



COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

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NEWS

COUNSELS

RESPECT LIFE MONTH, OCTOBER, 2017



- **Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities** (source: usccb.org)

My dear friends in Christ:

Once again, we mark the month of October as Respect Life Month. Looking back over the last year, there's been a lot of uncertainty, suffering, and heartache. Between tragedies that occur in the public eye and trials that take place in our personal lives, there's no shortage of reasons we cry out to God.

At such times, we may feel alone and unequipped to handle the circumstances. But we have an anchor of hope to cling to. With words that echo through thousands of years into the corners of our hearts, God says to us, *"Do not fear: I am with you"* (Isaiah 41:10).

The 2017-2018 Respect Life theme, **"Be Not Afraid,"** reminds us of this promise.

God isn't a detached, distant observer to our pain; the Eternal Son became man and Himself experienced immense suffering—for you and for me. His wounds indicate the very essence of our identity and worth: we are loved by God.

There are times we may doubt the value of our own lives or falter at the thought of welcoming and embracing the life of another. But reflecting on the healed wounds of the Risen Christ, we can see that even our most difficult trials ...*Continued on page 2*

Reflection for October

THEME: We grow in holiness when we use our God-given gifts and talents to prosper God's kingdom.

WORD: Is 5:1-7 ~ Ps 80:9,12,13-14,15-16,19-20
Phil 4:6-9 ~ Mt 21:33-43

ORDER: *"Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me."* - Phil 4:9a

REFLECTION:

Holiness is the crowning virtue of a Christian. To be holy is to come to the perfection of God, which is reached by our complete obedience to God and by modelling our character after the character of God. It points to the common bond by which all the Redeemed are united, the bond of sincere love among all brothers and sisters. Our lives are then characterized by holiness like that of God when we experience Him by our faith through our salvation in Christ. *"You shall be holy, because I am holy."* (Lev 11:45) The Sunday readings for the month provide us with insights on how we can continue in our journey towards holiness.

The theme for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time is – We grow in holiness when we focus our minds on what God wants us to do. In the book of Ezekiel it says: *"Cast away from you all the crimes you have committed, and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit."* (Ez 18:31) To be filled mightily with the Spirit, we must first be emptied of self, for pride and arrogance hinder holiness. Then our hearts will be open in obedience ...*Continued on page 3*

Promise of the Week

"The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds." - Phil 4:7

RESPECT LIFE MONTH... (from page 1)

can be the place where God manifests his victory. He makes all things beautiful. He makes all things new. He is the God of redemption.

That's powerful. That's something to hold onto.

And, He is always with us. Jesus promised this when he gave the disciples the same mission he gives to each of us: Go.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we know that our identity and our mission are two sides of the same coin; like the apostles, we are called to be missionary disciples. We are not only invited to follow and take refuge in God, our stronghold, but we are also commissioned to reach out to one another, especially to the weak and vulnerable.

Building a culture of life isn't something we just do one month of the year, or with one event or initiative—it's essential to who we are. It happens through our daily actions, how we treat one another, and how we live our lives.

How do we respond when our aging parents are in failing health? Do they know how much we love them and cherish each day given? Do we ensure they know they are never a burden to us? In our own challenging times, do we ask for support? When others offer a helping hand, do we receive it? When our friend becomes pregnant in difficult circumstances, do we show compassion that tangibly supports her and helps her welcome the life of her new little one? Sometimes, we may not be sure exactly what to do, but let's not allow the fear of doing the wrong thing or saying the wrong thing keep us from living out our missionary call. We don't need to have everything figured out all at once. Let's remember the guidance of Our Blessed Mother, the first disciple: ***“Do whatever he tells you”*** (John 2:5).

Also, I encourage you to visit www.usccb.org/respectlife to see the U.S. bishops' new Respect Life materials centered on the theme ***“Be Not Afraid.”*** There are articles, bulletin inserts, prayers, action ideas, and more!

This Respect Life Month and always, let's walk with each other; let's help each other embrace God's gift of human life. Whatever storms or trials we face, we are not alone. He is with us: ***“Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age”*** (Matthew 28:20).

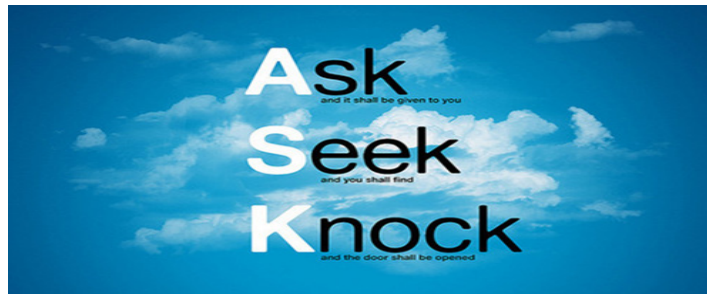
Sincerely yours in Christ,

Timothy Cardinal Dolan

Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities
October 2017

Did You Hear Me?

The Gospel passage to be read for the daily Mass on Thursday October 12th, from Luke 11:5-13, is one of the most easily misunderstood. While it's easy to see the essential message that we should always pray, many people find that their faith wavers when they don't get what they pray for.



If I ask, will I always receive what I ask for? If my faith is based on the premise that God should always answer my prayers and that I should get what I want, then my faith is weak indeed, and perhaps it is only built upon sand.

In many life situations, we don't really know what outcomes will happen. But whether the Lord's answer to one's prayer is an obvious *yes*, or a *maybe*, or an outright *no*, faith in Him should not be contingent upon which answer we receive.

Some will say that maybe we don't ask for the right things. To a large extent, that is true. I know that I too have been guilty of simply asking for life's challenges to go away, and sometimes they do. But wouldn't I actually be better off if I asked for the strength to be able to meet and address them instead? In every situation, miracles are always possible, especially since we know that God works in mysterious ways; but perhaps having the fortitude that only He can provide is what I need most to face any challenge. So, I really should be asking for the right thing.

Will I receive it? Will I find it? Will a door be opened for me?

The answer begins and ends with Jesus. If we believe in Him, you and I will receive that grace of strength when we ask for it. Through faith, His grace will provide the humility when it is needed, and solace when life's twists and turns distress us. It's what will whisper in our heart's ear, "Yes I hear you."

As Jesus taught, we must pray unceasingly and have confidence that He hears, for believing *that* opens many doors of hope that would have otherwise remained closed. Actually, He is the *only One* Who can do that.

COUNSELS

(from page 1)

to what God wants us to do. In the Gospel, Jesus presents the Parable of Two Sons in which He challenges sinners and rebels to turn away from sin and walk in the newness of life, to proclaim a sincere “Yes, Lord” that cancels a wavering “No.” We are always confronted with these two choices. Part of us cannot live up to our promise to be faithful to God. Thus, we cannot take anything for granted. On the other hand, we can admit that we have been wrong and see ourselves in need of conversion. After all, this is what Christian holiness means, to be in the process of continued conversion. In this awareness, we can receive the promise this week which says: **“But if the wicked turn from the wickedness they did, and do what is right and just, they save their lives.”** (Ez 18:27)

For the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the theme is – We grow in holiness when we use our God-given gifts and talents to prosper God’s kingdom. As Christians and followers of Christ, we know that God will ask us on Judgement Day what we have done to spread the Gospel of salvation and promote justice and well-being to His people. We are given time, talent and treasure, not necessarily for our benefit alone, but for those whom the Lord has given to us to nurture, to minister to and to share fullness of life that God has given us. He has chosen us from the world to go and bear fruit that will remain. What have we done to prosper the vineyard of the Lord and make it fruitful? Have we learned from Jesus and used His words to evangelize so that more people may come to believe in His mercy and compassion? The way to holiness calls us to live a fruitful life and then receive the Lord’s promise for the week: **“The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds.”** (Phil 4:7)

We grow in holiness when we heed God’s invitation to commune with Him, is the theme for the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time. In our Christian faith, all men are gathered under the Fatherhood of God to fellowship with Him and experience His unconditional love. But not everyone responds in a positive way. Some are too busy to pay attention to any spiritual invitation, as they are involved in worldly preoccupations. Some are rich but selfish, refusing to share their resources with the needy and don’t treat the poor as equals. The lures of immediate pleasure, though temporary, are too strong to accept God’s invitation to a lavish banquet of blessings and favors.

The book of Isaiah reminds us that the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces and that He saves us! (cf Is 25:8a,9b) We know that being in communion with God gives us the assurance of strength in our distress and suffering. Then we can claim His promise and say, **“My God will fully supply whatever you need, in accord with his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”** (Phil 4:19) But we must understand that God does not force His invitation for **“many are invited, but few are chosen.”** (Mt 22:14)

The theme for the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time is – We grow in holiness when we give others their due, just as we give God His due. God said: **“I am the Lord, there is no other, there is no God beside me.”** (Is 45:5) There is no authority on earth higher than God’s authority. In the Gospel, there were those who, with malice in their hearts, tried to entrap Jesus. But the wisdom of Jesus disarmed them before men, and instead showed them the truth about the way of God. First, God can see what’s in our hearts and therefore, we cannot tempt God by our pretensions. Second, God deserves the highest honor and adoration and therefore, our priorities and our actions should glorify His Holy Name. Everything that we cling to is powerless unless we have the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thes 1:5). In this, we recognize God’s promise for the week: **“... I have called you by name ... It is I who arm you.”**(Is 45:4b,5b)

Finally, the theme for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time is – We grow in holiness when we manifest love of God and neighbor through our actions. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gives us a very clear expression of the greatest commandment: **“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** (Mt. 22:37–39) Loving God is always clear to us as the foremost commandment, but at the same time loving our neighbors and self is like loving God. Jesus connects the two commandments into one great commandment. While distinct from one another, they are equal in importance and necessity. All other commandments are derived from these two. If we live our lives by honoring these two greatest commands, we are truly doing God’s will. How are we going to be judged at the end of time? By how we live these commandments; what we do to others is also done to the Lord. Thus, the Lord has given this promise to the poor: **“If he cries out to me, I will listen; for I am compassionate.”** (Ex 22:26b)

THE WORLD ENDS AGAIN...

The following has excerpts from a Covenant News issue from December 2012; its message is still as urgent today.

Five years ago, stories were circulating that the world was going to end on December 12 of that year. It did not. But a few days later, the shootings at Sandy Hook in Connecticut happened, so, in another sense, the world really did end. Last week, internet stories surfaced once again, warning that there were signs of the world ending this past weekend. Eerily, another mass shooting just claimed 59 lives, the most in America's continuing sad history of gun violence. It's all too easy to blame a "nut job" and then move on. But maybe it's time to **"put on sackcloth"** (Jon 3:4; first reading, Tuesday, October 10).

Once again, senseless violence has dimmed our understanding of God. "Where was God?" some of us may have already asked. Once again it's so tempting and convenient to blame Him, especially when we believe in our own science fiction that a forcefield can somehow be created by Him to stop bullets in mid-air. But is the fault His...or ours? Collectively, as a society, it is still ours, but what about individually?

"Yes" individually too. You might ask why again.

Just as it was five years ago, I imagine that the shooter did what he did because he was miserable and was frustrated by his misery – and he wanted others to be just as miserable as he was. Had there been stricter gun control, would he have been just as despondent? Probably...and in the name of personal freedom, we would have respected his God-given right to be so. Would he have found some other way to inflict pain on others? Seems the answer is still yes.

So, **"What then should we do?"** (Lk 3:10)

The answer, simple as it still might sound, is for us to help God provide His alternative to misery. As a society, so hung up on live and let live, we have all but abandoned the search for Divine Happiness. It is time to battle back. People do not have to be miserable and it is the responsibility of those who understand this to evangelize those blinded in the spiral and eventual frustration of self-absorption. That challenge may even be bigger today.

If we are too afraid to preach good values in the name of respecting others' personal freedoms, how could those who abuse those freedoms avoid succumbing to the pitfalls that happen, when the responsibility that comes with that freedom becomes too heavy a burden to bear? When proper values →→

LORD'S PROVISION

Previous Week's

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 1,526	\$ 53,472
Love Offerings	\$ 734	\$ 49,270
Mission Collections	\$ -	\$ 4,503

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



What is God's plan in our married life?
Join the...
Marriage Encounter Weekend #49
Nov. 17-19, 2017
Hotel Executive Suite
30 Minue Street
Carteret, NJ 07008
Please email us at mla@bldnewark.com
BLD Newark

Teaching Calendar

- Teachings for Saturday, October 21 - 1 to 6 pm:
- * New Creation Realities / Growth in Prayer (LSS 1-48)
 - * Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit (LSS 1-47)
 - * Advanced Intercession (LSS 1-46)

Support the BLD Newark 2017 Fundraiser!!!
Enter to win a trip for 2 to go to the Holy Land!
Raffle date: Friday, November 10, 2017

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Oct 13	Formation
		Oct 20	Management
		Oct 27	Mission
		Nov 3	Pastoral

→ are missing, it becomes easy to believe individual fantasies instead, and then just wallow in self-absorption, pity and indifference. Too often, this has boiled over into violence.

This still should not be something we just live with. But once again, we need to provide the God alternative by making the effort to reach out, and witness to God's love working in us, proving that His happiness is the perfect antidote to any human misery. And that it is readily available. It is as near to others as the person standing next to them, as close as the next smile they see, as immediately present as in the next moment.

Violence has reached another new low – and with it, the world did end. I pray that it did. And I pray once again that from that demise, a new world emerges, where we all seek God first; where we pursue joy and happiness that revolve around Christ. Perhaps it is time to put on sackcloth, and pray for the world to begin anew, where **"according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."** (2 Pt 3:13)