



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 23 Issue 15

Bulletin Edition

April 21, 2017

## NEWS

## COUNSELS

### Pope's URBI ET ORBI Blessing



**With one voice, in every part of the world, we proclaim the great message: "The Lord is truly risen."**

APRIL 16, 2017 / ZENIT STAFF / FRANCIS

*Here is a Vatican translation of the Easter message with the Urbi et Orbi blessing that Pope Francis gave today, Easter Sunday, at noon:*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Happy Easter!

Today, throughout the world, the Church echoes once more the astonishing message of the first disciples: "Jesus is risen!" - "He is truly risen, as he said!"

The ancient feast of Passover, the commemoration of the liberation of the Hebrew people from slavery, here finds fulfilment. By his resurrection, Jesus Christ has set us free from the slavery of sin and death, and has opened before us the way to eternal life.

All of us, when we let ourselves be mastered by sin, lose the right way and end up straying like lost sheep. But God himself, our shepherd, has come in search of us. To save us, he lowered himself even to accepting death on the cross. Today we can proclaim: "The Good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep, and willingly died for his flock, alleluia" (Roman Missal, IV Sunday of Easter, Communion antiphon).

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### Easter Message from Archbishop Angel Lagdameo

**"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"** (Luke 24:5-6)

Easter commemorates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. When the soldiers took him down from the cross and sealed him in a stone tomb, Jesus was truly dead, a fact even his enemies did not dispute. But on the third day after his death, the tomb was empty, and the words of the angels ... Continued on page 2

### Peace Be With You

**THEME:** The glory of God shines through us when the peace of Christ lives in our hearts.

**WORD :** Acts 2:42-47 / Ps 118:2-4,13-15,22-24  
1 Pt 1:3-9 / Jn 20:19-31

**ORDER:** "Receive the Holy Spirit." (Jn 20:22)

**REFLECTION:**

**"Peace be with you. Peace be with you. Peace be with you."** Three times, this was the Lord's greetings to His worried and disheartened disciples when He appeared to them in the Gospel of John (in chapter 20 verses 19-30).

But who could blame them? Just a few days before that, the disciples had seen their faith shaken to the core as they watched their Lord mocked and arrested, scourged at the pillar, tortured on the way to Calvary and then nailed to a cross and die. Even Peter, His most ardent follower denied Him three times. Even the news from Mary Magdalene, that she had seen the Lord did little to remove the fear and doubts from the disciples.

Now, all of that was to change. The Lord had risen from the dead and was now in their midst. The Lord was with them again. **"Peace be with you."**

If the Lord was talking to His disciples today, meaning you and me, He would be saying, *relax, don't worry, don't be afraid; remove all your doubts and fears. I am now with you. Everything will be okay. "Peace be with you."*

This is the message of Easter. Christ is Risen. He is alive. Believe. He is with us and will be with us forever. **"I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live."** (Jn 11:25)

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### Promise of the Week

**"Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."** (Jn 20:29b)

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST

(The Source of Christian Joy)

*“The source of Christian joy is the certainty of being loved by God, loved personally by our Creator, by the one who holds the entire universe in his hands.” - Pope Benedict XVI*

Pope Benedict describes an experience of love - one that goes beyond the limits of human love. **“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.”** (Jn 3:16)

We have to accept our Creator’s invitation and come to the “certainty of being loved by God” that Pope Benedict spoke about. While we may be searching for God, Jesus invites us into His presence and to come into a loving relationship with Him every day.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, our ultimate happiness “consists solely in the contemplation of God,” in communion with the One Who loves us eternally. However, it is extremely difficult to contemplate on God’s presence, and even harder to feel Jesus’ love, in the face of all the noise around us.

We are likely to miss out on God, unless we have the full desire to surrender our lives to Jesus. Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, **“...when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”** (Mt 6:6) This “inner room” is an interior place in our hearts, the deepest part of who we are. It’s a place of quiet, where we can meet the Lord personally.

Contemplate on Jesus even for just ten minutes each day, be humble, be receptive and be open. As you come into communion with Him, He will amaze you as you sense Him filling your heart with love and peace.

This Easter season let us resolve to come into the true meaning of these words, discover God and experience His love in our hearts.

*Lord Jesus, bless us with the spiritual discipline to accept Your invitation into Your life. Richly reward our efforts to resolve to love You as You love us. Amen.*

### **Archbishop Angel Lagdameo** (from page 1)

- who appeared outside the tomb – that the Lord has risen ring across the centuries.

We, Christians, know there is life beyond the grave because Jesus Christ has torn down the wall of death. He has shown us that this life is not all separated from him forever. This means we were meant to live with God forever, and because of Christ’s death and resurrection for us, we know we can. ➔➔

## RE-BORN

**“Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”** (Jn 3:3)

Christ’s resurrection at Easter means that we are not to be buried with our sins, our evil habits, desperation and anger, but instead that we are to live a joyful and contented life with Him. It is a new life and we are re-born into this new life


Joining the ME and participating in the LSS after that, had brought my husband and me closer to God. Before that, our marriage had been like a roller coaster ride – with sudden highs and steep lows that would pull us down. We were ignoring each other’s needs, too busy with work commitments and by the quest for material possessions that brought about only temporary happiness. We were skeptical too, about accepting BLD’s invitation for the encounter. We were blinded by seemingly more important things in our lives.

Even after the first day of the ME, I was quite doubtful that the situation we were in would change. But after the weekend, we saw the light; we were amazed, and slowly, we found His infinite light. Some five months after the ME, the LSS further strengthened our spiritual life, and solidified our hold onto God.

Now, Easter has taken on a deeper meaning. Our life has changed for the better in that our love for each other has grown deeper. More importantly, we know that God will never forsake us.

There are many Christians who have wandered away from the Lord, but we have so much to gain by being faithful instead. Jesus says, **“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?”** (Jn 14:2) Heaven will be a great place, beyond our wildest dreams. There are no words that can describe how wonderful heaven will be. And it will last forever and ever, time without end. I certainly want to be re-born, and to someday, go to heaven and see the kingdom of God... I know you do too.

➔ Jesus said, **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies”** (John 11:25). And so, my dear Bukas Loob sa Diyos community, do not live in doubt and hopelessness any longer, but turn to Jesus Christ and put your life into his hands, both today and forever.

  
\* ANGEL N. LAGDAMEO, D.D.  
Archbishop of Jaro  
5 April 2017

## URBI ET ORBI (from page 1)

In every age, the Risen Shepherd tirelessly seeks us, his brothers and sisters, wandering in the deserts of this world. With the marks of the passion – the wounds of his merciful love – he draws us to follow him on his way, the way of life. Today too, he places upon his shoulders so many of our brothers and sisters crushed by evil in all its varied forms.

The Risen Shepherd goes in search of all those lost in the labyrinths of loneliness and marginalization. He comes to meet them through our brothers and sisters who treat them with respect and kindness, and help them to hear his voice, an unforgettable voice, a voice calling them back to friendship with God.

He takes upon himself all those victimized by old and new forms of slavery, inhuman labour, illegal trafficking, exploitation and discrimination, and grave forms of addiction. He takes upon himself children and adolescents deprived of their carefree innocence and exploited, and those deeply hurt by acts of violence that take place within the walls of their own home.

The Risen Shepherd walks beside all those forced to leave their homelands as a result of armed conflicts, terrorist attacks, famine and oppressive regimes. Everywhere he helps these forced migrants to encounter brothers and sisters, with whom they can share bread and hope on their journey.

In the complex and often dramatic situations of today's world, may the Risen Lord guide the steps of all those who work for justice and peace. May he grant the leaders of nations the courage they need to prevent the spread of conflicts and to put a halt to the arms trade.

Especially in these days, may he sustain the efforts of all those actively engaged in bringing comfort and relief to the civil population in Syria, prey to a war that continues to sow horror and death. May he grant peace to the entire Middle East, beginning with the Holy Land, as well as in Iraq and Yemen.

May the Good Shepherd remain close to the people of South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who endure continuing hostilities, aggravated by the grave famine affecting certain parts of Africa.

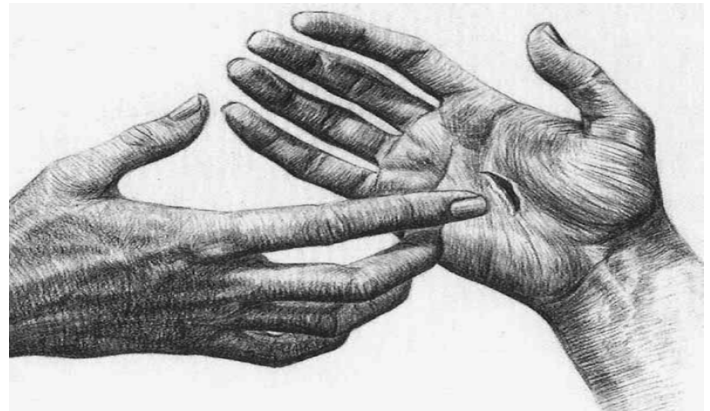
May the Risen Jesus sustain the efforts of all those who, especially in Latin America, are committed to ensuring the common good of societies marked at times by political and social tensions that in some cases have resulted in violence. ...Continued on page 4

## COUNSELS (from page 1)

He rose from the dead to give us a second chance; a chance at a new life and a path to eternal life. ***“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*** (Jn 14:6)

The peace of Christ lives in our hearts if we believe in Him. We cannot be at peace if we have our doubts or unbelief. Thomas, in his wavering faith, required proof in order for him to believe. This conditional belief is where most of us are at today, as in - *I will only believe that there is a God if He cures the illness that a family member has; or - I will only believe in God's love if I get the job I am currently applying for.* In John 20:29b, the Lord says ***“Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”***

We are so blessed that we have a God of second chances. Instead of holding it against Thomas for doubting Him, He gives Thomas a second chance. When Jesus appeared again, He even gives Thomas very special attention as He said, ***“Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving but believe.”*** (Jn 20:27)



We can almost see that exact same conversation happening between us and Jesus today. One moment we are filled with doubts as things we have asked for do not happen according to our plans and schedules. But then out of nowhere, the Lord breathes upon us the Holy Spirit and we receive unexpected blessings.

***“My Lord and my God!”*** This is the confirmation of faith that Thomas exclaimed when he realized that it was Jesus - real, alive and that He was with him. ***“My Lord and My God!”*** We are called every day to affirm our faith that Jesus is alive in us; that we are with Him and He is with us. And that we are one.

As a community of faith, we are called to this same unconditional belief in the presence of Christ in our midst. This belief comes from His peace, and with peace, the community will grow ...Continued on page 4



## COUNSELS

(from page 3)

and flourish. The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2:42-47) shows the fruits of peace in a community. Many wonders and signs were done. All who believed were together and had all things in common. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their numbers.

Father God, remove my unbelief. Open my heart to Your loving, caring and forgiving presence in my life. Allow me to see that even in the darkest and most painful times of my life, the Holy Spirit is with me and You are always there,



*- Amen!*

Directions:

1. Seek forgiveness and be reconciled with your brethren.
2. Share your time, talent and treasure generously.
3. Persevere through your trials and difficulties.

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## URBI ET ORBI

(from page 3)

May it be possible for bridges of dialogue to be built, by continuing to fight the scourge of corruption and to seek viable and peaceful solutions to disputes, for progress and the strengthening of democratic institutions in complete respect for the rule of law.

May the Good Shepherd come to the aid of Ukraine, still beset by conflict and bloodshed, to regain social harmony. May he accompany every effort to alleviate the tragic sufferings of those affected by the conflict.

The Risen Lord continues to shed his blessing upon the continent of Europe. May he grant hope to those experiencing moments of crisis and difficulty, especially due to high unemployment, particularly among young people.

Dear brothers and sisters, this year Christians of every confession celebrate Easter together. With one voice, in every part of the world, we proclaim the great message: "The Lord is truly risen, as he said!" May Jesus, who vanquished the darkness of sin and death, grant peace to our days. Happy Easter!

## LORD'S PROVISION

Previous Week's

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes & Love Offerings	\$ 2,128	\$ 35,043
Mission Collections	\$ 71	\$ 2,428

Financial details are available to all members through [treasury@bldnewark.com](mailto:treasury@bldnewark.com)

Thank you for your continued support!

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR



**BLD  
Newark**  
1992-2017

Save  
the  
Date

This year marks BLD-Newark's 25th anniversary. You are part of the beautiful tapestry the Lord has woven into this community's history, and we invite you to join us as we celebrate this important milestone.

Please save the following dates:

- August 19, 2017- Community Celebration at the Basilica
- August 20, 2017- 25th Anniversary Dinner Dance

We look forward to reminiscing our yesterday, celebrating our today, and envisioning our future with you.

By His grace,

The 25th Anniversary Committee

"May the LORD bless you and keep you! May the LORD let 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)

## Marriage Encounter # 48

May 19-21, 2017

Hotel Executive Suites  
30 Minue Street, Carteret, NJ  
Contact email: [MLA@bldnewark.com](mailto:MLA@bldnewark.com)

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](#)

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Apr 28	Management
		May 5	Mission
		May 12	Pastoral
May 19	Evangelization		