



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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Bulletin Edition

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NEWS

ME 47 listens to the King and hears His voice

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him.”

- Col 1:17,19-20

Give thanks to the Lord, for the ME 47 graduates who listened to and heard His voice during the Marriage Encounter weekend, held last November 18-20 in Carteret, New Jersey. It was indeed a victorious weekend as the couples rekindled their love and shared their feelings with each other. The pastoral team was led by Msgr. Shetelick, with the presenting couples, Boyie and Stella Huelgas, and Lito and Gigi Vibar. The sponsoring class, auxies, intercessors and all those who served during the weekend were steadfast witnesses to God’s mighty will.



The class of ME47 includes 13 couples: Ike and Debbie Amador, Antonio and Carina Asis, Eugenio and Evangeline Canete, Melencio and Dolores Carcamo, Mark and Escarlen Duran, Melvin Jr and Mary Grace Go, Jean Claude and Marie Jean-Bart, Paul and Jocelyn Magahis, Godwin and Angelina Nwogu, Oquamalam and Rita Ohia, Obiefuna and Juliana Okafor, Emmanuel and Jovita Owowo, Domingo and Antonette Tabobo.

Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord! *“Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”* (Lk 23:43)

COUNSELS

ADVENT MEANS “COMING” OR “ARRIVAL”

THEME: We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we produce good fruit through repentance.

WORD : Is 11:1-10 ~ Ps 72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17
Rom 15:4-9 ~ Mt 3:1-12

ORDER: *“Stay awake... be prepared”*
(Mt 24:42a, 44a)

REFLECTION:



We thank God for revealing to us His many “comings” into our lives. Christmas lights can be taken as symbols or indications of what we are waiting for. We are waiting for the Light of Christ Who dispels the darkness of life and heals the hopelessness we experience in our earthly journey. During the season of Advent, let us hold on to our faith with joy so that we can truly hear God’s message. Let us ponder and reflect upon our Community Word for December: **The coming of Christ brings joy to the people of God,** and faithfully carry out the Order: *“Stay awake....be prepared.”* (Mt 24:42a, 44a)

The theme for the 1st Sunday of Advent is: We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we await Him in faithful anticipation. In the Gospel, Jesus talks about the people during the time of Noah, how pre-occupied they were with their daily lives and merriment, and hardly thought about God or their future. Just like Noah, let us take the road of obedience in the face of detractors and doubts. This is the time to rid ourselves of our old crooked ways and embrace the newness of conversion in Christ. God’s steadfast love is waiting to embrace us and lead us to the paths of Truth. Our security is in putting our complete trust in God.

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Promise of the Week

Justice shall flower in his days. (cf Ps 72:7)



FR PAUL SPEAKS ADVENT

In my philosophy course in the seminary we learned about the omnipresence of God. In simpler words wherever there is anything, there is God. God not only creates things, He keeps them in existence. His creative power is always at work. If He were not constantly creating and keeping things in existence, everything would disappear back into nothingness. Just this scientific fact alone would be enough to lay the foundation for faith, a belief in a reality that we cannot see, but which is a logical conclusion to common sense.

As true as this is, our Christian faith takes us many steps forward and beyond philosophy. There are such things as eternity and time which philosophy does not consider. This short season of Advent opens to us a little bit of the mystery of time and how it intersects with eternity. With the Annunciation (Incarnation) eternity entered time in the person of God Himself. At the end of the world, time will be reabsorbed into eternity, again in the person of God Himself, Jesus, the Judge of the living and the dead, the very person who became one of us in the Incarnation.

Jesus teaches us that the Kingdom of God is present among us. This could fit the notion of the omnipresence of Jesus which we pointed out above. But Jesus wants to be more than an abstraction. He wants, not to be present AMONG us, but to be present WITHIN us. He wants us to be born into the eternal relationship that the Triune God possesses within Himself. Advent then is a time of consciousness raising. It is a call, not only to look around to discover God, but more importantly to go within, to the center of our souls. Is God there? If our faith does not discover Him there, use more carefully the means to stir up faith. Spend time every day in meditating and resting contemplatively in the Scriptures. Examine your conscience every day. Begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal in a more personal way, the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord for His many gifts. Review the day not only for sins and defects, but victories as well. They are the victories of the Lord.

When we pray **“Come Lord Jesus”** we are asking for a deeper intimacy and awareness of the Lord Who is already there.

Maranatha! Come O Christ the Lord!

HONOR THY MOTHER, MARY



The Catholic Church, to be the One, True Church of Christ has a particular characteristic which is manifestly based on Holy Scripture, and is unique to Catholicism — the honor and devotion to the Blessed Virgin

Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ.

Our Heavenly Father chose a young woman from a village in a tiny country, to be the mother of His only Son, Jesus. She was without any significant social status, yet she was chosen to be the sacred vessel that would carry His own Son and bring Him into the world for man’s salvation. Because of her perfect response of “yes,” she inspired the Church to give her the title Theotokos, which means “God bearer.” As we call her “God bearer” we not only honor her as the mother of the Divine Son, but we also affirm Jesus’ humanity. We thank her and honor her for the role she took in salvation history and for her perfect example.

With Mother Mary’s perfect obedience to God’s will, she is recognized by the Church as having a special role as a vehicle of grace for all believers and all humanity. When the angel Gabriel conveyed God’s will to her that she become the mother of God’s Son, her response was a perfect fiat, a perfect YES, **“May it be done to me according to your word.”** (Luke 1:38)

As Catholics, we honor the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. We call her the Mother of God, because she indeed is the Mother of the one Divine Person, Jesus Christ, Who has both the nature of God and the nature of Man. By this title of “Mother of God,” we simply refer to the Virgin Mary as when **“Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out... And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”** (Lk 1:42-43)

Let us honor Mother Mary who was so intimately connected with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Yes, there is only one Mediator with the Father — Jesus Christ. Only the God-Man Jesus Christ could have redeemed mankind. Nevertheless, we pray to Mother Mary that she may intercede for us with her Divine Son.

How often we request the assistance of prayers from our fellow men — how much more powerful are the prayers and intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Let us honor our dear Mother in spirit and in truth!

AN UGLY DUCKLING LESSON



One day, three friends were in an unfortunate accident, but they arrive in heaven at the same time. When they get there, St. Peter says, "We only have one rule here in heaven: don't step on the ducks!" So they enter heaven, and sure enough, there are ducks all over the place.

It is almost impossible not to step on a duck, and although they try their best to avoid them, the first friend accidentally steps on one. Along comes St. Peter with one of the ugliest persons they ever saw. St. Peter chains them together and says to that first friend, "Your punishment for stepping on a duck is to spend eternity chained to this person."

The next day, the second friend accidentally steps on a duck, and along comes St. Peter, who doesn't miss a thing. With him is another ugly person. He chains them together with the same admonishment as what he said to the first friend.

The third friend has observed all this, and, not wanting to be chained for all eternity to someone ugly, is very, very careful, and goes for months without stepping on any ducks. Then one day St. Peter comes over with one of the most good looking persons any of the friends had ever laid eyes on.

St. Peter chains them together without saying a word and walks away.

The happy third friend says, "I wonder what I did to deserve being chained to you for all of eternity?"

That newly chained mate replied: "I don't know about you, but I accidentally stepped on a duck!"

A friend had sent me this joke, and after first laughing about it, I was suddenly struck by the spiritual lesson that seemed to be embedded in its humor. I found a lesson in humility.

My guess is that one day, many types of people will actually find themselves in heaven; and while on earth, some would have been more pious than others. There may be some who might think that they deserve heaven more... maybe even that they deserve being there the most.

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COUNSELS

(from page 1)

Towards a meaningful Advent, in faithful anticipation, and with nurturing hope, we must always be watchful, vigilant and prepared for the coming of Christ. Thus, we will merit the promise this week: **"...those who love you prosper."** (Ps 122:6a)

We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we produce good fruits through repentance is the theme for the 2nd Sunday of Advent. John the Baptist preaches that the key to newness is repentance and conversion, to reform our lives and prepare for the coming of the Lord. Allow change to happen within us, in our attitude and character, and be better persons and better Christians. God has a beautiful plan for all, but we need to receive these gifts with a renewed mind and heart. The Gospel urges us to bear good fruit, not as who we are, but in what we do. Let us manifest God by our actions and strive to improve ourselves and become more God-like and loving. Let us give a spontaneous response to God's call to participate in His divine life, and in doing so, we will be assured of His promise this week: **Justice shall flower in his days.** (cf Ps 72:7)

The theme for the 3rd Sunday of Advent is: We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we recognize the Messiah in His works and words. St. Joseph acts upon God's word through the angel Gabriel with urgency and decisiveness. He sees himself, not as a mere spectator gazing upon a divine mystery, but as a steward, as a servant. Let us face life's mysteries like Joseph did – discerningly, trustingly, bravely and obediently. Jesus showed His messianic work of healing and preaching. Let us open our hearts to Jesus, acting with faith, enduring with hope, and doing all with love and compassion. This is the Lord's promise for the week: **"The Lord shall reign forever... through all generations."** (Ps 146:10)



The theme for the 4th Sunday of Advent is: We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we obey and trust in God's will. Jesus came to share His love for all mankind. He did not just visit with us, but actually lived among us as a man,

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COUNSELS

(from page 3)

offering His life and His friendship. The Light of the Lord can shine out and be reflected to others when we lead upright and virtuous lives, obeying and trusting God’s will. We received the power of Jesus in our lives because He is the source of strength, faith and our redemption. The power of Christ’s coming is found when there is conversion of hearts and transformation of lives. Like Joseph, each of us has a mission from God. Let us place our complete trust and obedience in God as we do our utmost in carrying out His mission. And we shall be blessed with this promise: **“He will receive blessings from the Lord, and justice from his saving God.”** (Ps 24:5)

Finally, the theme for the Nativity of the Lord is: We rejoice in the coming of Christ when we experience the fullness of His grace and Truth. God speaks to us and invites us with a sense of wonder and awe, conveying to us His unconditional love, mercy and forgiveness. Although it is unmerited and we are undeserving of it, God gave us a pure Gift which we can only receive with humility and gratitude. God loves us so much that He gave us His only Son. And, oh, how loving this Son is! Jesus loves us so much, giving His whole life for us, even going so far as to die on the cross for our sake. And because of His salvific action, we stand again as heirs to His Kingdom to experience the fullness of His grace and truth. As we celebrate His nativity, let us allow His light to shine through us so that others will also receive His redemption. For His promise this week is: **“I will be a father to him and he shall be a son to me”** (Heb 1:5b).

Prayer: Gracious God, grant us wisdom to realize the importance of living a righteous life, so that when we meet You face to face we will do so with courage and confidence. May we become more fully aware of Your holy and divine love. We pray for the grace to live the advent message and to share it with others through our words and deeds. Amen.

AN UGLY DUCKLING LESSON...

(from page 3)

I also suspect that there will be a few who would be like that third friend in the joke, who all along may have been thinking that they possessed the best behavior and done all the things that had to be done, which in their minds made them most “good looking”

...Only to eventually find out (although thankfully, already in heaven), what the truth of how they look to others really is.

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	\$ 2,746	\$ 125,801
Mission Collections	\$ 200	\$ 7,014

Financial details are available to all members through treasury@bldnewark.com
Thank you for your continued support!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

YLSS Salubungan - Friday, January 6, 2017



Friday, Jan 27, 2017

Medical Mission

February 13-16, 2017

Maasin, Leyte, Philippines

Contact Persons: Ramon/Leonie Mariazeta

rmariazeta@msn.com / lmariazeta@msn.com

Symbolon Study at Divine Mercy Parish

The Catholic Faith Explained

Monday nights – Jan 9 – Mar 13, 2017, from 7-9pm

Student booklet is \$25 / Contacts: Ray & Suzie Atienza

(908-463-0449) / Registration deadline is **Jan 2, 2017**

	Date	Apostolate
	Dec 9	Mission
	Dec 16	Pastoral
	Dec 23	Evangelization
	Dec 30	Formation

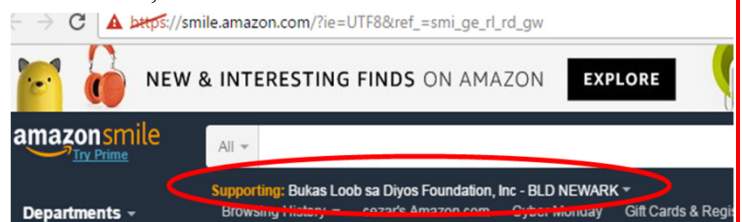
OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

IF YOU ARE GOING TO SHOP ANYWAY...

Shop at AmazonSmile
and Amazon will make a donation to:

BLD-BUKAS LOOB SA DIYOS

The holiday shopping season is upon us, and now is the perfect time to additionally support our community by shopping through AmazonSmile at smile.amazon.com. Each time a purchase is made, Amazon will give a portion to your favorite charity, which you need to include in your registration; just select Bukas Loob sa Diyos Foundation, Inc - BLD Newark:



We thank you for your cooperation and hope that you are able to further contribute to the vision and mission of the community through this effort.