



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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NEWS

USCCB President says the Gospel serves the Common Good, not political agendas

October 18, 2016 ~ The following is a statement from Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

(source: RCAN.org)

WASHINGTON—At this important time in our nation's history, I encourage all of us to take a moment to reflect on one of the founding principles of our republic – the freedom of religion. It ensures the right of faith communities to preserve the integrity of their beliefs and proper self-governance. There have been recent reports that some may have sought to interfere in the internal life of the Church for short-term political gain. If true, this is troubling both for the well-being of faith communities and the good of our country.

In our faith and our Church, Christ has given us a precious gift. As Catholics, we hold onto our beliefs because they come to us from Jesus, not a consensus forged by contemporary norms. The Gospel is offered for all people for all times. It invites us to love our neighbor and live in peace with one another. For this reason, the truth of Christ is never outdated or inaccessible. The Gospel serves the common good, not political agendas.

I encourage my fellow Catholic brothers and sisters, and all people of good will, to be good stewards of the precious rights we have inherited as citizens of this country. We also expect public officials to respect the rights of people to live their faith without interference from the state. When faith communities lose this right, the very idea of what it means to be an American is lost.

Politicians, their staffs and volunteers should reflect our best aspirations as citizens. Too much of our current political discourse has demeaned women and marginalized people of faith. This must change. True to the best hopes of our founding fathers, we are confident that we can and will do better as a nation.

COUNSELS

Reparation in Mercy

THEME: We bear the mark of a true servant of Christ when we repent of our wrongdoing and make reparation.

WORD: Wis 11:22-12:2 ~ Ps 145:1-2,8-9,10-11,13,14
2 Thes 1:11-2:2 ~ Lk 19:1-10

ORDER: *Abandon your wickedness and believe in the Lord.*

REFLECTION:

“Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.” (Lk 19:9-10)

In the Lord Jesus' ministry while on earth, this is probably the only one of His encounters where He invited Himself to a sinner's house. Jesus saw Zacchaeus' heart and his hope for mercy. Like all true seekers of God, Zacchaeus got more than he hoped for - his conversion which led him to follow Jesus.

In those days, as in our era, Zacchaeus, by accepting the job of collecting taxes for Rome, like any other tax collector, had to love money enough to defy the hatred of his people. He was an outcast, lonely, and although he had become wealthy, he wasn't happy. His desire to at least see Jesus must have been born out of desperation. It was desperation that led him to find Jesus amid the crowd.

It was widely known that tax collectors manipulated accounts to steal, cheat and take what they could from the people. He probably would have expected that many in the crowd, upon seeing him in the streets, would take the opportunity to get back at him and give him a kick, a push or a shove, and render him bruised.

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Promise of the Week

The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all His works. (cf Ps 145:9)

IN THE HAND OF GOD

(Of Lilies and Butterflies)

“The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them... they are in peace.” (Wis. 3:1,3)

When my eldest child Luigi passed away one early morning in June of 2005, my initial reaction was utter disbelief, *“Not my Luigi who was so kind, gentle, thoughtful, a giving person and very spiritual!”* The excruciating pain of his loss made me wish I had died with him. Through the help and prayers of relatives, friends and BLD USA and Manila, I found the strength to rise from my mourning and do what I had to do for my son.

At exactly 12AM of the next day I received a text that read, *“Only God knows where Luigi is,”* coming from a certain “Archangel.” But who sent it? Could it be Luigi’s guardian angel? I felt peace, and deep in my heart I felt God’s consolation and assurance that Luigi was in His hand. Throughout the six day wake, that message comforted me greatly.

The following day, a yellow butterfly was flying around in the room, and it settled on the wall near the head of the casket where it remained until interment. In my heart I knew it was Luigi’s soul or his guardian angel who sent me the text message. After the cremation rites on the 6th day, the saved text message in my cell phone was gone. Like the butterfly it vanished mysteriously as if its purpose had been served. I researched the meaning of the visiting butterfly and learned that a yellow butterfly is a symbol of the soul, of new life, of rebirth, and that a departed soul may utilize a butterfly to send a message to the bereaved that he or she is safe, happy and in the hands of angels.

Still, I was in some denial. How could this have happened to my son? Why was he taken so young, when he was about to fulfill his dream, after he had graduated with his Film/TV Production degree at NYU, of improving the quality of Filipino films? Why, when a few months earlier, he had just won Best Director for his first TV prime time documentary-drama series? Why would it happen to our family whom God had called to help start BLD USA, and to minister to families in North America? Why my very loving and spiritual son? In my mind, there were many questions left unanswered, but being the head of my family, I kept my grief inside me so that we could all move on.

Within six months, answers to my questions began

to unfold. My wife revealed to me that he had a calling to the priesthood but that he suppressed it because of his goal to succeed in the entertainment world, and to make quality films that would make the country compete internationally. My daughter, who was then in college in New York, also told us that weeks before Luigi died he had asked her this question: “If God tells you He would take your life today, would you say yes?” It enlightened me about the significance of Luigi’s reply whenever I texted him asking how he was; he would reply, “I am ok Pa ... everyday I spend two hours before the Blessed Sacrament despite my busy shooting schedule.”

In his quest for an answer, my other son was led by the Holy Spirit to the Truth of God in the Book of Wisdom (4:10-11,13-14):

“The one who pleased God was loved, living among sinners, was transported - snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul... Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the LORD, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness.”

I truly believe that the Lord called my son in His own time and purpose. That was God’s plan and God does not delay; His timing is perfect. He took him to save him from the corrupted world of the entertainment industry. Luigi’s career is not in the entertainment world but in the heavens with Him. Would Luigi still be alive if he responded to his calling to the priesthood? Perhaps...but I realize that God had higher plans for him, and I accept His will. Thank you Lord for having chosen us, unworthy as we are, to be the earthy family of one of your beautiful creations!

And I know Luigi is still very alive and happy in the Hand of God right now. He is at PEACE – that is the truth of God’s Word! In fact, he looked forward to it as his goal as was written in his personal memoirs, convincing me that Luigi might have had a foretaste of what life with God is like in His heavenly abode. These excerpts are now inscribed in his crypt in a Makati columbarium:

***I have to focus on God and His Kingdom beyond.
This life will pass and it’s temporary. Age is upon us.
This life will fade.
Forgetful of myself, my head reclined on my Beloved,
the world was gone and all my cares at rest.
Forgotten all my grief among the lilies...***



A Father's Peace

"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them" Wisdom 3:1.

I am not a learned man. I do not seek to find answers to questions that are far too sublime for me; but when my son died accidentally, I needed to know things to settle my grieving heart. I had to find answers.

The first reading for All Souls' Day (Wednesday, Nov 2) was the scripture read during my son's wake, and it says so much to me. It spoke to my heart because it was the very situation that I felt had transpired. I was concerned about my son's reputation, our name, but most importantly, my son's SOUL. I had to know. **"They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction."** (Wis 3:2-3) These words gave me comfort and strength, but I wasn't sure. Was my son in a state of grace when he passed away? Did he have mortal sin? Was there foul play, and if so, did he have enemies?

My son left New Jersey to find his own path in 2012, and I had not seen him in 3 years. We communicated only via texting, e-mail and facetime, so I did not know much of what he had been up to. But it was such a blessing when so many of his new friends, distressed by his disappearance, helped to look for him. To me, this was an indication that he was indeed a good man.

Later on, when we ourselves arrived to help find him, the overwhelming love we felt from his many friends confirmed my thoughts. Yet, I wanted more confirmation, not just my own conclusions. Since I was still unsure of his entry into eternal life, to alleviate my apprehensions, I had to ask several priests; not one, not two, but three priests. All of them had answers that gave me comfort. The first was that God looks at the overall life of a person, not just at the one time incident of his death. And that God is a loving God. The second priest said that God gave us free will to choose, and as long as our minds are free, we will inherit eternal life. And, the last one quoted these very verses from the Book of Wisdom.

I miss my son because he is my son and I love him. I still have his last voicemail message, when he greeted me on my birthday for the last time.

He had no enemies. He was a good man. He was able to find himself. In his new city, he had served by volunteering and leading many to serve also. →→

COUNSELS

(from page 1)

Being the chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was considered despicable by his fellow countrymen because his living was to impose tributes for the Romans. That Jesus would want to befriend him and then have dinner in his home must have been very repulsive to them, and was something they did not expect and probably could not imagine.

So delighted was Zacchaeus at the Lord's visit that he promised to give half his belongings to the poor. And that if he had extorted anything from anyone, he would pay them back fourfold. This was something Zacchaeus ordinarily would not have done, but he was being transformed as he was deeply touched by Jesus' kindness. He responded at that moment of truth, understanding that God's love was bigger than anything in this world, and that he could now let go of his wealth and accumulated possessions. He changed his ways and was himself, becoming merciful. Zacchaeus, after having met Jesus, experienced a total detachment from his earthly possessions.

Numbers 5:5-7 reads **"If a man or a woman commits any offense against another person, thus breaking faith with the Lord, and thereby becomes guilty, that person shall confess the wrong that has been done, make restitution in full, and in addition give one fifth of its value to the one that has been wronged."** While Zacchaeus was only required to add 20% on top of the amount that he had defrauded others by, he committed himself to adding 300% more.

Zacchaeus was a sinner. By the grace of God, he repented and welcomed Jesus into his home. Through Christ, he was saved.

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→ He encouraged others to think and to be better persons. His upbringing, exemplified by his role as a facilitator for BLD Youth and Singles, was so evident in the way he thought and led. I am so thankful to God, especially for BLD.



I know for sure he is with God. I am at peace.

"Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself."

(Wis 3:5-6)

BLD was God's divine tool for my son. It gave him the right direction; and I know that God is always in control.

COUNSELS

(from page 3)

“Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners.” (Lk 5:31-32)

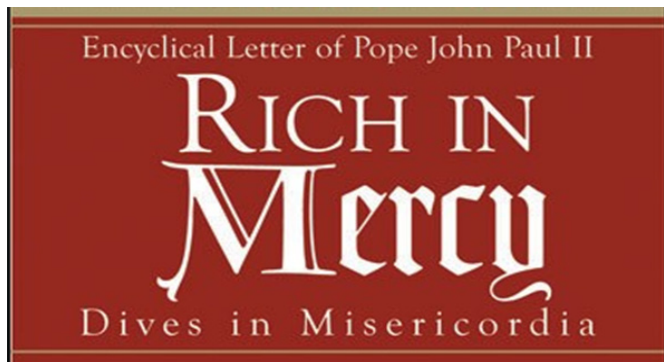
Jesus, our Lord, recognizing his conversion, promised that very day, that salvation had come to Zacchaeus’ house.

Imagine Jesus saying to us now, "I must stay at your house today." How would we react to such a request? Would our home be ready? Would we be personally ready to welcome Jesus in our home?

He invited Himself into our hearts and we have welcomed Him. For us who have received God in our hearts, let us be thankful to the Lord for coming to us. For those who have not received the Lord God, or have lost His Sacred Presence in their hearts, it is never too late to repent, to welcome the Lord Jesus, and to ask Him to rule once again. For the Lord is a God of love, grace and mercy.

When we look upon Jesus’ mercy towards Zacchaeus, which he reciprocated by his works of mercy to others, we can see that we should be merciful as our Father God is merciful. **“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”** (Mt 5:7) In this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, as proclaimed by Pope Francis, we are asked to rediscover the richness encompassed by spiritual and corporal works of mercy, works which we are all called to do for others.

“Man attains to the merciful love of God, His mercy, to the extent that he himself is interiorly transformed in the Spirit of that love towards his neighbor.” – St. John Paul II, from section 14 of the:



Special Announcement:

Please return unsold **Merci-Mercy Raffle** tickets to the BLD fundraising sponsoring class, ME 39. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

**Deadline for returns is by next week,
Friday, November 4, 2016**

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

LORD'S PROVISION

PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes & Love Offerings	\$ 2,410	\$ 113,649
Mission Collections	\$ 140	\$ 6,247
Fundraising Raffle	\$ 40	\$ 42,720

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

Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**SATURDAY, NOV 5, 2016 - WASHING OF THE FEET /
AGONY IN THE GARDEN RETREAT**

Marriage Encounter # 47

November 18-20, 2016

Hotel Executive Suites

30 Minue Street, Carteret, NJ

Contact email: MLA@bldnewark.com



**Feast of Christ the King
Sunday, November 20, 2016
Conclusion of the Extraordinary
Jubilee Year of Mercy**



THE POWER OF ONE



Medical Mission

February 13-16, 2017

Maasin, Leyte, Philippines

Contact Persons: Ramon/Leonie Mariazeta

rmariazeta@msn.com / lmariazeta@msn.com

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Nov 4	Mission
		Nov 11	Pastoral
		Nov 18	Evangelization
		Nov 25	Formation

