



Bukás Loób sa Diyós

(Open in Spirit to God)

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC COVENANT COMMUNITY
DISTRICT OF NEWARK

COVENANT NEWS

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Christmas Edition

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NEWS

BLD Newark: A Blessed Community

In the Gospel of Luke 1:39-45, what was Blessed Virgin Mary thinking? What’s the urgency for her to hastily go to the hill country to visit her elderly cousin Elizabeth whom the Angel told her is with child? Mary must have thought, “She’ll need my help. She’ll want me to be there, take care of her, pray with her, worship God and be thankful for His Blessings!”

And, indeed those were what the members of BLD Newark Community had in mind, too. The Community is hurting, BLD needs help; BLD wishes to worship God to the fullest. On December 17th, the whole BLD Newark Community did just that. Members from many different Ministries said special prayers while the Adult Praise Ministry led the joyful singing. Looking in from outside of Divine Mercy, it was clear from the church’s Christmas lights and solemnly lighted decorations that festive worshipping was happening, illuminating the inside of the church for hours. It’s like the Light is coming from within the church’s walls. It’s as if the warmth of heart of each and every one of the 120 attendees lovingly heated up the whole building!



In generous waves this Beloved Community also selflessly provided for other brethren in need. An announcement was made for everyone to open their wallets to support the multitude of unfortunate victims of Typhoon Odette. BLD overwhelming responded to the urgent call for help that night. Close to \$2,000 in donations was collected! ...Continued on page 6

COUNSELS

Live in joyful hope, peace, and love

THEME: We prepare for the coming of Jesus, our Savior, when, like the Holy Family, bond in love with our family and one another.

WORD : Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5/
Col 3:12-21/ Lk 2:41-52

ORDER: *“Strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father...”*

(1 Thes 3:13)

REFLECTION:

In the face of many uncertainties and obstacles that families are experiencing, it is easy to relate to Mary's anxiety when Jesus was nowhere in sight on their way to a Passover feast in Jerusalem.

Indeed without a family, one can feel lost. It is therefore for a good reason that the Church



commemorates the Feast of the Holy Family, the name given to the family unit of Jesus. This Feast which usually falls on the Sunday after ...Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

“For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork, blessed shall you be and favored.” (Ps 128:2)

Blessed and a Purpose-filled New Year from the DCS!



The heritage of BLD Newark Covenant Community is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic coming as it does from the community's mission and charism. We find joy in our hearts as we pursue the tradition of holding, serving in our respective ministries, and participating in every community's virtual and live-streamed events. We are blessed when we surrender our hearts and minds to the promptings of the Holy Spirit that anoint and empower us as a community: *"One voice, One heart and One in spirit"* in our mission works. Indeed, it is a wonderful experience to look back and reflect on our numerous blessings from the Lord as we bid goodbye to 2021 even as it has been a difficult and challenging year for everybody.

A New Year beckons, a fresh start for many unresolved issues in our lives. We are afforded a new opportunity of growing or improving relationships with others in improving our lives to become better Christians but most importantly, a New Year to grow our love for God, to know Him more and to serve Him better through the people He sends us to tend and care for. He said in Matthew 25:40 that *'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'* We have gained new friends and developed a wonderful relationship with a community of believers. Through the empowerment and anointing received from the Holy Spirit, we have become "living stones" founded on Christ, the "cornerstone" to be raised up into a spiritual building with new zeal and vigor inspired by St. Paul's exhortation in 2 Corinthians 5:17: *'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come'.* With this spiritual unction," we pray to be worthy in repeating the words of Jesus: *'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'* (Isaiah 61:1-2).

The Year 2022 promises to be a blessed and exciting year. Let us renew our hope for a brighter and more vibrant community of faith, each one to exude a humble, repentant and a serving heart with willingness to receive Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior. In gratitude, we thank the Lord for all the blessings He continues to shower upon us, with great anticipation for new blessings.

*"May the Lord bless you and keep you;
may the Lord make his face shine upon
you and be gracious to you; may the Lord
look upon you kindly and give you
peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)*
*Have a blessed and a purpose-filled New
Year!*



COUNSELS (from page 1)

Christmas, is also a celebration of all Christian families including our own. It is a good time to reflect upon the holy life led in the house at Nazareth by Jesus, the Son of God, Mary his Mother, and Joseph his foster father. Pope Leo XIII instituted this feast in 1892 to remind the laity of the sacredness of the family and to provide a model upon which to structure their own. As members of BLD, the best way to celebrate this Feast is to go back to the vision of our Community and align our family life accordingly, as encountered individuals, couples, and families. We ask ourselves what Jesus, Mary and Joseph would do as we make Christ and His Church the center of our family and individual life. We strive to be good witnesses by being faithful to our 8-point covenant pledge and unselfishly share our love and kindness to our family members following the footsteps of the Holy Family.

Our readings reveal the Lord's loving guidance and order as the pattern of our family life. In the gospel, Jesus although He is God, remains subservient and obedient to His parents. **"He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them"** (Luke 2:51). In the 1st reading, we are reminded to honor, obey, revere, and show kindness to our fathers with a promise of a long life. **"Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children, and, when he prays, is heard. Whoever reveres his father will live a long life; he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother,"** (Sir 3:4-5). While in the 2nd reading, wives and husbands are reminded to live a life of subordination and love, while children are told to be obedient. **"Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and avoid any bitterness toward them. Children, obey your parents in everything for this is pleasing to the Lord,"** (Col 18: 18-20).

How blessed we are that Jesus came to us from within a real human family giving us a perfect model of domestic life. Let's pray for those areas that need improving and follow the model that ultimately leads all the family members to a life of salvation. Sadly, we are witnessing a breakdown of the traditional family in our country where one parent or both are forced to work abroad for economic reasons, ripping families apart in the process. Ironically, mothers make big sacrifices leaving behind their own children to take care of other parents' children, while neglecting their own along the way. The prevalence of same sex marriage in many countries blatantly violates the sanctity of marriage. Embryonic stem-cell →→

→ research is likewise a cause for concern along with abortion, contraception, polygamy, divorce, and spousal and child abuse.

All these evil influences are shaking up the institution of marriage inside-out, upside-down. As followers of Christ, we are to remain steadfast in protecting our families, especially our children who are at most risk. It is our role to keep them rooted in the word of God so they may build a strong foundation for their own family life. And as the Lord promises: **"For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork, blessed shall you be and favored."** (Ps 128:2)

Prayer:

Consecration to the Holy Family

O Jesus, our most loving Redeemer, who having come to enlighten the world with Thy teaching and example, didst will to pass the greater part of Thy life in humility and subjection to Mary and Joseph in the poor home in Nazareth, thus sanctifying the Family that was to be an example for all Christian families, graciously receive our family as it dedicates and consecrates itself to Thee this day. Do Thou protect us, guard us and establish amongst us Thy holy fear, true peace and concord in Christian love: in order that by living according to the divine pattern of Thy family we may be able, all of us without exception, to attain to eternal happiness.

Mary, dear Mother of Jesus and our Mother, by your kindly intercession make this our humble offering acceptable in the sight of Jesus, and obtain for us His graces and blessings. Saint Joseph, most holy Guardian of Jesus and Mary, help us by thy prayers in all our spiritual and temporal needs; so that we may be enabled to praise our divine Savior Jesus, together with Mary and thee, for all eternity. Amen

Reflection Guide Questions:

1. What areas in my family life can I improve to follow the way of life of the Holy Family?
2. How can I be the Lord's instrument in strengthening the bond within my family in mutual love and respect?

Directions

1. **Jesus is the reason for the season; persevere in your prayer life, share love and joy to the poor and needy.**
2. **Go to confession; repent, be transformed and renew your life in Christ.**

An Advent Reflection: What is Christmas all about?

In my early formative years in BLD Community life, I encountered many questions concerning my spiritual life. Recalling many of these questions, at times naive to me now, and finding answers through prayers and supplications, gave me true and real peace and joy that only God can give in enlightening me on my simple questions. Please allow me to share.

*What is Advent/Christmas all about?

*Why am I being reminded every Christmas about the Incarnation of God?

*What does the Nativity of Jesus Christ really mean in my life?

*Why do I celebrate God's first coming every year, just like I celebrate my natal day every year?

*What is the connection between celebrating my birthday and the birth of Jesus in my life?

*What is the relevance of my humanity and the humanity of Jesus?

*What is the spiritual meaning of the Advent season?

*How do I connect the dots and try to find answers to almost redundant questions of mine?

In my years of human life, I had been celebrating Advent/Christmas every year.

Many times, I tried to put these questions into a perspective to have meaningful answers.

In those early years, Advent seemed like a long time of waiting. I had been waiting for Jesus to speak to me, but I heard nothing. I had been waiting a long time for him to answer a prayer, and I wanted to be reassured that he hears me. My waiting continued, from one Advent all the way to another.

I never realized during those years that God was just waiting for me.

He had been calling me for a true Metanoia, a true conversion, to open my heart to His Fatherly love and the friendship of His Son and the Holy Spirit to work on me and guide me to live His Word.

Words like, I belong to Jesus, were slowly getting into my mind that it should be two ways, Jesus belongs to me and I belong to Jesus. He had been talking to me when I read the Scriptures and the Liturgy of the Word but somehow, I was not getting it. The faith I had in my mind should not be all about me, but it should be that Faith that Jesus gives to His Body, which is the Catholic Church, where I belong. I wanted my →→

→ faith to work for me, instead of me working for my faith, for it to grow deeper and stronger in Jesus.

I finally realized that conversion into God's ways is a lifetime process. It involves carrying a lot of crosses in my life and offering it to the Lord in humility.

I realized that Christmas is everyday in my life, when I pray, worship, and give thanks to my Savior and my Creator. It is about knowing, understanding, following, and serving God every day of my life.

I realized and understood that He loves me so much that he offered His own Body and Blood for the redemption of my sins, and He continues to offer His Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

I stopped waiting for Him because He is already here, in me.

This is what He came to do – to save me and unite himself to me in the Eucharist.

Christmas is about Christ and Mass – The Eucharist
If you find yourself still waiting for the Lord, know that he always fulfills his promises.

Today he is waiting for you to receive him, and that alone is reason to rejoice!

In this Advent, let us all make an examination of conscience and ask God if we are truly, through Him, with him, and in Him. Is God really in our lives? Do we walk the talk?

St James says, you have faith but is your faith manifested in works? Do we witness Jesus in us, to others, especially those who are in need around us?

Do you have a reasoned faith?

Christmas is a calling for a true conversion into the life of Christ.

Are we (you) living the Catholic Christian faith?

Are we (you) living the faith of the Catholic Church and its Dogmas and doctrines?

Let us live the Gospel of Truth in our lives.

A very Merry Christmas to all and a Joyful New Year in Christ's Love.



NEWS

A Christmas Message from Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

December 20, 2021

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We associate “joy” with Christmas. Do we know what joy is? Have we experienced it lately?

According to Pope Francis: *“To be full of joy*

is the experience of the highest consolation, when the Lord makes us understand that this is something different from being cheerful, positive, bright...No, it is another thing; it is an overflowing joy that really hits us. Receiving the joy of the Spirit is a grace.”

When I was a boy in elementary school, the sisters gave us a very simple—but profound—tool for learning what joy is. They told us that when you spell j-o-y, the “j” stands for Jesus who should always come first in our lives. The “o” stands for others who come second. And the “y” stands for yourself. Place Jesus first, others second, and yourself last of all, and you will know joy.

Isn't it amazing how these simple teaching devices cut right to the heart of the matter? Volumes of philosophy, theology and spirituality have been written on the concepts of joy and happiness. The nuances they contain are important, I know, for the fullness or accuracy of our understanding, but what the sisters taught is no less profound. If we place Jesus first in our lives, if we think of others before we think of ourselves, we will be surprised by joy!

Jesus Christ is the greatest Christmas gift, the source of all real joy. He is the gift of God the Father, who became one of us in all things but sin by the power of Holy Spirit. This amazing gift was first given to Mary, and then to all of us, to save us from the destructive power of sin and death. This is the joy, the fulfillment, of all human desiring. This is what we celebrate at Christmas time—on earth as in heaven. This is the time of year when we call to mind most vividly the mystery of the Incarnation and the joy of Christ's birth.

All other Christmas gifts pale in comparison to this one: ***“For God so loved the world that he gave →→***

→ his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:16-17).

On Christmas Day, and throughout this joyous season, we are invited to join with Mary, and all the angels and saints, in a joy-filled festival of happiness and peace. The joy in heaven on Christmas Day cannot be accurately described in earthly words or images, but we believe with all our hearts that those who have gone before us to our heavenly home rejoice on this day. And we hope and pray that this joy will spill over and bring peace on earth—today and always.

Jesus is our j-o-y. When we place him first, others second and ourselves third, everything falls into proper perspective.



Deacon's Corner

How Do I Make the Incarnation Come Alive in Me?

Our Advent Journey is down to its final week. Christmas shopping is almost done and most of our cards are sent. With “holiday parties” almost every weekend and traffic seemingly doubled from last week, the “Holiday” is in full swing. But wait - have you asked yourselves:

- What have I done in the past 3 weeks to make Christmas (The Incarnation) meaningful?
- What have I prepared for the “Birthday Boy”?

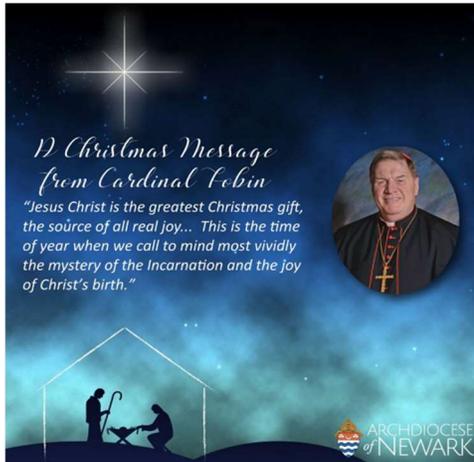
Christmas, after all, is a season of giving - the season of love, peace, and joy. It is in our nature to seek peace and joy through giving. St. Francis of Assisi said: *“It is in giving that we receive.”*

What then, have we prepared for the Newborn King? We know that Kings have everything we possibly could imagine; even more so, the King of the Universe, the Creator from Whom all things come. What could be a more appropriate gift for us to offer than praise and thanksgiving to the Lord of Lords and to our King of Kings?

In prayer, we talk to God; through our services and fasting, we share the love of God especially with those in need. In praise, we elevate God's generosity, mercy, and love. To confess our sin is the greatest act of praise, because in confession, we seek forgiveness, we acknowledge our weaknesses and our imperfections and we recognize our humanity.

In confession, we appreciate

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NEWS

(from page 1)

The night would not have been complete without the festive dancing and singing of the young and old of this



Beloved Community. Savoring the deliciously packaged meals boosted everyone's energy to do some line dancing,

come up with actions for "Twelve Days of Christmas" and watch the delightful dance performance of SPM.

Joy, Peace, and Hope have been oozing from each and every one, thankful for God's Presence through life's challenges and amazing accomplishments.



We love You, Lord God! We love you, Beloved BLD Community! Let us pray and trust God evermore for an Awesomely Fruitful and

Joyful Christmas Season and New 2022 for all!

Deacon's Corner

(from page 5)

more the birth of our Savior, who came for the forgiveness of our sins. Therefore, we look forward to the Incarnation, God's gift of His Unconditional Love. By His grace, Our Savior, Jesus Christ, will fix what is broken and restore man to his state of "original holiness and justice" so we may live in full communion with God, living in His Divine Intimacy. (CCC 375-376)

This, my brothers and sisters, is the purpose →→

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	\$ 3,058.83	\$ \$105,528.03
Covid 19 Collection	\$ -	\$ 1,990
Mission	\$ -	\$ 5,000

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Please join our own Intercessory Ministry in their nightly community prayers via Zoom.

Everyone is most welcome to participate

Zoom ID: 2265467380 / PW: 750109 @6:30PM

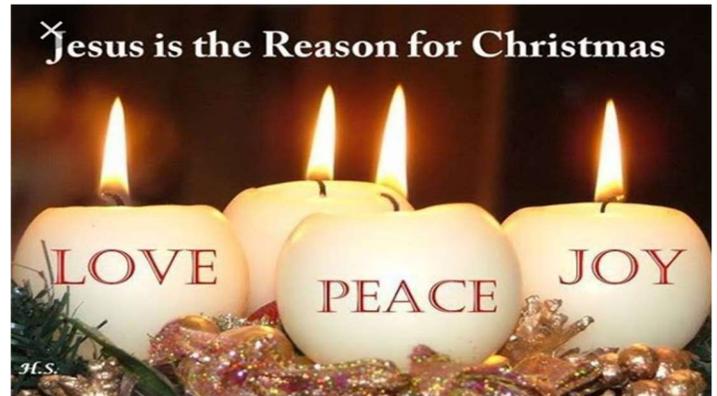
For more details, please contact

Ram & Claire Bautista

→ of Christmas, the reason for the season, where we find true joy when we receive Christ, the perfect gift. In prayer, may we hear God speak; in our works, may we find His strength and, in all things, may we see God.

During this last week of Advent:

- Let us bear the image of Christ - the gift we received in baptism.
- May we live the life of Christ - the call He has for all of us.
- And may we all be the light of Christ to the World.



Christmas is the season of giving and receiving.

Prayer:

Lord, with praise and thanksgiving in my heart, I have come to realize that all I want for Christmas and this New Year is You. Amen.

Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year to you and to your family!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!