



# COVENANT NEWS

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Volume 23 Issue 46

Bulletin Edition

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## NEWS

### BLD Newark conducts successful “...By His Grace” 2017 Fundraising Raffle

*And the winners are...*

2017 BLD RAFFLE (In celebration of our 25th Anniversary ... by His)	
PRIZE	WINNER
1st: 10-Day Trip to Holy Land for Two	23364 Name: <u>JULES ALMAZAR</u> Email:
2nd: Apple MacBook Pro 15.4"	01040 Name: <u>Analya Congleton</u> Email:
3rd: Apple iPad Pro with WiFi	27914 Name: <u>FILMORE FLORES</u> Email:
4th: 5 Consolation Gift Cards:	
1st Consolation	24005 Name: <u>CAROLINE S. LAGRADA</u> Email:
2nd Consolation	08456 Name: <u>J. Cam</u> Email:
3rd Consolation	33599 Name: <u>CIRILO DE JESUS</u> Email:
4th Consolation	09704 Name: <u>RICHARD &amp; LEE DELA FUENTE</u> Email:
5th Consolation	11679 Name: <u>CARMEL SANCHEZ</u> Email:

1st Prize: Jules Almazar, #23364

2nd: Analya Congleton, # 01040

3rd: Filmore Flores, #27914

Consolation prizes: Carol Legrada, #24005; John Cam, #08456; Cirilo de Jesus, #33599; Richard & Lee dela Fuente, #09704; Carmel Sanchez, #11679

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED MAKE THE RAFFLE A SUCCESS... and...

**THANK YOU LORD!!!**

To claim the raffle's prizes, winners should contact: Tony Abad at 201-244-5774 or Bing Frio at 973-767-8445

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## COUNSELS

### A Call to Live Up to Our God-Given Talents

THEME: God exalts those who use His gifts and blessings wisely.

WORD: Prv 31:10-13,19-20,30-31 ~ Ps 128:1-2,3,4-5  
1 Thes 5:1-6 ~ Mt 25:14-30

ORDER: “Come, share your master’s joy.” - Mt 25:23c

REFLECTION:

*The* first reading from Proverbs speaks about five *talents* of a worthy wife. The *talents* are her hard-working ethic, resourcefulness, charity, great initiative, and most importantly, fear of the Lord. The wife that is referred to in this reading is the Church.

The Psalm affirms that fear of the Lord is the wife’s (or the Church’s) greatest talent. Fear here is not synonymous with terror or fright, but it’s a fear of losing great rewards when one is not faithful to Christ and His calling.

The second reading reminds us of the certainty of end times, not so much for humanity, but more for our individual selves, which can happen when we least expect it. Its relevance to this Sunday’s readings is with regards the urgency of profitably living our Christian life while we still can. This means that to love God is to bring others to Him to be saved. This is our great commission if we are to be disciples of Jesus.

Jesus’ Parable of the Talents in this Sunday’s Gospel explains that the master of the house gives his three servants varying degrees of trust, according to their abilities. One is given five talents, the other is given two

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### Promise of the Week

“...to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich.” (Mt 25:29a)

*A reflection based on last Friday's raffle experience:*



As I arrived at BLD last Friday evening, I could feel the excitement building. I didn't need a MacBook or an iPad, but I was excited about winning the grand prize and spending ten days in the Holy Land with my husband. I remembered selling the tickets to friends, describing BLD to them, about the different encounter classes, its medical mission to the Philippines, and other aspects of the Community. I also asked if they were interested in joining our encounters. Some probably bought tickets, hoping to win; others were just returning a favor.

When I entered the auditorium, eager and excited members were already cheering and clapping as the tamborlo (raffle drum) was spinning round and round. Many had their tickets in hand ready for the announcements of their names as prize winners. As each drawing was made, I heard the sound of a trumpet and a long drumroll before the emcee read the winning ticket numbers. First were the consolation prizes; then, after a short intermission, it was time for the major prizes, and there was even more cheering and clapping.

By the end of the night, the winners were happy; everyone else congratulated them. We all cheered and thanked the Lord for blessing the efforts of everyone in the fund-raiser. I had hoped to win; I didn't, but I enjoyed the night. There were thrills and suspense, and it allowed me to get to know more of the BLD Community, where even just simple fun can create extreme joy in me, and I shared the happiness with everyone.

But I wasn't done yet. On the way home, I asked the Lord why I did not win anything, only to realize that Jesus had already given me a winning ticket. A ticket I didn't have to buy, but a ticket paid by Him already - a ticket to heaven, to be with our Father. As long as I hold on to this ticket and cling to Him, then I am a sure winner. Then I smiled again as I heard this passage at Mass from the following Sunday's reading, ***"For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven... Thus we shall always be with the Lord."*** (1 Thes 4:16-17).

***"...they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise... for to him all are alive."*** (Lk 20:36,38) Hold on to your ticket and together, let's whisper: "Thank you Lord, for because of You, we don't need a raffle to get to heaven. We just need to follow You and You'll be there waiting. AMEN!!!"

*The following is a reflection on the Parable of the Dishonest Steward, which was read at Mass a few weeks ago. It sheds an interesting light on one of Jesus' more complex teachings.*

## **The Prudent Steward**

Jesus presented to His disciples the Parable of the Dishonest Steward, whose prudence was commended by his employer (Lk 16:1-8). It is somewhat surprising that the Lord, Who has the whole world before Him to select His lessons from, chose a parable of worldly wisdom to teach His disciples. It is also not easy to comprehend that from his dishonesty, the servant would be praised. But the Lord does not always give us examples to imitate; more importantly He wants us to learn from them.

The children of light can learn something from the children of darkness. Evil people are resourceful and passionate; they make sacrifices to achieve their evil ends. Some go to greater trouble to reap ill-gotten gains, as compared to the efforts exerted by devout, spiritual men in their quest for the spiritual reward of eternal life. Jesus must have said this to further stimulate the spiritual zeal of His disciples, in order to secure more souls.

The means, as well as the ends of worldly people are different from those who are spiritual. From a worldly man's viewpoint, the pursuit of gains and pleasures is carried out with much energy and skill. So, a Christian, with a clearer and purer Light, should also pursue his goals with an energy and zeal similar to those exhibited by the worldly. Jesus wasn't holding up the wicked servant as a model, but gave His disciples a specific example of the wisdom of the world to learn from.

The praise of the master did not indicate moral approval. He only praised the steward's cleverness. The steward made the debtors his friends, winning their sympathy. He used the short time that remained and the resources still at his disposal to secure his future. Although we still can, do we use the time and talent that we possess, and the opportunities that remain, to answer our calling and make our after-life secure?

Jesus is telling *the children of light*, particularly those Christians seeking more faith, to employ prudence in their pursuit of the Kingdom. Prudence, a gift of the Holy Spirit, is the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason; it involves shrewdness in the management of affairs, and skill and good judgment in the use of resources.

Let us pray and ask God to grant us ways to make better choices in accord with His will and His wisdom; and let us lean on Him for strength. As we make choices guided by the Holy Spirit, we won't end up with regrets, but we will find fulfillment and peace, thrilled by how He works in our lives.

## Now Even More Grateful

A rule that I've learned over the years of serving God through this Community is that He answers prayers under His conditions, not ours. For years, He has never failed to send His blessings to me and my family; and while there may be trials that come along, there are also His miracles.

One Sunday evening last April, I was cooking dinner for the family, when suddenly I felt excruciating abdominal pain, which soon brought me to the ER. I was diagnosed with Acute Pancreatitis; my pancreas was inflamed and infected. I was treated with heavy doses of antibiotics and pain relievers, but the pain stayed with me. So the doctor referred me to a specialist because he suspected that some cysts were in my pancreas. Although my concern grew, there was an unexplained peace within me.

The specialist told me that there were two adenomas, and that he had to put two temporary stents to enable my pancreas to function properly, with the hope that after the procedure, things would heal normally. But the pain got worse; one of the cysts grew by 11% in ten days! Armed with faith, my wife and I prayed, asking for intercessions, from Padre Pio to the Blessed Mother; this was especially urgent since John 6 Crossings was coming up soon and we were pressed for time. I also started asking people in the Community for help. After consulting with BLD members who were medical professionals, it was unanimous that I should seek out a pancreatic specialist. With continued prayers, we found someone, even though he only took on special cases. Upon seeing me and reading through my medical history, he scheduled an immediate endoscopy procedure due to the rapid growth of one of the cysts.

But surprisingly, after the procedure, I woke up without any pain at all! I got off the recovery bed, and was sent home as if nothing had happened. With that, alongside my wife and the John 6 core, and with a clean bill of health, I was able to serve at the retreat the following weekend.

Two weeks later, during the post-surgery meeting with the specialist, he was astonished. His exact words were, "I don't know what to tell you, but the reason why I had you scheduled for an early surgery was because I was concerned of the two adenomas that showed in the MRI and CTSCAN; but we did not find any." And when I went to see my primary physician, she said that in 40 years of practice, she had never seen anything like it.

Now you see it, now you don't... God not only healed me, He made the adenomas disappear!

God answers prayers, but under His conditions not ours. My family's way of thanking God for the blessings, the trials and the miracles is simply by serving Him the most that we can, because He too gave us His life; He gave us His all. And this thanksgiving, we are even more grateful than ever before.

## COUNSELS

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and the last servant receives only one. The master is not unfair, but through this parable, Jesus wants to assure us that we are given tasks and responsibilities that we are capable of doing, and that what's important is that we use the talents. We should not be afraid of receiving less reward than others; because, as in the parable of the field workers, those who arrived at different hours of the day, through the Master's generosity at the end of their work, received equal pay; for us, the reward is eternal life with Him.

Each of us has so many God-given talents that we can use in this Community to serve Him through our service to our fellowmen. We gain even more when we exercise them as we bring others to come and know Christ. When we joined this Community, we felt the profound experience of the love of Christ and renewed hope in Him that planted the seeds of excitement of sharing His Good News with others. He will continue to sustain us.

As a Community, BLD has been entrusted with five talents which we put into action and operation via BLD Newark's five Apostolates and their respective ministries. All of these talents must be invested for the singular and united purpose of evangelizing others. They must be used collectively to reap a greater harvest. If used separately, the results of our work of evangelization will be limited; but when used together, our efforts will be a thousand times more effective.

The Community's talents referred to in the readings and as embodied in the Apostolates are mere tools. Tools do not operate by themselves; so, we need to pick them up and use them. We need to use the proper tools according to what's needed, and should directly gear them towards this greatest purpose - EVANGELIZATION. How can we reap a good harvest, a harvest that can be reinvested to multiply the produce, if we do not use these different talents together towards our most fundamental purpose? These five talents should be united and concentrated in the Community's effort towards the primary goal of our calling - to bring others to salvation through Christ.

The greater reason why a community does not work together to use their talents is because of FEAR - fear of losing control; fear of inadequacy, of inability to contribute enough; fear of living up to expectations, and, most disparaging of all, fear of losing ownership of the talents. Recognizing that our talents are God-given and that our very own being ... *Continued on page 4*

# COUNSELS

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belongs to God is the first step towards becoming more profitable workers. As branches, we must cling to the Vine so that we may bear much fruit (Jn 15:5). We must be wary that if we do not use our talents as one body in Christ, we will become unproductive.

As with the first servant in the Parable of the Talents, our Community has been blessed to receive the most. We must use our respective talents towards the greater good of strengthening our evangelization efforts so that we may produce the greatest harvest out of every encounter weekend, retreat, mission and seminar, all of which we pray we will continue to have.

As we pray for the ongoing ME#49, let us also pray for our Community - that its heart, mind and spirit may collectively heed the call to work towards greater evangelization efforts, and for the Holy Spirit to show us the way to do this, trusting in this week's promise: "... to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich." (Mt 25:29a)

### Directions:

1. Be faithful in small matters, and you will be entrusted with great responsibilities.
2. Use your God-given talent to evangelize and help others grow in holiness.

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# NEWS

(from page 1)

The pictures below show some of the excitement from last Friday's drawing of the winning tickets of this 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary "... by His Grace" Fundraising Raffle:



A pdf of this Covenant News and more information about BLD are available online at BLDNEWARK.com

# LORD'S PROVISION

Previous Week's

Collections:	Prior Week	YTD
Tithes	\$ 901	\$ 61,287
Love Offerings	\$ 1,333	\$ 55,055
Mission Collections	\$ -	\$ 5,407
Raffle	\$ 10,386	\$ 38,620

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

Thank you for your continued support!

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



## Medical Mission to the Philippines, 2018

Tarlac City, Tarlac / February 5-8

Marshaling	Schedule	Date	Apostolate
		Nov 24	Management
		Dec 1	Mission
		Dec 8	Pastoral
		Dec 15	Evangelization