



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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## NEWS

### BLD Singles Prays Twice in Elizabeth



Unbeknownst to many in BLD, for over a year now, the Praise group of the Singles Ministry has been supporting the parish community of St. Genevieve's in Elizabeth, NJ. On the first Sunday of each month, they have been providing the music for the Church's 7 pm Mass. Last Saturday evening, **Prays Twice**, as they are known by the churchgoers of St. Gen's did something extra special. They put together a simple yet powerful event – **"A Night of Praise and Worship."**

For regular attendees of BLD, it wouldn't have appeared like it was anything fancy - there was Adoration, Invocation; Readings and Reflections; Contrition and Supplications; Thanksgiving and Praise. There was also the special and unique brand of music that Singles Praise plays in Rahway every Friday. But what made it look easy was much effort and careful planning by the Praise Pillars of the Singles Ministry. Added to that simple formula was the presence of the Holy Spirit, Who multiplied everyone's offerings, transforming two-hours on Saturday evening into a truly memorable night for the more than a hundred parishioners who had attended.

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## COUNSELS

### LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

THEME: The spoken word of God empowers us to share the fruits of forgiveness.

WORD: 2 Sm 12:7-10,13 ~ Ps 32:1-2,5,7,11  
Gal 2:16,19-21 ~ Lk 7:36 - 8:3

ORDER: 1. Go in peace, your sins are forgiven.  
2. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice.

REFLECTION:

All four Gospel accounts include the narrative of the penitent woman. Simon a Pharisee, invited Jesus to dinner but did not render the traditional hospitality. The woman, who came uninvited, washed Jesus' feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed them and anointed them with expensive perfumed oil. Simon and his guests were scandalized that Jesus Who was a known prophet, would allow a sinful woman to attend to Him. Reading their minds, He asked Simon about two debtors whose debts were cancelled. **"One owed five hundred days' wages, and the other fifty. Which of them will love him more?"** (Lk 7:41,42) Simon replied: **"The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven."** (Lk 7:43) Jesus agreed and reminded him that he had not offered Him hospitality, while the woman had not stopped ministering to Him. Then Jesus told the woman: **"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."** (Lk 7:50) Faith in Jesus drew her to seek forgiveness. God's grace leads us to repentance. When we repent, He forgives us and His forgiveness brings about healing and transformation.

The letter to the Galatians relates how the Jewish converts to Christianity who were still following the Mosaic law, believed that the Gentile converts should first be subjected to Mosaic law, in order for them to be accepted as Christians and thus obtain salvation.

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### Promise of the Week

**"For his part, the LORD has removed your sin.  
You shall not die."** (2 Sm 12:13)

## RECOMPENSE FROM GOD

***“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”*** (Mt 5:44) Jesus is teaching us the way we should relate to people, in particular, those with whom we have some conflict with and those we find difficult to love.

How could we love those who cause us harm or ill-will? To love an enemy is contrary to human nature and goes against our worldly way. It is human to get even with an enemy, but it is Christian to forgive; for we are all children of God Who loves both the good and the bad. We can make a decision to love even though we have no feeling of love for a person, for love is not a feeling but an act of the will. ***“For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?”*** (Mt 5:46)

As Christians, we must continually be reminded of how Jesus lived what He said in Matthew 5:43-48. He came as the One sinless human in a sinful world where people had turned to their own ways, weak and ungodly. Yet, Jesus loved them and died for them (Rom 5:6-11). He prayed for Jerusalem, knowing He would be killed there (Mt 23:37-39). He prayed for those who executed Him while they were in the very act of killing Him (Lk 23:34). God loves us despite our unworthiness; we must love others despite their unworthiness. What excuse do we have to do otherwise?

When Jesus asks us to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48), He is talking about the perfection of love, particularly through love for enemies. This sounds like a fantasy! Yet, it is better to strive for this ideal and fall short than never to have tried at all.

Only God can help us to love as He loves and in the way Christ asks of us. God gives power and grace to those who believe and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit, with a holy desire to please God in all things. We must practice true piety, a loving devotion to God. Almsgiving, praying and fasting are seen as the key signs of a pious person. However, Jesus warns us in Matthew 6:1-6 about the self-seeking desire of the hypocrites who perform righteous deeds only to draw recognition and praise from others. They have received their reward. The implicit promise of recompense from our heavenly Father is directed to those who seek the divine way.

*Lord, grant me the grace to seek You with a humble and repentant heart. Renew me each day with a heart of love and compassion that I may grow in love for You and for my neighbor. A sure reward of being in communion with You is all I hope for.*

## BEYOND FIRST IMPULSE

***“An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you for service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.”*** (Mt 5:38-42)

We find ourselves in many situations that cause us to react instinctively or impulsively to events that impact our well-being (physically, psychologically, economically or spiritually). Depending on the severity of the perceived impact, response times may vary, from an instantaneous reflex action, to well-thought out retaliatory responses. All of our responses are influenced by our physiological and psychological make up which are continuously being shaped by the evolving environment that we live in.

Our first impulse to any event is often an instinctive reaction, a natural and automatic reflex which takes place without any conscious or logical evaluation on our part. These non-cerebral reactions are similar to a computer's instructions that provide programmed responses to situations that are downloaded into it. Alas, we cannot use the computer instruction theory to justify our rash responses that may worsen rather than resolve an issue. The teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ regarding retaliation prohibits exacting revenge, even though proportionate reaction was espoused by the Old Testament commandment in Leviticus (Lv 24:20). Jesus' teaching on retaliation is also an extension of His new commandment to love one another (Jn 13:34).

Take some time to ponder the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde persona that many of us morph into whenever we get into our cars. Many of us, unconsciously become road warriors, Formula 1 racers, and even kings of the road. Often we bring out our vocabulary of expletive words and a variety of offensive gestures to express our disapproval of perceived infringements of our rights. Some end up with uncontrolled road rage that can have lethal or disastrous results for all parties involved. This example describes the instantaneous shift, from our normal selves to primitive beings, that can happen when guided by instinct and impulses that tend to worsen, rather than resolve, situations.

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## Encountering Christ Again - A Ten Year Reunion

We've been members of BLD for a number of years now and have been assigned to many ministries. Every assignment has given us great experiences and contributed so much to our personal and spiritual growth. One of our best experiences has been as ME Class Shepherds. Since the ME weekend ten years ago, we've rejoiced that many members of our class have been covenanted and have served in various BLD ministries. But we were also saddened that some later found out that community life was not for them.

From the very beginning, our class was a tightly-knit family, but eventually, we saw each other less often on Fridays, and after three years, our reunions also dropped off. We always thought that the reunions bonded us together so strongly, as we shared very personal, intimate events in our lives, trusting that what was shared would be held sacred by everyone. Although the desire was there, to gather as an ME class, other duties and responsibilities prevented some from attending, while others moved on to distant places where life called them to live, rendering them unable to join us. How we missed and wished we could see all of them together once more!

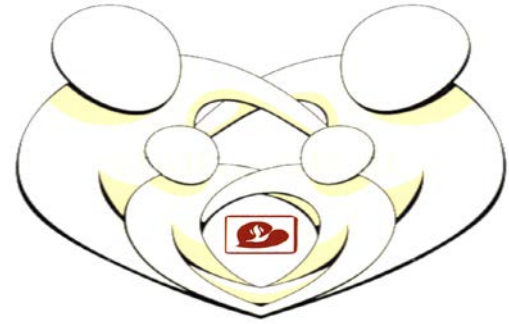
So, while the passage of ten years had taken its toll on the couples still active in BLD, the ten-year anniversary of our class was an opportune time to re-live a part of the ME experience once more. And as we found out, the level of the class members' participation and devotion to the class had not waned.

*"Find your delight in the Lord who will give you your heart's desire."* (Ps 37:4)

Truly the Lord hears our prayers. As May approached, we knew we all wanted something special to mark our 10th Anniversary; and we agreed on a weekend getaway to someplace interesting. Through meticulous planning, the necessary arrangements were made. God must have really been with us throughout the process, as even the local Catholic Church in the area agreed to rent out space at their parish center for our praise and worship. Soon it seemed that the only thing we needed, but couldn't pre-arrange, was good weather. But as the weekend arrived and everyone showed up, even the skies cooperated, and it turned out to be a fantastic reunion!

It was quite an auspicious weekend for all of us and it was clear that it could only be by God's grace that everything fell into place according to His perfect plan. The unrehearsed praise and worship was beautifully powerful and moving. In the ensuing updates by each couple, everyone shared and unburdened their joys and challenges, just like at all those other reunions →

→ in the past. Time had not erased our love for and trust in each other as, aided by the Holy Spirit, we opened up and embraced each other as family.



Then, the next day, sunshine blessed our planned barbecue by the Cape May Lighthouse. It was the icing that topped off our proverbial reunion-weekend cake. It was a perfect reunion, bringing tears of joy to my eyes and gratitude into my heart for what the Lord had been doing in the lives of our class and family. God's blessings of peace and hope were upon us.

Everything seemed to work out perfectly. But what the weekend also pointed out was the need for each of us, shepherds and classmates, to continue to try to reach out to each other, and in most everyone's case, find Christ once again. For truly when our relationship with God is made strong, then life's most important relationships are also strengthened, and life continues as beautiful and sumptuous as can be. Now, although we resume lives on our separate paths, we realize that He is there for each of us, always. Whether we are in community or not, the seed has been planted in rich soil.

*"Therefore, neither the one who plants, nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth."* (1 Cor 3:7) All thanks, praise and glory be to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit! You are truly amazing!

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## NEWS

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The following Sunday, Fr. George, the Pastor of St. Gen's, started out his homily by first profusely thanking **Prays Twice** for Saturday's worship concert event. The congregation at the Mass echoed their gratitude with rousing applause for the group. As Fr. George observed, it is indeed very powerful witnessing to see young folks unafraid to show the world their faith; and that his parishioners, most especially the parish's youth, were now emboldened to really find and proclaim their faith too.

*(For this BLD dad, it was an admittedly proud moment; but also a humbling one to see and be inspired by the work of our Singles and the fruit of their outreach beyond just BLD. In their efforts, it seems that there are lessons from the Holy Spirit for all of us.)*

## COUNSELS (continued from page 1)

Paul believed that the way to salvation was through faith in Christ, rather than the law. He was prompted to journey to Jerusalem to seek counsel from the apostles and presbyters. Peter, after much debate, declared that there was no need to subject the Gentiles to the Mosaic law. What everyone needed for salvation was faith in Jesus Christ and repentance of sins.

In the first book of Samuel 16:7, we see God counseling Samuel not to judge by outer appearance but to look at the heart. He then commanded Samuel to anoint David king of Israel. David is the only one in the scriptures to whom God said: *“a man after his own heart.”* (1 Sm 13:14) He earned this distinction not because of his righteousness but due to his total dependence on God. When confronted with his sins, he owned up to them, repented, and accepted the punishment for his sins.

God forgave David, and He forgave the woman in the Gospel reading. Through His words, God shows us that it is not the enormity of our sins that He focuses on but the sincerity of our hearts. A sincere repentance gains us God’s peace and forgiveness.

*God, our heavenly Father, we praise You and bless Your holy name. Thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to redeem us from our sins and grant us eternal life. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit Who transforms us into the image of Christ. You are truly loving and forgiving, slow to anger and rich in kindness.*

### Directions:

1. Be reconciled with God and others
2. Be loving and forgiving

## BEYOND FIRST IMPULSE (continued from page 2)

“Tit for tat” and “Quid pro quo” affairs devolve into never-ending feuds that tend to destroy the core values of both parties.

Unfortunately, our pride and our lack of neighborly love often rise up when we are confronted by the difficult daily challenges we face in our attempts to follow in our Lord’s footsteps. We must become aware of our human weaknesses, and consciously strive to overwrite and update the individual belief and value systems we have, that influence our responses to various situations. In essence, we must learn to rein in reflexive actions, and pattern our responses, upon the love taught to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, in all the circumstances that we may face.

*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	\$ 2,538	\$ 59,924
Mission Collections	\$ 102	\$ 4,406

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

Thank you for your continued support!

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### Marriage Encounter #47

*“Restore, Renew, Rekindle ...”*

Please contact: Efen & Yollie Cruz

June 17-19, 2016

Hotel Executive Suites

30 Minue Street

Carteret, NJ 07008

### Solo Parents Encounter #18

*“Jesus is calling...”*

Please contact: Vic & Becky Napenas

June 24-26, 2016

Days Hotel Conference

Center East Brunswick

195 Route 18 South, East

Brunswick, NJ 08816

### Singles Encounter #36

*Come all you who are thirsty...*

Please contact: Jutt Bustos

Lita Alfaro

June 24-26, 2016

Graymoor Spiritual Life Center

Garrison, NY 10524

Note change in date

### Youth Encounter #23

*“Come and Follow Me...”*

Please contact: Charlie & Weng Larobis

July 8-10, 2016

Pine Hill, PA (TBC)

Ron & Dina Pangilinan

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, June 18** - 1 to 6 pm:

- CMP1 Part 1 (LSS 1-45)
- Christian Love / Christian Faith  
Renewing the Mind / Walking in the Spirit
- Shepherd’s Training I & II (LSS 1-43)

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		June 17	Mission
		June 24	Pastoral
		July 1	Evangelization
		July 8	Formation