



COVENANT NEWS

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Uruguay No Eucharist for Prelates: Abortion Backers

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay, Nov. 10, 2008 (Zenit.org).- Uruguayan bishops are recalling that those who vote in favor of abortion exclude themselves from communion with the Church.

The prelates appealed to canon law in recalling the Catholic position on abortion during their Nov. 5-12 plenary assembly.

In a communiqué Friday, the bishops responded to a bill regarding “reproductive and sexual health” currently under consideration.

They cited a declaration from last year, titled, “In Defending Human Life, All of Us Win.” There, the prelates affirmed, “Legalizing abortion doesn’t change bad into good. Once it is made concrete, things go badly for everyone. A human life is lost. The mother ends up with wounds that do not easily heal. The doctor goes against the essence of his noble profession. Society loses a life because of not opening its arms to receive it. The culture of life is attacked.”

The bishops go on to say that no “honest law can justify the elimination of a defenseless being who has the right to life and to be born.”

Regarding Catholics who promote and/or vote for laws in favor of abortion, they recalled that such a person breaks the link that unites them to Christ and the Church. While he remains committed to this position, the bishops affirmed, he is impeded from approaching Eucharistic Communion, according to what is established in the Code of Canon Law, canons 1341 and 1398.

“Uruguayans need to multiply the signs of favor for human life in the midst of emigration and the demographic winter that compromises our future,” the prelates concluded. “The well-being of our people requires sons and daughters to bring joy to homes, to fill the classrooms and playgrounds. We are in favor of the integral development of human life, which as Catholic bishops we see from the perspective of Jesus Christ, who came to the world to bring worthy and abundant life.”

COUNSELS

Sharing the Master’s Joy

Word: Prv 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; Ps 128:1-5; 1 Thes 5:1-6; Mt 25:14-33

Theme: We work with God’s grace to inherit his kingdom when we are faithful stewards of His gifts.


Order: “*You are children of light, therefore stay alert and be sober.*” (1 Thes 5:1-6)

Reflection:

“Our readings this Sunday remind us of the importance of living each day to the fullest, striving to discover, developing and applying our talents, time and treasure in preparation for Christ’s second coming and last judgment. As St. Thomas Aquinas once wrote, “grace builds on nature”, so whatever innate and acquired character traits we have received from birth are part of God’s plan, so that we may be useful and fruitful in every way we serve Him.

God entrusted His possessions to us according to the abilities that He blessed us with. We are given physical, intellectual and emotional attributes on a personal basis. We receive them in trust and are supposed to develop them not only for our personal interests but for others, and ultimately for God. Even the trials that God allows us to experience are for our own good, so that we can touch others as God has planned. God owns everything that we have. We should therefore nurture every gift He gave us. Like the proverbial fig tree in Luke 13:7, we could be cut down for being useless. When we cultivate and fertilize the same soil, giving it all the nutrients essential for spiritual growth, we become fruitful giving glory to our Creator.

The Gospel this Sunday invites us to serve Him throughout our lives, in anticipation of Him saying to each one of us, on that great reckoning day:

(continued on page 3) 

God’s Promise for the Week

“*For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich.*” (Mt 25:29)

The Mystical Stages of Prayer

1. The Prayer of Recollection

The first experience that people have when their prayer begins to well up spontaneously from the depths, beyond the control of their will, is what has come to be called the prayer of recollection. Teresa says that this is “the first prayer I felt that was supernatural,” that is the kind of prayer “which cannot be acquired by industry or diligence.”

What does this experience consist of? For those who receive it, it consists of their feeling drawn gently inward, immersed in an atmosphere of reverence and love. It appears essentially as a firm attention to God present within them. That is, there is a sense of a firm attraction to God, who is felt as being very near. However, their psyche is still active; memory and imagination move freely.

It comes suddenly in the form of interior movements or touches which are perceived as calls to withdraw. God is preparing us for a mutual encounter in solitude. When one has already gone more deeply inward, these touches or movements will be repeated before the prayer of quiet or that of union.

In short, the prayer of recollection is the first mystical prayer. In this stage one's attention is gently drawn inward and one begins to become vaguely aware of the presence of God. When one has gone more deeply inward, he or she is led to the deeper stage, the prayer of quiet.

2. The Prayer of Quiet

While the prayer of recollection is a somewhat tenuous experience, the prayer of quiet is the first form of prayer that powerfully invades us, because one of its most characteristic traits is a very strong inner peace. It is not like the normal state of rest or relaxation and takes away all the recipients' weariness. Sometimes it comes suddenly; at other times it comes very gradually.

However, peace is but one trait of this experience. The soul feels the nearness of God and is filled with joy, sometimes bursting into acts of love or praise or gratitude. If the period characterized by infused recollection is often brief, that of the prayer of quiet usually lasts longer.

The body feels the muscles relax and even, in stronger experience, fall into lethargy. The senses are awake, although it takes an effort to open the eyes and an even greater effort to come out from inside in order to respond to anyone else.

Although the will is submerged in this great, joyful quiet and the understanding's attention is drawn to the divine presence, memory and imagination can cause distractions. However, these distractions do not disturb the soul's quiet or its joy in God's presence.

In short, in this stage one experiences the great quiet; the understanding's attention is drawn to the divine presence. The prayer of quiet therefore is the successive form of the prayer of recollection and also the preparation stage for the prayer of union with God.

3. The Prayer of Simple Union

The stage of prayer that follows is called the prayer of “simple” union, because, beginning with it, all further stages of prayer are stages of ever deepening and more total union. What this prayer consists in is God's uniting the soul to the divine, leaving it in passivity and communicating the divine life to it.

Its fundamental characteristic is an awareness that all of the inner faculties, from the will and understanding to the imagination, are being taken over. Those who pray this prayer no longer perceive just the effects of the divine presence (quiet and joy), but rather experience an act of possession and submission of their psyche. They feel dominated and possessed by God. Here, in comparison of with what it was in the prayer of quiet, the perception of the divine presence is strong and overpowering. During these experiences, the bodily senses remain awake, although they are not consciously adverted to.


Those who experience it are left with a diffuse sense of the presence of God in the depth of their being. It sometimes seems to them that they are deeply united with God's will: God becomes their dwelling place, their only true homeland. They only feel “at home” in God. And the principal effect of this prayer is to greatly enamor the believer, intensifying his or her love for God and increasing his or her generosity toward the neighbor.

In short, the perception of the divine presence is overpowering and one feels first possessed by God in this stage. Unlike the former stage, all of the inner faculties are being taken over. That is, one feels dominated by God and one is deeply united with God. But the prayer of simple union is only the starting point of the more total union, the prayer of ecstatic union.

4. The Prayer of Ecstatic Union

Simple union is followed by a still more powerful and total experience of union. It is so powerful that it produces a loss of the external senses. The person is so deeply in the God who acts within that communication with the outside world is cut off. While this experience lasts, the person finds it impossible, not just difficult, to regain ordinary consciousness.

What constitutes this stage is, then, a most powerful experience of being united to God by God's taking possession of the human spirit. During the ecstasy, there can be imaginative visions or imageless visions of a purely intellectual type. The will feels totally inflamed with love and quite happy. And the soul feels the superhuman power of the experience of love and thus feels wounded, but this brings it immense happiness. In other words, the soul is inwardly burning in a flame of godly love.

The senses are suspended because of their weakness. Ecstasy is at once caused by the power of the interior experience and the weakness of that part of the psyche and body that remain without energy. Some persons who have suffered a grave trauma remain for several hours without knowing what is going on around them. They can travel to one or more places without realizing where they are or registering it in their memory. *(continued on page 4)* 

The Cleansing of Ten Lepers **Counsels** *(continued from page 1)*

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee.

As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed.

And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice;

and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply,

"Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" (Lk 17:11-18)

Lack of gratitude is not a fault, like stealing or unkindness or impurity. The ungrateful person is simply thoughtless; he doesn't mean to hurt. And yet his thoughtlessness does hurt, almost as though it were an intentional insult. The lepers who were cleansed were naturally excited. It was normal that they should be overcome with happiness and want to show themselves to their relatives and friends.

Like many of us today, the other nine lepers took their cure for granted; they like many of us failed to appreciate the love and kindness our Lord keeps on pouring to all of us; we clung to our gifts and forget the Giver. That lack of gratitude is one of the biggest failings of our life today. We take so much for granted. We could easily frown that the cleansed lepers didn't return to thank the Lord. Yet isn't that what most of us would easily do, the same exact thing? Is God any less good in keeping us healthy all or most of the time than He was in cleansing and restoring health to the ten lepers? Should God be less thanked, less appreciated because He never let us lose our sights, never gives us chest pains, or cancerous diseases? All the love and gifts that have been poured onto us are all His doing. The inner strength that has kept us from sinning, it's all the work of His protective grace.

Lord, don't let us take our gifts for granted. Let us appreciate them, love them, enjoy them – and constantly be grateful to our Father.

===== **Traveling Catholics** =====

For nationwide listing of Catholic Churches and Mass times, visit www.masstimes.org.

For information on St. Mary's and St. Mark's visit their newly designed website: www.stmarystmarkparish.com

"Well done, my good and faithful servant... Come share your master's joy." (Mt 25:21).

How can we share our Master's joy? How do we become good, faithful and fruitful servants of God? It is not just by developing our gifts and harnessing them for ourselves, but by sharing our talents with others so they too, may live an abundant life in Christ! The first step, therefore, is to generously share what we have with others. By doing so, we are able to witness to the humility Jesus Christ exemplified while he was on earth. Our model is Jesus Christ — His character and His mind. In Philippians 2:1-5 St. Paul says: *"Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.* We have to learn humility before we can honestly say we love Christ.

The second step is to completely abide in God's Word. We need to be constantly immersed in scripture, reflecting on them, keeping them alive in our hearts and minds. We also need to improve and deepen our knowledge of Christ by attending teachings. We can only prove to be true disciples of Christ if we observe, live out God's commandments and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. This will make our Father immensely joyful. John 15:9-12 succinctly puts it: ***If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. My commandment is this: Love each other as I have loved you.***

The third step, is have complete dependence on God's provision. We must offer ourselves, our gifts, our time, talent and treasure to be used for His greater glory and honor. Even in trials we should thank Him. We offer our sufferings to Him and continually pray for His help and mercy. For as our faith is tested, we produce endurance through which God will make us perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. And when we are made perfect, we truly become the children of light — alert, sober and ready for the coming of Christ to share His joy with God the Father in the heavenly dwellings.

Directions:

1. Strive to preserve peace, unity and harmony in community.
2. Be faithful stewards by sharing your time, talents and treasures.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION

Nursing Home Visit – Hamilton Plaza

56 Hamilton Avenue, Passaic, NJ 07055

Every 2nd Saturday of the month. Volunteers are needed

Nong & Tricia Bustos – 732-591-1340

nongb601@aol.com, teres202@aol.com

NJ Catholic Charismatic Conference 2008

June 13–15, Union Catholic High School

1600 Martine Avenue Scotch Plains, NJ

Angel & Aida Calilap 973-284-1853, aacalilap@gmail.com

Frank & Malou Venadas 973-562-0055,

fvenadas@hotmail.com

Resurrection Parish – St. Bridget Church

372 Montgomery St Jersey City, NJ 07302

Healing Prayer Service every Monday at 8:00pm

Healing Prayer Service with Eucharistic Celebration

Every first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm

2000 Hail Marys Devotion w/ Eucharistic Celebration

Every last Sat. of the month starts at 8:30am except Dec.

Notice of Change for SOUP KITCHEN Assignments

Nov. 22 – Singles Ministry | Jan. 2009 – Solo Parent Ministry

WORD

Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord with the community through an article (450 words max.). Send to word@bldnewark.com.

Week Ending Nov. 7 , 2008

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

All collections last Friday went to

St. Francis Cathedral

Thank you for your continued generosity

PLEDGE OF LOVE \$7,776

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saint Mary's Parish

Thanksgiving Food Drive

ONE DAY ONLY - Nov. 21, 2008, Next Friday

Please bring 2 canned goods per family (beans, corn, noodles, ready mixed mashed potatoes, muffins, etc.) Bins will be placed at the entrance door of the St. Mary's Church for collection.

Contacts from Mission Ministry:

Frank & Malou Venadas - 973-562-0055

Angel & Aida Calilap - 973-284-1853

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Nov 14-16 Marriage Encounter # 32

Mary Immaculate Center, Northampton, PA

Contacts:

Emil & Baby Canlas 551-265-0720

Gary & Mil Camacho 732- 642-1889

Nov 21-23 John 6 Crossing #9

Ramada Limited, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080

Contact: Boyet/Zita Cruz 908-378-518

Email: boyetzita_cruz@yahoo.com

Applications for encounters/retreats are available at www.bldnewark.com

TEACHINGS

Nov 14 After Worship

Intro to Intercession

Singles

Teaching

Youth, John 6, Mark 10

Nov 15 St. Mary's

10-6pm Shepherds Training

1-6pm Agony in the Garden

LSS 28

Washing of the Feet Retreat

Nov 21 St. Mary's

1-6pm CDFPO Overview

ME 32

Intro to Word

*Make the Covenant News
a part of your covenant life.*

The Mystical Stages of Prayer

What is always intensified is the perception of the divine presence and the experience of being seized by the Spirit and united to God.

This period of the spiritual life is characterized by a variety of interior experiences that are at once cognitive and volitional, all of which have one overall meaning: God's self-gift to the human being, with a promise of a fuller giving at a later time.

The Christian man or woman comes forth from the ecstatic union immensely strengthened in spirit. Their whole heart is set on God and nothing else matters to them. They would like to spend all their energies serving God.

In short, in this stage one experiences the ecstasy which produces a loss of the external senses; during the ecstasy one has a most powerful union with God and also experiences some mystical phenomena. Further, the soul feels the superhuman power of the experience of love. While the principle effect of the prayer of the simple union is to intensify his or her love for God and the neighbor, the soul in this stage burns inwardly in a flame of godly love. That is, through the prayer of ecstatic union the soul arrives at the perfect union with God.