



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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NEWS

Youth open their hearts in YLSS

“Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ.” (Jn 17:3)

This past weekend, the Youth Life in the Spirit Seminar #21 was blessed with the presence of 35 lambs: Isa Martinez, Issa Somera, Kathryn Guiang, Pochie Brillantes, Isabel Agapito, Melissa Sanagustin, Sherwin Fabe, Bertina Joseph, Carla Magdangal, Camille Martinez, Annabelle Malamug, Audrey Urmaza, Eliza Villarba, Kim Labang, Anamaria Pais, Bundu Anyanwu, Briege Julien, Ryan Bautista, Christopher Passigna, Kerry Regis, Alvin Marmol, Karl Pepino, Spencer Fabe, Josh Mendoza, Christian Malamug, Joaquin Cariaso, Michael Rangel, Paolo Rivera, Thomas Digiuseppe, and DJ Severt.



The 35 lambs, shown above, becoming the “salt of the Earth” during the YLSS graduation ceremony, were called by God from the BLD Community and from Saint Antoninus Parish in Newark.

During the Seminar, our Spiritual Director, Fr. Paul Lehman, encouraged the lambs to yield and open their hearts to God by way of daily prayer. Each day culminated in an awesome praise jam, evidence of just how palpable the spiritual renewable was for everyone. Come Sunday morning, the spiritual glow on their faces was undeniable.



...Continued on page 4

COUNSELS

Pursuit Toward the Goal

THEME: We live a life of holiness when we do not pass judgement on those who have gone astray.

WORD: Is 43:16-21 ~ Ps 126:1-2,2-3,4-5,6
Phil 3:8-14 ~ Jn 8:1-11

ORDER: *“Go, and from now on do not sin any more.” (Jn 8:11b)*

REFLECTION:

In the first reading, Isaiah recalls all the great things God has done for the Israelites, providing as examples their exodus from Egypt when He opened “a way in the sea” for the Israelites to pass through, and Pharaoh’s army, He *“snuffed out and quenched like a wick”* (Is 43:17). Isaiah also recalls how the Lord *“brought back the captives of Zion”* (Ps 126:1a) from the Babylonian exile to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem. Isaiah enjoins them to learn from history, not to dwell in the past, but instead to focus on the “something new” that he is doing which is proclaiming the coming of the Messiah and preparing the path in people’s hearts that they may accept Him.

In the second reading, taken from St Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Paul tells us about the supreme good of knowing Jesus. Perhaps he is referring to Jesus’ personal revelation to him on the road to Damascus which inaugurated his conversion and forged a relationship between him and Christ which continued on throughout his earthly life up to his martyrdom and beyond - in heaven certainly. Paul proclaims Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection and seeks to share Jesus sufferings *“by being conformed to His death,”* to the end that he *“may attain the resurrection from the dead”* (Phil 3:10-11) and to be in communion with Him for all eternity. Paul tells us that knowing Jesus in this way is the only important thing for him when he says *“forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling”* (Phil 3:13-14). ...Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

“Although they go forth weeping, they shall come back rejoicing.” (Ps 126:6)

SIGNS AND WONDERS

When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, who was near death. Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe." The royal official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "You may go; your son will live." (Jn 4:47-50)

What are these signs and wonders that we consider so *amazing*? What indeed is a *miracle*? Should it be only through *miracles* and *amazing events* that we are moved to a deeper commitment to our faith?

The royal official came to Jesus begging for healing for his son. Jesus' response was curious and puzzling. *"Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe?"* The official was not coming to Jesus because of who Jesus was; instead, he was coming to Jesus because he needed something that he thought Jesus could give him.

Interestingly, Jesus did not go with the man to cure his son; He simply told him that his son would be well. While in most of Jesus' healing miracles there is contact that occurs, here He simply says the words, *"You may go; your son will live."* Thus we are reminded that Jesus need not be physically present to effect a cure.

"The father realized that just at that time Jesus had said to him, 'Your son will live,' and he and his whole household came to believe." (Jn 4:53)

I find it curious that it was just then that the official came to believe. Didn't he already believe when Jesus spoke to him about his son? He did, he believed Jesus and trusted Jesus' words spoken to him; and it was in trusting His words that he came to believe who Jesus was, thereby experiencing how Jesus works miracles in the lives of men.

Let it be a lesson to us, then, that we should trust Jesus' authority even before we see the results. That I think, is the main point of the passage. This story doesn't teach us that persistence is sufficient; the story teaches us about Jesus' authority, and how, if you trust in Him, He will take care of you.

...Continued on page 4

Realizing Christ

"Could the authorities have realized that he is the Messiah?" Jn 7:26

To a certain extent, man's vision of who Christ is, has been blurred by almost two-thousand years of history. On the other hand, as the centuries have passed, our definition of Him as God, has sharpened and become more focused. I suppose that where you are on this spectrum largely depends on your point of view. Regardless of that, the Truth of Christ will always remain the Truth.

Because we did not live in that time and place, there might be a part of each of us that wonders if there really was an historical person named Jesus. Let us answer that first with a big YES. The way historians re-construct the past is based on archeological evidence, including written accounts from different sources from the time an event was supposed to have happened. This is true of the stories that none of us question today: the exploits of Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, and many other big name historical figures. Many accounts from the first century, including Roman and Jewish sources, as well as early Christian writers provide overwhelming evidence that Jesus Christ lived. When put under an historian's scrutiny then, He must have been alive.

But was He God?

During His time on earth, it seemed that the first ones to recognize that Jesus was God were the ones possessed by evil spirits. Although there was much to admire the twelve apostles for, the biggest credit for the spread of Christianity belongs to St. Paul, who was actually a persecutor of the early Church. He did not know Christ during the Lord's earthly life, and St. Paul only met the resurrected Christ on that road to Damascus. And among the four Gospels, it seems that the one to fully declare Jesus Christ as God, was the last among them to be written (the Gospel of John is believed to have been written around 100 AD).

So it seems that it took time for man to realize who Christ really was.

But the key question for most of us, is whether we recognize and realize who Christ is for us today.

In the past, I sometimes wondered if I became Catholic simply due to a twist in history, the Spanish conquest of the Philippines. I admit that I was stuck in looking for cause and effect, with the missionaries' efforts being the cause of my eventual birth to a Catholic family. Now, years into BLD and a deeper relationship with Christ, I've found a truly happier and richer life. I'd even say that all the historical evidence for Christ is no longer necessary. Now I have come to the irreversible conclusion that His effect on me, happiness and peace, is because of the Truth of Who He is: my God, the God Who loves and will always be there for us... for me.

Fighting for Life

“Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary.” (1 Cor 12:22)

Even though this year’s March for Life happened almost two months ago, its impact has proven to be long lasting. A member of BLD Newark’s Singles Ministry, who works for the organization Priests for Life, recently submitted something he wrote about the March that was held last January:



This year's March for Life 2016 was yet another eventful experience! An historic Snowmageddon, obnoxious pro abortions, baby parts being sold, these were no match for the fire that the crowds brought to the snow-stricken city.

Being part of Priests for Life gave me more of an insight as to how important this fight against abortion and the promotion of the Culture of Life is, not just for women, but for men and children, young and old, and from all walks of life. Hearing Fr. Frank speak during the Interdenominational Prayer Service at Constitution Hall rekindled that flame in me, of wanting to ensure that we continue to see our purpose and mission – that of being the voice for the voiceless. We all played an important role, from the Pro Life Leaders to the massive groups of students nationwide, who were there to defend the most vulnerable, the unborn, who are the future of what mankind and the world may come to be.

As we were in the hotel after the march, a Priest who was offering Mass emphasized the importance of this fight by quoting 1 Cor 12:22: **“Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary.”** We are all parts of one body, the Church. We need each other, to love, protect, and cherish, not only ourselves but others, most especially those who have no one to speak for them. It is with the weakest, the most innocent and the purest of souls that we can find solace, peace and comfort in Him; therefore we need to protect them from the culture of death. I hope and pray that we continue to fight this fight till the very end, until all Life is accounted for and protected, in His Mighty Name, Amen.

COUNSELS

(from page 1)

In this Sunday's Gospel, taken from John 8:11b, Jesus did not condemn the woman caught by the Pharisees in the act of adultery. He told her to **“go, (and) from now on do not sin any more.”** Jesus shows us the way to holiness when we do not pass judgment on the sins of others, but focus only on Jesus’ infinite mercy to forgive our sins. In a few simple words, Jesus demonstrated His divine wisdom dissuading the elders from their murderous intent of stoning the woman. At the same time, He saved her, not only from a deathly punishment, but also from a life of sin.

The *something new* that Isaiah mentioned, and for which Paul has *accepted the loss of all things* and considered them rubbish, is one that affects every human soul. It is His divine mercy and the forgiveness of our sins that He has obtained for all of us through His sacrifice on the Cross, most especially for those who believe in Him. It’s a permanent *newness* even for you and me today.

Although it may seem that we, too, are stuck in a cycle of sinning, repentance, and then sinning again, Christ has brought into the picture the permanence of His Truth that can make us new each time; for when we strive to sin no more, as Jesus had admonished the adulterous woman to do, then we move forward towards the ultimate prize that St. Paul identified in Philippians: God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus and our resurrection from the dead.



When we believe in Christ and pursue Him, then we, too, will realize that His mercy is real and that the reality of eternal life for us is indeed possible. We will then see the absolute truth of His statement in John 14:6 – **“I am the way and the truth and the life.”**

... And His Truth will set us free!

DIRECTIONS:

1. Be accepting, forgiving and merciful to others.
2. Once you are reconciled with Christ, do not dwell in your sinful past, but see the new things God is doing in your life.
3. Consider others better than yourself.

NEWS

(from page 1)

By the conclusion of the weekend, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were overflowing from every direction.

A special thanks to the Singles Praise Ministry, Shepherds from BLD Trenton, North Carolina, Newark youth and adult auxies, ME 42 immersion couples, Witness Development Coaches, and the support of St. Antoninus Parish (as represented by Eileen O'Hara). You guys have made this weekend extra special!

When you witness an abundant harvest such as the YLSS, there could only be one thing that comes to mind, **God's love.**

Signs and Wonders

(from page 2)

We felt so blessed that we were already in BLD when a similar need arose for us: my husband was struck with a debilitating disease. In spite of this, we felt blessed because BLD taught us to be thankful for all things and be intimate with Him in all circumstances, not just when need arises. That said, our faith in Him was already there, believing that He would take care of our needs.

During the BLD Friday worship, a week after my husband's diagnosis of cancer, he shared with me something very **amazing**. He said that during the quiet time, he prayed unceasingly to God asking, "Lord if only I could touch your cloak, I'll be healed." Just moments later he heard this yelling voice prophesying, "You're healed, you're healed – your faith has healed you!" My husband, although a bit surprised, quickly uttered in his mind (in Tagalog) – "That's me, that's me Lord!" Hearing this sharing from my husband on our way home was so reassuring, and like the royal official in the passage, we believed in His word that He already answered our prayers.

We went through with my husband's healing process in full surrender, which gave us the inner peace brought about by a deep and sincere belief that His will was the best for us. We were truly blessed because we didn't have to wait for my husband to be healed before we believed, and so we felt God's presence through every step of the way. We are ever so grateful to the Lord for His mercy in giving my husband a second chance at life. This we believe, was a true miracle! **Praise God!**

Signs and wonders of God are truly amazing, but we should trust Jesus' authority even without first seeing results. The story about the official and his son teaches us that Jesus is the Authority, and that if you trust in Him, He will take care of you

LORD'S PROVISION

PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections	Prior Week	YTD
Tithe & Love Offering	\$ 2,466	\$ 23,868
Mission Collections	\$ -	\$ 2,603

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LSS 46

Invocation Mass: April 8 / LSS 46: April 9-10
Contact: Lito/Gigi Vibar~ litogigi@vibar.com

Marriage Encounter # 47

June 17-19, 2016 Hotel Executive Suites
30 Minue St, Carteret, NJ 07008
Contact: Efren.Cruz@bldnewark.com

Disciples' Assembly

Saturday, April 23, 2016

TEACHING CALENDAR

Teachings for **Saturday, March 19 - 1 to 5 pm:**

- Advanced Intercession / Orientation to Spiritual Warfare (LSS 1-43)
- Encounter with Jesus:
The Gospels of Matthew & Mark (LSS 1-45)

COMMUNITY TEACHING, **Saturday, April 2**

Eucharist: Source of Mercy

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Mar 18	Formation
		Apr 1	Management
		Apr 8	Mission
		Apr 15	Pastoral

One more on "Realizing Christ":

There's this saying that goes, "If it walks like a duck, acts like a duck, quacks like a duck, then it must be a duck."

Father God, I apologize in advance for this poor analogy, but it just seemed appropriate and something we could all relate to. It's about Your Son Jesus. One day, while I was thinking of Him and why we should believe in Him, that thing about the duck got stuck in my head.

So here goes: If He walked like God, talked and taught like God, even performed miracles like God... Then He must be God!

Jesus did all of these things while He walked the Earth. Thing is, He still performs miracles to this day. Often, people find healing after praying to Him. I know that I myself feel instantly better, just thinking about Him.

If I had to define what or who God is, I would have to say that the real God would say "love one another." The real God would command us to take care of and not kill each other. The real God would forgive my sins. The real God would even die to prove His love for me, so that I too wouldn't be afraid to die for others.

And yet, the real God wouldn't insist that I believe in Him.

So I have to find a way to remind myself...and I pray that You are ok with the analogy.

Dear Jesus, You walked, talked and humbly lived like True God. Then, **YES!!!... You must be God.**