



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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## NEWS

### BLD Newark welcomes ME 48



The ME 48 weekend held on May 19-21, 2017 at the Hotel Executive Suites in Carteret, NJ was led by the weekend's Pastoral Team: our very own Spiritual Director, Msgr. Paul Schetelick, Rene and Sally Castaneda (couple A sharers) and Carlito and Arlene Claricia (couple B sharers and ME 48 class shepherds.) The weekend culminated with a glorious Eucharistic Celebration that was followed by a rousing, warm welcome as the everyone there sang the "Community Song" together.

Christ's love was palpable in the room as the BLD Newark members circled around the graduates, heartily welcoming each of them into our Community. The new graduates include twelve couples and one priest, namely: Fr. Boniface Anusiem (Vicar of St. Antoninus), Eric and Mayjen Apiado, Bambi and Tina Cabanig, Cirio and Tess de Jesus, Lito and Cheryl de la Cruz, Vergil and Jess Garvin, Ricardo and Ana Delia Izquierdo, Russ and Melissa Monasterio, Patty and Phil Okafor, Eduardo and Nette Parana, Carlos and Patty Tam-Ajito, Boyet and Margie Trinidad, and Jim and Karen Wallaesa. ...Continued on page 4

## COUNSELS

### Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

**THEME:** We are empowered by the Holy Spirit when we observe the commandments of Jesus and preach the Gospel, and make disciples of all nations.

**WORD:** Acts 1:1-11 ~ Ps 47:2-3,6-7,8-9  
Eph 1:17-23 ~ Mt 28:16-20

**ORDER:** *Go... teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.* (cf Mt 28:19a, 20a)

**REFLECTION:**

May 28<sup>th</sup> is the seventh and last Sunday of the Easter Season. The Feast of The Ascension of the Lord that's celebrated was actually last Thursday – exactly 40 days after Easter, but because of its importance and additional pastoral reasons, in many dioceses, it has been moved to this Sunday.

The Ascension of the Lord is a special event in the life of Jesus and an important feast in the Church. Therefore, how should we look at it? What is the actual meaning of the Ascension and what is its significance for us today?

First: Ascension is a glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ and in a sense, it was an event expected after His Resurrection. As a matter of fact, the Suffering & Death of Jesus, His Resurrection, His Ascension and Pentecost all form one unit, inseparably linked with one another, each necessarily implying the others.

When we watch games and sports, we often see winning players and teams joyfully lifted up high by their supporters. One could say that it was the same with Jesus. ...Continued on page 3

### *Promise of the Week*

*"I am with you always, until the end of the age."*

(Mt 28:20b)

# “I HAVE CONQUERED THE WORLD.”

In the Gospel for Monday, May 29, Jesus tells us, *“But I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.”* (Jn 16:32b-33)

This past week was quite a trying time for my family and relatives, as my sister in the Philippines has been very sick. Because everyone was under a lot of stress, and fearful and anxious over what could next happen, there have been misunderstandings and disagreements among us. Incidents such as these may pull people away from God. Some will abandon and question Him. I realize though, that He knows everything and that He does not need to have anyone question Him (cf Jn 16:30). So while some of my relatives have felt discouraged, I’ve chosen to cling to God’s love for us. I just placed my trust in His mercy, focused on the positive, and remained faithful that God will help my sister. I believe in Him, and that brings me peace, knowing that God will hear and answer our prayers. I knew that surrendering to His will is the only way I could remain calm despite the sadness I was going through since I could not be with my dear sister.

Our daily lives are not without problems and challenges. We are constantly battling against oppression. Even in our BLD community, we encounter trials and conflicts while serving God through our brothers and sisters. But because of God’s great love for us, He gave us His only son, Jesus, Who in turn bequeathed the Holy Spirit to us, to guide us to the truth. The Holy Spirit brings us that inner peace that tells us everything will be fine.

Jesus conquered the world by His passion, death and resurrection. He triumphed over sin when He sacrificed and died for us on the cross. We have to take courage in all that we do, empowered by the conviction that God is always with us. In spreading the Word of God to bring people closer to Him, we should have the strength to persevere and withstand any danger, fear or difficulty. May we have an unwavering confidence in Jesus’ victory over sin and death. Jesus Christ alone is our peace and our hope.

I will conquer everything in this world because I have God in me! Thank you Lord Jesus, for your Divine Mercy! I trust in You!



In the first reading for Monday, May 29, the passages from Acts (19:1-8) relate what happened when St. Paul traveled to Ephesus where he found some disciples. When he asked them if they knew the Holy Spirit, their response was that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit. As it turns out, they were baptized by John (the Baptist), with a baptism of repentance; but that they had not yet been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Only when Paul laid hands on them, did they receive the Holy Spirit.

This story reminded me of a YouTube video of a Catholic Life in the Spirit Seminar where a speaker (his name was Winston Garcia) was introducing what the LSS was all about. To explain things, he used a visual demonstration.

He started with a pitcher of water; this was to represent the seminar participants. He then added a small amount of powdered juice mix. Baptism, he said was like the powdered juice that was put into the water. He added some more, to represent Communion and then Confirmation; and he likened each addition to the sanctifying grace that each sacrament brought into a person’s life. Then he tasted it.

It didn’t taste like juice yet. Next he stirred the contents of the pitcher with a spoon, and tasted it again. Now, he had juice.

The obvious analogy that the exercise demonstrated was that the LSS was like the act of stirring the contents of the pitcher to transform all the ingredients that were in it into something sweet tasting and good.

We all receive sanctifying grace as we partake of the sacraments. But, just as with the contents of that pitcher, which was mostly just water until it was stirred, until we allow the Holy Spirit to come stir things up, His grace just sits at the bottom and it does not flavor the rest of the aspects of our lives.

Stirring things up once, however actually is not enough. With the juice, if after stirring, it is left untouched for an extended amount of time, then the original powder of the juice mix will still begin to settle as sediments at the bottom of the pitcher. We too would need to constantly ask the Holy Spirit to bless us and to help us use the gifts and graces that He bestows upon us, letting them flavor all the aspects of our lives each day.

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Resurrection was His victory over sin and death – and God the Father, immensely filled with joy, lifted Jesus up to heaven. Now that Jesus waits for us in heaven, His Ascension embodies the hope of our own glorification.

Moreover, Ascension sets the stage for a new heart, a new spirit and a new power of faith that are to come on Pentecost, the feast we will be celebrating next Sunday (June 4). When the Father took Jesus into heaven, He also made special provisions for after His departure: He would send the Holy Spirit. As related in St. Luke's Gospel, Jesus promised His disciples that they would be **"clothed with power from on high."**

Secondly, the Ascension marks the end of Jesus' earthly work of redemption; i.e. Jesus stopped appearing to His disciples and was no longer with them in a physical sense. But it did not mean that His mission had come to an end. In Sunday's Scripture Readings, we hear that immediately before His Ascension, Jesus entrusted His mission to the disciples: **"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."** (Acts 1:8)

The same mission is now ours; we are now the witnesses, both as individuals and as a community of believers. The saving work begun by Jesus is now to be continued by the Church through us. Jesus is present in the Church in a different manner: He is the invisible leader of a visible Church. From Ascension onward the physical presence of Christ becomes sacramental, so that Christ can always be with us in the signs embodied by the Sacraments – Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders and the Anointing of the Sick. In these Sacraments we are allowed to experience the presence of Christ while we are still on earth.

Thirdly, Ascension can also be seen as Jesus parting from His disciples. In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we read about the farewell scenario and that intimate moment of separation when He finally disappeared in the sky. This could have been a sad moment for the disciples; but Jesus fills them with joy through His parting gifts: the gift of understanding, so that they could fully comprehend the Scripture; the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit; and a loving final blessing, with the promise that He would never abandon them and will be with them till the end of times.



➔ In the same reading from Acts, St. Luke quotes what appear to be angels. They said: **"Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven."** (Acts 1:11)



In that farewell scenario, the disciples were also given the glimpse and assurance of Christ's second and final coming.

This belief in the after-life is what we hear in St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians: **"May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory... and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe..."** (Eph 1:18,19) What a beautiful prayer this is, reminding us that God has great plans for us.

St. Paul makes this more explicit by telling us that God the Father has Jesus seated at His right hand in the heavens. To be seated at God's right hand is a Hebrew idiom for sharing power with God. This is another way of saying that the Father has made Jesus Lord of heaven and earth. This is what we really celebrate on the feast of the Ascension.

St. Paul further explains that Christ lives, but that we have become His earthly body and that we now need to become Christ for others. Once He left earth He gave us His Spirit so that we could carry on His work.

The Gospel Reading from St. Matthew, known in tradition as 'the great commission,' shows Jesus sending His followers out to preach and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The scope of the mission was universal. They were sent to 'all nations,' not only to Israel. At the opening of the passage, Jesus appears as Lord of the Universe. The very sight of Him dispelled the last lingering doubts His followers had. He spoke in regal fashion when He issued His command, and yet His pledge to remain with them always affirms the intimacy the disciples had with the Lord. **"I am with you always, until the end of the age."** (Mt 28:20b)

To conclude, the feast of the Ascension of the Lord is the hope of our glorification and provides the hope of meeting our Lord in heaven. It is a reminder of our salvation,

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# COUNSELS

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a reminder that our true home is in heaven. So, today, we are challenged to look beyond this world to the destiny which we are to share with Christ. Thus, this world can only be a place of temporary refuge; a world of passage and not a world of permanence. But, we are sometimes caught by the assumption that this is the only life there is. Let us strive to overcome this short-sightedness of ours.

Direction: Be a good shepherd to others by word and deed.

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## BLD Newark welcomes ME 48 (from page 1)

The class was joined by 3 in-filling couples: Denny and Marichelle Dizon, Gerry and Marie Somera, and Raul and Joy Wong.

The Spirit-filled and fruitful weekend was sponsored by the wonderful, hard-working class of ME 47, led by their class shepherds, Manny and Nette Manguiat. ME 47 was lovingly supported by countless community members from our beloved DSL and DCS, as well as the Marriage Life Apostolate, Praise, Liturgical, Intercessory, Witness Development, Word, Teaching, Mark 10, John 6, Pastoral, Singles, and Solo Parents ministries, just to name a few.

Overwhelming joy filled the air as the newest members of our community basked in the company of their BLD Newark brethren. Let us rejoice for God has graced our community once again with a beautiful harvest!

**“Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; sing of His glorious name; give Him glorious praise.” Ps 66:2**

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### Pastoral Ministry holds Jeremiah Healing Prayer Service

After Worship last Friday, the Pastoral and Word Ministries jointly conducted a Jeremiah Healing Prayer Service for six BLD members (from Word and friends from other ministries) currently facing major health issues. We invite everyone to continue praying for their speedy return to good health, as well as for other BLD members, family and friends in need of physical and spiritual healing.



The Pastoral Ministry also wishes to announce that they are making themselves available to provide this service to all interested BLD ministries and encounter groups. For more information, please contact the Pastoral Ministry Coordinators, Emil/Baby Canlas.

# LORD'S PROVISION

Previous Week's

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 1,196	\$ 27,126
Love Offerings	\$ 939	\$ 25,453
Mission Collections	\$ 64	\$ 2,811

Financial details are available to all members through [treasury@bldnewark.com](mailto:treasury@bldnewark.com)  
Thank you for your continued support!

## A Stewardship Prayer

- from the Franciscans at St. Anthony's Shrine, Boston, MA

*Receive my offering O Lord. It is not charity because You are not a beggar. It is not a contribution because You have no need for it. It is not leftovers because You want more than that.*

*My gift O Lord, represents my gratitude, my love...*

*...for whatever I have, it is because You have given it to me.*

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### Teaching Calendar

Teachings for Saturday, **June 17, 2017** - 1 to 6 pm:  
 - Healing and Deliverance (LSS 1-45)  
 - Encounter with Jesus: Luke / John (LSS 1-46B)  
 - New Creation Realities / Growth in Prayer (LSS 47)

June 16 -18, 2017  
 Graymoor Spiritual Life Center  
 Garrison, NY 10524

#### Singles Encounter #37

*Come all you who are thirsty...*  
 Please contact: Jutt Bustos  
 Lita Alfaro

June 23-25, 2017  
 Days Hotel of East Brunswick  
 195 Route 18 S  
 East Brunswick, NJ 08816

#### Solo Parents Encounter #19

*"Jesus is calling..."*  
 Please contact: Cherry and Reuben Vibar

July 7-9, 2017  
 Pine Hill, PA (TBC)

#### Youth Encounter #23

*"Come and Follow Me..."*  
 Please contact: [dyc@bldnewark.com](mailto:dyc@bldnewark.com)

July 14-16, 2017  
 Malvern Retreat House  
 315 South Warren Avenue  
 Malvern, PA 19355

#### Family Encounter #24

*Your family is your first church...*  
 Please contact: Willy and Amor Ferrer  
 Noel and Gale Deleon

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Jun 2	Management
		Jun 9	Mission
		Jun 16	Pastoral
		Jun 23	Evangelization