

BLD WASHINGTON



BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsel

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

Theme: We are vigilant for the coming of Jesus when we repent of our sins.

Word: Redemption is at hand for those who are vigilant for the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man.

Order: “.....*Prepare the way of the Lord* make straight his paths.” (LK 3:4)

(BLD Global Community reflection for December 2009)

REFLECTION:

During Advent season, we are confronted with the challenge of preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ. We tend to confuse the spiritual message of the season with the commercial aspects of the celebration. And so we go on frenzied shopping sprees looking for bargains and gifts to give to those close to us – family members, relatives, friends, neighbors, officemates. We over-extend our budget; even over-spend on our credit cards so that no one will be left out in the gift-giving. We buy expensive and colorful ornaments because our neighbors have brighter Christmas decorations. We scour the supermarkets for rich and expensive food – ham, cheeses, imported fruits which we normally don't eat -- just to impress guests. In the midst of all this rush, we overlook our spiritual well-

being. Soon the significance of Christmas is lost to us. We no longer yearn for the coming of the Christ Child, let alone look forward to His final coming to us. We become engrossed in endless parties, and forget the reason for the celebration.

We could make Advent a fruitful time for our spiritual lives. The morning chill should remind us of the peace and serenity that is the Prince of Peace personified. His Word says: ***“Be still and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme on the earth.”*** (Ps 46:10) As we ponder on God and in His Power, He becomes our refuge and strength. As we recall our sinfulness, we lay claim to His mercy and grace, and His river of love will refresh our souls. As we look around us and behold the beauty of His creation, God will still our useless struggles and anxieties. He will gather us in the embrace of His Peace.

The Classic Christmas songs – like Silent Night, O Holy Night, O Little Town of Bethlehem - remind us of how Jesus came to save us from our sinfulness. These carols should inspire us to ponder on that first Christmas Eve, how Jesus, God the Son, came to us in a lowly manger, surrounded by animals, because they had no room for Him at the inn, reflecting on what St. Paul said in Phil 2:7: ***“Christ Jesus, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself***

taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness and found human in appearance.”

Spending time and singing Christmas carols with the family could help us realize the humility that was in Christ Jesus. It is something we should emulate. Advent should also encourage us prepare for a good confession so we can truly welcome Jesus in our hearts on Christmas Day. Repentance begins when, in the stillness of our hearts, we acknowledge we are sinners and that we have not yet fully accepted the love of God. When we recall those sins we have failed to confess, we also recall the instances we have hurt others.

St. John instructs us in the Gospel: *“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain shall be made low.”* (Lk 3:4b) St. Francis de Sales said this about the Gospel reading: *‘in as much as they represent obstruction, “The crooked shall be made straight, many twisting to be found”. It is penance that will fill up the valleys, lay low the mountains, and make straight the crooked paths. Do penance, says St. John, make low the mountains of pride, fill up these valleys, these ditches of tepidity and cowardice. Fill up the valleys, that is to say, fill your hearts with confidence and hope, because salvation is at hand.’*

St. Paul again reminds us in the second reading that God has already begun the good work in us and He will carry it to completion. His prayer, which can be our prayer too during this Advent season, is that our love for one another may abound not only in our hearts but in our deeds. We need to repent and confess our sins, so that with a clear conscience and blameless conduct, we may learn to value the things that really matter, up to the very day of Christ. So let us all be vigilant for the coming of Jesus not

only during the Advent season but for the rest of our lives.

Direction:

1. Repent and reconcile with God by confessing regularly, receiving Him in the Eucharist daily, visiting Him in the Blessed Sacrament often, and reflecting on His word daily and putting it into action.
2. Discern what is of value.

God’s Promise for the Week

“Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”
(Lk 3:5 & 6)

December 3

St. Francis Xavier

(1506-1552)

Jesus asked, “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Matthew 16:26a). The words were repeated to a young teacher of philosophy who had a highly promising career in academics, with success and a life of prestige and honor before him.

Francis Xavier, 24 at the time, and living and teaching in Paris, did not heed these words at once. They came from a good friend, Ignatius of Loyola, whose tireless persuasion finally won the young man to Christ. Francis then made the spiritual exercises under the direction of Ignatius, and in 1534 joined his little community (the infant Society of Jesus). Together at Montmartre they vowed poverty, chastity

and apostolic service according to the directions of the pope.

From Venice, where he was ordained priest in 1537, Francis Xavier went on to Lisbon and from there sailed to the East Indies, landing at Goa, on the west coast of India. For the next 10 years he labored to bring the faith to such widely scattered peoples as the Hindus, the Malayans and the Japanese. He spent much of that time in India, and served as provincial of the newly established Jesuit province of India.

Wherever he went, he lived with the poorest people, sharing their food and rough accommodations. He spent countless hours ministering to the sick and the poor, particularly to lepers. Very often he had no time to sleep or even to say his breviary but, as we know from his letters, he was filled always with joy.

Francis went through the islands of Malaysia, then up to Japan. He learned enough Japanese to preach to simple folk, to instruct and to baptize, and to establish missions for those who were to follow him. From Japan he had dreams of going to China, but this plan was never realized. Before reaching the mainland he died. His remains are enshrined in the Church of Good Jesus in Goa.

Comment: All of us are called to “go and preach to all nations” (see Matthew 28:19). Our preaching is not necessarily on distant shores but to our families, our children, our husband or wife, our coworkers. And we are called to preach not with words, but by our everyday lives. Only by sacrifice, the giving up of all selfish gain, could Francis Xavier be free to bear the Good News to the world. Sacrifice is leaving yourself behind at times for a greater good, the good of prayer, the good of helping someone in need, the good of just listening to another. The greatest gift

we have is our time. Francis gave his to others.



Patron Saint of: Japan & Missionaries

[Source: http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Saints/saint.aspx?id=1218](http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Saints/saint.aspx?id=1218)

Love Offering

Nov. 06, 2009 \$ 937.00
Nov. 13, 2009 \$ 425.00
Nov. 15, 2009 \$1,119.00
Nov. 20, 2009 \$ 962.00
Nov. 27, 2009 \$ 928.00

Thank you for your generosity!

December Calendar

Dec. 04 1st Friday Eucharistic Celebration
11 Praise & Worship
18 Eucharistic Celebration
Community Christmas Party
25 Christmas Day – No P&W

Reminder

Please sign in and wear your BLD IDs during Praise & Worship and Community Functions.