



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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## NEWS

## COUNSELS

### UAE: Aid to Church in Need Views Impact of Pope's Visit

Pope Francis Celebrated Largest Holy Mass ever Held on Arabian Peninsula in Abu Dhabi

February 11, 2019 17:35 • ZENIT Staff • Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue, Papal Trips  
Source: Zenit.org

The Pope celebrated the largest Holy Mass ever to be held on the Arab Peninsula in Abu Dhabi. But what will be the result of the papal visit? Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) presented a view on February 11, 2019:

Gregory Fonseka is grateful: "I already experienced Pope Francis in Sri Lanka, my homeland. But I would never have thought that he would be celebrating Holy Mass here in Abu Dhabi. It has strengthened my faith in Jesus. Thank you, Pope Francis." The local church in the United Arab Emirates is made up of people like Gregory, a foreign worker. The Catholic church has about one million members there. They are served by a total of nine parishes – a number that is of course far too small for so many people. They temporarily live and work in the country, which grants them the freedom to attend religious services, but not full religious freedom. This is no different for the citizens of the Emirates; they are prohibited from converting to Christianity or another religion. In theory, the renunciation of Islam is punishable by death, even if this punishment is not executed. Nonetheless, converts are under massive pressure from their families. Christian proselytizing is prohibited and punished with deportation.

In view of this, the Holy Mass celebrated by Pope Francis on Tuesday morning was something quite special. Pope Francis has in fact set a number of benchmarks simultaneously by holding the large Mass in Sheikh Zayed Stadium in the capital city of the Emirates. For the first time ever, a Catholic church leader has celebrated Holy Mass in the heartland of Islam, only a few hundred kilometers from Mecca.

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### The Road Map to Eternal Happiness

THEME: We proclaim God's love when we perform charitable acts.

WORD: Jer 17:5-8 ~ Ps 1:1-2,3,4,6  
1 Cor 15:12,16-20 ~ Lk 6:17,20-26

ORDER: *Hope in Christ.* (cf.1 Cor 15:19a)

REFLECTION:

**This** Sunday's readings speak of the value that a man has in God and for God, which will be revealed to him in time. The manner in which we exercise our gift of freedom will determine whether we will bring upon ourselves blessings or curses. This freedom enables us to choose where we will be rooted, what and in whom we believe, how we will flourish, and if and when we will bear fruit (cf. Jer 17:5-8).



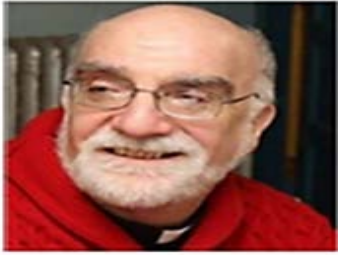
In Luke's Gospel, Jesus begins His teachings on the beatitudes by addressing His followers on the issue of where true happiness is found. The word beatitude literally means "blessedness" or "happiness." Jesus' way to happiness, however, demands a transformation from within, a conversion of heart and mind, which can only come through the gift of the Holy Spirit. If we want to be filled with the joy and happiness of heaven, we must empty ourselves of all that would shut God out of our hearts.

The beatitudes are often described as a design of Christian living. They teach us about the essentials of human growth, and perhaps, a way ...Continued on page 3

### Promise of the Week

"Behold, your reward will be great in heaven."

- Lk 6:23b



**Msgr. Paul  
Speaks**

**The Holy Spirit:  
A Sound  
from Heaven**

**NEWS**

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*Since the YLSS and LSS will be upon us shortly, our Spiritual Director, Msgr. Paul Schetelick wrote the following reflection. But it's applicable, not just for those who will be there during those weekend seminars; actually, it's for everyone.*

- The Father..... the heart of the Trinity**  
..... **The Creating Love**
- The Son ..... the hands of the Trinity**  
..... **The Touchable Love**
- The Holy Spirit..... the hum of the Trinity**  
..... **The Spoken Love**

*“And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.” (Acts 2:2)*

When the first Christians were praying in the Upper Room, they didn't know what to expect even though Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit to them (cf. Acts 1:8). Then the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost, like a sound from Heaven (an *S-H-e*).

A loud sound may surprise you; a sweet one may entice you; if unexpected it may startle you; and familiar sounds may soothe and bring comfort to you. The Holy Spirit came upon them as a loud Sound, as of a rushing mighty wind from Heaven (cf. Acts 2:2). Because *S-H-e* was like a mighty wind, *S-H-e* can do mighty things in your life. The sound filled the whole house, so, *S-H-e* can influence your whole world too. Those who prayed **“were all filled with the holy Spirit”** (Acts 2:4); you are included in that “all.” The Holy Spirit can unite your life to the entire Trinity to transform all that you do.

*Holy Spirit, I need to hear from You. Let me hear Your presence speaking into my life. Attune my heart to Your beautiful groaning.*

The Holy Spirit is a Sound from Heaven. *S-H-e* doesn't sound anything like what you hear on earth. A Sound from Heaven is optimistic and filled with hope. It is sweet and good. When you focus your ears on Heaven, you'll hear eternal things. A Sound from Heaven will make you want to worship. So stop what you're doing, be quiet and listen for Heaven's Sound. The Sound you'll hear will be the Holy Spirit voicing the love of the Father and the Son for you.      **→→**

And it was not just any Mass, but the largest service ever to be celebrated on the Arab Peninsula. More than 160,000 Christians gathered in and around the stadium on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi. They cheered enthusiastically when the Pope was driven through the masses in an open car. The fact that the divine service was held on public property was another first. In this country where Islam is the official state religion, Christians may celebrate divine services within the confines of a church. Church bells and crosses that are visible from the outside are not permitted. However, the celebration of Holy Mass in a state-owned building, broadcast on television, attended by members of the government: that was something special. A gigantic cross hung resplendent over the altar. Thousands of Muslims were present when Pope Francis delivered a homily on the Sermon on the Mount as a roadmap for Christian life. The crowd applauded appreciatively when Bishop Paul Hinder thanked the crown prince of the Emirates for the opportunity to celebrate Mass in a public setting. “The ruling family is, in fact, taking a risk by allowing this,” a journalist from Abu Dhabi, who does not wish to be named, commented. “Islamic scholars in Saudi Arabia, for example, will not approve of the public celebration of Holy Mass on Islamic soil.”

But what will be the result of the papal visit? Will circumstances change for the better for the Christians living in the region? Bishop Camillo Ballin, the Apostolic Vicar for northern Arabia, is skeptical. Similar to the Apostolic Vicariate for Southern Arabia, the region Pope Francis has just visited, millions of Christians live as foreign workers in the region that is composed of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Religious freedom does not exist in any of these countries. In a talk with ACN in Abu Dhabi, Bishop Ballin commented, “The visit of the pope encourages Christians in the northern part of the Arab Peninsula to live their faith with even more conviction and to share human fellowship with Muslims. I am also certain that the interfaith meeting here in Abu Dhabi can foster a new mentality. But fundamental changes simply do not happen within 24 hours. In a talk with ACN in Abu Dhabi,

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**→ Holy Spirit, I need You today. My mind is clear and I'm quiet. I'm waiting for Your voice. Speak, for Your servant will hear and do what You say. Amen.**

Go deeper; just as in Acts 2:1-8, you too will hear a new and different sound from the Holy Spirit.

## COUNSELS

(from page 1)

to find favor with God. As Christians, our vocation is not to be first in this world, but rather to be first in the eyes of God.

Jesus lays out the conditions for following Him to bring about transformation. He wants us to reverse the higher value we commonly tend to place in self-centeredness, riches and power. It seems unusual to declare that someone is blessed on the basis of his poverty, hunger or sorrow; but because of the promise of eternal life, Jesus has reversed what blessed means. By His divine power those who are totally dependent on His providence will be the ones blessed. Meanwhile, those whose security is based on worldly comfort and gratification might feel blessed now, but that worldly security often blinds them to their need for God; they will find that their future blessedness has already been spent.

Life is a great journey, and for us to follow the right road map is quite challenging. Only by embracing the reality of our human struggle can we hope to find the way to a life worth living. We must recognize the direction of our life, as led by the Holy Spirit, as a blessing, an indication of a deep and solid faith.

As a community of believers, we are challenged to have a strong faith that examines the blessedness of our human need before God. We have to see how we stand in evaluating our present situations, as they relate to the ultimate realization of the Kingdom of God.

In the Second Reading, Paul rebukes some of his Corinthian converts because of their denial of the resurrection of the body. To them, death is not viewed as the passage of a risen person to a fuller life. Paul points out that rejecting the concept of man's resurrection is to deny the resurrection of Jesus, thus undermining the central doctrine of the Christian faith. Hence, because of this view, the gift of salvation which is hoped for is also rejected.

The Spirit of God is always present in those who proclaim the reality of God's love that is revealed in the Gospels. Encountering Christ's love is the basis for any real calling to participate in His mission. We should be constantly forming ourselves by following the example of Jesus, bearing witness to His unending mercy and compassion. The resurrection of Jesus and our own resurrection should incite us to persevere amid sufferings and difficulties along the journey. Our hopes are not to be limited to this earthly life, but should look toward



→ a vision of eternal fulfillment. Paul says in 1 Cor 15:19, **"If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all."**

There is no denying that Christ was raised from the dead. Jesus has risen in glory, **"the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"**

(1 Cor 15:20). This is an assurance that after death, the whole "harvest" of humankind will follow His lead to everlasting life. Jesus promises His disciples that the joys of heaven will more than compensate for the hardships they experience on earth. He also promises us in Lk 6:23, **"Behold, your reward will be great in heaven."**

Let us ask ourselves how our hope in an eternal bliss affects the way we live. Shall we follow the map that sees life's journey, with all its bumps and potholes, as a way to meet God? Or shall we choose the path of destruction, the way of selfishness and self-promotion that leads us nowhere? The choice is yours!

Direction: Give alms to the poor, fast and pray.

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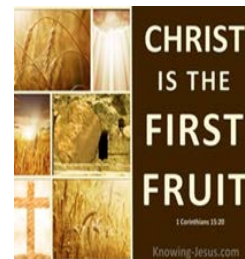
## NEWS

(from page 2)

Bishop Ballin commented, "The visit of the pope encourages Christians in the northern part of the Arab Peninsula to live their faith with even more conviction and to share human fellowship with Muslims. I am also certain that the interfaith meeting here in Abu Dhabi can foster a new mentality. But fundamental changes simply do not happen within 24 hours. I, therefore, do not expect any concrete improvements."

Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of the Maronite Church, a Church that is united with Rome, is more optimistic. He considers the meeting between the Holy Father and leading representatives of Islam such as the Grand Imam of al-Azhar University to have been an important event for the relationship between Islam and Christianity. "Of course something will change, even in Saudi Arabia. There are no churches there and no public celebration of Mass. The meeting between the pope and the representatives of Islam will have consequences. But it will need time," he told ACN.

George Samia, a young Catholic who traveled to Abu Dhabi from neighboring Dubai for the papal Mass, is very positive about the outcome. "The papal visit was an opportunity for non-Christians to learn more about Christianity and its message of love. It was wonderful. I am proud that I was able to be here for this historic event."





# Blessing in Disguise

Jesus was sent for the poor and the miserable  
 For the rich are already blessed anyway  
 His beatitudes are for those  
     whom we first might think of as pitiful  
 They're meant to lift up their spirits  
     in a certain special way  
 He gives relief  
     to those who are uncomfortable  
 He blesses us that way

But He also disturbs  
     those who are comfortable  
 That's how He blesses us in yet another way  
 He does not want us to be too stable  
 For we would never improve  
     if things were always that way  
 For us His teaching methods  
     may be quite unimaginable  
 Because we would never  
     think of things that way

Many times He denies us  
     what seems easy and possible  
 For He knows  
     what's not good for us anyway  
 He wants us to trust and remain faithful  
 For His ways would never lead us astray  
 So if we find ourselves in times of trouble  
 And the skies are gloomy and gray  
 Just learn to accept  
     what might seem unacceptable  
 For better things could be coming our way

At times things are out of our control  
 And we plead to Him and pray  
 Though He may seem unreachable  
 He will answer us another day  
 His plans for us are actually on *His* timetable  
 For He does things in *His* own special way

## LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Last Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 1,327	\$10,487
Love Offerings	\$ 876	\$4,598
E-Giving	\$ 380	\$760
Mission	\$ 225	\$6,312

Financial details are available to all members through [treasury@bldnewark.com](mailto:treasury@bldnewark.com)  
 Thank you for your continued support!

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### Teaching Calendar

Teachings for Saturday, Feb 16, 1-6 pm DMP School Building

- Basic Bible Seminar (LSS 1-50 / ME 47,49,50 / SPE 20)  
 CMP II, Part II (LSS 1-48 / ME 48 / SPE 19)

**YLSS #24**  
 Youth Life in the Spirit Seminar  
 March 1-3, 2019  
 Divine Mercy Auditorium


**Contacts:**  
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 William and Maria Sumandal (732-500-3988)  
 Archie and Lelet Quevada (732-910-7085)  
 Email address: [dyc@bldnewark.com](mailto:dyc@bldnewark.com)

**Life in the Spirit Seminar #51**  
 April 5-7, 2019  
 Salubungan is on March 1, 2019  
 Contacts: Earl & Flo Manguiat

[bldnewarklsa@gmail.com](mailto:bldnewarklsa@gmail.com)

## INSTALLATION OF REV. FR. ALEXANDER T. CRUZ AS PASTOR

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2019 - 4:00 PM  
 DIVINE MERCY PARISH, 232 CENTRAL AVE  
 RAHWAY, NJ

Marshaling		Schedule	Date	Apostolate
			Feb 22	Formation
			Mar 1	Management
			Mar 8	Mission
Mar 15	Pastoral			