



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 22 Issue 4

Bulletin Edition

January 22, 2016

NEWS

COUNSELS

Nine days for life

Bishops call the faithful to participate in the Novena surrounding Roe v Wade Anniversary — It Starts Saturday. (Zenit.org, January 14, 2016, By Caitlin Bootsma, Bioethics and the Defense of Life)

Whether or not you will participate in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Catholic bishops hope you'll join in a digital pilgrimage of prayer and action January 16-24, 2016.

This novena, titled 9 Days for Life, is an annual event to gather the community of faith to pray for the protection of every person's life, from babies in the womb to people nearing the end of their lives.

This year, we have the opportunity to reflect on the witness of Pope Francis' visit to the United States, where he emphasized the love we should express to each person we encounter.

More than a cliché - Respecting the sanctity of all life is more than opposing abortion, the Bishops stress. In the words of Pope Francis, "*All life has inestimable value even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect*" (Annual Day for Life, 2013).

How has a respect for life changed your life or changed the lives of those you love?

Perhaps you were in difficult circumstances, but decided to give your baby the gift of life. Maybe a neighbor or community helped you with food or clothing when you needed it most. It's possible you were greatly affected by seeing a parent or another relative embrace each moment of life even as they approached the end of their life.

Being pro-life changes the lives of so many people every day. During these upcoming 9 Days for Life, our bishops are challenging us to "pray, gather, and share" about what being pro-life means to us. Here are just a few ideas for living out this powerful novena:

1. Pray the novena with resources available by app, email, text message, social media, or a printable version.
2. Post a 5-15 second video or a selfie of you with your customized sign, sharing what being ...Continued on page 4

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THEME: We find joy in the Light of God when we proclaim the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.

WORD: Neh 8:2-4A,5-6,8-10 ~ Ps 19:8,9,10,15
1 Cor 12:12-30 ~ Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21

ORDER: "Rejoicing in the LORD must be your strength."

REFLECTION:

We find two elements in our theme for this week: the proclamation of the Gospel, and the power of the Holy Spirit. One informs the other, and they are complementary. It is the Spirit that prompts our desire to proclaim the Gospel; and we can proclaim the Gospel with power only by being docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

In the emotional account in the First Reading, the prophet Ezra reads and explains the Word of God with such passion, that the people - all who can understand - were left bowed down, prostrate on the ground, and weeping. We can imagine such power of his preaching as to evince this kind of response. Perhaps in the many times that we have listened and received God's Word, at Mass or during our Friday worship, we too have experienced strong emotions. But the challenge presented to us today concerns the way we proclaim the Gospel, with our reflection on its meaning in our lives, and with our witnessing and sharing.

Notice how our Evangelist, St. Luke, respectfully and lovingly addressed those to whom he was proclaiming his Gospel to, calling them "most excellent Theophilus", a general reference functioning as the phrase "Dear Reader" that you and I might use in our writing. In Greek, the word Theophilus translates as "lover of God."

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Promise of the Week

"The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple." (Ps 19:8)

A CALL TO ARMS

We hear so much about radicalized Moslem militants. Even in this country, American born young Moslems, from good Moslem families with strong ethical values who are respectful of the rights this country is founded on, are suddenly “radicalized” and turned into some kind of murdering fanatics. Why? Often the family members are more shocked with no idea what was festering in the minds and hearts of their children. What is behind all this? Or rather we should acknowledge who is behind all this.

Pope John Paul II gave us a profoundly prophetic warning back in 1976 when the then Cardinal Wojtyla addressed a Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia on the occasion of the Bicentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He said: “We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has ever experienced. I do not think that the wide circle of the American Society or the whole wide circle of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church & the anti-church, between the Gospel and the anti-gospel between Christ and the antichrist. The confrontation lies within the plans of Divine Providence. It is, therefore, in God’s plan and it is a trial which the Church must take up and face courageously.” We must now face it as the enemy has ramped up his attack, probably since he knows his time is short.

Satan’s plan has always been to divide and conquer: pitting children against their parents, the governments against their citizens, the Church against the anti-church, etc. He is relentless, he is rapacious and he is stronger than we are. But the *One Who* is in us is stronger than he. We need to be likewise “radicalized”. We need to storm heaven for radical repentance, reparation, praise, specific prayer, and a realization that the attack is going on against us; needed are radical gentleness, patience, kindness, and forgiveness.

Let us beseech Him for the Holy Spirit’s gift of radical faith, raw faith that opens the door to miracles and signs and wonder;, the raw faith that gives the power to cause supernatural realities to break forth in the natural realm. We need the grace to see possibilities in the impossible. Why so radical? Because the stakes are so high: *souls*, the eternal salvation or damnation of souls.

And Our Lady has certainly warned us about the multitude of souls heading for hell. It is time to take up arms which means dropping all the distractions that occupy so much of our time and attention.

Let us take up arms: the greatest weapon we have is the Holy Mass; second is the Holy Rosary; then the Divine Mercy Chaplet, personal devotions, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, faithfully coming together each week for prayer, praise and worship, and focus on

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SAUL & DAVID

The daily Mass readings, beginning with Monday, January 18, 2016 contain passages from the first Book of Samuel. In a sense, Saul, who at that time was the king of Israel, was gloating over his victory over the Amalekites, but was met by Samuel with reproach because Saul had taken some of the spoils of war instead of fully destroying everything of Israel’s enemy, as God had commanded. Samuel then pointed out that in his doing so, Saul had not been obedient to the Lord. This then sets the stage for the story of David.

The readings for the rest of the week then present in almost whirlwind fashion, what happened next (in 1 Samuel and the beginning of 2 Samuel):

- Samuel anoints the youngest of Jesse’s sons, David.
- David’s victory over Goliath leads to Saul’s jealousy when David is praised more than him.
- Although Saul eventually sought to kill David, when it seemed that the Lord had given David the opportunity to eliminate Saul, he did not. In a later chapter, when another opportunity to kill Saul occurs, David refuses to do so again, citing that Saul was the Lord’s anointed one, whom only the Lord had the authority to strike.
- And when David learned of the death of Saul, along with his sons, David mourned and wept and fasted.

As our Jewish brethren all know, David then went on to become their greatest king. But one might ask, what’s in this story for us Christians, when now we have Jesus? The answer, I think has several dimensions.

The main relevance concerns the fulfillment of prophecy – Scripture clearly states that a descendant of David will become Israel’s true King. So the story of David is inevitably crucial to the story of Jesus. Another dimension, I think, involves the lessons we are to learn from the earthy and worldly aspects of David’s life. In the readings about Saul and David, there are plenty.

When he confronted Saul, Samuel cried out that “*Obedience is better than sacrifice*” (1 Sam 15:22) – a cry that is as relevant today as it was then. When David was praised, jealousy led Saul into trying to kill him; but when he had the chance, David did not kill Saul because he had no right to take his life. And when death came upon his enemy, it was still something to mourn.

So there is really more to this than just being a story, and if we fast forward to today, this Old Testament story still sheds light on many current issues. Among them are:

- On Friday, January 22, the March for Life will rally for the unborn, for life from conception to natural death; encompassed in that cause is the battle against capital punishment.
- As local and international terrorism takes its toll on society, we mourn for victims, which really should

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BLD Newark in the 21st Century

Communication and the means of getting information have changed over the last decade. The Internet has revolutionized this. At any geographical location where internet is available, it allows worldwide broadcasting to disseminate information, the medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and organizations. Like many companies and organizations that use internet tools, BLD Newark is no exception. We are responding to the need for a medium to evangelize and communicate with each other effectively.

Setting up a web presence is not an easy or inexpensive proposition. Fortunately, we are blessed with a knowledgeable and adroit member of the community. He was able to secure a relatively inexpensive web hosting service which also provided an email system. BLD Newark now has a more efficient means of communicating among members via group email.

Back track to 2013. After a number of changes to the members maintaining the website and web hosting service, already stagnant for a decade, the BLD website began to show signs of age. Sporadically, emails were not getting through, and ambiguous member emails were difficult to decipher and update in the group email system; general members had no email at all. A website editor was needed to update the website; FTP software was difficult and tedious to maintain, and some of the information became obsolete. The static website also looked and felt outdated.

“The human heart plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps.” (Prv 16:9)

Since email has become a prominent means of communication, there was now a need to look for a more robust email system. The search began two years ago but with no ideal solutions. Most web hosting services do not provide an email system, and those that do, have limited functions. Getting a third party email service would have been costly and those that are free, again have limited functions. The search came to an end in mid-2015; with the Lord’s guidance, we were led to Microsoft Outlook and Office 365.

Microsoft Outlook is used widely by most companies around the globe. More research was done, and by God’s grace, we found out that Microsoft has a special plan for recognized non-profit organization like BLD Newark. It involved a process to ensure that we met their requirements and eligibility for a free plan. We passed the test!

At first, the thought of setting up the email system seemed straight forward - just adding 800+ names to Outlook. But inevitably, it became a big project to set it up in a certain format, create groups, add members, set rules, test it, etc. The website was also migrated for easy maintenance by a non-technical person.

Fortunately, a member already had an account using such a website, and migrating to this web hosting service then became the most logical choice. ... *Continued on page 4*

COUNSELS

(from page 1)

“Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.” (Lk 4:14) Time and again, the events in the life of Jesus were marked with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit came upon the Virgin Mother at the Incarnation.
- The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at His baptism
- Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, Who led Him into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil
- In tonight’s Gospel, He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.

Reflecting further on our theme, what does it mean that we belong to BLD as Christian disciples and members? We believe that it is the Lord Who brought us to this community that is part of the Charismatic Movement and that we share in the core beliefs of all Charismatics with a common emphasis on the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, miracles and Pentecostal experiences.

We believe that the gifts (in Greek, *charismata*, grace) of the Holy Spirit, as described in the New Testament, are available to us contemporary Christians through the infilling or baptism of the Holy Spirit. These spiritual gifts are manifest in the form of *signs, miracles, and wonders*.

A fair question to ask is, do these Pentecostal gifts that started at our LSS fade gradually, and do our joy and enthusiasm in them wane over time? Beyond our Friday worship, do we still turn to the Holy Spirit for help, and in thanksgiving and adoration? Do we ask the Spirit for power by the exercise of His gifts as we serve Him in our evangelization, mission and formation works? Let us ask ourselves these questions, let us contemplate on the answers that come up.

Let us also recall how the august presence of the Holy Spirit is also associated with other people in the Gospel narratives.

- The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that by the power of the Holy Spirit, she will conceive a child who will be the Son of God.
- John the Baptist, whom the angel announced will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb
- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit upon hearing Mary’s greeting.
- Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, while proclaiming his Canticle after naming his son John.
- The devout Simeon who came to the temple in the Spirit and blessed the Holy Family at the presentation of the Child Jesus.

Tonight in our worship, let us pray for the Holy Spirit to bring an awakening that is needed in our community - to awaken all slumbering and timid spirits, that we may all be bold and confident disciples in proclaiming the Gospel.

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COUNSELS (from page 3)

May God send BLD Newark fresh winds of grace that will converge with those from many others in the Renewal, for a better world and victory of good over evil, for the reign of Christ that is sure to come, and for the greater glory of our God.

DIRECTIONS:

- **Work together as one body.**
- **Find joy in using the Spiritual Gifts that we received in our baptism.**

A CALL ... (from page 2)

what's truly important. There are enemies within and enemies without and anyone trying to walk this walk alone will be picked off. The world is in crisis. The Church is in crisis. "Who is going to save our Church? Not our bishops, not our priests and religious. It is up to YOU, the people. You have the minds, the eyes, the ears to save the Church. Your mission is to see that your priests act as priests, your bishops like bishops and your religious like religious." (Bishop Fulton Sheen, Address to the Knights of Columbus, June 1972). So some powerful prophetic words came out of the '70's and now we are living it.

Thank God for the BLD community that provides a place to come together weekly to praise, worship, fellowship and pray, helping us all stay focused and faithful in these times of utmost turbulence and temptation.

Radicalize us, Lord. Can you imagine the impact on our world if we had the zeal and commitment of our radicalized Moslem brothers and sisters? Or better yet, can you imagine if we could harness that zeal to work for Peace instead? Pray radically for the conversion of all hearts, Moslem and Christian alike; pray radically for all our Jewish brethren, the apple of His eye.

Impossible? Then pray for that grace to see possibilities in the impossible. He is Lord of the impossible.

BLD Newark in... (from page 3)

We have rebuilt the BLD Newark website over several months (and still ongoing). It is dynamic and has a fresh new look. By the Grace of God and the hardworking core members of the Secretariat Ministry, BLD Newark has moved into the 21st Century in terms of technological advancement, effective January 2016.

"Whatever you do, do from the heart, as for the Lord and not for others." (Col 3:23)

SAUL & DAVID (from page 2)

- include the poor souls who have been misled by twisted human ideology; and,
- on a more personal level, there is the ultimate importance of obedience to God's commands.

Please notify Word Ministry if you have not been receiving your soft copies by emailing: word@bldnewark.com

LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections	Prior Week	YTD
Tithe & Love Offering	\$ 2,520	\$ 5,272
Mission Collections	\$ 273	\$ 674

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

Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Medical Mission

February 22-25, 2016

Tagbilaran, Bohol, Philippines

Contact Persons: Ramon/Leonie Mariazeta

rmariazeta@msn.com / lmariazeta@msn.com

bldmmcoord@outlook.com

YLSS 21

March 4-6, 2015

Kristian Quevada: YLSS Youth Evangelization Coordinator | (732) 910-9924

Ronald and Dina Pangilinan: YCS, Adult Youth Evangelization Coordinators | (732) 581-9497

LSS 46 – Registration is now open!

Salubungan/Aquaintance: March 4

Invocation Mass: April 8


LSS 46: April 9-10

Contact: Lito/Gigi Vibar~ litogigi@vibar.com

TEACHING CALENDAR

Teachings for **Friday, January 29** (after Worship):

LSS orientation – the Four Basic Truths

Marshaling		Schedule	Date	Apostolate
			Jan 29	Pastoral
			Feb 5	Evangelization
			Feb 12	Formation
			Feb 19	Management

NEWS (from page 1)

pro-life means to you. Use the hashtag #9DaysforLife, and tag @USCCB on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. They'll pick from the best posts to share!

3. Commit to trying a new life-giving activity, such as helping at a soup kitchen, donating time, money or clothing to a crisis pregnancy center, or visiting those who are ill or have no one to visit them.
4. Spend time in a life-affirming community by gathering with friends and family together. For example, host a potluck other families, and pray one day of the novena together. Or invite friends to join you at a local coffee shop for Coffee & Conversation.

Being pro-life can change the world, one prayer, one loving action at a time. Join us in 9 Days for Life by visiting www.9daysforlife.com!