



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE DCS

JESUS, THE **REFULGENCE** OF GOD'S GLORY

This Advent and Christmas seasons, the many beautiful Readings give all of us the grace to advance in knowledge of Jesus Christ. Consider this in the First Reading on Christmas Day:

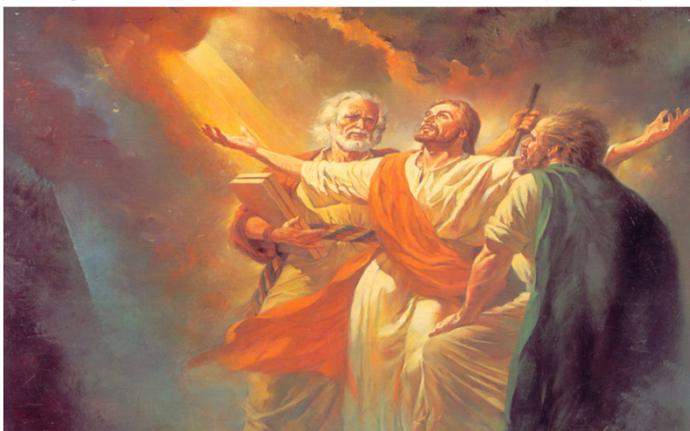
“In these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word.” (Heb 1:2-3)

What a splendid, magnificent word, *refulgence!* Its most common meaning, given by various sources, is radiant. And in this holy season, in this surpassing Holy Year of Mercy, Scripture passages like Paul's letter to the Hebrews focus our reflection on Jesus, *the refulgence, the radiance of God's glory.*

At Christ's Resurrection, *“His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow.”* (Mt 28:3)

At the Transfiguration, we saw His glory, *“the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth”* (Jn 1:14):

- *“His face shone like the sun.”* (Mt 17:2)
- *“His clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them.”* (Mk 9:3)



...Continued on page 3

COUNSELS

Finding the True Joy of Christmas

THEME: We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we experience the fullness of His grace and truth.

WORD: Is 52:7-10 ~ Ps 98:1,2-3,4,5-6
Heb 1:1-6 ~ Jn 1:1-18

ORDER: *“Testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.”* (Jn 1:7)

REFLECTION:

After the fall of Adam and Eve, God buoyed them up with the hope of salvation, promising Redemption (Gen 3:15). So, for approximately 4000 years, men had been expecting the coming of the Messiah. While waiting for the appointed time, God made His plan of salvation known by gradually speaking in partial, and in various ways, through the prophets, such as what's revealed in the First Reading (Is 52:7): *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation, saying to Zion, ‘Your God is King!’”* God has revealed Himself fully by sending His own Son In Whom He established His covenant forever. This supernatural revelation culminates in the Person and Mission of the Incarnate Word Jesus Christ (CCC 53).

Advent season is now over and the Christmas season has begun. The Catechism stresses the twofold meaning of this season. First is celebrating the anniversary of the Lord's first coming to Earth, wherein the faithful ponder the great mystery of His Incarnation, entering our time and space to free us from sin. Second is waiting expectantly on His promise, recalling what our Creed says, that He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

...Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

*“I will be a father to him,
and he shall be a son to me.”* (Heb 1:5b)

Fr. Paul Speaks



During this time of the year when we are focusing on the Incarnation, God's coming in fleshly humanity, allow me to express my deepest appreciation for all the love and attention you constantly pour over me, and your dedication to serve so many... This community is blessed by a large group of both young and old, who despite human defects that we each carry within ourselves, still take their roles in BLD very seriously. The role of the Incarnation, God in flesh, comes alive when you as disciples work and strive, when much is asked of so many of you.

Recall that the Church celebrates two liturgical seasons. The Advent/Christmas season leads into the major season of Lent/Resurrection. This is the time to express our humanity, as a continuation of the human presence of Jesus. Your visible work in BLD is a continuous Incarnation. It is making visible the redeeming work of Jesus.

No matter... here we go in 2017, and my best wishes and blessings will always accompany you during this glorious Christmas time into a deeper participation of the Lord's glorious Resurrection.

Merry Christmas.

— Fr. Paul

All Year Praise

Like many in BLD, I have my car radio usually tuned to Star 99.1. Since the weekend before Thanksgiving, the station has been playing nothing but Christmas carols. Oddly enough, as passionate as I am about the holiday season, I didn't like this format. At first, I thought that hearing yuletide songs six weeks before December 25 was just too early; but this past weekend, I found myself reflecting on what may be a more profound reason as to why I reacted this way.

As a child growing up in the Philippines, I too, had sung about Rudolph and Santa Clause, the cold, snow and white Christmases, turkey and mistletoe, that is, despite never ever having personally seen snow until I got to the US; I had also assumed, until I got to try it at Thanksgiving during my first November here, that turkey tasted better than chicken. There were also songs about angels, joy and Jesus as a Baby Boy.

This year though, once Star 99.1 stopped playing their regular line-up of praise songs, I found myself switching to another Christian station instead (K-LOVE, 96.7, where they still had them, along with, from time-to-time, an occasional Christmas carol).

Seems I was happier with the praise songs...

... Continued on page 4



We are God's creation, united and bound in His love. Jesus Christ came down to Earth and dwelt among us, that we may learn to live in the Father's will.

"For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want. Now if [I] do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." (Rom 7:19-20) Our society, however, encourages individualism. Our human nature constantly makes us believe that everything we think, say, or do, is our personal accomplishment; but oftentimes this causes us pain and sometimes, even leads to the prospect of one's demise.

In our 21 years as a married couple in the BLD Community, my wife and I have come to realize that as God's people, we needed to accept that anything of spiritual value is not the result of our individual accomplishments, but comes from the fruit of communal life in Christ. We learned that sin will dwell in us if we do evil things which we do not want to do; that life on Earth is temporary; and that death may seize us, but cannot hold us if we remain in a loving relationship with God. In Community, we've been blessed to receive a spiritual baptism – the refining fire of the Holy Spirit and His spiritual purging of impurities, to produce in us, pure gold.

"And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection." (Col 3:14)

Jesus longs to see the fulfillment of the purpose of His coming - His sacrifice and death on the cross to atone for our sins and to lead us to eternal life. His binding love transcended down to us enabling us to truly love God and others.

Father God, increase our faith. May we always remember that You are Love. Inculcate in our minds the sanctity of human love and the value of family life. Empower us to share Your compassion with family members and with others. Grant us the grace to forgive and obtain the reward of eternal life. May we partake of Your joy and glory, live in peace and harmony with others, and be safe, joyful and triumphant at the end of time, fulfilling Your final vision to come true. Amen.

COUNSELS

(from page 1)

The Second Reading tells us that Jesus is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's being. **"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."** (Jn 14:9) Jesus sustains all things by His Word and existed before He appeared as man. After He made atonement for our sins He sat down at the right hand of the Father. His Work on earth, as Jesus in physical form, was completed. Jesus rules over His spiritual kingdom in Heaven and on Earth, supreme and superior to angels. He will reign forever. Undoubtedly, as the Creed says, He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Are we prepared to meet Him?

Hebrews 1:5b is God's promise saying **"I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me."** Through Jesus' death on the cross and by our baptism, we become adopted children of God, and co-heirs to the kingdom. So, what is expected of us as adopted children and co-heirs? In Matthew 18:3, He says, **"Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."**

To understand this passage, we need to know the nature of little children. They have special humility, are teachable and eager to learn. They have simple trust and a love that is forgiving; they do not desire authority, are free from malice, and are simply dependent on their parents. They are also lowly of heart, obedient, honest and untouched by the materialism of grown-ups.

Are we like these little children? What are the qualities we lack that can affect our entering the kingdom and our credibility as witnesses to family, friends and members of our community?

Lastly, the Gospel reading commands us **"to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him."** (Jn 1:7) God in His Goodness, Grace and Love, has made us children of the Light. We are to show Christ's Light, for **"from his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace"** (Jn 1:16).



...Continued →→

Christmas Message from the DCS...

(from page 1)

At His birth, the heavenly hosts praised God, saying,



"Glory to God in the highest!" (Lk 2:14)

A priest confessor at St. Anne's Cathedral in Quebec was handing out a card that said, **"Jesus, Glory of the Father."** When our minds are immersed in these words and passages, aren't we all transformed, though be it, perhaps, infinitesimal? Isn't this a part of the relentless pursuit by "The Hound of Heaven" of the objects of His love?

Do we keep alive the wonderful sense of God's presence among us?

May Father God give this gift to each and every precious disciple of the Lord Jesus in our Community. May the exceeding joy in contemplating God's glory, the glory that awaits us in His kingdom, remain with us this Christmas season and at all times. Like Mary, who never fails to lead us to Jesus, let us keep all these things, reflecting on them in our hearts.

Come, Lord Jesus!

COUNSELS

(continued)

→ Not everyone has seen the saving power of God yet. Let us be active participants in bringing those who are still in darkness into God's marvelous light.

Directions:

- Learn and live the Word of God.
- Be in the state of grace always by receiving the sacraments.
- Empty yourself of any resentment and unforgiveness to receive the grace of God.

HOLIDAY PARTY – PART ONE

In the first of the traditional, two-part, BLD Newark Christmas celebration, last Friday evening, the Community was treated to special holiday presentations from several Pastoral Ministries. After worship, the evening started off with three songs from Mark 10, including a Filipino number sung by the children. John 6 and the latest SPE class then followed up with dancing and singing too. And, for the program's finale, the Singles Ministry dressed up in costumes and presented a skit about the many things we now associate with this special season. Three stations, manned by the Service Ministry (and their ME immersion classes) provided everyone with tons of food.

This Friday (December 23), the BLD Newark Holiday Party will continue! In the meantime, here below is the proof that Part One was indeed a great time for everyone:



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

All Year Praise ...

(from page 2)

At this time of the year, many signs come up that say **“JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON.”** But almost half of the holiday tunes on the radio no longer seem to celebrate that. With praise and the songs that celebrate God (and no one, and nothing else can ever replace Him!), I've found that truly, He makes me happy, not just at Christmastime, but every single day of the year. Don't get me wrong, Christmas is still special. But always praising Him makes the **whole entire year ... special.** 😊

LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes & Love Offerings	\$ 1,458	\$ 131,741
Mission Collections	\$ 63	\$ 7,417
Christmas Envelopes	\$ 1,339	\$ 1,339

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

Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

YLSS Salubungan - Friday, January 6, 2017



Washington, DC - Friday, Jan 27, 2017

(one week after the Presidential Inauguration)

Medical Mission

February 13-16, 2017

Maasin, Leyte, Philippines

Contact Persons: Ramon/Leonie Mariazeta

rmariazeta@msn.com / lmariazeta@msn.com

Symbolon Study at Divine Mercy Parish

The Catholic Faith Explained

Monday nights – Jan 9 – Mar 13, 2017, from 7-9pm

Student booklet is \$25 / Contacts: Ray & Suzie Atienza (908-

463-0449) / Registration deadline is **Jan 2, 2017**

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Dec 30	Formation
		Jan 6	Management
		Jan 13	Mission
Jan 20	Pastoral		

Merry Christmas!!!
- from the BLD Newark Word Ministry



1

ABSOLUTE LOVE



"For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only Son..."

John 3:16

3

Someone once asked

"What's Christmas all about?"

"Is it about the cold and the snow?
And lights that twinkle and glow?"



Is it about shopping for toys?
For clothes for girls and boys?"

2

ABSOLUTE LOVE



a poem about Christmas

by cezar calingo
December 2011

© CCalingo 2011

4

"Hmmm," I said, "Not just that, no."

"I'll try to tell you what I know."



5

"It's about love because..."



"Let's start with many, many years ago
One December night

A baby was born
Under a big star's light"

"Was Santa there?" he interrupted.

"On his way around the world in a sled?"



7

"It's about love because..."

"See this was a very special person
This baby that was born



He was God's Son
Who became man that Christmas morn."



"Were there presents underneath a tree?
A celebration with food and drink aplenty?"

6

"Hmmm," I said, "Not just that, no."



"Listen and I will tell you what I know."

8

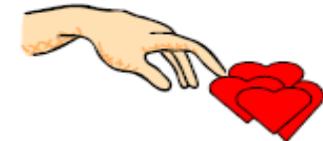
I said, "No, it wasn't a party"
"Just a manger with a small family."



"Was that so unusual?
How does that make Christmas special?"

"Hmmm," I said, as I shook my head.

"All those things you listed,
See they're just minor parts
What's truly special is
- how Christ touches many hearts."



9

"Because it's about Love
Christmas is about Absolute Love.



It's about our God, Who despite absolute power,
Is first Absolutely Love."

"He came into this world like a man
To show us how Man could save man.



No, not with overpowering might
What began that night
From that humble start
Was His conquest of the heart."

11

"From our God Who is Love



His Son
Absolutely, Overwhelmingly - Love"

10

"See because the message was about Love
Jesus proved that He is God"



12



December, 2016

**Alleluia
&
Merry Christmas!!!**

- love and prayers from the Calingo's of
BLD Newark