



COVENANT NEWS

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Pope: Bringing Joy to a Gloomy World Is Act of Mercy

JUNE 16, 2016 KATHLEEN NAAB (<https://zenit.org/articles>)

Praises 'artisans' of celebration, of wonder, of the beautiful, and encourages them to be evangelizers who transmit love of God.

Pope Francis says that bringing beauty and joy to a sometimes gloomy and sad world is also an act of mercy.

The Pope affirmed this today when he gave a brief address for the Jubilee to itinerant artists — from puppeteers and street musicians to open-air painters and circus performers.

The Holy Father told the musicians and performers that they are “‘artisans’ of celebration, of wonder, of the beautiful.”

“With these qualities you enrich the society of the whole world,” he said, adding: “You do so through exhibitions that have the capacity to elevate the spirit, to show the audacity of particularly demanding exercises, to fascinate with the wonder of the beautiful and of proposing occasions of healthy entertainment.”

The Pope said the artists and performers are in fact a “special resource” in evangelization: “With your continuous moving, you can bring to all the love of God, His embrace and His mercy. You can be an itinerant Christian community, witnesses of Christ who is always on the way to encounter those who are most distant.”

The Holy Father also congratulated them for various initiatives in the Year of Mercy to make their entertainment programs available to the poor, prisoners, and other needy groups. “This too is mercy: to sow beauty and joy in a world that at times is gloomy and sad,” he said.

The Pontiff also recognized the difficulties these groups have in participating in parish life. “Therefore, I invite you to take care

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COUNSELS THE SUMMONS

THEME: The spoken word of God empowers us to be committed and steadfast in following Christ.

WORD: 1 Kgs 19:16b, 19-21 ~ Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11 ~ Gal 5:1, 13-18 ~ Lk 9:51-62

ORDER: “...*Follow me... Go and proclaim the kingdom of God.*” (Luke 9:59-60)

REFLECTION:

James and John, sons of Zebedee did not get the nickname of “Sons of Thunder” for no reason. They were vindictive, as they demanded Jesus to destroy an unwelcoming village. Ambitious and short-tempered they were, yet, they left us a lasting legacy of what it is to be a disciple of Christ. John became the Apostle of love and James became the first martyr amongst the Apostles.

Three more unnamed disciples in the Gospel reading openly expressed to Jesus their desire to be with Him. “*I will follow You, wherever You go!*” (Luke 9:57) What is not clear in the Scripture are their intentions of following Jesus. We can only guess that like many of us, we follow the strong and the powerful, just as they witnessed Jesus perform miracles after miracles, including giving back life to the dead and quieting a storm to obey. Had they known the scandal on the Cross, where would those followers be? They disappeared at the time of His Passion and Death. Even Peter disdained the idea of Jesus dying on the cross. “*No such thing shall ever happen to you.*” (Matthew 16:22), because of which he got the strongest response from Jesus, “*Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.*” (Matthew 16:23). Feeling unworthy, Peter chose to die on the cross upside-down.

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Promise of the Week

“Live by the spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16)

Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!

I Will Bring About The Restoration Of My People

“On that day I will raise up the fallen hut of David, ... wall up its breaches, raise up its ruins, and rebuild as in the days of old, ... I will bring about the restoration of my people Israel; ... never again shall they be plucked from the land I have given them - say the LORD, your God.” (Amos 9:11,15)

In the beginning verses of Chapter 9 of the Book of Amos (verses 1-10), the Hebrew prophet of divine judgment points to the destruction of the sinful kingdom off the face of the earth. Symbolized by the destruction of probably the temple Bethel, he connotes no escape from God’s punishment. However, in common with the other prophets, Amos knew that divine punishment is never completely destructive; it is part of the hidden plan of God to bring salvation to mankind.

Against a backdrop of Divine Judgment, Amos sends a message of hope that as long as humanity abides in God, there is always the dawn, after the darkest night. On Judgment Day, the Lord will bring about the restoration of Israel. He will gather together the children of God that were scattered. The Gentile peoples, who shall be converted to the Lord; that is, conquered by Him shall bear His name.

As children of God, we are to seek the kingdom of God because it is life, hope and truth. Surrendering to God is the only absolute power God’s creation possesses. The faithful share and witness among themselves the good experiences in life so that all may ascribe with the Lord.

The foregoing Scripture passages send me contemplating on a very recent life-restoring situation. July 10, 2013, “my day of infamy” - my life-style shifted 180 degrees on my dermatologist’s diagnosis concerning my health condition: an autoimmune disorder, characterized by tense blistering eruptions on my skin’s surface. Because it is life threatening, it was difficult for me to think of joy in life in the face of my predicament. My life got interrupted on December 24, 2015; I was hospitalized seven days and almost faced death because of extreme physical weakness.

I now live my 4th life and finally desire to grant Jesus first priority over everything and to console with other faithful for we shall always be with the Lord, as it is always His will to be one with us.

How I Long for This Day

Early in the fourth chapter of 2 Timothy, Paul reminds Timothy of certain congregants who seek a smooth and gratifying religion. Led by the confusion of their own egos they are dual-minded, and as such seek the easy way of following many masters, a slave to their self-gratifying instincts. In essence, serving their egos but not serving Christ. They will wander as the Jews did in the desert and get caught in man-made myths and manufactured superstitions. Paul reminds Timothy to remain calm, cool and steady. Unlike the misguided congregants, he is told to suffer every hardship that comes his way, unflinchingly to pick up his cross and walk through the ministry of being an Evangelist. Don’t play the smooth game of cheap popularity; which is itself favoritism and a corruption in the eyes of God. Cheap popularity brings ruination in the end, and with the stench of corruption (a good example would be the politics in Washington, DC).

Paul then becomes prophetic. He says his life will end in sacrifice, just like his Savior’s did. What’s more, his life is about to be poured out as a drink offering, and that soon his body will release him to go free. He states that all the trials he had gone through: stonings, shipwrecks, beatings, and imprisonment did not deter him in his service to the community. He says, ***“I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race.”*** He has kept the faith! The only thing that’s left is what is not seen. But his faith assures him, that what is left, is the crown of righteousness. Much like the long suffering Job, he writes to the Righteous Judge, the Lord, Who will award him and recompense him on the Great Day. But not only himself but all who have loved, yearned for, and welcomed His return. In verse 17 Paul states that it was only God Who strengthened him, so that the Gospel could be proclaimed, making sure all the Gentiles could hear it. He was delivered from the jaws of Satan, who is ***“prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour.”*** (1 Peter 5:8)

Paul lived an extraordinary life, and encountered many near death experiences. He travelled more than the other apostles, and wrote more instructions. His final affirmation is yet another message of faith. If the Lord brought me this far, He will draw me to Himself, and bring me safely into His kingdom. We are reminded of Philippians 1:6 where he says, ***“I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*** Amen.

Faithless Believer

In Psalm 50:16-19 it says: ***“But to the wicked God says: “Why do you recite my commandments and profess my covenant with your mouth? You hate discipline; you cast my words behind you! If you see a thief, you run with him; with adulterers you throw in your lot. You give your mouth free rein for evil; you yoke your tongue to deceit.”*** In these verses God rebukes the hypocritical worshipper or those people who give superficial lip service to God while their hearts are actually opposing God – hence a “faithless believer.”

Psalm 50 is a covenant lawsuit or indictment against the hypocritical worshippers among the Jews. (NAB footnotes) God requires the believer to do justice and love goodness, and to walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). The sacrifice God really wants is the sacrifice of praise accompanied by genuine obedience. In Romans 2:17-23 the rebuke is directed to teachers specifically those Jews who rely on the law, and boast of God, and call themselves trainers of the foolish and teachers of the simple, who teach others, but who fail to teach themselves.

As modern day Catholic Christian witnesses, we are called to live in the Truth. When we follow the way of the “faithless believer,” we violate the Eighth Commandment: ***“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”*** (Exodus 20:16) This commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. Our vocation is to bear witness to our God Who is the Truth and wills the Truth. Jesus Christ revealed the whole of God’s Truth when He came as the *Light Of The World*, ***“full of grace and truth”***. (John 1:14). The Father sent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth in Jesus’s Name to lead us ***“to all truth.”*** (John 16:13)

We offend God when we refuse to live in moral uprightness or become unfaithful to God’s commandments. Truth as uprightness in human action and speech is called truthfulness, sincerity, or candor. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists of showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and guarded against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy (CCC 2468). ***“You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You who detest idols, do you rob temples? You who boast of the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?”*** (Romans 2:21-23). The “faithless believer” would offend God in these ways. We need to take

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COUNSELS (from page 1)

Jesus laid out some specific demands to the 3 disciples. “Before you get too excited of being my disciple, let me first tell you something. You know ***‘foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but ‘the Son of Man, has nowhere to rest his head.’*** (Luke 9:58) Are you sure you want to follow me? Please consider what it takes. I am homeless, this world is not My home. Life with Me can get difficult. They hated Me; they will hate you. Are you willing to pick up your cross? I need to know if you are 100 percent with Me. Sharing your life, means sharing with My sufferings and rejections.”

The other two disciples wanted to follow Christ too, but with pre-set conditions. ***“Let me go first and bury my father.”*** (Luke 9:59) ***“Let me first say farewell to my family.”*** (Luke 9:61)

Jesus’ familiarity with His disciples’ excuses shows when He said to them ***“Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”*** (Luke 9:60)

Our duties to our family are life-defining. That is God’s 5th commandment. To bury the dead is our sacred obligation. What is Jesus really up to? “I am not against family. I created them and loved them first before you loved them. What I want of you is a relationship. Can you put Me, so far, above anyone? Can you make Me first in your life? I understand you have conflicting duties and social obligations, but can you allow Me to participate in your decision-making or at least be a part of your conversations? Do you consider Me a treasure more than wealth and can you sell everything for Me?

And Jesus went further, ***“No one, who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.”*** (Luke 9:62)

Discipleship requires undivided loyalty to our Lord. Can we detach ourselves from the lures of this world? Can we burn the bridges behind us and break up with the ties of our old selves? Can we fix our eyes on Jesus and hold fast to our confession that we want to follow Him?



The Disciples’ responses to the demands of Christ remain unknown, but the same demands are asked of us. Today, whether out of curiosity, coercion or discipleship,

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COUNSELS *(from page 3)*

or for whatever reasons, we joined this community and followed Him to His House. This is where He speaks to us, feeds us and renews us.

He used this community to lavish us with love, to hold our unsteady hands, to teach us lessons of what it takes to become a follower of Christ. BLD has been instrumental in transforming us from believers to disciples, from lambs to shepherds, from living an apprenticed life to one of servanthood.

True to Jesus' assurance, as we serve, we are able to rise when we fall; though we may be persecuted and rejected, we are never abandoned; and when we are tested to our limits, we are never crushed. Suffering builds endurance, character and hope that will not disappoint.

You embraced the wisdom of the cross, a life of self-giving and love. The Son of Man, Who has no place to rest, found a home amongst us. Our broken hearts have become His dwelling and resting place; hence, our name, Bukas-Loob sa Diyos.

Directions:

1. Remain faithful and live up to our committed and covenantal pledges to love and serve God.
2. Reach out to the inactive members of our community.

Pope: Bringing Joy ... *(from page 1)*

of your faith," he said. "Take every occasion to approach the Sacraments. Transmit to your children the love of God and of neighbor."

He also called on particular Churches to be attentive to the needs of these and similarly mobile groups.

"As you know, the Church is concerned about the problems that accompany your itinerant life, and she wishes to help you to eliminate the prejudices that sometimes keep you somewhat on the margins," he assured. "May you always be able to carry out your work with love and care, confident that God accompanies you with His Providence, generous in the works of charity, willing to offer the resources and the genius of your arts and of your professions."

Faithless ... *(from page 3)*

lessons from the past so as not to repeat the same mistakes. Just as God did not even spare the angels when they sinned, but condemned them to the chains of Tartarus (hell) and handed them over to be kept for judgment (2 Peter 2:4), so will the wicked, when they do not repent, suffer the same judgment.

Thus in our lives as regular, committed and covenanted disciples of the Lord in BLD, and as members of the Catholic Church, we are commanded to "live in the truth," that is, in the simplicity of a life in conformity with the Lord's example, abiding in His truth. *"If we say, 'We have fellowship with him,' while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth."* (1 John 1:6)

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DLC MEETING / PASTORAL HOUR

MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2016 @7:30 PM

Divine Mercy Parish Library

Youth Encounter #23

"Come and Follow Me..."

Please contact: Charlie & Weng Larobis

July 8-10, 2016

Ron & Dina Pangilinan

Pine Hill, PA (TBC)

Oliver & Marissa Rangel

FAMILY ENCOUNTER 23

When: July 15, 16, 17, 2016
Where: Malvern Retreat House
Malvern, PA

Submit Applications to:

Mat & Precy Yap (973) 769-1426
June & Edith Buhain (973) 342-3276
Butch & Malou Morales
(908) 477-5125



Community Day



August 13, 2016
Johnson Park, Grove 4
Piscataway, NJ

LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithe/Love Offering	\$ 2,659	\$ 65,533
Mission Collections	\$ 78	\$ 4,578

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

Thank you for your continued support!

Stewardship - It's a way of life!

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		July 01	Evangelization
		July 08	Formation
		July 15	Management
		July 22	Mission

Be a Living Word

Please note that a copy of this Covenant News is also available online at www.BLDNEWARK.org