



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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Bulletin Edition

April 28, 2017

NEWS

BLD feels the Father's Love

On April 22, 2017, the Teaching Ministry held the first of many community events celebrating BLD-Newark's 25th Anniversary. About 300 people attended, including members of the Singles and Solo Parents Ministries, BLD disciples from the Allentown, Rockland and Trenton districts, as well as friends and family of BLD members. The event was by far the largest retreat held by our community. What a way to kick off our 25th year!

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

The retreat started with Msgr Paul Schetelick talking about the famous painting by Dutch master, Rembrandt van Rijn, depicting his version of what the scene of the prodigal son's return might have looked like. The main focus of the moving masterpiece shows the father placing gentle welcoming hands on the shoulders of his kneeling, bedraggled younger son. But in it were other figures, who, although they are not mentioned in the parable, add to the meaning one can derive from the artist's vision. Msgr Paul then went back to the other parables and episodes in St. Luke's Gospel to find who they could have been; among them were a domineering Pharisee, a tax collector, a rich young man and a poor widow.

Rembrandt's life itself seemed depicted in the painting, as he too once enjoyed a spendthrift, extravagant lifestyle, only to have it all end with him as a poor, lonely, old and childless widower.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

From the painting, Msgr Paul transitioned to separate presentations on the parable's three main characters – the younger son, the older one and the father, sharing his own deep insights on each.

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COUNSELS

Unimaginable Joy

THEME: The glory of God shines through us when our hearts are open to the understanding of Scriptures.

WORD : Acts 2:14,22-33 ~ Ps 16:1-2,5,7-8,9-10,11
1 Pt 1:17-21 ~ Lk 24:13-35

ORDER: *“Conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning.”* (1 Pt 1:17)

REFLECTION:

“And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.”
(Lk 24:15-16)

On that first Easter Sunday, after Passover in Jerusalem, two disciples were walking back to Emmaus when a Stranger fell into stride beside them. Has this ever happened to you? Perhaps on your commute home, while waiting for a flight at the airport, or even while in line at a checkout counter, where you strike up a conversation with a total stranger and it just seems right, and later it makes you feel good that somehow, you had that connection. When one thinks about it, it can actually be an everyday event.

In this particular resurrection episode, of the two disciples, only one is named. So imagine yourself filling in the scene as the other disciple, and give that disciple your name. After the events of Good Friday, you are sad and dejected that the Savior you had placed your hope in had seemingly left that hope tragically unfulfilled. You probably expected nothing to come from the stranger Who started walking beside you... you being too pre-occupied to recognize Who He actually was.

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Promise of the Week

“You will show me the path to life, abounding joy in your presence.” (Ps 16:11)

Looking Forward: On Resurrection Faith

"I believe in the resurrection of the body." "I look forward to the resurrection of the dead." Why do we profess faith in these things? We know that our faith is in vain if Christ has not been raised (1 Cor 15:14), but why? Let us consider three aspects of Resurrection Faith that are key: the Resurrection is proof that Jesus' whole life and teaching are vindicated and confirmed (CCC 651); it opens up a new way of life (CCC 653); it points to Jesus as principle and source of our own Resurrection (CCC 655).

Vindication: the Resurrection confirms what was revealed at the Crucifixion, that Jesus, "**Truly...was the son of God.**" (Mt 27:54, cf Mk 15:39) and that He is indeed our Lord and God (cf Jn 20:28). But the Gospels are insistent that Jesus' Resurrection was bodily, meaning that the disciples could touch His wounded body and even try to hug Him. This means that the Resurrection also vindicates and transforms our flesh, and reveals God's immense love for the material world. For this reason, Psalm 16 has been key for explaining the Resurrection, for Christ's Resurrection proves that God indeed will never let His faithful one see the pit and does not give him up to Sheol (cf Ps 16:10). God raised Jesus through the power of the Spirit, and if that same Spirit is present in us, Jesus will give life to our mortal bodies through that same Spirit (Rom 8:11).

A new way of life: Beginning with the Resurrection, Jesus' mode of existence is different. Until His Ascension, He was physically present but in different ways: He was not immediately recognizable and could also disappear (Lk 24:13-35, Jn 20:11-18); He could enter into rooms that were locked (cf. Jn 20:19-28). From the Ascension on, Jesus is physically absent *in the flesh*, and yet He is really present, "**with us always**" (Mt 28:20) in new and exciting ways. Now Jesus can be known "**in the breaking of bread**" (Lk 24:35); through this sacramental presence, he opens a "**new and living way**" (Heb 10:20).



Our Resurrection: The Resurrection removes the sting of death (cf. 1 Cor 15, espec. 15:54-55), such that we too have hope of resurrection. ... *Continued on page 4*

Faith, Faithfulness and Salvation



Faith, faithfulness and salvation. What should those words actually mean in our lives as Christians?

Reciting the Apostle's Creed sums up my faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, my Savior, Who came down from heaven to save me from my sins. But, for my faith to be true, I need to trust in Christ for my salvation. After all, He did not come for those who claim to be righteous, but for those who are lost: sinners like myself.

I am not ashamed to declare my sinfulness as even St. Paul, in his letters to the Romans, wrote about his struggles with sin. Even Isaiah before him detested his sinfulness.

Yes, I confess I am lost, a sinner, and so are we all. But, what has "faith" got to do with it? Well, everything. Christ is asking me daily to turn away from sinfulness. He is asking me to turn toward Him and make Him my first priority, so that I can be saved.

Is faithfulness the same as having faith? My conscience says not by a long shot. When Christ said, "come follow me," He did not mean come and listen to my lectures, or to follow Him around like an avid fan. He meant "abide in me;" that is follow My footsteps, like a true first century disciple, who follows the living example of his teacher/master. Faithfulness means remaining obedient to His word.

Having expressed my faith and remained obedient to Christ's words, am I guaranteed salvation? The answer, I believe, is "No" (Mt 7: 21-23). Salvation is God's sovereign gift to man (Eph 2: 8-9), and is by no means a result of man's own actions. In other words, I cannot buy my own ticket to heaven; it is God through Christ, Who decides if I am worthy. But how would I know if I am worthy of it? Only God knows. The only thing I can do is (1) to have faith in Christ and (2) to remain faithful and obedient to His word. My lifestyle and work on earth should reflect my faith and faithfulness to His word; otherwise, there is no way for my Lord and Savior to justify me in the eyes of our Father in heaven.

BLD feels the Father's Love (from page 1)

Using what is known about Jewish culture in the time of Christ, he pointed out how the younger son's request for his inheritance, probably equated to wishing that his father were dead. As for the older son, he surmised that the disrespect and envy displayed by this son were really timeless sins that a lot of us might be guilty of harboring against others today.

Eventually, Msgr Paul's talk focused on what the retreat was, and what the parable is, truly about – it's about the Father's Love

LET'S BE ADOPTED

Upon re-reading the parable's passages from St. Luke's Gospel, one could say that not much is really said about what later happened to the two sons. In His wisdom, Jesus left it up to us to fill in the rest of their stories, perhaps with our own. But He spoke volumes on what the Father is like.

He's the Father Who, not just "waits and waits and waits," but will actually run toward His sons and daughters to embrace us with His love. The Father's love "never stops." It is "heaped and heaped and heaped."

According to Msgr Paul, the vital question is, are we willing to receive it, and thereby assume our "truest identity... that of His sons and daughters"? And, as he pointed out to conclude the retreat, if we haven't assumed that identity yet, then...

"Let's be adopted."

We felt the Holy Spirit's strong presence at the retreat, and we saw Jesus too, in the many people who made the event happen. He was there in the volunteers who stood through the chilly morning drizzle as marshals in the parking lot, and in those who were at the registration tables welcoming everyone with beautiful smiles and warm hugs. We saw Jesus in the Service Ministry's selfless servants who woke up at dawn to prepare lunch and snack treats. We saw Him in the tireless members of the Praise, Teaching and Liturgical ministries, and others who orchestrated the various segments of the retreat.

We experienced the Spirit moving among us as we took some time to be like Jesus' friend Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to His words, as delivered by our beloved Msgr Paul Schetelick. We felt Jesus too in the person of our Spiritual Director Emeritus, Father Paul Lehman, who served as concelebrant at the retreat's concluding Eucharistic Celebration.

We believe that the Lord brings us to where He wills us to be. As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we recall the many blessings that have brought us this far. ➔➔

COUNSELS (from page 1)

But in the course of your conversation with Him, you feel a connection and your attention is grabbed. He talks to you about Scriptures and you find that you don't want the time spent with Him to end. Later, you find yourself at a crossroad – part ways or invite Him to stay with you. In the Gospel story, you and the other disciple ask the Stranger to stay so that you can continue your conversation.

In this 21st century that we live in, weeks can go by in a blur. There is so much out there to preoccupy all of our waking moments, and then some. When problems surface, which they will, it has become much too easy to forgo real prayer and the connection to God. For some, BLD Fridays become optional; for too many Catholics, Sunday Mass too.

The two disciples said, **"Stay with us."** What would have happened if you had not invited Jesus to stay? Life would probably have continued on, but you would not have realized the Hope that was just there, oh so very close, that would make all the difference in the world.

As the weeks of our lives unfold today, Christ presents us with many, many opportunities to recognize Him. Some are simple, and others, maybe more involved and more deeply profound. Daily Mass is one of them; and certainly there is daily prayer where we don't just present our petitions, but we also try to get to know Him more, and find out what He wishes us to pursue. Some time also has to be spent in an effort to recognize what it is He does for us.

Number one on the list is the reality of Who Christ is. He is our Savior, not only because He died for our sins, but that in that dying, He showed us that sacrifice is the way to the Father. ...Continued on page 4

➔ May the love of the Father that is within us continue to burn brightly; and may the glorious Light of the Risen Lord shine through us.

"We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song." - St. Pope John Paul II



COUNSELS

(from page 3)

In that one act, He has shown how we must live. How much is the joy of salvation multiplied when we invite others to share instead of reserving it only for ourselves?

Second on the list is that He is always there right beside us. He is there whispering how we are to live that full life that leads to the Father. And when we fail, He is still there forgiving and encouraging us to try again.

In the course of the evening, Jesus gave the two disciples a history lesson, and this made them ready to see Who the Stranger beside them actually was. Just like with the two on that Emmaus road, we have to invite Him to stay with us, so that we can find out more about Him. And eventually find Him in all the things around us, our family and friends, the strangers and the poor we strive to help. The real Jesus Who becomes part of the fabric and fiber of our very own being when we partake of the Eucharist.

Can I imagine Jesus standing by my side? Will He see a look of recognition on my face? Sometimes I just stand and bask in His presence; other times, I fall to my knees. The reality is that I sing Hallelujah because I don't have to imagine the unimaginable joy He brings. In my heart I smile from recognizing that He is actually always in the here and now... walking beside each one of us on this amazing and sumptuous journey of life.

Directions:

1. Immerse yourselves in daily scripture readings.
2. Partake of the Eucharist as frequently as possible.

Looking Forward

(from page 2)

This may seem abstract to us, but it becomes all the more concrete and powerful when we remember all our family members "who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection" (Eucharistic Prayer II). Resurrection Faith does not take away our grief and pain, but it tells us that death does not have the final word. Even as our flesh decays and we confront trauma and loss, we know through Christ's Resurrection that God truly loves us, our flesh, and our world "to the end" (Jn 13:1), and that we do have "a living hope" through the Resurrection of Jesus and remain even now under the protection of the power of God (cf 1 Pt 1:3-5).

Amazingly, an agnostic philosopher once wrote, "Only love can believe the Resurrection. Or: It is love that believes the Resurrection." Everything depends on faith in the Resurrection, which gives us true hope. Christ's Resurrection proves God's love for us and our world, and as we celebrate the Resurrection and all that it means, we must be drawn more deeply into love for God and live our lives looking forward to the resurrection of the dead.

A pdf of this Covenant News is also available online at BLDNEWARK.com

LORD'S PROVISION

Previous Week's

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 2,362	\$ 21,459
Love Offerings	\$ 5,724	\$ 21,670
Mission Collections	\$ 71	\$ 2,499

Financial details are available to all members through 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)

Teaching Calendar

Teachings for Saturday, **May 13, 2017** - 1 to 6 pm:

- Advanced Intercession / Orientation to Spiritual Warfare (LSS 1-45)
- Encounter with Jesus: Matthew / Mark (LSS 1-46B)
- Sienna Gift Inventory (LSS 47)

Marriage Encounter # 48

May 19-21, 2017

Hotel Executive Suites

30 Minue Street, Carteret, NJ

Contact email: 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
			May 5	Mission
			May 12	Pastoral
			May 19	Evangelization
			May 26	Formation