

BLD WASINGTON



BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsel

TEACHER, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Theme: We are vigilant for the coming of Jesus when, like Mary, we do the will of the Father.

Word: Mic 5:1-4; Ps 80:2-3,15-16,18-19; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45

Order: Do the will of God.

(BLD Global Community reflection for December 2009)

REFLECTION:

The Gospel in the 4th Sunday of Advent narrates how Mary bearing her child within her, through the miracle of God, traveled to her cousin Elizabeth. At that time, Mary's pregnancy was not known to anyone even to her betrothed husband, Joseph and Elizabeth, her relative. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, the child in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy. This confirmed that what was spoken to Mary by the Lord, which she believed, has been fulfilled. Having accepted this exalted vocation, she became the ideal model of Christian faith and discipleship. The work and grace of God in Mary's life transformed her entire being into the embodiment of faithfulness, love and obedience.

As Christians, this advent revelation prompts us to ponder on our love and obedience to our God and reflect on the readiness of our hearts for the coming of

Jesus. Deuteronomy 29:28 states: ***“Both what is still hidden and what has already been revealed concerns us and our descendants forever, that we may carry out all the words of His law.”*** Through the revealed will of God, the bible, we know God's plan, purposes and the moral will. The most important purpose of God's revealed will in the scripture is to lead us to salvation in Christ. In 2 Timothy 3:15, Paul told Timothy, ***“and that from infancy you have known the sacred scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”***.

As disciples of Christ we have the responsibility to search the scriptures and know God's Word as fully as we are capable of learning. Only through knowledge of the Word can we develop or increase faith, hope, charity, love, and other virtues. We have to attend seminars and teachings that will deepen our knowledge of Christ. We can only prove to be His disciples if we bear fruit by actualizing what God commands us to do. If we obey His commandments, then we love our neighbor and we abide in God. Romans 1:17 reveals: ***“For in it is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith; as it is written, the one who is righteous by faith will live”***.

Faith is a gift of God, a theological virtue infused by Him, by which we believe in Him and believe all that He has said and revealed to us, because He is Truth itself. By faith we freely commit our entire self to God and for this reason we seek to know God

and do His will. Obedience is faith in action to the will of the Father. Jesus himself did this when He said, ***“I come to do your will.”*** (Hebrews 10:9) And it is ***“by this ‘will’ that we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*** (Hebrews 10:10). By obeying the will of the Father, whom He loves, Jesus saves us.

Similarly, Mary’s obedience to the will of the Father was drawn by her love and deep-rooted faith in God. She believed that what was spoken to her by the Lord through Angel Gabriel would be fulfilled. She committed herself by responding, ***“May it be done to me according to your word.”*** (Luke 1:38) If we have Christ in us we must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it, confessing Christ before men and follow Him along the way of the cross.

Jesus wants us not only to participate in good works but also believe in Him to be able to come up higher and be like Him. When we are being obedient to God, we are just doing that: Knowing Him, loving Him and having a personal intimate relationship with Him. To accomplish this we must be attentive to God’s laws. Obedience to God is living God’s Word because we want to, and enjoy being filled with the love of Jesus. For a Christian, obedience is a very important factor for growth. However, to always obey the law is almost next to impossible. But we can honor and maintain obedience to God by pondering or meditating on the words of Jesus. This means focusing one’s thoughts on the scripture in order to understand it deeply.

To love God is to keep His commandments. In 1 John 14:15, Jesus says: ***“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”*** Let us be reminded that advent is not only for waiting but also preparing for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we prepare for the

coming of our Lord through His mercy and forgiveness may we increase and abound in love for one another and for all, so as to strengthen our hearts to be blameless before our God. Like Mary, our blessedness is in believing in God and doing His will.

Direction: Shepherd the flock by the strength of the Lord.

God’s Promise for the Week

“Blessed are you who believe that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” (Lk 1:45)

December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe



Mesoamerica, the New World, 1521: The capital city of the Aztec empire falls under the Spanish forces. Less than 20 years later, 9 million of the inhabitants of the land, who professed for centuries a polytheistic and human sacrificing religion, are converted to Christianity. What happened in those times that produced such an incredible and historically unprecedented conversion?

In 1531 a "Lady from Heaven" appeared to a humble Native American at Tepeyac, a hill northwest of what is now Mexico City.

She identified herself as the ever virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God for whom we live, of the Creator of all things, Lord of heaven and the earth.

She made a request for a church to be built on the site, and submitted her wish to the local Bishop. When the Bishop hesitated, and requested her for a sign, the Mother of God obeyed without delay or question to the Church's local Bishop, and sent her native messenger to the top of the hill in mid-December to gather an assortment of roses for the Bishop.

After complying to the Bishop's request for a sign, She also left for us an image of herself imprinted miraculously on the native's *tilma*, a poor quality cactus-cloth, which should have deteriorated in 20 years but shows no sign of decay 477 years later and still defies all scientific explanations of its origin.

It apparently even reflects in Her eyes what was in front of her in 1531.

Her message of love and compassion, and her universal promise of help and protection to all mankind, as well as the story of the apparitions, are described in the "Nican Mopohua", a 16th century document written in the native Nahuatl language.

There is reason to believe that at Tepeyac Mary came in her glorified body, and her actual physical hands rearranged the roses in Juan Diego's *tilma*, which makes this apparition very special.

An incredible list of miracles, cures and interventions are attributed to Her. Yearly, between 18 - 20 million pilgrims visit the Basilica, making it Christianity's most visited sanctuary.

Altogether 25 popes have officially honored Our Lady of Guadalupe. His Holiness John Paul II visited her Sanctuary four times: on his first apostolic trip outside Rome as Pope in 1979, and again in 1990, 1999 and 2002.

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated on December 12th. In 1999, Pope John Paul II, in his homily from the Solemn Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, during his third visit to the sanctuary, declared the date of December the 12th as a Liturgical Holy Day for the whole continent.

During the same visit Pope John Paul II entrusted the cause of life to her loving protection, and placed under her motherly care the innocent lives of children, especially those who are in danger of not being born.

Source <http://www.sancta.org/intro.html>

Love Offering

Nov. 20, 2009 \$ 962.00
Nov. 27, 2009 \$ 928.00
Dec. 04, 2009 \$1,177.00
Dec. 11, 2009 \$ 672.00

Thank you for your generosity!

December Calendar

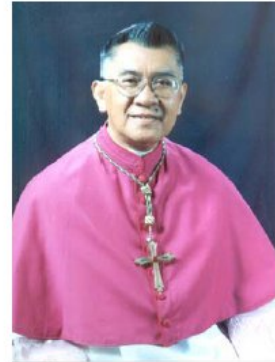
Dec. 04 1st Friday Eucharistic Celebration
11 Eucharistic Celebration
18 Eucharistic Celebration
Community Christmas Party
25 Christmas Day – No P&W

Reminder

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



Archdiocese of Jaro



**Bukas Loob sa Diyos Covenant Community
Global Districts**

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Let the Spirit of Christmas that caused the Word of God to become flesh-and-blood dwelling among us bring forgiveness to whatever was sinful or wrong in our life, bring perfection to whatever is yet imperfect, bring fulfillment to whatever we have been dreaming and envisioning as individuals, families and communities of Bukas Loob sa Diyos.

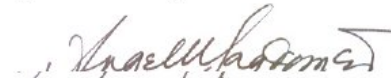
We have to keep on remembering and celebrating Christmas with a view of realizing and experiencing what Jesus Christ, Son of God, is challenging us to do: *"Follow me."* In this light we understand what Mary, his mother and our mother, has instructed us to do. *"Do whatever he tells you."* And he says *"Follow me."*

It is no longer simply watching the Christmas Crib – which by the way has become rare. But the spirit of Christmas must now find its way and expression in our lives. Jesus, who was born of Mary two thousand years ago, must become flesh-and-blood in us. There would not have been a first Christmas, if there had not been Mary and foster-father Joseph to accept God's will with all its challenges.

Christmas is now in you. Christmas is you . . . and you . . . and you . . . and you. Jesus Christ has now to become flesh-and-blood in you and me. It is a process, longer and more difficult than what happened in the sacred womb of Mary. The process takes a lifetime of *"incarnation."* And so there was Christmas in 2000 and long before that, and Christmas this year 2009 and many more years after this year.

It is an invitation to proclaim, different in spirit and intensity each time: *"Jesus Christ yesterday, today and forever."* You and I have a role in the presence of Jesus Christ in each moment of history.

Wherever you go with Jesus in you, your presence brings Christmas.


+ ANGEL N. LAGDAMEO
Archbishop of Jaro &
BLD Spiritual Director
December 10, 2009



BUKÁS LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY
The Executive Council of Servant Leaders

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



Dear Brothers and Sisters in the BLD Global Community

The Peace and Love of our Lord Jesus Christ is with you all!

During this Christmas season, we are all invited to reflect in a deeper way on the Love of God who sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Jesus was born in a manger because there was no room for Him in the inn; whose first visitors were the shepherds. In His humble birth, may we not be completely absorbed with the temporal concerns of this world but be focused more and more on the perspective of eternity and our salvation and those of others.

May we celebrate the feast of the birth of Jesus with **Love** – for our family, for our neighbor, for brothers and sisters in community, for our poor brethren, for those whom we have a misunderstanding, for those who have caused us pain; with **Thanksgiving** – for the blessings we have received this year, for the miracles we have witnessed in our family and in this community, and for the grace that allowed us to grow spiritually inspite of the trials, sufferings, and calamities in our lives.

May we all pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide each and every one to **live in, with, and for Christ** in the coming year; to continue to be a **blessing** for our family and for our community; to be empowered to continue to do the **Will of the Father** and the **Mission** given to BLD.

We thank you for all your help in forging unity in BLD and helping in our common mission to bring Jesus to others. Our prayers for you and for your family,

A blessed Christmas to all!

The Executive Council of Servant Leaders

Eliang Leah Sison
Eliang & Leah Sison
Presiding Servant Leaders



December 12, 2009