



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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Bulletin Edition

April 1, 2011

Made Fruitful Again

Fr. Brendan Leads BLD Community Retreat

Last Saturday, March 26, 2011 starting at 9AM, 154 BLD disciples gathered together at Divine Mercy Parish to be refreshed and made fruitful again through a community retreat given by Fr. Brendan Williams of St Veronica Parish in Howell, NJ. The recollection started with praise and worship led by Fr. Brendan. It was a day filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. ***"When I found your Words, I devoured them."*** (Jer 15:16)

Fr. Brendan directed us to two Greek words that refer to the Word: "Logos" and "Rhema". Logos is the general word of God, also used to refer to Christ Himself, who is the Living Logos. Meanwhile Rhema refers to the "spoken Word" and to that particular special meaning from It that strikes the reader/hearer. It impacts in a special way and may come as an answer to a question he has. In a number of ways the retreat reemphasized many community teachings, retreats and seminars, which we have already all gone through.

The main focus, however, was on the water, light and life of baptism. Baptism, he said, is the most important day of our life. It is the day when "we are adopted into the Family of the Holy Trinity to share the perfect, intimate love and communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit". He also emphasized how we must return home and go back to the arms of Abba.

Together, we reviewed the new vision and mission of BLD, and the call to be living witnesses for transformation; to be "Theotokus" or God bearers, like Mother Mary, by our life and example. There is a call to a deeper conversion, and we must determine how we respond to this call. He exhorted us to clarify our roles, and to evaluate and re-evaluate decisions we make based on this vision and mission. As Fr. Brendan said, "Community is a charism of baptism."

Save The Date

Community Retreat • Oct. 25, 2011
Please reach out to inactive members and invite them

COUNSELS

LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

THEME: We are children of light when we produce the fruits of goodness, righteousness and truth.

WORD: 1 Sm 16:1,6-7,10-13; Ps 23:1-6; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41

ORDER: ***"Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness."*** (Eph 5:11)

REFLECTION:

The month of April offers us a special opportunity, through the weekly themes discerned by the Executive Council of Servant Leaders (ECSL), to reflect on God's Word as we prepare ourselves for the Holy Week. Our theme for the 1st week may sound like a mouthful, ***"We are children of light when we produce fruit of goodness, righteousness and truth."*** It is in fact a statement that we, as members of a Catholic charismatic community, can relate to and certainly live by.

What does it mean to be children of light? In the second reading, St. Paul reminds the Ephesians that they were once in darkness, but are now in the light of the Lord. Like the Ephesians, all of us in BLD, were likewise plucked out of darkness during our baptism as infants, and more recently as adults during our Life in the Spirit Seminar (LSS). When we light candles during our LSS graduation rites, we effectively proclaim that the light of Christ has come to us, delivering us from the darkness of our sins. As light illuminates our darkness, we are able, with the light of Jesus shining through us (Eph 5:8), to live as children of light. The LSS somehow brings about a burning passion for Christ in the hearts of its graduates, who are empowered by the Spirit to be a shining light to the nations.

Holy Week is fast approaching and it is a good opportunity to look into our hearts and reflect upon where we stand as children of light. St. Paul completes his message with a call, ***"Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you,"*** (Eph. 5:14).

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Promise of the Week

"He guides me in the right paths for his name's sake..." (Ps 23:3)

Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!

The Naaman in Me

"But his servants came up and reasoned with him. 'My father,' they said, 'if the prophet had told you to do something extraordinary, would you not have done it? All the more now, since he said to you, 'Wash and be clean,' should you do as he said.'"
(2 Kings 5:13)

Reading the entire story of Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-15) seems to me that the key word in the above verse is "extraordinary". Since the time God created man we have always been attracted to the extraordinary, the more mind-blowing, the more miraculous something is, the better we think it is. That is why people at that time could not accept Jesus as the Savior; he wasn't flashy enough, wasn't extraordinary like Solomon with his wisdom or David with his prowess in battle. He was the son of a carpenter, born in a stable. How can He save the world? You would think that after more than two thousand years we would have gotten it by now. Personally I have experienced the Naaman in me many times and continue to struggle with it.

I remember a few years ago my wife and I started to feel a void in our spiritual lives and that somehow going to mass on Sundays was no longer enough. We were searching for something to fill that void, get our spiritual life back on track, so to speak. Then my brother and his wife started inviting us (nagging was probably a better word) to attend an ME weekend. But did I say yes to his many invitations, of course not! I was looking for something different, something extraordinary. I didn't think a marriage encounter retreat was the extraordinary event that would transform our lives forever.

Only after we moved here to New Jersey did we finally say yes, took several years of convincing. And when we got there I was expecting some miraculous transformation, some kind of epiphany or "flash of lightning" moment. However, nothing happened! I thought maybe the LSS would be it, especially after hearing some of the stories, but not that one either. In fact nothing happened to me, no gift of tongues, no "slain by the Spirit" experience, nothing at all. Inasmuch as we were moved by the sharings& enjoyed the camaraderie, I went home that weekend feeling the same - nothing has changed. Of course, only years later did I start to realize how wrong I was.

I finally realized that God's healing power does not come from doing extraordinary works. That being a loving husband to my wife, a good father to my kids, sharing my God-given gifts with those in need, being active and fully supporting my Parish Church, participating in BLD ministry work, and doing all the other ordinary things I do in my daily life the way God planned it, is what it's all about...nothing fancy, nothing mind-blowing, or miraculous about it.

I think Fr. Escriva said it best in the following excerpt; how great a thing it is ***Continued on page 4***

THE TALE OF TWO SINNERS

"... for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (Lk 18:14)

Two disparate characters find themselves in the synagogue one day. One, the proud Pharisee, the other, the despised tax collector. Both sit as far apart as they are in their intent to pray. The Pharisee, of a group known as "perusim," Hebrew for "the separated ones," sees himself as a person steeped in the knowledge of and strict adherence to the Mosaic Law. He sits where everybody could see him. Instead of praying in praise of God, he praises himself that he is "not greedy, nor dishonest, nor an adulterer", unlike others. He reminds, God (as if He needs reminding) that he fasts twice a week and gives ten percent of his income! It may very well be that he did all of these and other good deeds according to his own judgments and designs, but not God's. The arrogance and haughtiness of the Pharisee stand in the way of his acknowledging that his blessings come from God. He could not admit that he owes God for everything he is and everything he has. Pride undermines faith. ***"When pride comes, disgrace comes; but with the humble is wisdom."*** (Prv 11:2)

On the other hand, the tax collector, seated in the obscure corner behind the Pharisee, could not even begin to raise his head to heaven, in shame, to ask for forgiveness. The people look down on him as a defrauder, an extortionist, and a "sell-out" to the Roman authority. It is conceivable that he is. Only God knows the circumstance of the tax collector's sinfulness vis-à-vis his profession. However, the tax collector is humble enough to admit his sins, bowing low, beating his breast, and sincerely asking God ***"...be merciful to me a sinner."*** (Lk 18:13). The humility and true repentance of the tax collector, so moved Jesus to say ***"I tell you...the tax collector, and not the Pharisee, was in the right with God when he went home."*** (Lk 18:14)

The tax collector shows open-mindedness, a readiness to embrace and believe in Jesus. It is no accident that Jesus showed the same love to Zacchaeus and Levi, both tax collectors, to ask them ***"Come follow me."*** (Mt. 9:9; Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27). Jesus even promised ***"Amen, I say to you, tax collectors...are entering the Kingdom of Heaven before you."*** (Mt 21:31)

When we sin against God, we second-guess His purpose. It makes us think that God should be the one who has to work according to our narrow and selfish interest and to our limited knowledge. Instead, we must submit to God's call. He is so magnanimous that God's mercy is bigger than ours. When we turn to Him and repent, He lifts us up to His Kingdom - a vision that fills us with hope, joy and peace.

COUNSELS (from page 1)

Our Gospel reading also speaks of Light, (Jn. 9:1-41). It tells the story of a man born blind whose sight was restored by our Lord. We are reminded that, just like the blind man, we are all born spiritually blind. We were restored to light through our baptism and as followers of Christ. It behooves us to maintain our sight with faith in Him, and through the Sacraments of Confession and the Holy Eucharist.

How do others know that we are indeed children of light, we may ask? They will know by the fruit we bear – when we produce what is good and right and true - and do what is pleasing to the Lord. [Eph. 5:9-10]. Jesus said to the disciples, ***“You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven,”*** (Matt. 5:14-16). People seeing our good deeds see the light and are illuminated by it.

What are the things that are good and right and true? Goodness is described as the generosity of spirit, righteousness means giving to people and to God that which is their due, and truth is moral truth, something to be done as well as known. These virtues imply living for others, and they come alive in us through the fruits of the spirit, as manifested in our lives. ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,”*** (Gal 5:22-23). Lent is the time to hone these virtues through of fasting, abstinence, prayer and almsgiving. And as we bear fruit, we are assured of the Lord’s promise for the week, ***“He guides me in the right paths for his name’s sake...”*** (Ps 23:3)

Our theme for the 2nd week is a promise of hope. ***“We are children of light when we firmly believe that Christ will raise us up to new life.”*** The Gospel narrates the raising of Lazarus from the grave, underscoring our belief that death is not an end but merely a passage in our journey to eternal life. When our physical bodies die and we depart this world, our souls rise to Heaven to await the last day when our physical bodies shall be raised from their graves. ***“O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them,”*** (Ez 7:12). The story of Lazarus is merely a preview of the victory of life that was made possible with the resurrection of Jesus. This is God’s promise for the week, ***“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die,”*** (John 11:25.)

This leads us to the theme for the following Sunday which is Palm Sunday signaling the start of the Holy Week, ***“We are children of light when*** ➤

we endure suffering and persecution for the sake of the gospel.” On this day, the Church celebrates Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery. This paschal mystery includes the suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus into glory and the sending of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Jesus to continue the work Christ began. After five weeks of preparation we now enter the apogee of the Lenten season. There really is so much to reflect upon in the passion of Christ according to Matthew. An experiential way to pursue our theme is to take on the role of Jesus as we do the readings and feel the pain of His suffering and persecution through prayerful meditation. With grateful hearts, the torture, humiliation and degradation of Jesus give us the endurance to persevere with our own suffering and persecution. ***“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends,”*** (Jn 15:13-14). This is an empowering verse that enables us to proclaim the gospel armed with God’s promise for the week, ***“The Lord God is my help therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame,”*** (Is 50:2).

And then finally, we come to the culmination of the Lenten Season, which is Easter Sunday the feast of life. Our theme for this week is, ***“We are children of light when we bear witness to the living Christ.”*** Easter is a celebration of Christ’s victory over suffering and death. It is a day of joy and all the saints and angels of heaven rejoice with us in the perfect unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, because ***“The Lord has risen indeed”*** (Lk. 24:34). During Easter, we are likewise called to symbolically resurrect from sin to grace, leaving behind a life of darkness to enter a new life of light.

The glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, witnessed by hundreds in the early days of the Church, is our proof that one day we will all be united as one eternal family. Through the resurrection of Christ, we too have been raised up to a new life with Jesus by the spirit that is within us. And because we have been raised, we go forth and bring the joy of the Lord to all those who touch our lives, bearing witness to the living Christ. We then can count on His promise for the week, ***“When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.”*** (Col 3:4)

DIRECTIONS

1. Meditate on the passion, death and resurrection of Christ.
2. Do what is pleasing to God.

Fr. Paul Speaks

On April 17th, Palm Sunday, we will enter the most important week of the year. Within that week we enter into the Sacred Triduum, the three most important days of the year as well as the introduction to the "Paschal Mysteries", the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. The liturgy on Holy or Maundy Thursday, invites us to celebrate the *washing of the feet*, a fitting preparation for the reception of the Eucharist. On the surface it may seem that the *washing of the feet* is a reminder to be cleansed in preparation for Holy Communion. That certainly is a very important element, to be in the state of grace before taking Communion. The problem is that this concept leads us to reduce Eucharistic preparation merely to moral reform, trying hard to be good. It can also be a reminder that service to others, even in the humble task of foot washing, is the logical outcome of Eucharistic devotion.

But it can also be a redefinition of the concept of God and God's mercy, and I believe this is the bottom line mystery contained in the foot washing ceremony. Peter's initial refusal to allow Jesus to wash his feet points to the common definition of God as master (which Jesus claims to be), a master who could not possibly humble himself. This master Jesus not only humbles Himself to wash feet, but humbles Himself to death on the cross. (Cf. 2 Phillipians.) Peter realizes this dimension very shortly when he denies the Lord, and experiences forgiveness.

Peter and Judas are two examples of the way we can approach human weakness. Peter's way - "Just try harder." Judas' way- "I'm too weak or too evil to be forgiven." Both approaches are wrong. Eventually, Peter experienced forgiveness by humble recognition of his previous self-assurance. He knew now that it is only mercy and God's work that can effect forgiveness. Judas also had that recognition. His big sin was despair, the height of pride. The difference between Peter and Judas was the despair that drove Judas to suicide, believing that he had committed the unforgivable sin. His sin was bigger, in his own eyes, than God's mercy.

We in BLD often re-enact the foot-washing scene. The ceremony is quite simple, yet quite profound. I encourage those of you who have not made this optional experience to take advantage of the renewal of our devotion to this moment in the life of Jesus. Would that we could deepen our appreciation of the events of Holy Week by meditating on this introductory drama of foot washing! The lesson to be learned is not only service, but a deeper experience of God's mercy.

CN archives are available at www.bldnewark.net, click on Covenant News.

NAAMAN ... to be accompanying God through the faithful fulfillment of your ordinary daily duties, coming through struggles which fill Our Lord with joy, and which are known only to him and to each one of us. Rest assured that you will usually find few opportunities for dazzling deeds, one reason being that they seldom occur. On the other hand, you will not lack opportunities, in the small and ordinary things around you, of showing your love for Christ. As St Jerome writes, "Even in small things, the same (greatness of) spirit is revealed". Amen!!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Youth Ministry Retreat

April 16 • St. Mary's

Washing Of The Feet / Agony In The Garden

Contact: Youth Tricord @ ycs@bldnewark.com

Marriage Encounter 37

May 13-15 • Radisson Hotel located in Carteret, NJ

Contacts: Nick/Island Raagas @ nlraagas@yahoo.com

• Gary/Mil Camacho @ mla@bldnewark.com

Singles Encounter 26

June 3-5 • Graymoor Spiritual Center, Garrison, NY

Contact: M/A Mangalonzo @ singles@bldnewark.com

Solo Parent Encounter 13

June 24-26 • Radisson Hotel located in Carteret, NJ

Applications available after worship. Contacts: Lucille Vizcayno 914-963-9017 Miles Dionisio 703-899-9967

Family Encounter 18

July 15-17 • Malvern Retreat House, PA

Contacts: Randy/Beth Trinidad lynx.cmt314@comcast.net •

Manny/Nette Manguiat @ fla@bldnewark.com

For Mass & Adoration schedule within the U.S.A.

www.masstimes.org or call 410-676-6000

TEACHING CALENDAR

4/8 **Youth Teaching**

4/9-10 **Teachers Development** - By Invitation •
District Cluster - Covenanted/ Disciples

4/15 Intro to Intercession • **ME 36 & 37**
Mark 10, John 6 & Service Formation
Teaching

Special Announcement

April 30 • 9-4pm • Connell Hall

Singles Retreat: "Create Your Love Story". Contact:

Manny/Arlene Mangalonzo - singles@bldnewark.com

Fri: after worship; *Sat: 1-6pm @ St. Mary's, +At Reunion

Stewardship - It's a way of life!

LORD'S PROVISION

WEEK ENDING MAR. 25, 2011

Collections	Actual	YTD
Tithe/Love Offering	3,965	41,343

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

Thank you for your continued support!