

BLD WASHINGTON



# BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

## Counsels

### Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension

**Word:** Acts 1:1-11; Ps 47:2-3, 6-9; Eph 1:17-23; Mk 16:15-20

**Theme:** We have God's own heart, when in Christ, we are co-defenders of the marginalized.

**Order:** "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." (Mk 16:15)

A few months ago, a controversial advertising campaign was launched in local Metro buses in the DC area. Sponsored by the American Humanist Association, the ad campaign asked, "Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness' sake." With this simple message, the atheists (or so-called humanists) promoted that good works devoid of God as praiseworthy, and espoused a very dangerous proposition, that God is not important, but people are!

This is truly disturbing because it is symptomatic of the secularism that prevails in our society today. Atheists want to take God out of our schools, out of our courts and out of our Constitution. Slowly but surely they have been making inroads, arguing that traditional Christian beliefs are intolerant, and that God has no place in our society. What they fail to realize, though, is that good works without God is empty. Without Christ, charitable acts are merely social work, and not the powerful message of self-sacrificial love that it should be! All efforts for lasting peace fail when Christ is removed from its midst. The advances in science and technology produce monsters when the plans of God the Father are ignored and subverted.

The devil is indeed very cunning in misleading people of today into believing that being a good person is enough. They do not need God or an organized religion to lead a fruitful, happy and peaceful life. And so, without this vision of God, without our anchor in Christ, everything becomes a

muddled mess. We claim to love our neighbor, but fail to recognize the unborn child hidden in the womb as one in most need of our love and protection. We claim to love all peoples, caring for their bodies, but neglecting the state of their souls.

It is not our good works that will save us. Christ alone saves! Blessed Mother Teresa understood it well. It was her love for Christ that propelled her to take action. To serve the poorest of the poor. To defend the marginalized. She lived the theme for this week: **"We have God's own heart, when in Christ, we are co-defenders of the marginalized."** The key phrase in this week's theme are the words: **WHEN IN CHRIST**. It is only **IN CHRIST** and **WITH CHRIST** and **THROUGH CHRIST** that our good and charitable works take root in the souls we help and bear fruit in their lives. Without Christ, who is the source of all life and grace, our words and action fall flat. Feeding the poor, clothing the naked, giving shelter to the homeless...while all good and noble endeavors, are doomed to fail for it does not accomplish the work of God, which is to lead all creatures back to their Creator. Devoid of Christ, these good works are in danger of being used for self-promotion rather than a selfless giving of oneself. Jesus is not fooled by our mask of decency. He is not impressed by our benevolence, for he sees clearly the pride and self-seeking motives that animate our acts. When we are rooted in Christ, we are able to see clearly with eyes of faith. We feed the poor, visit the sick, clothe the naked, not because it is the good thing to do, but because we see Jesus in them. Jesus Himself said, *"Whatever you do to one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."* (Mt. 25:40) We do not need to ask who is the least of our brothers, who are the marginalized, for with the eyes of Christ, we see who they are. They are the poor and the homeless, the sick and the dying, the lonely and the imprisoned. They are the children of impoverished and war-torn areas and the unborn babies hidden and threatened in the womb. They include the misunderstood celebrity, the rich man who trusts in wealth, the politician who seeks power, the intellectual who leans on his own understanding, the atheist who refuses to see Christ, the seeker who

looks for answers in new age fads and self-help books, the addict who is powerless against his addictions, the sinner who is in need of forgiveness, the lonely in search of love, the friend, the family member, and most especially, the person we see in the mirror every day.

The Ascension of Christ reminds us that we are to set our eyes upward to our heavenly destination. Love is not expressed in merely caring for the physical needs of our neighbor, while ignoring his immortal soul. True love consists in leading souls to heaven. It entails the practice of the spiritual works of mercy, including admonishing the sinner, instructing the ignorant, and counseling the doubtful. Too often, we are uncomfortable confronting others. But Christ calls us out of our comfort zone and challenges us to be a courageous and loving witness to the Truth in a world that has lost sight of its eternal goal. Even in the midst of persecution, we must not be afraid to stand up for the Truth and confront evil. For it is said, that all it takes for evil to succeed is for good men to remain silent.

St. Paul understood very well that the world we live in can be very dangerous, seductive and misleading. Thus, he exhorts us in the Second Reading, not be discouraged, anxious or afraid. He encourages us to keep our eyes fixed on the prize: *“May the eyes of your heart be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones...”* (Eph 1:18)

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Deepen your prayer life through frequent reception of the Sacraments, daily spiritual readings and meditations.
2. Put faith into action by participating in the community’s Feed the Homeless program, medical mission, Gawad Kalinga and other mission work.
3. Evangelize more effectively by learning more about Church teachings, particularly on controversial moral issues as taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church

**God’s Promise for the Week**

**“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon You.” (Acts 1:8)**

**May/June Calendar**

May 29	Praise & Worship (OLV)
30	Teachings (St. Raphael)
June 5	Eucharistic Celebration
6	Agony in the Garden/ Washing of the Feet Retreat (St. Raphael)
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
May 22, 2009	.....	\$ 926.00

*Thank you for your generosity!*