



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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NEWS

BLD Newark's Cluster Shepherds reflect on the reading for Election Day, Nov 8

~ Titus 2:2-3,6-8

The challenge we face today is not only how to transform the people in governance into true servant leaders, but more importantly, how to make our future leaders regard themselves as servant leaders.

Historically, those who wielded power, most especially in government, regarded themselves as *in authority*, thereby justifying their power. The resulting power plays and jealousies often threatened and jeopardized relationships, ultimately leading to disenfranchisement and the doom of decay.

On the other hand, Jesus, though a King, humbled Himself by coming from up on high and descending so low to serve and rescue us from our certain destruction. ***“Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*** (Mt 20:28) Jesus changed the concept of leadership by being a **servant** first. We must profoundly understand that to serve means to be willing to subordinate ourselves to a cause or purpose that is much bigger than we are. Jesus gave glory to His Father by giving His life as a ransom for our sins. ***“He humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.”*** (Phil 2:8)

The second description of servant leadership is that of a **shepherd**. ***“Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, leading the ewes with care.”*** (Is 40:11) Like a shepherd, a servant leader makes sure that he puts those in need as his highest priority. ***“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”*** (Jn 10:11)

Lastly, a servant leader should see himself as the **good steward**. He must view his authority and powers as gifts. It is predicated by the responsibility to oversee, protect and respect the rights of the people, to observe the laws, promote peace and harmony, to support the framework of progress and the betterment of those he serves.

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COUNSELS

THE PROMISE

THEME: Christ is sovereign in our life when we put our hope in His promise of eternal life.

WORD: 2 Mc 7:1-2,9-14 ~ Ps 17:1,5-6,8,15
2 Thes 2:16-3:5 ~ Lk 20:27-38

ORDER: ***“Direct your hearts to the love of God.”***
(2 Thes 3:5)

REFLECTION:

The liturgical readings for November remind us of two realities – first, that suffering and trials will be with us always while we live on earth, and the other is that we will attain the promise of eternal happiness if we persevere in our faith and allow Christ to rule our life. We are called to have unflinching courage in the midst of our trials, and a joyful hope towards a promised life without sadness, tears, sickness, and death: eternal life in God's Kingdom.

The theme for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time is: **Christ is sovereign in our life when we put our hope in His promise of eternal life.** This week's readings allow us to ponder God's word about death, the inevitable end of our earthly existence, and the beginning of eternity. The first reading tells the story of seven courageous brothers who, with their mother, endured martyrdom rather than violate their conscience and their Jewish faith. Persevering in faith, they believed that everything in life came from God; and they were confident that death was but a door to resurrection where God would reward the just and the faithful.

We know that after our earthly life, our souls need not be lost and suffer decay, because we have seen the joyful hope of God's glory, as promised in

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Promise of the Week

“Our Lord Jesus Christ...has loved us and given us everlasting encouragement and good hope through his grace.” (2 Thes 2:16)

Increase Our Faith

Like the apostles in St. Luke's Gospel, we beg and pray to God to increase our faith because we feel we are inadequate. Faith is a free gift from God to us. It is also trust in the Lord. It must grow with us as we mature.

As people of faith we will be persecuted, arrested, tortured, and some will even be killed. We can also be happy one day and sad the next, healthy one day and sick the next, rich one day and poor the next, alive one day, but if called, dead in the next. *So who is there to hold on to? Who is there to feel secure with? Who is there to trust at all times?* God exhorts us not to be afraid of skepticism and cynicism that come our way, but to trust that He will give us the words, the wisdom and the strength to hold steady, grounded in Him at all times.

Faith increases when we are willing to bear our ***"share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God."*** (2 Tim 1:8b) To live, grow, and persevere in faith until the end, we must make the effort to nourish our faith with the word of God.

God says: *I will love you with an everlasting love. I will be faithful to you, even when you run away from me, reject me, or betray me.* (cf Jer 31:3) We often break this covenant because we are unwilling or unable to remain faithful to its terms. However, God continues to love us even when we say or think evil things. God continues to wait for us as a loving parent waits for the return of a lost child. It is important for us to hold on to the truth that God never gives up loving us even when He is saddened by what we do. That truth will help us to return to God's ever-present love.

Of course, we are aware, that when we remain deeply anchored in the love of Jesus through faith, He will never disappoint us, and we will remain secure about who we are in this world and why we are here. With our hearts connected to the heart of Jesus, we will always know what to say when the time to speak comes.



Almighty and eternal God, we pray: may Your grace always go before, and follow after us, and make us determined to carry out good works. May Your love for us surpass all our hopes and desires; forgive our failings, keep us close to You in faith and lead us in the way of salvation. Amen.

CORRECTION & FORGIVENESS

When a Brother Has Sinned Against You

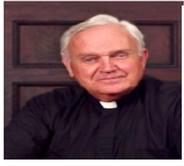
Luke 17:3-4 ***"Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, 'I am sorry,' you should forgive him."***

This verse from Luke begins with ***"Be on your guard,"*** that is to be careful of our actions about sinning and forgiveness. The Lord is telling us to be vigilant so as not to cause others to sin from our actions and to take every precaution so we do not sin. And along with this we have to forgive our brothers who have sinned against us, make a loving effort to correct them through a more direct relationship and not just accept how they are.

In BLD, as we continue to be soaked in God's teachings, we recognize that Scripture is primarily about forgiveness that is unconditional. This means we forgive everyone of the sins they commit against us. We choose this to keep God's promise of peace and joy, as we remove the hatred, resentment, and anger in our hearts that delay and hold back our forgiveness. We believe Jesus wants us to forgive, and forgive and forgive, and to do all things in love. Our Christian faith gives us tremendous capacity to forgive, so we are able to leave all past sins behind and move on.

Scripture teaches us two complementary processes: we should encourage repentance on the part of brethren who have sinned against us; and we gain maturity in God's Kingdom by granting them our unconditional forgiveness, so that by doing this, we may be forgiven our own sins. As we say in our Lord's Prayer - ***"forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."***

If we hope to be able to avoid causing others to sin, to keep from committing sin ourselves, and to forgive those who have sinned against us, we need to have a strong and enlightened faith. These things are not possible on our own strength, so we must pray for more faith so we will always have the understanding of what Jesus is asking us to do. We must pray to be able to show others that we care and to be able to speak out in love whenever we find a need to rebuke a brother. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit's help: for courage to approach others as brothers and friends, for the humility to be able to express gratitude, for renewed confidence in our friendships, and for restoration of joyful fellowship going forward.



FR. PAUL SPEAKS....

... about Heaven, Purgatory
and Hell

At this time of the year, when the Church is celebrating the world of heaven and purgatory, the entertainment world around us usually shows us another aspect of the invisible. It is interesting to note that as the existence of the invisible and supernatural is being denied, it seems to haunt us (sense intended) that something invisible lies beneath the surface of life. So we have horror movies, witches, goblins, spider webs, fake grave stones, skeletons and all manner of scary things for sale and amusement. It seems that we enjoy being frightened. Besides being a money maker, these indicators point to a hidden, unconscious sense of the supernatural, which I believe is part of the sense of the transcendent that God has instilled in us. It is really an unconscious desire for God. It got all mixed up, but the traces of God are there. For instance, Halloween historically was the holy evening before, or the vigil of, All Saints day that is celebrated on November 1st.

The Church teaches us that there are the three “last things” or possibilities after death. Some say death ends it all, but when we die we are faced with the reality of hell, purgatory or heaven. When was the last time you heard a brimstone sermon on the reality of hell? Perhaps it was overemphasized a few years ago, and possibly reduced our Catholic practice to fear. But devotion to the Divine Mercy means we have been rescued from the fires of hell through our repentance and the acceptance of forgiveness given to us by God’s mercy. People do not automatically go to heaven when they die. They are saved by the mercy of God mediated for us by the death and resurrection of Jesus, and accepted in repentance by us.

What about purgatory? It is a doctrine that to me makes a lot of sense. The explanation of the process of purification after death can be confusing, but the reality of the need for purification should be obvious. Purgatory is NOT God’s revenge for unforgiven sin. It is pure love conditioning us for eternity in heaven.

And heaven? It’s beyond words! It’s an eternity of infinite love given by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

When you see the silly reductions of these mysteries in society, let your mind move quickly to the real underlying supernatural reality beneath them. Move from the trivial to the profound.

COUNSELS

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2 Thessalonians 2:16, **“Our Lord Jesus Christ himself... has loved us and given us everlasting encouragement and good hope through his grace.”**

The second reading guides us on how to prepare for our eternal reward. Our life’s race to the finish line is all about love in our hearts and our works. Love for God necessarily overflows into a godly love for all – godly charity. Finally, in the Gospel, Jesus shows us a vision of eternity. He knows all about eternity because He comes from God; that eternity is an afterlife of indescribable beauty and unfathomable happiness. For us who follow Jesus, death is the gateway to a beautiful reality – the Beatific Vision of God to enjoy for all eternity.

The theme for the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time is: **Christ is sovereign in our life when we remain in God’s word, and God’s word remains in us.** How do we prepare for the end of the world? Significantly, as the Church is about to end its liturgical year, the apocalyptic readings about the end of time are highlighted. The coming end is described in the Old Testament and is re-told in the Gospel reading. There will be earthquakes, plagues, famines all over and people will suffer. There will be confusion and panic. There will be wars, fighting and division among peoples and nations. Even those who follow the Lord and live their lives in the Lord will not be spared. But the glory of the Lord will make the difference as not a single hair on their heads will be destroyed.

In Luke’s Gospel, the Lord cautions us on how to prepare when the end is near, not to sow terror and fear, but to teach the people what to do and how to look at things when the day comes. In our world and even in our country today, we are faced with all forms of destruction. There are horrible and destructive events caused by natural and man-made disasters that haunt, destroy and victimize mankind. In all these, Jesus tells us to trust in Him only, to be steadfast and persevering. He assures us: **“By your perseverance you will secure your lives.”** (Lk 21:19)

The theme for the Solemnity of Christ the King is: **Christ is sovereign in our life when we proclaim Him as our God and King.** Obviously, the crucifixion scene is not a scene fit for a king. The Jews simply jeered at the crucified Christ – **“If you are King of the Jews, save yourself.”** But there was one man who believed that Jesus was God and He truly has a kingdom. He pleaded with Jesus – **“Remember me when you come into your kingdom.”** (Lk 23:42)

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COUNSELS

(from page 3)

There was nothing that Jesus could do for him on the cross or to save him from mortal death, but He promised him much more. He gave him eternity itself: ***"Today you will be with me in Paradise."*** (Lk 23:43)

To gain eternal life we must proclaim Christ as our Lord and Savior. In the 2nd reading, St. Paul tells us that we have been redeemed and delivered from the power of darkness (Satan and sin) and "transferred" to the kingdom of God in Christ Jesus. We must live, honoring the sovereignty of Christ as God and King, for in Him all things were created. He is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega, where all things hold together.

Just as Jesus promised eternal life to the criminal on the cross because of his faith, so also for us, that by the very act of Jesus sacrificing and dying on the cross, He saved us and gave us back our heavenly inheritance. St. Paul assures us this promise: ***"The Father has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones."*** (Col 1:12)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Strengthen and up-build one another as you perform the mission you are called to do.
2. Proclaim truth and love in every spiritual and temporal work of mercy that you do.

NEWS

(from page 1)

"As each one received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Pt 4:10)

This brings us to the marks or traits of a servant leader. At the top of the list is good moral and ethical integrity: doing what is right, not what is merely popular and convenient. A person of integrity treats everyone with equality, does not favor supporters and friends or treat others, such as enemies and adversaries, with a separate set of principles. He is honest, truthful and impartial. ***"The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones."*** (Lk 16:10) He conducts himself morally, founded on divine truth.

He must be credible by being a witness and an example of the principles and conducts that he professes. ***"Men should be temperate, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, love and endurance."*** (Ti 2:2) He must be accountable for his actions by being transparent, speaking the truth regardless of consequences. The list goes on to include the ability to discern in making decisions or in assessing different options. He must be an >>>>>

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
Tithes & Love Offerings	\$ 2,646	\$ 116,295
Mission Collections	\$ 193	\$ 6,440
Fundraising Raffle (net)	\$ 624	\$ 38,581

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

Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Marriage Encounter # 47

November 18-20, 2016

Hotel Executive Suites

30 Minue Street, Carteret, NJ

Contact email: MLA@bldnewark.com



**Feast of Christ the King
Sunday, November 20, 2016
Conclusion of the Extraordinary
Jubilee Year of Mercy**



THE POWER OF ONE



Marshaling	Date	Apostolate
	Nov 11	Pastoral
	Nov 18	Evangelization
	Nov 25	Formation
	Dec 2	Management

>> inspiration to his people by being able to motivate and inspire others to rally around a vision, to accomplish a purpose and achieve progress based on love, truth and justice. He must be adaptable to the needs of the people in addressing situations, ***"showing... a model of good deeds in every respect, with integrity... dignity, and sound speech that cannot be criticized."*** (Ti 2:7)

Our fundamental goal, as a community, and even as a nation in general, should always be to ensure that our leaders and future leaders be service-oriented first, shepherds at heart, and good stewards of the resources entrusted to them for the common good. Let us emulate the example of a true servant leader, Jesus our God and King. ***"Whoever claims to abide in him ought to live [just] as he lived."*** (1 Jn 2:6)