



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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Pope at Jubilee Closure:

'If You Give God a Chance ... He Is Ready to Start Your Life Anew'

Closing Holy Year, Francis Says Even If Holy Door Has Closed, Christ's Heart Remains Open

NOVEMBER 20, 2016 / DEBORAH CASTELLANO LUBOV / JUBILEES AND SPECIAL YEARS / Source: RCAN.org

"As soon as we give God the chance, He remembers us. He is ready to completely and forever cancel our sin, because His memory – unlike our own – does not record evil that has been done or keep score of injustices experienced."

Pope Francis said this during his homily for the Closure of Jubilee Year of Mercy, Dec. 8, 2015 – Nov. 20, 2016, on the occasion of the Feast of Christ the King, as he reminded faithful how God's mercy awaits us always, even if Holy Doors have closed.

"God has no memory of sin, but only of us, of each of us, we who are His beloved children. And He believes that it is always possible to start anew, to raise ourselves up."

Recalling that today marks the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, the Pontiff encouraged us to proclaim His victory today, and joyfully share the splendor of having Jesus as our King: His rule of love transforms sin into grace, death into resurrection, fear into trust.

Must Not Only Be King of Universe, But of Lives

"It would mean very little, however, if we believed Jesus was King of the universe, but did not make Him Lord of our lives: all this is empty if we do not personally accept Jesus and if we do not also accept His way of being King."

The Jesuit Pontiff then went on to present three figures in today's Gospel that appear, along with Jesus: the people who are looking on, those near the Cross, and the criminal crucified next to Jesus.

Which of These Three...

Speaking first on the people who "stood by, watching," without drawing closer (Lk 23:35), Francis reflected: "Given the circumstances of our lives and our unfulfilled expectations, we too can be tempted to keep our distance *Continued on page 4*

COUNSELS

Stay the Course with a Steadfast Spirit

THEME: We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we await Him in faithful anticipation.

WORD: Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9; Rom 13:11-14; Mt 24:37-44

ORDER: *"Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."* (Mt 24:42)
"Throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light." (Rom 13:12)

REFLECTION:

As we start the first week of Advent, we await with expectant joy the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus. It marks the beginning of His journey on earth, from Bethlehem to Calvary, then to its glorious destination, His resurrection into Heaven.

There is a beginning and an end to every journey. In the first reading, it is mentioned that nations stream towards the highest mountain to climb it by walking in the light of Christ. Their ultimate objective is to reach the house of the Lord which is on the mountain top. We are part of this journey.

In our case, the beginning of our spiritual journey is like the dawning of a new day with the light of Christ which comes after the darkness of our sinful past. This journey started when we received a wake-up call to join an encounter or an LSS with our hope for a life eternal as our ultimate goal. We need to realize though that we can only accomplish this if we keep our faith in God.

Our wake up call to join this journey came from our BLD community and hopefully, we can continue to stay together and proceed to the end. It starts and continues with our individual determination to stay the course, coupled with our efforts to bring others with us, starting with our spouse and *Continued on page 3*

Promise of the Week

"... those who love you prosper." (Ps 122:6)

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

A Reflection on Isaiah 11:1-10

...from a BLD Youth Ministry member

Analyzing text has been something that I've been doing for a while and I actually enjoy doing it on my own time. I love reading through the Bible and finding the meaning behind a text and taking a message from it. This scripture that I was given didn't initially stand out with a message that I could get from it, except for some very generic statements, so I have resorted to analyzing it in hopes of finding a struck.

I have formulated many notes on the passage on my analysis, but there probably lies many more things in this passage that I cannot see. In the beginning of the passage it says "***a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a branch will bear fruit.***" (Is 11:1) which to me says that God doesn't plan on coming as something huge, but as something small that will progressively get bigger and better. This has happened several times in the Bible where God doesn't come as a strong force, but a gentle whisper. Here God doesn't want to bring hope in the form of a human whose greatness was predicted from birth, but from one that people would underestimate. In this case it is David, the youngest son of Jesse, who is compared to a shoot, a small tree that grows from another that a person can easily snap apart. This states that David is destined for greatness for he will be an effective ruler and "bear fruit" or have a family line that will continue on for many generations so that "the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples". This foreshadows the coming of Jesus who will bring peace to the land.

I initially saw that the reason for the inclusion of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit was to state qualities that an effective ruler would have, qualities David was to have when he is leader. I later realized that these are actually qualities that not only David will have, but Jesus too in the New Testament. More than that, these are qualities that are for all people. To us Roman Catholics we believe that we receive these Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and they will be strengthened in Confirmation. While in the passage, it was referring to David, we know that the Holy Spirit will present us with these gifts too.

Though my insights and thoughts on this passage are just that of a young girl, I hope some people will agree with me or actually be inspired by them. I admit, I do not know or understand as much about God as I wish I did, but I believe in God's time, I will be given the grace to understand, strengthen my faith and perhaps inspire others to seek and follow Him.

Let It Be Done

"Let it be done for you according to your faith."

(Mt 9:29)

I'm called to reflect on a time when I became very ill. It was unexpected, fierce and physically disabling. In fact, it happened over the course of a few hours. My life as I knew it was altered in every way. Who I was then, paled in comparison to the severity of my immediate reality.

I spent three weeks in a hospital undergoing intense physical and occupational therapy to regain the use of the left side of my body. Doctors of various specialties were reluctant to offer a specific diagnosis. What was I to do? All I could do was pray, however my faith in God suddenly seemed weak and inadequate.

Even worse, my prayerful friends and family members expressed doubt and wondered why God hadn't healed me or asked why He allowed this to happen at all. I recall the look of uncertainty in my children's and loved ones' eyes. In the midst of this I prayed, "Lord, I have been the strong one in their lives, if only for them, show Your mercy!"

"***For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways...***" (Is 55:8) The journey was difficult and in time I came to understand that the Lord allowed my situation for His own plan and purpose. In fact, I was forced to re-evaluate my understanding and definition of faith. After many healing retreats, prayers and alone time with the Lord, He revealed my heart to me.

In prayer time the Lord slowly removed the blindness from my eyes. I saw how my sinfulness created a barrier between my heart and His attempts to enter in. He told me that I was asking for the wrong healing. My greatest ill, was my spiritual blindness which affected my faith. He assured me that He would heal me slowly.

The more I surrendered to His will and humbled myself, the stronger I found myself becoming. My journey of faith increased gradually over the years. I'm not fully restored until now and I've sometimes asked the Lord, why? He has answered me as He did to St. Paul: "***My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.***" (2 Cor 12:9)

I've come to conclude that in fact the Lord has answered me all along by saying to me, "*Let it be done, according to your faith.*" I acknowledge my misery and need of His forgiveness and love. His mercy has been without measure and my prayer now is, "Lord increase my faith." I'm happy to share the good news that our God is always faithful and never disappoints!

BLD Newark Members visited at least 48 Catholic sites with Holy Doors of Mercy

During the recently concluded Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, many BLD members made pilgrimages to various places around the world. The list below is based on information sent to the Word Ministry of the sites in Europe, North America and the Philippines that were visited by the Lord's disciples from Newark, including all seven that have been designated as "permanent" (see sites with an * below) by various pontiffs throughout the Catholic Church's history.

New Jersey-6: Divine Mercy Parish, Rahway; Our Lady of the Sea, Cape May; National Blue Army Shrine, Washington; Sacred Heart Church, Dover; Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark; Sacred Heart Church, Wallington

New York - 2: St. Patrick's Cathedral, NY City; National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Stony Point

Pennsylvania - 2: Shrine of Our Lady of Chestochowa, Doylestown; Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia, Philadelphia

Other US - 9: Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC; National Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, MA; Basilica Shrine of St. Mary, Wilmington, NC; St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, Bluffton, SC; San Fernando Cathedral, San Antonio, TX; St. Joseph Co-Cathedral, Burlington, VT; Cathedral of St. Thomas Moore, Arlington, VA; St. James Cathedral, Seattle, WA; Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, Hubertus, WI

Canada - 5: Notre-Dame Basilica Cathedral, Quebec City*; Saint Anne-de-Beaupre Shrine, Quebec; Our Lady of the Cape Shrine, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec; Basilica di Santa Rita Sanctuaire de La Réparation au Sacré-Coeur et de Saint Padre Pio, Montreal; Saint Joseph's Oratory, Montreal

France - 13: Sacre Coeur Basilica, Paris; Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris; Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Paris; Chapel of St Vincent de Paul, Paris; Versailles Cathedral, Paris; Eglise St Pierre at Mont St Michel, Normandy; Basilica of St Therese, Liseux; Cathedral of our Lady of Chartres, Chartres; St. Gildard Church (St Bernadette), Nevers; Chapelle des Apparitions, Paray le Morial; Shrine of St John Vianney, Ars*; Basilica of our Lady of La Sallette, La Sallette; Basilica of our Lady of Lourdes, Lourdes

Italy - 6: Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome*; Basilica Papale di San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome*; Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, Rome*; St. Sebastian, Rome; Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, Rome; Basilica di Santa Rita, Cascia

Philippines - 3: Pontifical University of Santo Thomas Chapel, Manila; The National Shrine of Saint Padre Pio, Batangas ; Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Boracay

Spain: Catedral de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago*

Vatican City - St. Peter's Basilica*

COUNSELS (from page 1)

family, our relatives and friends, and others whom we meet along the way, so that they too will see the light.

With the love of Christ and the strength that comes from Him, we help each other out when we encounter trials and difficulties along the way. We share with each other our provisions of knowledge and wisdom with those among us who are in need of spiritual nourishment so they can get back on their feet whenever they stumble due to distractions from worldly temptations.

God equips us with the talents and spiritual gifts that are meant to be shared and used to help those we meet along the way; those who are weak and feel abandoned, the hungry and the needy; those who live in darkness and the coldness of their sinfulness; and those who are in desperate need to feel God's warm embrace. We need to search for them and bring them along with us and thus become God's bell ringers or instruments for their wake up call.

As we proceed in our journey, we need to immerse ourselves in prayers to shield us from the relentless pressure from the evil one who wants us to take another path that leads to nowhere. Our prayers should be for guidance, strength and protection so our journey will stay on the right course that leads us to the promised land of salvation and eternal life.

Our prayers though have to come from the heart because these are our expression of faith in God and our belief in His love that endures forever. Through prayers, we can live in hope and endure the test of time. God perseveres in molding us, so we should likewise persevere in following the path that He has set for us.



We are guided along this path by His Word which is the light that leads us to the truth about the glory of God. We need to reflect on His word regularly and live it constantly so that our personal desires do not prevail over His will. Only then can the Spirit of life and love completely rule our hearts and minds. This enables us to share the truth with others which is also meant to be lived by them.

This is the very essence of community life; sharing in humility the love of Christ with others, immersing ourselves in prayers, and obedience to His will. By stirring the flame of His Spirit in us, we will be guarded and guided as we persevere in our faith.

Continued on page 4

COUNSELS (from page 3)

This will allow us to “*throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.*” (Rom 13:12b) As we continue to walk along the path of life, we become more determined than ever to persevere as we start to feel the closeness of our ultimate destination, with streams of life giving water along the way that sustain us and gives hope to our weary souls. We need a steadfast spirit to stay awake spiritually so we can enter through the Gate of Life and go rejoicing to the House of the Lord.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Immerse ourselves in prayers.
2. Be reconciled with God and others.

Pope at Jubilee Closure (from page 1)

from Jesus’ kingship, to not accept completely the scandal of his humble love, which unsettles and disturbs us.”

Even if at times we feel tempted to keep our distance, Francis pointed out: “A people who are holy, however, who have Jesus as their King, are called to follow His way of tangible love. They are called to ask themselves, each one each day: “What does love ask of me, where is it urging me to go? What answer am I giving Jesus with my life?”

Turning to the second group, including various individuals, the leaders of the people, the soldiers and a criminal, who mock Jesus and tell Him ‘Save yourself.’ Francis noted that in saying ‘Save Yourself, they are committing a terrible temptation, in trying to tempt Jesus, just as the devil did at the beginning of the Gospel (cf. Lk 4:1-13).

“This temptation,” the Pope said, “is a direct attack on love: “save yourself,” not others, but yourself. He continues rather to love; He forgives, He lives this moment of trial according to the Father’s will, certain that love will bear fruit.”

How Many Times...

In order to receive the kingship of Jesus, the Holy Father explained, we are called to struggle against this temptation, fix our gaze ever closer to Him and become always more faithful.

“How many times, even among ourselves, do we seek out the comforts and certainties offered by the world,” Francis said. “How many times are we tempted to come down from the Cross. The lure of power and success seem an easy, quick way to spread the Gospel; we soon forget how the Kingdom of God works.”

This Year of Mercy, the Holy Father reminded, invites us to rediscover the core, to return to what is essential.

Abandon Those Habits...

“Mercy, which takes us to the heart of the Gospel, urges us to give up habits and practices which may be ↗

LORD’S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK’S

Collections	Actual	YTD
Tithe/Love Offering	2,550	123,055
Mission	226	6,814

Financial details are available to all members through treasury@bldnewark.com
Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Eucharistic Celebration, First Friday, Dec 2

Guest Celebrant – Fr. John Gordon, Coordinator for Evangelization / Associate to the Vicar for Pastoral Life, Archdiocese of Newark



Friday, Jan 27, 2017



Stewardship - It's a way of life!

Marshaling		Schedule	Date	Apostolate
			Dec 2	Management
			Dec 9	Mission
			Dec 16	Pastoral
Dec 23	Evangelization			

obstacles to serving the Kingdom of God; mercy urges us to orient ourselves only in the perennial and humble kingship of Jesus, not in submission to the precarious regalities and changing powers of every age.”

Turning to the thief, the Gospel’s third figure, who begged Jesus to be remembered in His Kingdom, Francis applauded his faith. “He was not closed in on himself, but rather – with his errors, his sins and his troubles – he turned to Jesus, and experienced God’s mercy: “Today you will be with me in paradise” (v.43), and we are called to do the same.

With this in mind, Francis called on those present to pray for the graces of “never closing the doors of reconciliation and pardon, to know how to go beyond evil and differences, opening every possible pathway of hope,” and to realize that, “As God believes in us, infinitely beyond any merits we have, so too we are called to instill hope and provide opportunities to others.”

Heart of Christ Remains Open, Even If Holy Door Is Closed

“Because even if the Holy Door closes, the true door of mercy which is the heart of Christ always remains open wide for us. From the lacerated side of the Risen One until the very end of time flow mercy, consolation and hope.”

Pope Francis concluded, reminding us to entrust ourselves daily to Mary, Mother of Mercy, for “in every situation we are in, every prayer we make, when lifted up to His merciful eyes, [She] will find an answer.”