



**Bukás Loób sa Diyós**

**(Open in Spirit to God)**

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC COVENANT COMMUNITY  
DISTRICT OF NEWARK

# COVENANT NEWS

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## NEWS

### Pope at Audience: Take time to reflect on how we live our faith

*At the General Audience Pope Francis continues his catechesis on the apostle Paul's Letter to the Galatians when he warns them about straying from their new faith in Christ. He says we too are invited to reflect on how we live our faith and to ensure that our love of Christ, crucified and risen again, remains at the centre of our daily lives.*

**By Vatican News staff writer**

Welcoming pilgrims to the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican for his weekly General Audience, Pope Francis continued his catechesis on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians. In this latest chapter, he recalls how the apostle Paul challenges the first Christians of Galatia to look at where they have strayed from their faith and how they risk nullifying the grace they have experienced if they do not correct course.

The Pope described how the Apostle uses strong terms, like foolishness, to describe their behaviour, because they risked losing their faith in Christ, which they initially received with enthusiasm, and so Paul appealed to their memory of his first proclamation when he offered them the possibility of attaining a new, hitherto un hoped-for freedom in faith.

#### **The love of Christ, the wellspring of salvation**

The point is to shake up their consciences, the Pope explained, when Paul reminded the Galatians how the word he preached to them focused on God's love, fully manifested in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the grace they received from that. In summary, the Pope went on to say, Paul's intention is to compel the Galatians to avoid falling into the trap of a religiosity based solely on the scrupulous observance of precepts, overlooking "the love of Christ, crucified and risen again," which should "remain at the centre of our daily life as the Wellspring of salvation". ...Continued on page 4

## COUNSELS

### Ephphatha!

**THEME:** We witness to God's love and saving grace when we courageously proclaim His mighty deeds.

**WORD:** Is 35:4-7a/ Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10/  
Ja 2:1-5/ Mk 7:31-37

**ORDER:** "Ephphatha!"... "Be opened!" (Mk 7:34)

**REFLECTION:**

**B**eing open or "bukás loób" is needed to understand our Community Word for September – **Faith opens**



**our hearts to witness to God's love and saving grace.**

To witness to the love and grace of the Lord, we need

for our faith to grow deep in our heart. Faith is to have confidence in what we hope for and the assurance that the Lord is working, even though we cannot see it. Faith allows the Lord to penetrate our hearts so that we may see His mighty works. We need to follow His instruction, "Ephphatha!" (Be opened), so that His saving miracles are manifested in our lives.

During this time of the pandemic crisis, sufferings and difficulties may test our faith especially when we lose a loved one due to Covid. Sometimes, we can lose sight of the Lord as we question Him for allowing such things to happen in our family or to members of a faith community. Yet, we can look at these trials from God's perspective; we can view them.... *Continued on page 3*

### Promise of the Week

**"God...comes with vindication, with divine recompense, he comes to save you." (Is 35:4b)**

## Reflections from our Deacons:

### **“Come follow Me”**

By Deacon Joey Reyes

What will it take to change our lives?

*“Jesus passed by and saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.*

*While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (Mt 9:9-13)*

I invite you to hear God’s call and yield to His invitation to follow Him. This is all about His love for you and me and how he wants us to have a personal relationship with Him.

He said, “Follow me.” Jesus wants to get into our minds, then past our minds into our bodies, and then through our bodies and into our lives to make our daily decisions based on His ways. These will lead us into living life with Christ, Life with the Spirit.

We all heard Matthew’s response, he got up and followed Him. Bishop Barron, pointed out that in Greek, the verb used here in his response, “Matthew rose”, is the same verb used to describe the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead - “He rose.”

To rise is to move higher or to elevate oneself from a former state or level. Theologically speaking, conversion means a transition into a higher life, arising from a preoccupation with the goods of the world to a reorientation to the things of God. This is the story of Matthew’s conversion, from the earthly life that he lived that cluttered his vision from seeing God, to following Jesus.

Then we hear what happened after his conversion: *“And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples.”*

And this deeply annoyed the Pharisees, who asked Jesus’ disciples, *“Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”*

Jesus loves sinners and He doesn’t require perfection. God’s mercy is inclusive, His love is unconditional; He is inviting us to rise and change our lives.

Let us also be reminded of the Eucharist, our Sacred Meal, the Perfect Sacrifice that Jesus offers for us, as we gather at the table to partake of the Bread of Life. At every Mass, Christ gathers all our prayers, our pains, our sufferings and all our praise and thanksgiving and offers them all to the Father. Then, the Holy Spirit fills us with Joy, supplants our weaknesses with strength and rejoices with us. This is the reason why the Eucharist is the source and Summit of our faith. *Continued on page 3*



### **Who Will You Serve?**

By Deacon Rod A. Soriano

In Joshua 24, Joshua gathered together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, summoning their elders, their leaders, their judges, and their officers. Joshua addressed the people and asked them to decide whom they will serve, the gods their fathers served beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose country they were now dwelling. Then Joshua proclaimed this famous line: “As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

In John 6, after Jesus finished His Bread of Life discourse, many of His disciples who were listening said, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” Since Jesus knew that His disciples were murmuring about this, He said to them, “Does this shock you?”

We all know the rest of the story. Many of His disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied Him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?”

There were obviously two groups of people that reacted to Jesus’ Bread of Life discourse: those who could not accept Jesus’ words about their having to eat His flesh and drink His blood; and those who knew that Jesus’ words bring Spirit and Life. Thank God that the Apostles remained with Jesus.

I would like to add a third group: those who remain quiet, who say they believe with no questions to ask, and who generally, at least externally, just go through the motions of following Jesus. This group is the subject of the Gospel in Mark 7. At the outset, they remain with Jesus, worshipping Him with their lips, but not with their hearts. They say they believe but won’t serve. Isaiah says, “This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.”

There is really no need for anyone to ask, “Which group do you belong to?” Our response will be evident in the choices that we make, the actions that we take and the words that we say. These will show our answer to His question, “Who will you serve?”

## COUNSELS (from page 1)

as experiences where He may strengthen our faith. Throughout this month, let us reflect on how we can witness to the loving and saving grace of God.

The theme for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time is – **We witness to God’s love and saving grace when we courageously proclaim His mighty deeds.** In the gospel of Mark, Jesus manifests His mighty healing power and compassion by opening the ears and speech of the deaf mute by mere utterance, “Ephphatha” (cf. Mk 7:34b, 35a). Those who witnessed this miracle proclaimed the mighty deed of Jesus. To this present time, it is the same command – “be opened,” that Jesus is giving us. The Lord asks us to open our hearts so that His healing love may flow to our needy brothers and sisters, by sharing our time to minister and pray for those who are sick physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Through these charitable acts, we may confidently receive God’s promise: ***“God...comes with vindication, with divine recompense, he comes to save you,” (Is 35:4b).***

On the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the theme is – **We witness to God’s love and saving grace when we deny ourselves for the sake of the Gospel.** How are we to do this? Once again, the gospel of Mark gives us a glimpse of how Jesus, our Master and Teacher, instructs us: ***“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me,” (Mk 8: 34b).*** Our journey of conversion involves renouncing our self-importance while embracing God’s will. Jesus’ perfect example of sacrificial and selfless love while carrying His cross should move us to follow Him with deep faith. As we share in His sufferings, we too will rise with Him in glory and reap His promise: ***“...whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it,” (Mk 8:35b).***

**We witness to God’s love and saving grace when we serve others in humility** is the theme for the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Humility is one of Jesus’ greatest virtues. He is the Son of God, our Lord and King. Yet, He came to earth and became human, not to be served, but to serve. His life and ministry was all about service, to set an example for His followers to emulate. Jesus told His twelve apostles, and us today, ***“If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all,” (Mk 9: 35b).*** Oftentimes, man equates leadership with superiority. Instead, the Lord teaches us that to be a true leader, one must be first and foremost a servant. Serving with humility leads us to God’s promise: ***“God is my helper; the Lord sustains my life,” (Ps 54:6).*** → →

→ Like Christ, being servant of all will assure us of experiencing fullness of life.

Finally, for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the theme is –

**We witness to God’s love and saving grace when we are pure of heart and charitable in our ways.** Sin forms a barrier that isolates God from the people He loves. Because of sin, the mind is perverted, imagination corrupted and faculties of the soul degraded. There is a great abyss between light and darkness that cannot be bridged except by accepting the salvific gift of Christ. But when a heart is pure, and the life and character of a person is transformed, he becomes a testimony to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit because Christ lives in him. A person who is renewed in mind and spirit will be granted this promise: ***“... because you belong to Christ ...you will surely not lose his reward,” (Mk 9:41).*** Be righteous and holy then, that you may inherit heaven as your reward.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, You are the author of my life. You know everything about me. I pray that as I walk in my spiritual journey, You will always help me to be consistent in my faith so that I may not stray away from You. Grant me wisdom as You open the eyes of my heart to witness to Your great love for me. Amen!

## Directions

1. ***Have a deeper understanding of the word of God and become the person He wants you to be.***
2. ***Actively participate in community and mission work.***

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***Reflections from our Deacons:*** (from page 2)

Jesus came to heal the contrite of heart, He called and gathered the sinners. Jesus gave His life for the atonement of the sins of the world and gained victory over sin and death by His rising.

Conversion is the realigning of our life with God. Conversion is our rising from the worldly life that hinders us from living life with Christ.

Jesus showed us the way, just as He called Matthew to rise and follow Him. So let us ask ourselves, “What is hindering me from getting up and giving my whole life to God?”

My Sisters and Brothers of Christ in BLD, let us heed His call, “Come follow me.”



# NEWS

(from page 1)

The Galatians understood what Paul was saying, the Pope pointed out, since they had experienced the action of the Holy Spirit in their communities, through charity and other charisms that manifested themselves among them, "the fruit of the newness of the Spirit." God was bringing them to faith, the Holy Spirit had been the agent of their experience, the Pope added, but the Galatians were putting that all in the background seeing their own works as the protagonists, which Paul described as foolishness.

The Pope added that throughout history, even today, similar situations can arise where some propose a rigid religiosity or an artificial asceticism, with an "inflexibility that takes away from us that freedom in the Spirit that Christ's redemption gives us." We need to be aware of this reality, he noted, and this Letter to the Galatians speaks about it and encourages us to go forward "in the paschal vocation of Jesus".

## Christ's love at the centre of our lives

In conclusion, the Pope said we also need to reflect on where our faith is, and how we live it; and to make sure that Christ's love remains at the centre of our lives, the way to our salvation. We must continually keep to this "precious treasure, to the beauty of the newness of Christ," rather than to externals, rather than "something that attracts us momentarily but then leaves us empty inside." He said we can be encouraged by the fact that, "even when we are tempted to turn away, God still continues to bestow His gifts... God does not abandon us but rather abides with us in His merciful love."

## World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

Before imparting his Apostolic Blessing, Pope Francis recalled that September 1 marks the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and the beginning of the Season of Creation, which will conclude on October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. He said this year's theme is, "A Home for All? Renewing God's Oikos", and that a message for the occasion will be released soon together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. He concluded inviting everyone to "pray and work for our common home in these times of grave planetary crisis," together with our brothers and sisters of different Christian denominations.

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Please note that a pdf of this Covenant News is also available online at [BLDNEWARK.com](http://BLDNEWARK.com)

## LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Last Week	YTD
Tithes & Love Offerings / E-Giving / Mailed Checks	\$ 2,531	\$76,316
Covid 19 Collection	\$ -	\$ 1,990
Mission	\$ -	\$ 5,000

Financial details are available to all members through [treasury@bldnewark.com](mailto:treasury@bldnewark.com)



## THE WORD MINISTRY IS LOOKING FOR YOUR REFLECTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE COVENANT NEWS!!!

### Suggested Topics:

- Reflection based on the Mass Readings
- Blessings during the time of Pandemic
- Various themes involving faith and spirituality

Reach out to the Word Ministry ([Word@BLDNewark.com](mailto:Word@BLDNewark.com)) if you have any ideas for the Covenant News.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR



**BLD Newark Livestream  
Eucharistic Celebration  
Friday, Sep. 3, 2021 / 8:00 PM**

**Feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary  
2000 Hail Mary  
Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021  
8 am – 6 pm / DMP Auditorium**



**Aspirants Retreat  
October 15-17, 2021  
CYO Kearny, NJ**

**Live In-Person Teaching/Meeting  
Creed – Sacraments – Scriptures  
Saturday, Sep. 11, 2021 / 1 – 4:30 pm / DMP Library**

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**Worship Leaders Forum: ALL Worship Leaders,  
including those from SPM and Singles Ministry  
are REQUIRED to attend**

**Saturday, Sep. 25, 2021 / 1 – 4:30 pm / DMP Auditorium**

Please join our own Intercessory Ministry in their nightly community prayers via Zoom. Everyone is most welcome to participate

Zoom ID: 2265467380 / PW: 750109

For more details, please contact Ram & Claire Bautista