



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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NEWS

COUNSELS

Grateful people are happy people

Rejoice in the Lord - by Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R. Archbishop of Newark

November 13, 2020

Source:RCAN.org

November is often referred to as Gratitude Month. It's a time when we give thanks for all the blessings in our lives.

Especially during this time of pandemic, many of our sisters and brothers are struggling to find reasons to be grateful. Many will be unable to celebrate Thanksgiving in their homes with family and friends because of illness, social distancing or restrictions on travel. Let's be sure to pray for those who are less fortunate than we are, and let's help them every way we can—especially as we prepare for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Our thanks go to the God who created us and who sustains us by his grace. We Christians believe that this God is a person who knows us individually and who cares about each one of us. When we give thanks to him, it is a very intimate and personal thing.

When possible, we Catholics celebrate the holy Eucharist (whose name comes from the Greek word for "thanksgiving") on a daily or weekly basis, but on Thanksgiving Day we give special thanks to God for all his abundant blessings. That includes the gift of life itself, our parents and families, the love that we share with spouses and children, our friends, our freedom as citizens of the United States of America, our vocations as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, our material possessions, our intellectual gifts and talents, and much, much more.

Gratitude is a powerful virtue. It opens our hearts to the healing power of God's grace. It helps us look beyond our own selfish wants and fears to the gifts

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What Did You Do for One of These Least Ones?

THEME: We are sanctified when we render works of mercy.

WORD: Ez 34:11-12,15-17 ~ Ps 23:1-2,2-3,5-6
1 Cor 15:20-26,28 ~ Mt 25:31-46

ORDER: "...do for one of these least ones..."
– Mt 25:45

REFLECTION:

This Sunday, we conclude the Sundays of Ordinary Time with the Great Solemnity of Christ the King. Over the past several months, we have celebrated the mysteries of the life of the Lord. But now, we contemplate Christ in His glory as King of all creation and King of our souls. The greatest sign of Jesus' triumph and of His Kingship is the glory of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. The cross was where He was given the crown as King.



Indeed, He rules in Heaven as King of Kings and His power is revealed through His goodness and His shepherding care for us. The hallmarks of His Kingship are: His mercy and unfailing love for us,

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Promise of the Week

"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" – Mt 25:34

Blessed Are You

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During a recent Friday night, our word sharing circle was discussing the Beatitudes. As her sharing, one of the people in our group described herself as more of a 'Beatitudes' Christian, as opposed to a 'Ten Commandments' one. She went on to describe what she meant.

The Ten Commandments are clearly written, and most of them provide instructions on what not to do. These commandments that were handed down to Moses seem to involve more of judgements and consequences. We have all learned them as part of our Catechism and continue to use them as our guide. Even today's criminal justice system, and in a very related way, the attendant punishments for committing crimes have their origins based on the Ten Commandments.

When the sharer discussed the Beatitudes, she described how the Beatitudes point to a state of blessedness that we are to pursue, with less emphasis on what to avoid. So, she liked their more tranquil and heavenly theme. She said that it would be a blessing if God were to view us as merciful, meek and poor in spirit, which we can only attain through prayer and turning to God always.

Later that night, it struck me that she might have just accurately described the two broad types of Christians there are. Of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, there are some whose personalities adhere more to the finite parameters of law and order, hierarchies and structures. And there are those who identify more with the less defined ideals of loving others and being blessed.

In the Gospel, Jesus said that He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it (cf. Mt 5:17). And He did it by actions of love and forgiveness. As we head toward the Feast of Christ the King,



many of the upcoming daily Mass readings come from Revelation, and they serve as a reminder of the end of time. While there's room for us to be both types of Christians, as we live our lives, may we remember that being one is not so much about obeying rules and observing "do not's." As the Beatitudes exhort, it's about doing what it takes to become blessed – merciful, meek and pure in spirit.

we receive from others, and to the opportunities we have to share with others, and to return thanks to God for all that he has generously given to us.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of my religious congregation, the Redemptorists, once wrote about the encounter between a priest who was eager to learn more about the spiritual life and a beggar who was barefooted and in rags.

One day, the two happened to meet. The priest greeted the beggar saying, "Good day, my friend."

The beggar responded, "Thank you, sir, for your kind wishes, but I do not recall ever having had a 'bad' day."

"Then God has certainly given you a very happy life," said the priest.

"That is very true, sir," the beggar replied. "I have never been unhappy."

When the priest asked how this could be true given the man's wretched condition, the beggar said,

"This is the reason: when I have nothing to eat, I give thanks to God; when it rains or snows, I bless God's providence; when someone insults me, drives me away, or otherwise mistreats me, I give glory to God."

The beggar continued, "I said I've never had an unhappy day, and it's the truth, because I am accustomed to will unreservedly what God wills. Whatever happens to me, sweet or bitter, I gladly receive from his hands as what is best for me. Hence my unvarying happiness."

St. Alphonsus told this story to admonish us. If a poor beggar can thank God despite all the hardships he must endure, shouldn't we be able to do the same? Shouldn't we have the faith and the courage to look beyond our own needs, wants and fears to the gifts we have received from God and from so many others? The poor and vulnerable have much to teach us, especially when they remind us to be grateful.

Grateful people are happy people. They don't focus on their problems, but on their blessings. Their hearts are filled with love even when their stomachs (or their pockets) are empty.

Holidays can be hard times for people who are in poor health, homeless or who are experiencing emotional or financial difficulties. When we celebrate Thanksgiving this year, let's say a word of thanks to God for all his blessings. Let's say a prayer of thanksgiving for all the people who have shared their gifts with us.

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and His desire to mend broken hearts and broken lives and completely turn them around.

Jesus Christ is our mighty King and Good Shepherd. He goes after the scattered, the lost sheep who have gone astray because of sin. Jesus brings them back to the fold, where He heals them from their sins and where they find rest in His warm embrace.

Christ, the Good Shepherd, says: ***“I myself will pasture my sheep; I, myself will give them rest... The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy, shepherding them rightly.”*** (Ez 34:15-16)

Jesus exercises His authority, not by lording it over us, but by showing mercy. His authority is that of a Good Shepherd, One with a compassionate heart, One Who would lay down His life for His sheep. As His disciples, we are called to follow His example.

The one thing that affects us and that should concern all of us is how we will be able to stand before God during the last judgement. How will we He judge us? On that day, we will be surprised to find out that He has already been forming His verdict all along while we were living our earthly lives. It will be based on how we felt about and how we treated - the hungry who begged us for food and drink; the sick who asked us for comfort and care; the prisoner who longed for our visit and concern; the stranger who asked us for shelter from cold nights; and the downtrodden who begged us to assist them. Jesus as judge will merely affirm the results of our performance evaluation while we were on earth. Why? Because Jesus Himself is there in these vulnerable people. As Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, they are Jesus in disguise. Any kindness done to a person, however lowly he/she might be considered by society, is kindness done to Jesus Himself. Jesus will say to those who did nothing for them: ***“What you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.”*** (Mt 25:45)

In short, Jesus’ standard for judging us is the compassion and kindness we extend to the ***“least brothers of mine.”*** And if we can do these things, then we’d be on our way to ***“inherit the kingdom.”*** But if we haven’t, then we still have a lot of work to do ahead of us.

It is clear from this Gospel that our actions and the way that we relate to the poor, the sick, the homeless, and the prisoners, →→

→ help build up God’s Kingdom. It is a Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of mercy, of justice, of love, and of peace.

Each one of us is called to participate in expanding God’s Kingdom in our community. The Lord should be present in our families, among our friends, neighbors and colleagues at work. The Lord must reign in our hearts and minds, in our will, and be part of our actions, because Christ is the King, Who has been given all power in Heaven and on earth and we must follow Him. Are we giving the proper honor and glory to the King of Kings?

We need to integrate both our faith and works into our daily lives in order to gain salvation. With all of the great gifts that the Lord has given us, including the grace of baptism, we can respond to our calling by living our lives in faith, prayer, gratitude, and good service. Because He is the God we love and serve, our desire should be to belong to His Kingdom where love abounds. A life of selflessness and service is challenging, but for us members, note that we are able to gain the strength to overcome any such difficulties by living, guided by with the ideals and values of the vision and mission of our BLD Community.

To help us live these ideals and values, we must turn for help to our Blessed Virgin Mary, the holy Mother of our King, the Queen of our hearts, who looks after us as our loving intercessor.



Dear Lord Jesus, our merciful and compassionate King, fill us with Your love and grace so that we may be able to serve all people and guide them to Your way, Your path that leads to salvation. Jesus, our King and Shepherd, You are the comforter of Your flock. Give us, Lord, a generous heart and a faithful sharing of the blessings which You, O Lord, have provided. Help us, O generous King, and support us in everything that we do, and guide us to follow Your ways. We pray that we will be worthy and faithful witnesses in following Your path to everlasting life in heaven, our true and eternal home. AMEN.

Directions:

1. Pray to God to have courage and strength to help the least and the lost.
2. Do corporal works of mercy.

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And let's also say a prayer for all who are poor, homeless, hungry, or suffering from the devastating effects of COVID-19.

Let's make Thanksgiving 2020 a moment of grace for all who have been blessed by God with abundant gifts, including family, friends, co-workers, strangers and even enemies.

Our prayers of thanksgiving have the power to bring us hope, healing and great joy. May we thank God always for his goodness to us!

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

A Coincidence or an Answered Prayer?

This may sound like just a coincidence. At the very least, it is that. But for those who subscribe to how God hears our prayers (of whom I am one of them), believing that He does opens up vast vistas that confirm that He exists and that sometimes His answer to even our smallest prayer is a resounding "YES."

Maybe we're just more sensitive to it, but these good things seem to happen to a lot of members of BLD; so much so that we've already given it a name – "Disciple's Privilege." The Covenant News has actually featured such stories in the past; so this one just adds to the growing anecdotal evidence that God favors those in our beloved Community.

I mailed our federal income tax return last June. Because my wife only worked for four months during 2019, we landed in a lower tax bracket than the one that we originally thought we'd be in for the year; so the result was that a hefty refund was due to us from the federal government. But by mid-October, we still had not received the refund check from the IRS, and I began to worry. *Why was it taking so long? What if our return never got there?* Even a quick search of the IRS website did not produce any results with regards to its status.

So I began to dread having to gather everything together and having to drag myself down to the local IRS offices with all my paperwork. →→

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

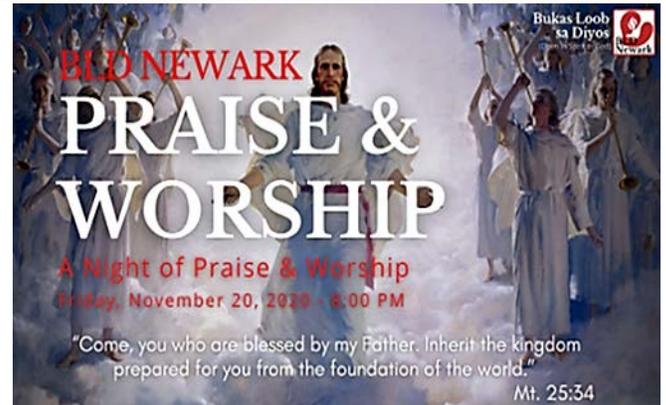
LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Last Week	YTD
Tithes & Love Offerings / E-Giving / Mailed Checks	\$ 2,086	\$ 85,293
Bereavement Fund	\$ -	\$ 8,272
Donation (Phil Typhoon)	\$ 50	\$ 50
Mission	\$ -	\$ 3,956

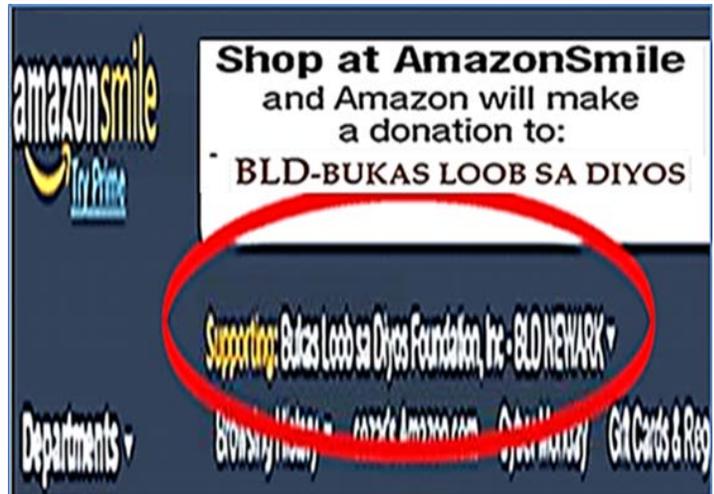


Financial details are available to all members through treasury@bldnewark.com

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



Guidelines and registration link are available at BLDNewark.com



→ Meanwhile, I inserted a quick prayer every day after daily Mass, that there be no problem with the refund, and that the check would one day magically appear in our mailbox.

Early in this month of November... it was there! Thanks be to God!