



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 25 Issue 16

Bulletin Edition

April 26, 2019

NEWS

266 BLD members and guests attend the Community's Lenten Retreat



What better way is there to prepare for Holy Week and the most important days of the entire Lenten season than to ponder upon the Seven Last Words of Jesus? The BLD Newark Lenten Retreat, "The Seven Last Words of Christ" that was held Saturday, April 13 at the DMP gym did exactly that as BLD members personally reflected on Christ's words along with our brothers and sisters in the BLD community. The retreat was organized by the Teaching Ministry with the collaboration of several others: Praise, Service, Intercessory, Secretariat, Treasury, Liturgy, and Solo-Parents, along with volunteers from various ME classes. Altogether, 266 members and guests attended the retreat.

Msgr. Paul Schetelick started the afternoon off by asking all who were present, to use their imagination to enter the story and be there during Christ's passion and death. The Words of Christ, as He was dying, and re-told by the four evangelists, were in effect, Jesus' last sermon to all humankind.

By their accounts, Jesus didn't do a lot of talking on the cross. Except for a very few words, He was mostly silent during the hours He hung on the cross.

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COUNSELS

Life in Jesus' Name

THEME: We live Christ's sacrificial love when we acknowledge Him as our Lord and Savior.

WORD: Acts 5:12-16 ~ Ps 118:2-4,13-15,22-24
Rev 1:9-11a,12-13,17-19 ~ Jn 20:19-31

ORDER: "Do not be unbelieving, but believe."
(Jn 20:27)

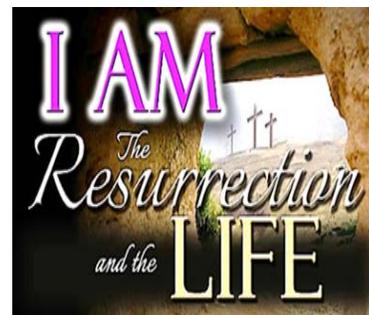
REFLECTION:

This Sunday, as we celebrate the feast of Divine Mercy, let us remember that God's love is strong enough to conquer the greatest of all human fears - death itself.

Jesus confirms the truth of these words in the Gospel: "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" (Jn 11:25b) Upon Christ's return from the cross, death, and hell, He brought back with Him the ultimate perfect peace; a peace, "*not as the world gives,*" but a much deeper peace. By appearing among His disciples Jesus demonstrated beyond any doubt that He was alive. He wished for His disciples the peace that He Himself is, as He greeted them, "*Peace be with you.*" (Jn 20:19)

"*Christ loved us and handed himself over for us....*" (Eph 5:2) Whenever we come upon these words of St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, don't just breeze over the words. Reflect on the wounds that Jesus showed the disciples, wounds that were caused by one of the worst kinds of torture devised to inflict human pain.

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Promise of the Week

"...believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name." – Jn 20:31

NEWS

(from page 1)

But these Seven Last Words provide a window into His soul, a way to understand what was ultimately most important to Him Who sacrificed Himself to save us. The Seven Last Words reveal His incredible love, determination, humanity, as well as His divinity, His intimate relationship with the Father, and His trust.

During the retreat, Msgr. Paul reflected on the deep meanings of each of the Seven Last Words, also delving into the intricate nuances that are there, such as when Jesus addressed God as the Father, versus the one other time when Jesus referred to Him as *"My God."* At times, Msgr Paul incorporated into his presentation, singing in his own powerful voice, poignant songs that added immense depth to his reflections. And he challenged us with several questions based on each of the Seven Last Words for us to think and reflect about, not just during Lent and Holy Week, but also in the rest of the days of each year.

THE FIRST WORD
"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

THE SECOND WORD
"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

THE THIRD WORD
"Jesus said to his mother: 'Woman, this is your Son'. Then he said to the disciple: 'This is your mother.'"

THE FOURTH WORD
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

THE FIFTH WORD
"I thirst"

THE SIXTH WORD
"It is finished"

THE SEVENTH WORD
"Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit"



Pope Francis: There Resounds a call to Praise: 'Alleluia, Alleluia!'

'Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way, he brings youth to our world.'

• April 21, 2019 15:16 • Jim Fair • Francis Source: Zenit.org

Pope Francis on Easter Sunday offered a message of hope and prayer for peace in his "Urbi et Orbi" blessing from the central balcony of St. Peter's Square.

Speaking to a crowd estimated at 70,000 in the square – and millions more around the world via radio and television – the Holy Father proclaimed that risen Christ and said His message is for every person in the world.

"Today the Church renews the proclamation made by the first disciples: 'Jesus is risen!'" the Pope said. "And from mouth to mouth, from heart to heart, there resounds a call to praise: 'Alleluia, Alleluia!'"

The Holy Father turned to the opening words of his recent apostolic exhortation on youth, *Christus Vivit*, to focus his message not only on young people but on the youth of the Church"

"Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way, he brings youth to our world. Everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive! He is in you, he is with you and he never abandons you. However far you may wander, he is always there, the Risen One. He calls you and he waits for you to return to him and start over again. When you feel you are growing old out of sorrow, resentment or fear, doubt or failure, he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope" (*Christus Vivit*, 1-2).

The Holy Father offered his hope for peace in the many areas of the world suffered in conflict. In particular, he mentioned Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sudan, South Sudan, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

"Before the many sufferings of our time, may the Lord of life not find us cold and indifferent. May he make us builders of bridges, not walls," Francis said. "May the One who gives us his peace end the roar of arms, both in areas of conflict and in our cities, and inspire the leaders of nations to work for an end to the arms race and the troubling spread of weaponry,

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COUNSELS

(from page 1)

Remember that His love is greater, and that His love overcame the horrendous demands of the sacrifice He endured.

During His first visit with the Apostles after His resurrection, "*The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord*" (Jn20:20b), but it was not just to be a joyful reunion. Jesus commissioned them to carry His mission out into the world - "*As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*" (Jn 20:21b) By these words, Jesus entrusted to the disciples, and eventually, to us, His mission of preaching the "Good News" of God's love, mercy, forgiveness and salvation.

Jesus, "*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*" (Jn 1:29), breathed on them and bestowed the Spirit that empowered and authorized them to pass on to other men the peace He had given. "*Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.*" (John 20:22-23) By this act, centuries later, we too have been provided God's mercy which we can now obtain through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Our willingness for true contrition gives us the peace that we all seek. However, this must take place in faith.

Life is without struggles and doubts. There are times when we experience the deep valleys and feel low and weak. These are the times when we act like Thomas in the Gospel reading and refuse to believe. We become doubtful of His existence and question His presence during our pain and grief. Yet our faithful Lord will always find the perfect time to deliver His message to us, to not be afraid and to believe. Whether through a song, a billboard, a commercial, or a conversation, God's mercy comes to us just when we need it the most.

"Do not be afraid."

- Rev 1:17b

"Do not be unbelieving, but believe." - Jn 20:27

As Jesus was with Thomas, so Jesus is with us. He shows us His tenderness through others. When other people reach out to comfort and support us, He is with us. When we reach out to help and care for others, Jesus is present through us. Jesus is among us during our Friday evening worships and other Community activities. Jesus is ever present in the breaking of the bread in the Holy Eucharist.



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Pope Francis...

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especially in the economically more advanced countries. May the Risen Christ, who flung open the doors of the tomb, open our hearts to the needs of the disadvantaged, the vulnerable, the poor, the unemployed, the marginalized, and all those who knock at our door in search of bread, refuge, and the recognition of their dignity.”

COUNSELS

(from page 3)

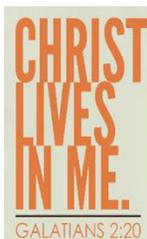
When we are struggling to believe and when our faith is weak, Jesus is with us and we are able to feel His presence when we cling to our belief in Him. This does not happen by insisting that a miracle happen before our eyes, for our frustration when we don't see miracles will hold us back from truly seeing Him all around us. What we need is to have faith like that of the people in the First Reading, who laid down the sick onto the street, simply for Peter's shadow to befall on them. So we must also have that same faith where we do what we can, and then leave the rest up to God.

On Patmos, St. John said, **“When I caught sight of Him, I fell down at his feet as though dead.”** (Rev1:17a) As the Lord gazes upon us, we too have to fall down and believe. Like St. Thomas, we must say in faith: **“My Lord and my God.”** This confession of faith affirms Christ's Divinity, and that He is the Son of God Who heals our wounds of unbelief.

Because of the Resurrection, as Christians, we know that true joy and fullness of life are not accomplished merely through rigid religious practices; rather, they come from a new center, a new source of power – God, the God Who is revealed in and through Jesus our Lord and Savior.

This is what the Apostles and the Lord Himself are calling us to do - to see the depths of the love of Christ for us. And to say with St. Paul,

“Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.” - Gal 2:20



Directions:

1. Adhere to the Apostles Creed and to the teachings of the Church.
2. Be a witness and testify to the enduring presence of Christ in our lives.

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

LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Last Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 1,697	\$ 23,203
Love Offerings	\$ 682	\$ 11,817
E-Giving	\$ -	\$ 1,735
Mission	\$ -	\$ 10,017

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

Thank you for your continued support!

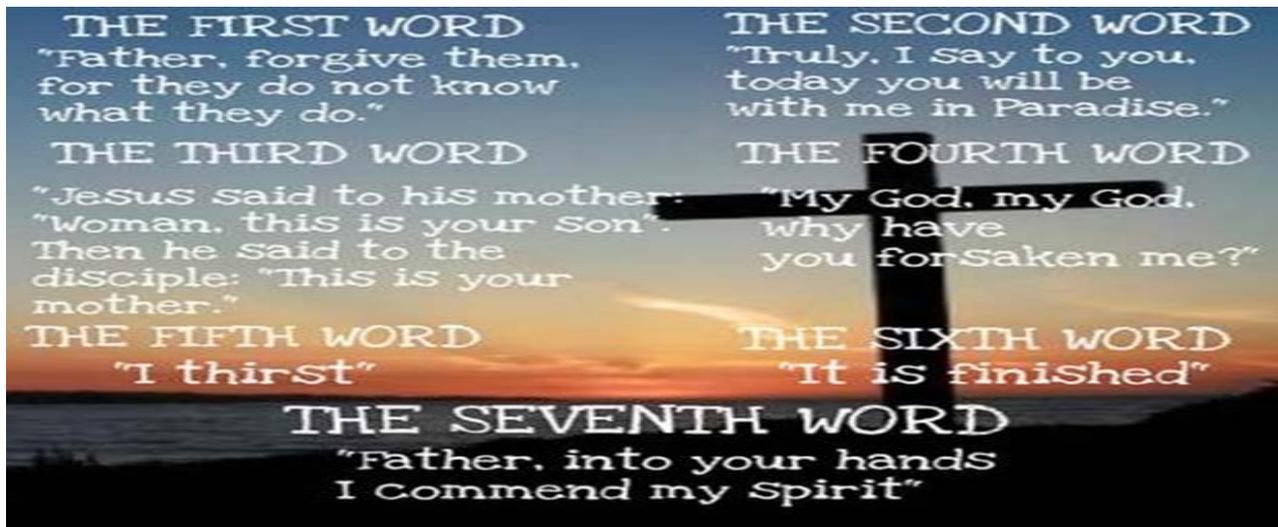
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		May 3	Evangelization
		May 10	Formation
		May 17	Management
		May 24	Mission



This week's Covenant News has a report on the BLD Community Lenten Retreat that was held on April 13, the Saturday before Palm Sunday, 2019. The following has some of the reflection points that Msgr. Paul had shared that afternoon, along with some questions that were discussed in the retreat's small group breakout sessions. (Please note that this is not intended as a teaching. This CN 16 attachment is solely meant to stimulate deeper personal reflections on Christ's words, which Msgr. Paul had described as Christ's last sermon as He was dying on the cross.)

Community Lenten Retreat "The Seven Last Words of Christ"



"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34)

- The first words of Jesus from the cross are about forgiveness, which, after all, is the point of the cross. Jesus died so that we might be forgiven for our sins, so that we might be reconciled to God for eternity. God chooses to wipe away our sins, not because of any excuses we might have, but because He is a God of amazing grace, with mercies that are new every morning.

For reflection: How do you respond to Jesus' sacrifice? Describe what kind of a person you would be if all your sins were totally forgiven and forgotten and you would never be able to sin again.

"Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Lk 23:43)

- Mocked by the leaders and the soldiers as Jesus hung on the cross, one of the criminals crucified with Him mocked and scorned Jesus. But the other one sensed that Jesus was being treated unjustly. After speaking up for Jesus, he cried out, ***"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*** (Lk 23:42)

For reflection: Paradise is from the Greek word paradeisos, which means "garden." At the time of Jesus it was associated with heaven. How would you describe heaven?

“Woman, behold, your son... Behold, your mother.” (Jn 19:26,27)

- This showed that Jesus was a real man, true flesh and blood, a son of a mother, dying with unbearable agony. His suffering was real, and he took it on for you and for me. Jesus wanted to make sure that Mary would be in good hands after His death.

For reflection: What does Mary’s presence at the cross evoke in you? Why do you think that it was necessary for Jesus to suffer physical pain as He died? Whenever you are hurting or tired or struggling with life’s circumstances do you go out of your way to care for others?

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15:34)

- This is Jesus crying out, not as God but as a human being, “Why had God abandoned me?”

For reflection: Have you taken time to consider that Jesus was seemingly abandoned by the Father so that you might not be? What does this *word* from the cross mean to you? Tell your own story of when you gave up on God.

“I thirst.” (Jn 19:28)

- No doubt Jesus experienced extreme thirst while being crucified. He would have lost a substantial quantity of bodily fluid, both blood and sweat, through what he had endured even prior to crucifixion.

For reflection: At this point in your life what do you thirst for, what is your deepest longing? How do you respond to Jesus’ statement “I am thirsty”? What does this statement suggest to you about Jesus? About yourself?

“It is finished.” (Jn 19:30)

- Jesus said “It is finished.” One might think that He was expressing relief that His suffering was over. “It is finished” also meant, in part, that this is finally done, His mission was accomplished.

For reflection: Can you share what part of your own spiritual journey is not yet finished?

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit...” (Lk 23:46)

- Jesus was putting His fate after death in the hands of his Heavenly Father. It was as if He was saying, “Whatever happens to Me, Father, I trust You.”

For reflection: Jesus’ final word teaches us to see open hands ready to catch and embrace us. What for you is the most difficult part of your life to let go of, to completely surrender? Have you put your life and, indeed, your life beyond this life, in God’s hands? How do you experience God’s salvation through Christ in your life today?