



Bukás Loób sa Diyós

(Open in Spirit to God)

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC COVENANT COMMUNITY
DISTRICT OF NEWARK

COVENANT NEWS

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NEWS

COUNSELS

Arise! The Spirit is Alive!

Last Saturday, Fr. John Gordon addressed the BLD Newark Community and fanned its spirit into flames after eighteen months of separation. By reminding us of what the Baptism of the Holy Spirit means and what its core characteristics are, he made us realize our identity as a charismatic community rich in gifts and prayerful members once again. He recalled his own journey as one baptized in the spirit 46 years ago, which marked him with the love for Scripture, desire to be with like souls, hunger for prayer, evangelistic zeal and especially JOY! Fr. Gordon energetically led us in the realization that we are in the challenging phase of our faith and that we must use our gifts to bring forth Jesus in numerous hearts by having Him in ours first. He asked us to eliminate fear and doubt as they are not of the Spirit.

He addressed concerns about social media, yoga, diversity of religions and many others. His response was that media/social media is not evil by itself. It was instrumental for the Catholic churches and ministries in reaching its members during the pandemic. But, excessive attachment like television binging can isolate or hinder relationships. Yoga is not merely a bodily activity, so we must know the spiritual background of the teacher and their teachers down to the very root to see if it is not of Christ. Christian meditation is recommended instead. Regarding the diversity of religions, pre-Christian religions like Buddhism and Hinduism aspire to the best in humanity. Judaism developed into Christianity/ Catholicism, which has the Holy Spirit, in contrast to post-Christian religions like Islam, which has another spirit.

Fr. Gordon exhorted the community to keep the Holy Spirit's fire alive for where two or more are gathered in God's name, He is there. He anointed the congregation with oil from Jerusalem, laying hands, that some were slain. One participant felt that every church should have this LSS experience so that church will not be as usual but even better!

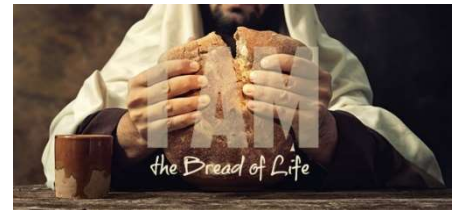
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Whom Will You Serve?

THEME: We are nourished for eternal life when we accept and follow Jesus, the Holy One of God.
WORD: Jos 24:1-2A, 15-17, 18B/ Ps 34:2-3, 16-21/ Ep 5:21-32/ Jn 6:60-69
ORDER: "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ." – cf. EPH 5:21

REFLECTION:

John, in the Gospel reading for this Sunday, brings us to the final stage in Jesus' discourse



on the Bread of Life. We find Jesus in Capernaum, in the synagogue with the Jews and His disciples. We feel the tension in the air continuing to build up. We see the Jews quarreling among themselves. We hear Jesus' words: "**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.**" (John 6:54) Then, we hear the murmurings, coming not from the crowd but from Jesus' own disciples: "**This saying is hard; who can accept it?**" (John 6:60)

The thought of eating someone's flesh was already unacceptable; the idea of drinking blood was even more repugnant. Blood was considered holy and used in sacrifices. In the Book of Leviticus, it says: "**Since the life of every living body is its blood, I have told the Israelites: You shall not partake of the blood of any meat ... anyone who partakes of it shall be cut off.**" (Leviticus 17:14)

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Promise of the Week

"Many are the troubles of the just one but...the Lord delivers him." – Ps 34:20

BLD Newark is on FIRE!

Arise! The Spirit is Alive!

On this momentous day of August 14, 2021, our community was once more blessed with the great comeback of the Holy Spirit. The much-awaited retreat finally came to fruition as the community gathered as one body in Christ. After a respite of 18 months, marked by lockdowns and sudden loss of lives and countless suffering endured by many, God blessed the community with a truly Spirit-filled retreat that traced our giftedness that began at our baptism. It was a day with our Lord as God spoke through our retreat director, Fr. John Gordon, Archdiocesan Vicar for Pastoral Life and Evangelization.

It was a day of self-examination, a day of prayer and meditation, a day of reckoning and repentance for our failures, a day to celebrate our life's overflowing blessings, a day to cherish God's presence in our lives. It was the day for us to, once more, recommit our allegiance and loyalty to Him as we gave our loving response to His call: **"YES, LORD!"**

The day was truly a gift from the Lord as it swiftly flowed into a Disciples Assembly where effective ministry and service to the Lord was the main focus. Best of all, we closed the day with a Eucharistic Celebration by Fr. Joseph Meagher, our District Spiritual Director.

"Well done, good and faithful servant."

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all who contributed to this awesome undertaking. Thank you so much for everyone's labor of love in making the Community Retreat a joyous and successful event that brought our brethren together; an event that renewed everyone's spirit and commitment to do God's work.

Your willingness to use your gifts and abilities has strengthened the Vision, Charism and Mission of our Community. You have also been an example of servant-leadership and giving of one's self.

For all your time, effort, hard work, and prayers, please accept the gratitude and appreciation of the DCS. You have all been a true blessing and model to one and all.

Our sincere thanks to those who responded to God's invitation. Thank you, Fr. John Gordon and Fr. Joseph Meagher!

Most importantly we give thanks to our Triune God! To God we give all honor, glory, and praise! → →

NEWS

(from page 1)

With more than 110 members in attendance, the retreat was followed by the Disciples' Assembly which was a special time earmarked for the community to express their deepest sentiments and expectations. It was our Lord's way of exhorting everyone to lead a life of deep faith, to come together in prayer and fruitfully work with each other to fulfill God's plan for the community as one united body, where one contributes according to God given gifts.



The much-awaited Assembly was capped by a Eucharistic Celebration, with Fr. Joseph Meagher, District Spiritual Director, as celebrant and duly assisted by Deacon Rod Soriano.

God is good all the time. The day spent with the Lord and His BLD flock renewed the community's spirit and brought a vibrant commitment in people's hearts, as the Spirit in us is truly ALIVE!

Arise! The Spirit is Alive!

"Indeed, the Word of God is living and effective... penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart!" (Hebrews 4:12)

→ ***"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."*** (Philippians 4:8)

AMDG,
Boyie & Stella Huelgas
For the DCS

COUNSELS (from page 1)

Many of the disciples could not accept Jesus' words because they could not understand. Because they would not believe that Jesus is the One sent by the Father, the Bread that came down from heaven, the Bread they must eat to have eternal life.

"Does this shock you?" Jesus asked them, and then, He turned the heat even higher: He predicted His own ascension. The Jews had heard of *Enoch's* assumption (Genesis 5:24), of Elijah being taken up to heaven on a flaming chariot and flaming horses (2Kings 2:11), and of Moses, who **"... to this day no one knows the place of (his) burial."** (Deuteronomy 34:6) But they had not seen nor heard of Jesus, Who they knew was the son of the carpenter Joseph, ascending to heaven. If they did not believe in Him as the One sent from heaven, how would they believe that He could ascend?

Understanding Jesus' words and wisdom comes to those who believe, and to those who believe are given the spirit to know and understand.

Jesus knew who among His disciples would not believe; He knew they would leave. This may have brought sadness; but He was not about to change His language, or soften it, or explain to them to convince them to stay. **"No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."** (John 6:65) The offer of eternal life is free, to those open to receive it.

Jesus then turned to the Twelve, **"Do you also want to leave?"** (John 6:67) Peter's response was a profession of his loyalty and friendship to Jesus.

"Master, to whom shall we go?" – John 6:68
Speaking for the group, Peter may not have fully understood all that Jesus was saying. But he had the gift of faith; the eyes of his mind were open to accept truth and wisdom. **"You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."** (John 6:68-69)

When we have come to believe, Jesus invites us to bring our consciousness to a higher level. He challenges us to see that when He gives His flesh for us to eat, "the food we eat is not turned into us. We are turned into the food; we are made into Christ." Jesus calls us to enter into a communion, to be in union with His flesh, to be one flesh with Him, in His gift of self for the salvation of us all. (cf. M. Basil Pennington, Seeking His Mind)

It is the Father's will to bring together His sons and daughters that they may enjoy the bliss of the kingdom of heaven. It is an open invitation for all, yet many find it hard to accept it. The road to heaven → →

→ is long and narrow. It requires sacrifice from those who have been called. The disciples went through hardships as they preached the Gospel. Paul, most persecuted among the Apostles, suffered illnesses, was imprisoned, flogged, and stoned. Three times he was ship-wrecked and was robbed; he went through hunger and thirst, cold and exposure. (cf. 2Corinthians 11:23-27) And yet, Paul continued with his journeys.

We could imagine the struggles of the early Christian men in their transformation as they worked to accept and embrace equality with their wives – at a time when women were considered inferior to men. We wonder how they were seen by the society. They may have been the object of ridicule, and may even have been cast off.

Today, the faith community - our beloved BLD, faces a challenge of a different nature: to adopt the regulations set forth by the public health officials, particularly that on social distancing, as we gather in fellowship and in prayer. How can we come together as a community – to reignite the fire of our faith, to keep strong our bonds, to encourage new and current members to continue this journey with us – when we cannot come together? Yes, we have learned to take on new ways. We have held virtual and hybrid Masses and Praise & Worship Fridays to somehow connect with members who could not come in-person and with members who don't, despite being vaccinated. The Delta variant has caused anxiety for some people. What else can we do in the midst of this unprecedented time? Through all of these we believe that God provides – all the time, as we continue to serve the Lord with humility, respecting one another. And we hold on to His promise, **"Many are the troubles of the just, but the Lord delivers from them all."** (Psalm 34:20)

Remembering God's goodness, how God drew his people out of their miseries, out of slavery and into the



Promised Land, Joshua renewed his commitment to God as he rallied all the tribes of Israel. **"... decide today whom you will serve ... As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."** (Joshua 24:15)

The success of the retreat and Disciples' Assembly held last Saturday attended by more than a hundred members, with masks, sanitizers, and physical distancing, was a testimony that despite obstacles, we shall arise, because the Spirit is alive!

The following is a reflection from the Singles Ministry

Revival of the Holy Spirit

To walk into the Divine Mercy Parish auditorium with all the decorations, seats set up, food in the kitchen, and the Praise Ministry on the stage certainly stirred up a nostalgic feeling of community, reminiscent of LSS seminars that we've had in the past. The obvious differences though were the strict temperature checks, hand sanitizers that were all over the place, members in masks, and the hardest part of all, the social distancing and refraining from hugs and common "beso-beso". However, despite COVID-19, the Holy Spirit was working, moving and alive in each of our Christian hearts. It didn't matter if at first, one was scared or lukewarm in spirit, our Lord allowed for a revival to take place.

Fr. Gordon was a breath of fresh air as he led us through the Word, reminding us of what others before had experienced in their walk with the Lord. Fr. Gordon was the representation of our Heavenly Father, and through him, our God said that it is time to rekindle the fire of the Holy Spirit and to trust that it is okay to once again be the many hands that make the work in our community lighter. We were reminded that our gifts were not meant to be hidden in fear, but are to be used to save souls in the name of Jesus. Our BLD community needs our fruits and gifts. And yes, while COVID-19 is real, our God is greater! As Fr. Gordon anointed each participant, hearts were set afire, dormant gifts were awakened, new gifts were released as proof that our God is indeed greater!

Yes, we will continue to follow and diligently observe CDC guidelines, but that should not stop us from using our God given talents and gifts to save souls in the name of Jesus and for the greater glory of God. Through it all, we embrace this revival of the Holy Spirit together with all our fruits and gifts as we enter the new normal, and continue to serve our brethren in our BLD community.

THE WORD MINISTRY IS LOOKING FOR YOUR REFLECTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE COVENANT NEWS!!!

Suggested Topics:

- Reflection based on the Mass Readings for an upcoming birthday or special days
- Blessings during the time of Pandemic
- Various themes involving faith and spirituality

Reach out to Word Ministry (Word@BLDNewark.com) if you have any ideas for the Covenant News.

LORD'S PROVISION PREVIOUS WEEK'S

Collections:	Last Week	YTD
Tithes & Love Offerings / E-Giving / Mailed Checks	\$ 2,769	\$72,039
Covid 19 Collection	\$ -	\$ 1,990
Mission	\$ -	\$ 5,000

Financial details are available to all members through treasury@bldnewark.com

Donate
to BLD Newark

Thank you for your
generosity and support

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

- from St. Anthony's Shrine, Boston, MA

Receive my offering, O Lord.

It is not charity because You are not a beggar.

It is not a contribution because You have no need for it.

It is not my leftovers because You want more than that.

My gift, O Lord, represents my gratitude, my love... for whatever I have, it is because You have given it to me.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



BLD NEWARK
PRAISE & WORSHIP
A Night of Praise & Worship
Friday, August 20, 2021 - 8:00 PM
"Many are the troubles of the just one but...the Lord delivers him."
Ps 34:20

Protecting God's Children
Certification Course
DMP Library
Saturday, August 28, 2021
8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Please note that a pdf of this Covenant
News is also available online at
BLDNEWARK.com