



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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## NEWS

### 2016 - A NEW YEAR OF MERCY

*“The LORD’S acts of mercy are not exhausted, his compassion is not spent; they are renewed each morning—great is your faithfulness!” (Lam 3:22-23)*



As we usher in the new year, let us contemplate and celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy with new hope, renewed strength and eagerness in our efforts to share His love and mercy for all.

Our journey will only be complete through our steadfast spirit of sharing God’s perfect gift, His greatest love for all, our Lord Jesus. It is the love that endures the test of time, so should our love for God and neighbor be also pure and everlasting.

Let us bring others with us as we enter through the Holy Door of Mercy which leads to our salvation and the gate of Heavenly Peace.

Wishing you all and your families and loved ones a blessed, joyful and meaningful Jubilee Year of Mercy!

With our love and prayers,

DCS - BLD Newark

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF EASTER AND THE MOVEABLE FEASTS (FOR THE YEAR 2016)

#### Introduction

The proclamation of the date of Easter and the other moveable feasts on Epiphany dates from a time when calendars were not readily available. It was necessary to make known the date of Easter in advance, since many celebrations of the liturgical year depend on its date. The number of Sundays that follow Epiphany, the date of Ash Wednesday, and the number of Sundays that follow Pentecost are all computed in relation to Easter.

*Continued on page 2*

## COUNSELS

### Pay Him Homage!

**THEME:** We find joy in the Light of God when our way of life is renewed by the Holy Spirit.

**WORD:** Is 42:1-4,6-7 / Is 40:1-5,9-11  
Ps 29:1-2,3-4,3,9-10 /  
Ps 104:1B-2,3-4,24-25,27-28,29-30  
Acts 10:34-38 / Ti 2:11-14; 3:4-7  
Lk 3:15-16,21-22

**ORDER:** *“Bow before him... serve him.”* (Ps 72:11).

**REFLECTION:**

New Year begins with a wonderful message of hope in the person of Jesus Himself, the Star of Bethlehem. Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, was manifested to the world through the searching eyes and determination of the wise men who left the comforts of their homes to look for higher wisdom in the King of Israel. Their search was difficult. There were obstacles along the way. They were almost misled by King Herod, whose only desire was to remain the only mighty king. Like the magi, we are also finding our way towards the Truth, the Light of God. God gave us Jesus so that we might journey towards holiness and joy, just as our Community Word for the month of January 2016 tells us - Those who diligently search Jesus will find joy in the Light of God. And therefore, we must heed our Community Order as expressed in Psalm 72:11 - *“Bow before him... serve him!”*

As the story of the Epiphany of our Lord unfolds in the Gospel for the 1st Sunday of the month, we can associate ourselves with the journey of the magi who, despite finding a poor child in a lowly manger, paid Jesus homage with humility, and gave Him gifts. After a long arduous search, what the magi saw “filled their hearts with delight.” *Continued on page 3*

### Promise of the Week

*“The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” (Is 40:5)*

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

## Knowing God



As transcendent and mysterious God is, we catch a glimpse of the very essence of Him in the First Letter of John 4:7-10. ***“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten***

***by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us; God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.”*** If God is love, his very being must be structured according to love.

We know from our catechism that God is not simply a supreme individual. The very being of God is Love and God is a Unity of Three Persons in a relationship of Love. We are made in the image of a Trinitarian God and He wants to share that divine life with us. That’s why we don’t live in solitude but rather in families and in community. Loving relationships in family and in community are about living for others, but these will become dysfunctional when pride causes us to live only for ourselves. Living for oneself is the triumph of ego over love and is the root cause of disobedience which led to original sin.

While our community has a clear mission and vision, working together with diverse personalities in different ministries can be daunting. However, the beauty of being in the community is all about complementing one another, and not about competing against each other. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”

Service in the community, no matter how insignificant it may seem, if given with love, can become fruitful. It is about being with and for the other. For to love, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, is to will the good of the other. It does not seek something in return but sacrifices oneself for the other. Our Heavenly Father has loved us first and continues to love us so that we can respond with love. He does not demand from us that which we are incapable of producing. He makes us see and experience His love through Jesus in our own little way, so we can blossom and be fully alive. Once we receive that grace through the Holy Spirit, we can’t keep it to ourselves. It has to be shared. It enables us to live for others, not only to imitate Jesus, but to participate in His divine life.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF EASTER *(from page 1)*

Although calendars now give the date of Easter and the other feasts in the liturgical year for many years in advance, the Epiphany proclamation still has value. It is a reminder of the centrality of the resurrection of the Lord in the liturgical year and the importance of the great mysteries of faith which are celebrated each year.

Each year the proper dates for Ash Wednesday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, and the First Sunday of Advent must be inserted into the text. Those dates are found in the table which is included with the introductory documents of the *Roman Missal*. The form to be used for announcing each date is: the *date of month*, e.g., “the seventh day of April.”

On the Epiphany of the Lord, after the singing of the Gospel, a Deacon or cantor, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year according to the following text. (The musical notation is found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.)

### ANNOUNCEMENT:

Know, dear brethren (brothers and sisters), that, as we have rejoiced at the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, so by leave of God's mercy we announce to you also the joy of his Resurrection, who is our Savior.

On the tenth day of February will fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season.

On the twenty-seventh day of March you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the Paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*[In those places where the Ascension is observed on Thursday:]* On the fifth day of May will be the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*[In those places where the Ascension is transferred to the Seventh Sunday of Easter:]* On the eighth day of May will be the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.]

On the fifteenth day of May, the feast of Pentecost.

On the twenty-ninth day of May the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

On the twenty-seventh day of November, the First Sunday of the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is honor and glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

## THE LORD'S DELIGHT



One benefit of being in a community is experiencing growth in the love of Scriptures. Take for instance, being struck by a random verse in a daily mass reading, a weekday mass at that.

There's this passage from a responsorial psalm last week: "***The Lord takes delight in His people***" (Ps 149:4a). I thought immediately, *truly, this God loves me so!* What is it in me that pleases Him? For I'm aware of being an inveterate sinner, willfully choosing to turn away from Him in favor of shallow ambitions and pleasures that do not last.

It's easier perhaps to state that I take delight in the Lord. Yes, there are times when God or things of God bring me great satisfaction. But it's much more than that, like the prophet says, "***It is as if fire is burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding back, I cannot!***" (Jer. 20:9b) Yes, I take delight in knowing more about our Triune God - my Creator, my Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit. It pleases me when I'm able to serve others as I exercise my spiritual gifts. It satisfies me like no other, to receive the Lord Jesus in the Sacraments. Indeed, what incomparable delight it is to praise Him, in joyful worship with my community brethren, or in solitary, silent adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. These are all *pearls of great price* indeed! (Mt 13:45-46) The gifts that God gives me are the eternal goods, yet I keep dissipating them in exchange for things of tinsel worth.

And that is why I marvel all the more to hear the Psalmist proclaim, "***The Lord takes delight in His people***" (see Ps 149: 4a). I keep pondering why! Again, the Word helps me understand that He takes the initiative in bringing me closer to Him, even in my sin. "***God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us***". (Rom 5:8) He looks beyond my sin, He does not withhold His love until I am repentant and obedient and perfect. Rather, "***we love because He first loved us.***" (1 Jn 4:19)

How immeasurable is this grace of being the object of God's affection! Last Sunday's Gospel scene of the Baptism of the Lord gives us a faint idea of what it must be like to be in God's favor. "***A voice came from the heavens, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'***" (Mt 3:17)

May the Lord Jesus grant us the grace to follow His example of utmost and adoring obedience to the Father, our God Who delights in loving His people without conditions or merit on our part.

## COUNSELS (from page 1)

They presented Jesus with gold - acknowledging Him as King, frankincense - acknowledging His divinity, and myrrh as a prophecy of His suffering and death as our Savior. We too will experience joy when we adore and offer ourselves in serving the Lord thru our brothers and sisters. This is our theme for the 1st week – We find joy in the Light of God when we adore and offer Him our time, talent and treasures.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord gives us the theme for the 2nd week – We find joy in the Light of God when our way of life is renewed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus' baptism was in fulfillment of the Will of God because at His baptism the heavens were opened and the waters were sanctified by the descent of the Holy Spirit, Who empowered Christ as He began His earthly ministry. This is the same for us because it is in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in our lives that our hearts are renewed and we are prepared once again to continue our apostolate, our ministry, our mission to bring Christ to those who need him – the lost, the last and the least of our brethren.

On the Feast of the Santo Niño and 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, our theme is – We find joy in the Light of God when we are obedient to pastoral authority. Jesus started His ministry in the spirit of obedience. Even as a little child, He was obedient both to His heavenly Father and to His earthly parents. Especially for us who serve our community, the attitude of obedience opens our hearts to love, and therefore, gives us the opportunity to serve others with sincerity, commitment and dedication. For each one of us, obedience to God's Will "***may give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in the knowledge of him***" (Eph. 1:17).

Our theme for the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time is – We find joy in the Light of God when we proclaim the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit. We have received the love of God in our hearts and our delight in the Lord should be experienced by others. Just as Jesus received the Spirit, and was empowered "***to bring glad tidings to the poor,***" (Lk 4:18) we too should share the love of God by translating the Gospel of Christ into action through our evangelization and mission works, attending to the needs of the poor among us, promoting the spirit of peace and reconciliation, opening the doors of mercy and compassion, helping the younger generations sustain their faith in a time when it has become scarce.

Perhaps, our challenge for New Year 2016 is expressed in our theme for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – We find joy in the Light of God when we are willing to stand up and be witnesses ... *Continued on page 4*

## Plenary Indulgence Information

In a September 1 letter to Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, Pope Francis said it was his “wish that the jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective.”

As with other jubilee years, the Holy Father has instructed that special plenary indulgences be available for the faithful through the duration of the year. The indulgence allows for the complete remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. Here’s how to get one:

For able-bodied Catholics: Take a pilgrimage. Make a journey to your local Holy Door (a physical portal in your local cathedral, shrine or other designated Church) or to one of the Holy Doors in the four papal basilicas in Rome. Crossing through a Holy Door is a spiritual journey that signals, as the Holy Father said, “the deep desire for true conversion.”

**Go to confession. ~ Receive the Holy Eucharist “with a reflection of mercy.”**

**Make a profession of faith. ~ Pray for the pope and for his intentions.**

For the elderly, confined and the ill: Pope Francis said that they may obtain the indulgence by “living with faith and joyful hope this moment of trial.”

For those in prison: The incarcerated may obtain the indulgence in their prison chapels. Said Pope Francis: “May the gesture of directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell signify for them their passage through the Holy Door, because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts, and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom.”

For the deceased: Through the prayers of the faithful, indulgences may be obtained for the dead.

**For all Catholics:** Perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy. Pope Francis said that an indulgence may be obtained when a member of the “faithful personally performs” one of these merciful acts. “The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us,” he said.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### Medical Mission

February 22-25, 2016

Tagbilaran, Bohol, Philippines

Contact Persons: Ramon/Leonie Mariazeta

[rmariazeta@msn.com](mailto:rmariazeta@msn.com) / [lmariazeta@msn.com](mailto:lmariazeta@msn.com)

[bldmmcoord@outlook.com](mailto:bldmmcoord@outlook.com)



**Friday, January 22, 2016**

Contact Persons: Ray Salmo – [raycsalmo@aol.com](mailto:raycsalmo@aol.com) /

Cezar Calingo – [cezar02459@yahoo.com](mailto:cezar02459@yahoo.com)

## TEACHING CALENDAR

Teachings resume on **Friday, January 8** with:

a **CDFP Overview** (for ME 46; after Worship); and,

on **Saturday, January 16:**

**Prayer Leadership, CMP II - Part 1 & Encounter with Jesus**

Marshaling		Schedule	Date	Apostolate
			Jan 15	Management
			Jan 22	Mission
			Jan 29	Pastoral
			Feb 5	Evangelization

## COUNSEL

(from page 3)

to the Truth. The call to Christian discipleship is a call that requires courage. Peter was a good apostle because he had the courage to keep moving even when the circumstances were unfavorable. St. Paul was successful in bringing the Good News to the gentiles because he had the courage to confront the difficulties he met on the way. There are many external obstacles that we might encounter when we serve community, but perhaps one difficulty is within ourselves - when we are afraid to leave our comfort zones, change our priorities and attachments. But the Lord continues to sustain us, give us strength and encouragement: **“They will fight against you, but not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you”**(Jer. 2:19)

May our faith journey in 2016 continue with direction and focus. Quoting from the message of Fr. Vic de Jesus, BLD Manila Spiritual Director: “May the Light of God dispel the darkness of sin and death and lead us to the splendor of grace and a godly life.”

### DIRECTIONS

Commit to reading Scriptures daily and be formed in heart and mind for God.