

BLD WASHINGTON



# BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS

## COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

### Counsels

#### Is Your Life Bearing Fruit?

**Word:** Acts:9:26-31; Ps 22:26-28, 30-32; 1 Jn 3:18-24; Jn 15:1-8

- **Theme: We have God's own heart when we live the Word that others may hear and understand.**
- **Orders: Remain in me, as I remain in you, so you will bear much fruits for without me you can do nothing**

This Sunday's gospel reading is one that we have heard many times but oftentimes, we do not see the significance in our lives. If we followed the sequence of events from the last verse of the previous chapter, this teaching happened right after the Last Supper on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane where the Lord's passion begun. Jesus refers to himself as the True Vine. The purpose of the vine is to bring nourishment to the branches in order that they might produce fruit. When separated from the vine, the branches wither and die. Likewise, the vitality of our spiritual life is dependent upon our connection to Christ the "true vine."

Each of us must answer two questions as we reflect on this reading. First, are we connected to the vine, or is the life of Christ flowing within us? Second, if we are connected to the vine and we are joined to Christ, then how much fruit are we producing through our lives; is there no fruit, some fruit, or an abundance of fruit? We have to ask ourselves what areas in our life hinders us from being truly fruitful. It is ironic but true, the one common answer is "Self". We bear fruit when we abide in Christ, but from time to time, we stop relying upon Christ and rely on our own strength and intellect. Jesus said, "No branch can bear fruit by itself!" In those times when we stop depending on Christ, it is then that the branch is unable to continue to produce fruit. Often, we may fall into sin once again simply because we didn't depend upon Christ, who is the source of life, to help us.

Do you ever have the feeling that in your life you're doing more and more and yet, are accomplishing less and less? Maybe we need to learn something from this lesson of the vine. When we just keep running and do more and more, we hamper our fruitfulness. All our energy will go into maintaining our activities so that we won't have energy to develop fruit that will really make a difference in the kingdom of God.

Sometimes we need to take a look at our lives and our community, let us ask ourselves if we've allowed our "growth" to get out of control. Are we doing things because they are fruit producing – or just because that's the way we've done it so far?

What does the Vine Grower do for the branch that produces little or no fruit? Does He cut the branch off and throw it away? No, the Father's desire is that each branch produces an abundance of fruit; Jesus said "Every branch in me that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

What is the Father doing when He prunes the branches? He is causing us to stop depending upon ourselves in order that we might rely fully on Christ the True Vine and be fruitful. PRUNING IS PAINFUL. But have you also noticed that although pruning is painful, PRUNING IS PRODUCTIVE. When the branches are pruned back, more fruit really is produced.

In His wisdom, our personal and communal lives are being subjected to regular pruning by the Lord. It is not to punish us but to correct areas in our lives that are growing farther away from Him and His plan for us. We often do not understand the Vine grower's intent but we must learn to trust that He knows what is best for us.

Saint Paul in Hebrews 12:7, 11 exhorts us: "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? . . . No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

**Newsbits**

**Spirit Moves Mightily in LSS#9**

If movie critics were to hail Life in the Spirit Seminar #9, they would no doubt use the words, “Powerful and moving!” Indeed, it was a triumph of the Spirit as hardened hearts were touched and transformed and long lost souls found their way to God.

The line to the confessional was indeed a victory of the weekend in itself, as lambs and some members of the working team, lined up to be reconciled to the Lord. For some penitents, it was a beautiful journey back home, after many many years away from the confessional.

Fr. Francis heard confessions on Friday, May 1, the first day of the LSS#9 weekend. Fr. Francis Alves, who acted as LSS#9 Spiritual Director, also made himself available for confession for the rest of the weekend.

Assisting Fr. Francis Alves in this year’s LSS#9 weekend were sharers: Ben & Armi Aranda, Maris Manansala, DV and Jackie DelValle, Mennen Castillo, Raul & Fe Fernando, Manny & Lisa Gaskell, Mario & Rose Alipio. Mel & Lolit Villegas exhorted the lambs during Baptism.

Congratulations to Tim & Elma Andrada, Archie & Marissa Santos, Jimmy & Lisa Almendrala, Geof & Chat Ampoyo, Manny & Lita Dialino, Oscar & Pinky Hernandez-Zuniga, Dong & Tess Jomuad, Rico & Angelyn Marzan, Jun & Shirley Raymundo, Pinky Teng, Diday Tuano, Lettie Salazar, Rose Samillano, Zeny Pascual, Karen Celino, Mila Atienza, Teresa O’Toole, Ann Bautista, Colette de Castro, Miko Capulong, and Kisses Ipanag.

May the seed planted by the Holy Spirit in LSS#9 bear much fruit in their lives!

**God’s Promise for the Week**  
*“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.” (Jn 15:7)*

**May/June Calendar**

May 1	LSS9 Invocation Mass (OLV)
8	Praise & Worship
15	Praise & Worship
22	Praise & Worship
29	Praise & Worship
30	Teachings (Venue TBA)
June 5	Eucharistic Celebration
12	Praise & Worship
19	Praise & Worship
26	Praise & Worship

Please check our website [www.bldwashington.com](http://www.bldwashington.com) for 2009 Schedule of Events.

**Teachings:**

May 30, 2009

1. Christian Maturity Program Part 1 (LSS#8)
  - Faith
  - Love
  - Renewing the Mind
2. King David Worship & Praise Workshop (for Praise volunteers, including aspiring volunteers from LSS#9)

June 6, 2009

- Agony in the Garden/Washing of the Feet Retreat for LSS#7 invitees, as well as older graduates who have yet to attend this very important and uplifting retreat. The retreat will be held on Saturday, June 6, from 9 AM-4 PM at St. Raphael Church.
- Invitations to this event will be sent shortly.

**Love Offering**

May 1, 2009	.....	\$1,022.00
May 3, 2009	.....	\$1,149.00
May 8, 2009	.....	\$ 803.00
May 15, 2009	.....	\$1,085.00