



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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NEWS

BLD Medical Missionaries serve many in Leyte



“Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.” (Mt 25:34-36)

As we close another chapter in our mission of love and compassion for the needy, we express our gratitude to the Lord for this blessed opportunity to care for others, especially those in desperate need of medical and dental services in Maasin, Southern Leyte, and its neighboring towns.

As in previous Medical Missions, this was the result of the selfless love our missionaries and local volunteers shared with the thousands of patients. It was love for others that brought volunteers to work as one body to do His will and be witnesses of His love for all. This mission was not only about providing medical care to help others physically, but also about giving them hope that God had not abandoned them.

May we always remain inspired by His word in Matthew 25:40 – ***“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”***

COUNSELS

The Holy Season of Lent

THEME: We overcome temptation when we fast, pray and stand on God’s Word.

WORD : Gn 2:7-9;3:1-7 / Ps 51:3-4,5-6,12-13,17
Rom 5:12-19 / Mt 4:1-11

ORDER: ***“Listen to him.”*** (Mt 17:5b)

REFLECTION:

The following is a re-print of a “Fr. Paul Speaks” article that he had written for the CN 10 years ago. It’s a timeless message about Lent:

The primary purpose for this holy season of Lent is a preparation for the most important feast of Easter. Historically it was a very strict and serious time for two categories of the Christian faithful: for public sinners who had returned to the Church and for the catechumens. Public sinners were “excommunicated”, not allowed to receive Holy Communion or even to be in “communion” with the faithful. He or she was covered with ashes as a sign of guilt and was made to stand at the entrance of the Church begging for prayers. I am sure that in our present easy going style of forgiveness very few would opt for this kind of reconciliation. The ashes we now wear are a public admission that we are sinners in need of forgiveness. Finally, on Holy Thursday in Holy Week, absolution was granted by the bishop or priest, and the penitent was allowed back into Church and admitted once again to Holy Communion.

Secondarily Lent was also a time of final preparation for the catechumens preparing for the sacrament of Baptism on Holy Saturday evening.

....Continued on page 3

Promise of the Week

“...through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous.” (Rom 5:19b)

Pope's Ash Wednesday Homily: 'Return to the Lord With All Your Heart'

Says Lent Calls Us to Be Free, Not Slaves, and to Reflect Where We Would Be If God Had Closed His Door to Us

MARCH 1, 2017 / DEBORAH CASTELLANO / Zenit.org

“Return to me with all your heart... return to the Lord”

Pope Francis repeated this advice during tonight's Mass at Rome's Basilica of Saint Sabina, as he recalled how the prophet Joel makes this plea to the people in the Lord's name.

This afternoon –Ash Wednesday, the day marking the beginning of Lent – an assembly of prayer took place in the form of the Roman “Stations,” presided over by Pope Francis. At 4:30 pm, in the church of Saint Anselm all' Aventino, a moment of prayer was held followed by a penitential procession to the Basilica of Saint Sabina.

Taking part in the procession were cardinals, archbishops, bishops, Benedictine monks of Saint Anselm, Dominican fathers of Saint Sabina and some faithful. At the end of the procession, Pope Francis presided over the celebration of the Eucharist in the Basilica of Saint Sabina, with the rite of the blessing and imposition of ashes.

In his homily, during the Mass at St. Sabina, the Pope noted that we, today, are to take up this appeal, to return to the merciful heart of the Father.

“In this season of grace that begins today, we once again turn our eyes to his mercy,” the Pope noted, adding, “Lent is a path: it leads to the triumph of mercy over all that would crush us or reduce us to something unworthy of our dignity as God's children.”

No Longer to Be Slaves, But Free

“Lent,” Francis noted, “is the road leading from slavery to freedom, from suffering to joy, from death to life.”

The mark of the ashes with which we set out, the Pontiff highlighted, reminds us of our origin, namely that we were taken from the earth, we are made of dust. However, he stressed, we are dust in the loving hands of God, Who has breathed His spirit of life upon each one of us, and still wants to do so.

He wants to keep giving us that breath of life that saves us from every other type of breath: the stifling asphyxia brought on by our selfishness, the stifling asphyxia generated by petty ambition and silent indifference – an asphyxia that smothers the spirit, narrows our horizons and slows the beating of our hearts. The breath of God's life saves us from this asphyxia that dampens our faith, cools our charity and strangles every hope.

To experience Lent, the Pope said, is to yearn for this breath of life that our Father unceasingly offers us amid the mire of our history.



→ “The breath of God's life sets us free from the asphyxia that so often we fail to notice, or become so used to that it seems normal, even when its effects are felt. We think it is normal because we have grown so accustomed to breathing air in which hope has dissipated, the air of glumness and resignation, the stifling air of panic and hostility.”

Time to Say No

Lent, the Holy Father also reminded, is the time for saying no.

“No to the spiritual asphyxia born of the pollution caused by indifference, by thinking that other people's lives are not my concern, and by every attempt to trivialize life, especially the lives of those whose flesh is burdened by so much superficiality. Lent means saying no to the toxic pollution of empty and meaningless words, of harsh and hasty criticism, of simplistic analyses that fail to grasp the complexity of problems, especially the problems of those who suffer the most.

“Lent is the time to say no to the asphyxia of a prayer that soothes our conscience, of an almsgiving that leaves us self-satisfied, of a fasting that makes us feel good. Lent is the time to say no to the asphyxia born of relationships that exclude, that try to find God while avoiding the wounds of Christ present in the wounds of his brothers and sisters: in a word, all those forms of spirituality that reduce the faith to a ghetto culture, a culture of exclusion.”

Time to Remember

Lent, he added, is a time for remembering, and asking ourselves what we would be if God had closed his doors to us.

“What would we be without his mercy that never tires of forgiving us and always gives us the chance to begin anew? Lent is the time to ask ourselves where we would be without the help of so many people who in a thousand quiet ways have stretched out their hands and in very concrete ways given us hope and enabled us to make a new beginning?”

Lent, the Pope noted, is the time to start breathing again, to open our hearts to the breath of the One capable of turning our dust into humanity.

“It is a time to set aside everything that isolates us, encloses us and paralyzes us.”

Pope Francis concluded, noting, “Lent is a time of compassion, when, with the Psalmist, we can say: Restore to us the joy of your salvation, sustain in us a willing spirit”, so that by our lives we may declare your praise (cf. Ps 51:12.15), and our dust – by the power of your breath of life – may become a ‘dust of love.’”

Cardinal Tobin echoes Pope Francis

March 1, 2017 – At mid-day today, Joseph Cardinal Tobin celebrated the Mass for Ash Wednesday at the St. Patrick Pro Cathedral in Newark. In his homily, he addressed themes similar to those that our Holy Father had touched on at the Mass he presided over at Rome’s Basilica of St. Sabina to start the season of Lent.



Pictured above: Newark Archbishop, Joseph Cardinal Tobin, distributing ashes during the Mass, and afterwards, greeting the faithful outside of St. Patrick's Pro Cathedral.

“Return to me” (from the Old Testament book of Joel, 2:12) was the phrase from the day’s first reading that was prominent.

To drive home his own important point, Cardinal Tobin started his homily talking about the conversation between two fictional characters from the story of Alice in Wonderland. At the start of her journey, Alice had asked the Cheshire Cat which way she should go. When the Cat responded that it depended on where it was that she wanted to go, she timidly responded that she really didn’t care where. So the Cat replied that it then didn’t matter which direction she started with. The Newark Archbishop then pointed out that unlike Alice in the story, our Lenten journey must have a destination. And that part of getting there involves going beyond mere observances this holy season, to actually walking the talk of following Christ.

Many have already likened the Cardinal’s positions as supportive and reflective of our Pontiff’s (this seems to be the case here, given Francis’ recent words about “hypocritical Catholics” that have made it into the news). That similarity now adds an exciting dimension to being a Catholic in the Newark Archdiocese.

Cardinal Tobin’s homily was engaging, excellent and effective. He summarized his message by concluding, that the destination of each Lent must be a return to Jesus, to be ever closer to our Savior. **Always, we must return to Christ.**

COUNSELS

(from page 1)

We still call the liturgy of the Word, the Mass of the catechumens, because the catechumens were dismissed before the Eucharist.

Even though most of us are baptized, Lent is the time to renew our Christian life through prayer and penance. This renewal gets us ready to profess once again our Baptismal vows on Easter Sunday. Even though these two purposes should be uppermost in our minds, Lent can also be a time of “revelation”.

Let us challenge ourselves to go into our minds and hearts to see what kind of “spirit” may be influencing us even subconsciously. We should look for signs of negativity, spiritual laziness, apathy towards holy things, loss of attraction to prayer, heaviness of soul, cynicism, spiritual sadness etc. It is important to add an examination of conscience to our daily prayer routine.

Oftentimes these spiritual attacks “piggy back” on the back of real practical issues that come easily into our lives. They may be areas we are called to deal with, but the subtle spiritual attack can ride into our minds and hearts along with the practicalities of daily living. Ask the Holy Spirit each day to reveal those attacks. Make a daily examination of conscience. We will become aware of them only if we ask the Lord to tell us. Introspection is not enough. Look in with the Holy Spirit to help you discover not only sin, but any demonic attack that may be affecting you? As we said on Ash Wednesday: Repent and believe the Good News.

Directions:

- Be reconciled with God by going to confession regularly, especially during the Lenten season.
- Deepen your faith through prayer, fasting and generous almsgiving.



A Timely Top Ten

I was at a Pauline bookstore last month and a pamphlet they were selling there caught my eye. It was about the “Top Ten Reasons to Come Back to the Catholic Church” (written by Lorene Hanley Duquin for Our Sunday Visitor).

Everyone probably knows other Catholics who no longer partake of the Sacraments, do not attend Mass and aren’t involved in Church activities. Now that we are in the Liturgical season of Lent, perhaps it’s an opportune time to help them return.

Top Ten Reasons to Come Back to the Catholic Church:

10. To find meaning in life
9. Because of childhood memories
8. Because of mistakes made
7. The need to forgive others
6. To be healed
5. To find the fullness of truth and grace
4. To provide children a faith foundation
3. To be part of a community of faith
2. To help others
1. A hunger for the Eucharist

In today’s fast-paced world, it seems that we all try to maximize what we can pack into each hour of everyday. For many, faith suffers from an incorrect cost-benefit analysis of what the best use of our time is. Do we invest it in faith? Or spend it in the other things that life says we could be doing instead?

While there are certain worldly things that we inescapably have to do regardless of our faith, Faith really is an investment that we must actively devote time and effort into, in order to fully realize its rewards. The sooner, the better - because knowing Christ more, happens as soon as one turns to Him, and then, it can infinitely grow from there.

He simplifies and unburdens. He helps us realize mercy, forgiveness and healing. If we welcome Him in, He will be there in the midst of family; He is there in communities of Faith. He encourages us to help others, especially when simply helping ourselves is ultimately pointless. **He provides life its meaning.**

And with the Eucharist, He becomes physically present in the very fibers of our being.

If you have friends, family and loved ones who have wandered away... this Lent, make the effort to bring them back. While we can’t really impose, there is really nothing to be lost in trying.

LORD’S PROVISION

Previous Week’s

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes & Love Offerings	\$ 3,190	\$ 20,686
Mission Collections	\$ 48	\$ 1,545

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

Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

BLD-Newark

1992-2017



Teaching Calendar

Teachings for Saturday, **March 11, 2017** - 1 to 6 pm:
 - Apologetics (LSS 1-43)
 - Prayer Leadership (LSS 1-45)
 - Encounter with Jesus (LSS 1-46B)

LSS # 47

March 31 – April 2, 2017

Contacts: Manny & Nette Manguiat – lexman@hotmail.com,
 Earl & Flo Manguiat - bldnewarklsa@gmail.com

Prodigal Son Retreat



Join us, with **Msgr. Paul Schetelick** leading the Community in reflection and meditation.

Divine Mercy Auditorium
Saturday, April 22, 2017
12:30-6PM

Marriage Encounter # 48

May 19-21, 2017

Hotel Executive Suites
 30 Minue Street, Carteret, NJ
 Contact email: MLA@bldnewark.com

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Mar 10	Formation
		Mar 17	Management
		Mar 24	Mission
		Mar 31	Pastoral