and Eve. The concepts of captivity and ransom also bring to mind the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt and the Exodus. It is no coincidence that Peter goes on to mention that we were purchased with the Blood of Christ which he compares to that of a spotless lamb (1 Pt 1:19), an obvious reference to the Passover lambs sacrificed in place of the firstborn sons of Israel (Ex 12:12-13). Through these allusions to the Old Testament, we discover the universal call of the Christian faithful to the New Exodus, which is freedom not from the political and military oppression of Egypt, but from our spiritual captivity under sin.

If any further evidence of the call to the New Exodus of new and holy living is needed, we only need to take a closer look at the words of the prophet Isaiah (Is 40:6-8) in chapter 1 of the First Letter of Peter (verses 24-25). We find a proclamation, warning the Israelites against placing the honor of men above the glory of God's everlasting word. If we look at the preceding verses, we'll even find the same words that St. John the Baptist proclaimed, as he prepared the way of repentance for Jesus' public ministry, *“prepare the way of the LORD”* (Is 40:3, Mk 1:3). These common threads of captivity, ransom, Exodus, baptism, and new life are not merely coincidence, but *holy* coincidence, inspired by the Divine Author, the Holy Spirit.

For most of us, our spiritual exodus began at baptism, when we were, as in the words of St. Peter, *“purified”* and *“born anew”* (1 Pt 1:22,23). Let us remember that our own exodus out of sin is an ongoing journey. The Exodus of the Israelites began with the flight from Egypt, but didn't conclude until they had traversed the wilderness and crossed the river Jordan into the Promised Land. In much the same way, we all must continue living our lives in a way that will lead us to the heavenly Promised Land, *“through the living and abiding word of God.”* (1 Pt 1:23)

Give Up Everything

“We have given up everything and followed you.”
– St. Peter in Mark 10:28

As the Church's liturgical calendar returns to Ordinary Time, the Gospel readings for the daily Masses come back to some familiar themes. The readings for May 23, 24 and 25 deal with what the Lord said it would take to get to heaven. Seemingly taken aback, St. Peter is quoted as having uttered the sentence above.

The cost of discipleship can seem to be very steep, so we may think that only saints of the past are capable of it. But there are indeed, modern day saints. Mother Teresa (founder of the Missionaries of Charity) and the lesser known, but equally anointed Jamaican priest, Fr. Richard Ho Lung (of the Missionaries of the Poor) come to mind, along with the many religious and volunteers involved with both orders who've found peace and happiness serving the poor.

BLD has truly been blessed to be associated with the soup kitchen that Mother Teresa's nuns operate in Newark. Most everyone in **BLD** has been through a serving experience there at least once. Early on, I was able to get myself on the list of volunteers to serve there several times.

It was on one of those occasions when the nun-in-charge asked for some additional help. They needed some muscle to move something heavy to the second floor of their building. As it turns out, it was an old toilet from the first floor bathroom. Guess who drew the shorter straw to bear the larger share of its weight as we carried it up the building stairs? Seems that a porcelain toilet is heavier than I thought, so, because of that weight, I soon found myself with my precious cheeks pressed up against the toilet's bowl as we were bringing it up to the second floor.

Needless to say, I survived. And to this day, I am glad I volunteered. I felt I had done a good deed, but really more than that, I had my first real personal window into what “giving up everything” can truly mean.

The second floor had one giant room with single beds for the nuns, neatly arranged dormitory style. The beds had one small headboard where they each kept the few possessions they still personally owned. Some had books; others had some pictures, all had religious articles; and one of them had her teddy bear. And that was it; all their worldly possessions in one small single headboard.

I am ashamed to admit that I really have much, much more than they do, and really have no clue if I'd ever be able to do what modern-day saints such as those nuns proved to me is possible, when I caught a glimpse of their simple lives. Lord, giving up everything is a truly tough standard. But yes, please continue to send me the opportunities and help me try. Always, be with us, **AMEN**.

Be A Living Stone



Origen, one of the Early Church Fathers coined the phrase, 'Living Stones' to refer to all who believe in Christ Jesus and live in close union with Him.

The Church is like a spiritual building of which Christ is the cornerstone, that is, the stone that supports the entire structure. We Christians have to be living stones united to Christ by faith and grace, thereby forming a solid temple in which "spiritual sacrifices" are offered which are acceptable to God. The closer our union with Christ, the stronger the building is.

If you want to better prepare yourself for its construction, and be one of the stones closest to the foundation, you need to realize that Christ Himself is the foundation of this spiritual building. Saint Paul tells us that no one can lay any other foundation than that of Jesus Christ.

Real Christians are holy; their conduct attracts others to the faith. Their exemplary behavior in social and civic life shows that they obey lawful authority. Husbands and wives respect each other. They encourage all to practice fraternal charity; they stay true to the faith even when non-believers criticize them, or cause them to suffer, or insult them for following Christ.

In Saint Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says, "***Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.***" (Mt 5:16)

Saint John Chrysostom exhorted his flock this way: "There would be no need for preaching if our life were a beacon of virtues - no call for words if we had deeds to show. There would be no pagans if we were truly Christians - if we kept Jesus Christ's commandments, if we put up with unjust treatment and deception, if we blessed those who cursed us, if we returned good for evil. No one would be such a monster not to embrace the true religion immediately if we really lived like that."

Saint Peter reminds us of the dangers in our personal evil inclinations which wage war against our souls. Constant effort is called for, if one is to control passions and overcome temptation. Saint Gregory the Great teaches us, "There are some, who wish to be humble, but without being despised, who wish to be happy with their lot, but without being needy, who wish to be chaste, without mortifying the body, to be patient without suffering. They want both to acquire virtues and to avoid the sacrifices those virtues involve."

Come to Him, to that **Living Stone**, rejected by men, but Who in God's sight is chosen and precious. Be living stones yourselves built into a spiritual house.

COUNSELS (continued from page 1)

that He is always with us. Through the Holy Spirit, we are blessed with the hope that provides us with the strength and boldness to stand upon the truth of the glory of God. It is also this hope through the Holy Spirit that provides us with the endurance to persevere in overcoming any affliction that may come our way. "***And hope does not disappoint***" (Rom 5:5a), as long as we keep our faith in Him.

The *love* of the Father became the greatest love of all through the *humility* of the Son and further perfected with the blessing of *hope* through the Holy Spirit. This is the very foundation of our faith in God.

What then can we do to speak of God's glory?

We can claim to be part of His body, His Church. By answering His call to join a faith-based community like BLD, we have broken through the barrier that had prevented us from having a close relationship with Him. Like the prodigal son, we came back to the Father after realizing our past mistakes. Yet, this is not the end but just the beginning of our spiritual journey. As we walk along this path of righteousness, our relationship with God needs to be constantly nourished to feel the joy and peace from our renewal and transformation.

The feeling of joy and peace can only come from the depth of our faith in God. If the foundation of our faith is *love, humility and hope*, as manifested by the Holy Trinity, then we have to constantly love God and others unconditionally, with humility and the perseverance to always hope to see the glory of God.

We face tremendous challenges in having and maintaining a deep faith in God since there are so many voices and faces of evil that constantly try to drive a wedge between us and Him.

We have to immerse ourselves in prayers so we can shield ourselves from the constant temptations that try to lure us back to our sinful ways. By communing with God and giving praise to His Holy Name, we can turn our fears and doubts into strength and hope.

We have realized the need for us to go to Mass regularly and avail ourselves of the Sacraments of Penance and Communion so we can continue to follow the Light and avoid falling back into the dark valleys of life.

In a lot of cases, our most difficult challenges are within us, and these are our

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COUNSELS (continued from page 3)

self-righteousness and pride. We can overcome these challenges by staying focused on serving God with humility and selfless love for others, as exemplified by our Lord Jesus.

As we persevere in our faith with the Spirit of Hope, we realize that our challenges and trials can turn into opportunities to witness to others the unconditional and unending love of God.

Through His divine guidance, we make these opportunities as living works of faith; as corporal works of mercy for the weak, the needy and those who are living in darkness. Like the good Samaritan, we do not turn our back on them. We care for them and bring them along with us as we walk along the only path that leads us to the narrow gate of the Kingdom of God, so that we may see and live in His Glory.

Directions:

- Do everything for God's glory. Praise His Holy Name.
- Do not seek human recognition for your good works.
- Pray unceasingly for your needs and for guidance from the Holy Spirit.

NEWS (continued from page 1)

For those interested in a special road trip pilgrimage, those who are able to leave the US can drive north to Quebec City, Canada (about 9 hours from Rahway) to go through the Permanent Holy Door (pictured below) at the Notre Dame Basilica-Cathedral in that beautiful French-Canadian city. As the first Catholic parish in North America, it is the only parish in the Americas with a Holy Door that has been designated as "permanent."



While there are only six months left to the Extraordinary Jubilee Year, what continues beyond that is the mission started at Pentecost, which Pope Francis also summarized in his homily: "to love as God loves."

Note: Quotes of the Holy Father from the above article were taken from Zenit.org.

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
Tithe & Love Offering	\$ 3,028	\$ 51,135
Mission Collections	\$ 70	\$ 4,079

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

Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Protecting God's Children Training

Saturday, June 4, 2016 - 9:30 AM

Contact: Elaine Fernando (mefernando@comcast.net)

Marriage Encounter # 47

June 17-19, 2016 Hotel Executive Suites

30 Minue St, Carteret, NJ 07008

Contact: Efren.Cruz@bldnewark.com

Solo Parents Encounter #18

June 24-26, 2016

Days Hotel Conference

Center East Brunswick

195 Route 18 South, East

Brunswick, NJ 08816

"Jesus is calling..."

Please contact: Vic & Becky Napenas

Singles Encounter #36

June 24-26, 2016

Come all you who are thirsty...

Please contact: Jutt Bustos

Lita Alfaro

Note change in date

Graymoor Spiritual Life Center

Garrison, NY 10524

Youth Encounter #22

"Come and Follow Me..."

Please contact: Charlie & Weng Larobis

July 8-10, 2016

Pine Hill, PA (TBC)

Ron & Dina Pangiliinan

Oliver & Marissa Rangel

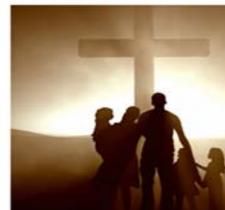
FAMILY ENCOUNTER 23

When: July 15, 16, 17, 2016

Where: Malvern Retreat House
Malvern, PA

Submit Applications to:

Mat & Precy Yap (973) 769-1426
June & Edith Buhain (973) 342-3276
Butch & Malou Morales
(908) 477-5125



TEACHING CALENDAR

Teachings for **Saturday, May 21 - 1 to 6 pm:**

- Apologetics (LSS 1-42)
- New Creation Realities (LSS 1-46; Singles)
- Growth in Prayer
 - Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit (LSS 1-45)

From the Secretariat Ministry, **Saturday May 21:**

OFFICE 365 LEARNING WORKSHOP (room 206)

Marshaling		Schedule	Date	Apostolate
			May 27	Evangelization
			June 3	Formation
			Jun 10	Management
			Jun 17	Mission

The following were the verses from next week's daily Mass readings, that were used by this issue's writers for their reflections:

Give Up Everything	Tue, May 24 - Mk 10:28
Born Anew	Wed, May 25 - 1 Pt 1:23
Be a Living Stone	Thur, May 26 - 1 Pt 2:5