



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 25 Issue 15

Bulletin Edition

April 12, 2019

## NEWS

### Release of the Holy Spirit results in a new and deeper experience of God

*“Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God has forgiven you in Christ.” - Eph 4:32*

Last weekend’s LSS#51 truly validated how God’s presence is very much alive. For those who were baptized in the Spirit, the release of the Holy Spirit resulted in a new and deeper experience of God. It was a highly personal experience, tailored to each individual by the Spirit Who knows our needs and knows how each of us is unique.

God never ceases to amaze us, and it showed through the LSS graduates’ testimonials. It was an awe inspiring and Spirit-filled weekend. To God be the Glory!!!

After the Baptism, there were those who prophesied, many who prayed in tongues, and just about everyone who shared their experience of peace, serenity and beauty, and God’s healing mercy, forgiveness and unconditional love for us. Two couples even shared about their planned separations prior to attending the LSS, and how the Holy Spirit came alive for them, and then mended their differences.

At LSS#51, our BLD Community was blessed with twenty-eight graduates. They were:

- five couples from ME # 51: Jose Manuel (Joe) and Alice Alonso, William Au and Josephine (Jojo) Au Kwok, Arsenio and Luisa Fauni, Brian and Stephany Ortiz, and Carlos and Mia Rose Reyes.
- from the Singles: Rodel Camposagrado, Stephanie Canete, Sophia Lavell, Julius Lizardo, Anthony Lucero, Justin Michael Reyes and Ashley Tobar.
- from the Solo Parents Ministry: Che De Mesa of SPE 20 and Maria Mulligan, who was an in-filler.

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## COUNSELS

### The Ultimate Act of Love

THEME: We live Christ’s sacrificial love when we are obedient to the will of God.

WORD : Is 50:4-7 ~ Ps 22:8-9,17-18,19-20,23-24  
Phil 2:6-11 ~ Lk 22:14-23:56

ORDER: *“This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” (Lk 22:19)*

REFLECTION:

*This* Sunday our Mother Church celebrates Palm Sunday; Lent is concluded and Holy Week is ushered in. Palm Sunday commences the week of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection, later punctuated by the humiliation and rejection of Jesus on Good Friday, and then glorified by His triumphant resurrection at Easter.

Rejection was the base of all of Jesus’ suffering; it’s the most common of emotional wounds, and it’s the one that everyone dreads the most. Jesus’ sacrifice was the ultimate act of love, and this is the time to remember and refresh our memories of the events that brought about our redemption and salvation. Each year the story is told and moving images are shown, but for us, there are times when it all still results in a failure to recognize and reflect its proper impact on our lives.

Our Lord’s Passion started with the Last Supper, which was a meal with His closest friends. It was at this event that Jesus showed how we are to remember Him forever as He said: *“This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me...”* and, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.” (Lk 22:19,20)* ...Continued on page 3

### Promise of the Week

*“The Lord God is my help... I shall not be put to shame.” – Is 50:7*

# NEWS

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- there were also some who were non-encountered married / singles / solo parents - George and Mary Cholankeril, Maureen Ogbuehi / Aimee Gamboa, Kevin Karakkat and Jeremy Bernard Rodriguez / Alicia Albanzas, Alcides Rios and Stephen (Steve) Glogoza.

We extend our utmost gratitude to Msgr. Paul Schetelick who was our Spiritual Director for LSS# 51, and thank Deacon Serge Bernatchez, Deacon John and Father Alex for their assistance during our Eucharistic Celebrations. We also extend our gratitude to Father Robert, who, together with Msgr. Schetelick, heard Confessions in the days prior to the LSS. And a heartfelt thank you to our sharers: Vanessa Fabe, Tony and Tatess Abad, Nena Dacula, Sam and Rory Olaso, Gene and Bing Ymbong, Caezar and Vicky Rasalan, and Mon and Bingle Chan.

Let us not forget to thank the sponsoring class of ME 50 and their Shepherds Tony and Marlene Brillantes who made sure nobody went hungry; the sponsoring class of SPE 20 and their Shepherds Mat and Precy Yap; the sponsoring class of SE 38 and their shepherds Nelson and Rose Manzo; the graduates of LSS#50; the entire LSS#51 team, LSA, Praise Ministry and all of the Auxies who helped tremendously over the course of the weekend seminar. Yes, thank you to each and every one for their enthusiasm and sincere commitment to serving the Lord. And most of all, THANK YOU LORD!

**SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 27, 2019 (SATURDAY) LSS#51 REUNION: It will be held in the Library on the 2nd floor of the Divine Mercy School building from 12pm to 4pm.**



# Beyond Easter

## COUNSELS

(from page 1)

Next week, on Good Friday, we will remember once again that Jesus suffered and died. And less than forty-eight hours after that, we will celebrate His Resurrection. It's easy to get caught up in the modern day preparations and practices of Holy Week and Easter, so before that happens, I thought that I should deeply reflect on what all that transpired two thousand years ago truly means.

With that in mind, I recently found myself going back to the Second Reading for the Sunday Mass that was celebrated two months ago, on February 17th. I have to admit that there are times when St. Paul's sometimes dizzying intellect puzzles me. Such was the case regarding the few passages from First Corinthians that were read at BLD that previous Friday. But after listening to the same verses at Mass on that Sunday, I felt that I had a eureka moment, one that has since deepened my appreciation for the events that we will recall next weekend.

St. Paul asked, ***"If Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead?"*** (1 Cor 15:12) Upon hearing that question again, whatever doubts that lingered in my mind about Jesus disappeared. Suddenly I more fully realized how crucial belief in Christ and His resurrection are to my own fate.

It's easy to believe that somehow, when our physical, conscious existence ends on earth that there must be some kind of life in some other dimension out there. And I reject the notion that some people have forwarded that there won't be that. But what I realized on that February Sunday was that only belief that Jesus Christ resurrected and is now in Heaven awaiting our own arrival there...only my belief in Him can establish and cement the foundation upon which to live.

St Paul rightly pointed out how crucial this is. Before that Sunday, I had taken this core axiom of our faith for granted; but upon hearing his words once again, it seemed that I suddenly understood the breadth of its meaning - that my own resurrection is fully dependent on the fact that Christ died and was resurrected, and that I must no longer just take it for granted, because if I don't sincerely believe in His Resurrection, then I am the one who is in deep trouble.

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It continued with the Agony in the Garden where Jesus contemplated why He must suffer and pleaded with Father God to be spared. ***"He was in such agony... that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground."*** (Lk 22:44) Then came the kiss of Judas' betrayal that sealed Jesus' fate, followed by the abandonment by all of His Apostles. And later came Peter's denial of knowing Jesus too.

Let us ponder for a moment, and try to feel Jesus' anguish and humiliation. For many of us, there may be times when we deny Him like Peter did. We sin and then beg for forgiveness, and gladly receive it from Jesus. After a while though, we forget about what we did and tend to blot Him out of our consciousness as if He cannot see us. But those are the times when it is us who choose to not see.

Jesus was humiliated and rejected by those who persecuted Him and had Him put to death. The very same crowd who happily welcomed Him with shouts of joy, ***"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"*** (Jn 12:13),



were soon shouting, ***"Crucify him! Crucify him!"*** (Lk 23:21) But the wavering of the crowd is not just a thing of the past. It is also a representation of the way we sinners treat Jesus.

We seek and desire Him not for His sake, but simply for ours, primarily placing only our own hopes, fears and expectations upon Him. We desire that Jesus fulfill our desires, making requests after requests; and then if they are not granted, like the crowd, we readily turn our backs on Him. In seeking that what we want be fulfilled first, we find ourselves denying Him.

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→ ***"Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."*** (1 Cor 15:20)

God sent His only Son so that through His life, death and resurrection we too could be granted the way to eternal life. Jesus truly is the only guarantee that there is on this earth, that someday, that trip to heaven could happen for any one... that it could happen for me and for all of us.

I pray that our ongoing conversion toward Christ continues, through Holy Thursday and Good Friday, beyond Easter and on to forever.

# COUNSELS

(from page 3)

Although the crowd wanted His death, nobody seemed to think that Jesus was guilty. Pilate, Herod, the Good Thief and the centurion, all said that Jesus was innocent. But the crowd not only wanted Him dead, they wanted Him to suffer! Jesus was given punishments - flagellation and crucifixion, which were reserved only for criminals and slaves. These two penalties were not just about the pain, but were about the humiliation. To further compound it, when He was sentenced to death, He was forced to carry the instrument of His own execution.

In spite of all the betrayal and injustice, in the middle of it all was love, total and compassionate love. In Luke 22:51, when *“he touched the servant’s ear and healed him,”* He demonstrated compassion for the servant, whose ear had been cut off. He showed this also when He said, *“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children...”* (Lk 23:28) Even from the cross, Jesus was teaching that we must forgive - in Luke 23:34, as He was dying, He prayed *“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”* Then just before His death, He assured the Good Thief, *“Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”* (Lk 23:43)

Jesus’ victory over sin released us from sin’s bondage and paved the way for us to enter the kingdom of God. Let us rejoice in Christ, and take His victory into our whole being, be transformed into the greatness, which has been granted us through God’s saving grace.

This year, once again, Palm Sunday provides us an opportunity to welcome Jesus into our lives, and in the days that follow, to share in His suffering, death and resurrection. Suffering has the power to transform lives. As Catholics, let us unite our own suffering to the suffering of Jesus. Let us consider it as a gift from God the Father, as a purification and as a powerful prayer offering.

As we enter Holy Week, the most sacred of all weeks, may we be drawn closer to Jesus and to each other. Let us ask ourselves what Holy Week really means to each of us. This is the week to pray and truthfully answer this question: “How do I respond to Jesus ultimate act of love?”



Direction:

Confess and partake of the Holy Eucharist.

Please note that a pdf of this Covenant News is also available online at [BLDNEWARK.com](http://BLDNEWARK.com)

## LORD’S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK’S

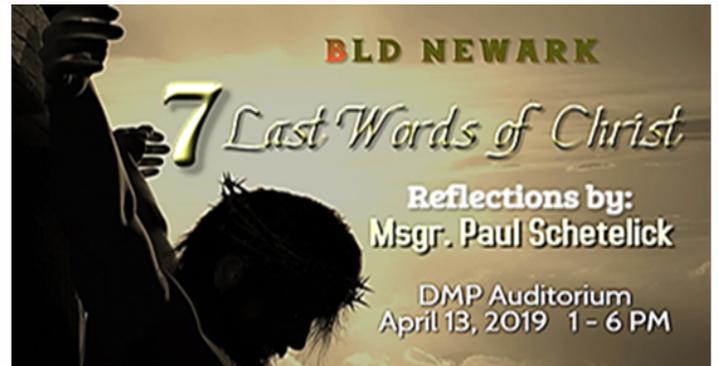
Collections:	Last Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 1,167	\$ 21,506
Love Offerings	\$ 648	\$ 11,135
E-Giving	\$ 260	\$ 1,735
Mission	\$ 120	\$ 10,017

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

Thank you for your continued support!

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**No BLD Newark Praise  
and Worship on  
April 19, Good Friday**



- ❖ Registration starts at 12:00 NN
  - For those coming in early, there will be a Rosary at 12:30 PM.
  - Retreat will promptly start at 1:00 PM
  - Only light refreshments will be served at around 3:30 Pm
- ❖ Retreat participants are NOT allowed to park in the DMP parking lot or on Central Avenue in front of the Church for the duration of the retreat.
  - You may park at side streets or at the Zion parking lot which is across Esterbrook Ave. Please follow instructions of parking marshals.
  - Carpooling is highly recommended due to limited parking
- ❖ There will be an anticipated Palm Sunday Mass, around 5 PM



Marshaling	Date	Apostolate
	Apr 26	Pastoral
	May 3	Evangelization
	May 10	Formation
	May 17	Management

## **EXPRESSIONS AT PRAYER MEETINGS**

Two of the most frequent expressions of prayer at a Catholic charismatic prayer meeting are glossolalia or prayer in tongues, and lifting hands in prayer. Where do they come from? Why do we do it? What is their purpose?

The New Creation Foundation

Everything we do in BLD is framed by our conviction that in Christ, there is a new creation (2 Cor 5:14-21) and we are all new creatures. The new creation is all about God's saving plan in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. We are new creatures in Christ because of the

mystery of Christ's incarnation, life, death, and resurrection, and because of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Because God has assumed our nature, he has redeemed it. In the new creation, there is another important rule: grace builds on and perfects nature. When we pray in general, it is a matter of God's grace perfecting and building on human nature, on our bodies and what they do.

From Natural to Graced Utterances

Let us consider what is natural: when people are frustrated, anguished, or happy, they express themselves vocally but not always verbally. We cry. We groan. We say, "Woohoo!" Vocal expression is powerful. Think of the Beatles: "Na na na nananana, nananana, hey Jude!" People love singing the na na na's of "Hey Jude" even though "na na na" says nothing because it is natural to do so. That is why some people "scat" or make "do" and "da" sounds while they sing.

In Judaism and Christianity, there are utterances like "scat." Many Psalms say, "Make a joyful noise to the Lord." They literally mean that the believers "jubilate"—they say "Woohoo!" or "nanana" to God! One Psalm even proclaims, "There are shouts of joy in the tents of the just" (Ps 118:15). But the difference is that we do so in the context of praise, and in that context, it is not natural speech but grace building on nature and perfecting it. Based on the Psalms and other clues in the Old Testament, jubilation seems to be a normal part of the life of Israel, and it was part of life in the early church too. St. Augustine encouraged his flock to jubilate!

In some New Testament communities such as the Corinthian church, that jubilation was defined as glossolalia, prayer in "other tongues." Paul considered glossolalia a sign for believers and even a personal gift of prayer. But importantly, Paul told the Corinthians to value this gift ("charism") properly by seeing it as a gift for service rather than a sign of superior discipleship. Charisms are for the common good of the community (1 Cor 12:4-7). The various workings of the Spirit, from tongues to prophecy to interpretation, are not signs of accomplishment or excellence but ways that the Holy Spirit builds a community into a diverse, loving community as the body of Christ.

Glossolalia has been part of Christianity from the beginning, but for some reason, tongues became less commonplace for a long period of time until the modern Pentecostal movement began around 1890-1910. By the 1950s, Pentecostal movements seeped into the mainline Christian denominations, and in 1967, the Catholic version of this emerged simultaneously in the United States and in Latin America. Today, Catholic Charismatics encourage, but do not require, people who experience "baptism" in the Spirit to pray in tongues. Why?

There seem to be two reasons: first, tongues reflect a natural human activity that grace builds on. In a way, tongues reflects an aspect of being a new creature in Christ: our whole bodily existence becomes more closely conformed to Jesus. Above, we saw that it is natural for people to vocally express themselves. Tongues is an experience that frees the mouth, the tongue, the lips to praise God more intensely, more freely, more joyfully. Tongues can be a sign for unbelievers (see 1 Cor 14:22) if they show that God is transforming our whole living. By experience, we can see this as true. Many who find renewal in BLD or elsewhere move from prayer in tongues to a "new tongue" in their entire life: they no longer curse, but bless God. They no longer tear down their loved ones, but build them up, confess their sins, and say the words: "I love you. Please forgive me. I forgive you." Surely such speech is true glossolalia!

The second reality is this: Catholic charismatics experience tongues as an entryway to a deeper life in the Holy Spirit. They recognize that the Holy Spirit does not simply give the gift of speaking a new language of prayer, praise, blessing, forgiveness, mercy. They also recognize that the Holy Spirit gives them gifts to speak prophetically, to teach, to discern, to lead, to welcome, to minister to and care for God's people. Tongues points them outward to

the world. It is worth noting that charismatics and Pentecostals also turn to the Pentecost account (Acts 2) for understanding tongues, but there, the disciples do not speak in “other tongues” but in fact “other known languages.” The miracle of Pentecost is that the confusion of Babel is undone, and the sign of Pentecost is that the church is to look outwards in its mission to bring God’s salvation to the world.

Catholic Charismatics do not believe that glossolalia is necessary. But they welcome and encourage it precisely because it is often an important step in the realities of the new creation in Christ. That leads us to posture in prayer.

### Lift Up Holy Hands

Above, we saw both the natural role of the body and the working of God’s grace. Grace builds on nature. In 1 Timothy 2:8, there is encouragement to “lift up holy hands” in prayer. This goes along with the whole tradition of prayer in Judaism and in Christianity. We pray with and through our bodies, not apart from it. Lifting hands and arms is an expression of prayer, and usually it takes the form of praise of God. The most important thing about this, in charismatic circles at least, is that it frees the believer, just like tongues does.

But as we lift up holy hands, we should have the following hope: if lifting hands up frees us, perhaps it will also remind us about all the ways that we pray with the body. We should not simply lift hands up to the Lord, but bow the knee (Philippians 2:6-11) before the name above every name. We should learn to bow at the right moment in the Creed—and feel it as powerful prayer. We should learn that hugging and embracing family is in its own way an act of prayer. After all, St. Paul’s admonition is to offer our whole bodies as our spiritual worship.

One last perspective: we have learned a little bit of theology along the way. God’s plan of salvation reaches to human nature and transforms it in Jesus, the Word become flesh, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus breathes on us. Through God’s saving plan, we are literally made part of Christ’s body. Charismatic spirituality enlivens our sense of the body: it frees our tongues, our lips, and our arms. But the Lord desires our whole being. It is no surprise, then, that over the course of the central sacrament of our faith, we stand, kneel, bow, eat, drink, sing, and lift up our hearts ( *sursum corda* —literally, “hearts up!”).

### *Sursum Corda*: Charismatic Prayer as “School” of New Creation Realities

We need training to lift up our hearts and to offer our bodies (see Romans 12:1-2). The need for training is why many of the important saints adopt the language of virtue as key to the Christian life. A virtuoso piano player is one who has practiced so much that playing piano well has become natural to the person. The same is true of the entirety of Christian life. We need to practice, so that practices become habits and habits become virtues. We thus practice “tongues” and lifting up hands not for their own sakes, but so that God will take over our entire speech, and so that God will be praised by every fiber of our being, with hands and hearts lifted, with knees bent, heads bowed, and more. When we do this faithfully, on Fridays and in daily life, we become virtuous.

As we grow in virtue, we gradually acquire the three theological virtues which are the bedrock of the new creation realities: faith, hope, and love. According to St. Paul, tongues and all charismatic gifts will disappear. Only faith, hope, and love will remain, and the greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13:13). This is why BLD speaks of “excellence” in worship. As we worship God, we become conformed to the God who is love, and learn to bring God’s saving love into the world. Practicing on Friday is meant to unfold into renewed existence in daily life in marriage, in families, at work, and at rest. As we learn to speak a new language in worship, we learn to worship in daily life with new language at home and at work—the language of praise, mercy, forgiveness, love. That whole life unfolds in the virtue of love. What is the great example of love for us but Jesus? Jesus spoke a new language: the language of the kingdom of God. He not only lifted his hands in worship, but extended them in blessing, healing, casting out demons, washing feet, and forgiving—even on the cross and beyond it!

As new creatures, our hands and our lips are not just for praise on Fridays, but for proclaiming the Gospel in every sector of our lives, with every fiber of our being, with “heart, mind, and strength.” Charismatic prayer is a school for virtue, and virtue is all about faith, hope, and love—and love is the only light that can illumine our world. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote, “Everything has its origin in God’s love. Everything is shaped by it. Everything is directed toward it. Love is God’s greatest gift to humanity. It is his promise and our hope.” Our practices at prayer meetings are but one step towards acquiring and extending God’s saving love.