

BLD WASHINGTON



BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsels

Peace and Unity

Theme: We partake in Christ's prophetic mission when we are united in the bond of peace under one Spirit.

Word: 2 Kings 4: 42-44; Ps 145: 10-11, 15-18; Eph 4: 1-6; John 6: 1-15

Order: Preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace (Eph 4:3)
Live in a manner worthy of the call you have received (Eph 4:1)

Promise: *"The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth."* (Ps 145: 18)

(BLD Global Community reflection for July 2009)

REFLECTION: This Sunday's Gospel is about the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish. It is the only miracle found in all four gospels pointing to its singular importance among the many miracles our Lord performed. In this story, we see a reference to the Eucharist and its meaning in the life of the people of God.

St. Paul in the second reading, exhorts all Christians in Ephesus and worldwide, then and now, to *"live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace..."* (Eph 4: 1-3), summarizing in a few words what it means to be a follower of Christ. It gives a list of virtues that Christians need to cultivate to live a life united with Christ and with one another within our community and in the Body of Christ.

So what are those virtues?

- Humility- Before the Christian era, humility was seen as a shameful, and menial quality in contrast to how Christians see it at the forefront of all virtues. Christian humility comes out of self-knowledge, in the realization and acceptance of our own unworthiness as seen from the standard of Christ's perfect life. It comes from our sense of creatureliness who are in absolute dependence on God, our Creator.
- The second virtue is gentleness or meekness. One who possesses this virtue is the person who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time. He is kindled by indignation at the wrongs and sufferings of others but is never moved to anger by the wrongs and insults that he himself has to bear. He is the person who has every instinct and every passion under perfect control, not self-controlled but God-controlled.
- The third virtue is patience or long-suffering. It is the spirit that never gives in and endures to the end despite discouragements, misfortunes, and sufferings. It bears insult and injury without bitterness and complaint, remains gracious with unpleasant people and fools alike showing the patience towards his fellowmen which God has shown him.
- The fourth quality is love- the *agape* kind of love- the quality of mind and heart which compels a Christian never to feel any bitterness, nor any desire for revenge. It is the ability to seek the highest good for every man, the unlovely and unlovable, those who do not love us and even those whom we do not like.

As we humble ourselves, become gentle, patient and loving to one another, peace cannot be far behind and unity would be a given. But this will never be realized as long as we put ourselves in the center of things. When the self dies and Christ becomes the

center of things, then we become united as “*one body and one Spirit... called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*” (Ep 4:4-6)

As we go back to the Gospel, we meet Philip and Andrew and the little boy. They each had their own opposing beliefs, convictions and positions. Setting aside their own differences of opinions and following the Lord’s guidance, they were able to accomplish the impossible task of feeding the huge crowd in an orderly manner. With everyone doing their part, peace and unity reigned and the mission was accomplished.

As our community continues to grow, we are faced with the challenges of community and mission work in our ministries. It may not be surprising that conflicts and disagreements may arise with just as many different opinions, ideas and attitudes that come out as there are members in our ministries. In those situations, are we a Philip, an Andrew or the little boy? Can we put ourselves aside and follow the higher calling to humility, gentleness, patience, and love to ‘*preserve the unity of spirit through the bond of peace*’? Can we forsake of the need for recognition, relevance, power, and honor just like He did on the Cross to become the Body and Blood given for us to sustain us that we may have life with Him? Let us bring to Jesus what little we have to enable Him to multiply them and nourish us in our journey. Nothing is impossible with God as He is always with us, the Source of our strength. He is indeed “*near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.*” (Ps 145:18)

Direction: Practice humility, be gentle and patient, bear with one another.

July 25 - St. James the Greater Apostle

For James there was no indication that this was the day that his life would change. The dawn for him was not the bright beginning of a new day, but the end of long fruitless night of fishing. As James sat mending his nets in the boat with his brother John and his father Zebedee, he must have watched in wonder as his partner Simon brought in nets loaded with fish he had caught at the command of Jesus. Was he shocked when he saw Simon and his brother Andrew walk away from this incredible catch at a word from this same Jesus?

As he watched Jesus walk toward him followed by Simon and Andrew, did he feel curiosity, fear, hope, envy? Jesus didn't pass him by but, stopping by their boat, called James and his brother John to do just what Simon and Andrew had done. Without argument or discussion, James and John left their boat and even their father behind, and followed Jesus.

The first thing James saw after he followed Jesus was his teaching with authority in the synagogue and the cure of Simon's mother-in-law.

We all know that Jesus was the focus of James' life from then on, but it is also evident that James held a special place in Jesus' life.

He was chosen by Jesus to be one of the twelve apostles, given the mission to proclaim the good news, and authority to heal and cast out demons. To be named one of the twelve James must have had faith and commitment.

But even among the apostles he held a special place. When Jesus raised Jairus' daughter when all thought her dead, he only allowed James, John, and Peter to come with him. Even more important when he went up to the mountain to pray, he wanted James, John, and Peter to go with him. And it was there on the mountain they were privileged to witness what no one else had seen -- Jesus transfigured in his glory, speaking to Moses and Elijah, as the voice of God spoke from a cloud.

And with Simon Peter, James and John were the only ones of the apostles that Jesus gave a special name: Sons of Thunder.

To be singled out in these ways, James must have been a close and respected friend of Jesus.

It's no wonder then that James, along with John, felt that he had the right to go to Jesus and ask him to give them whatever they asked. As a mark of his love, Jesus didn't rebuke them but asked them what they wanted. They showed their lack of understanding of his mission when he asked that he let one of them sit on his right and the other on his left when he came into his glory. He replied that they didn't know what they were asking. They didn't see the cross in his future, but an earthly throne. Could they drink of the cup he would drink of? They replied that they could. He assured them they would indeed drink of that cup. (St. Matthew tells that their mother came [Mark says it was the brothers themselves] to ask for this favor for her sons. Despite the bad reputation their mother got for this, it should be remembered that she too had followed Jesus in his travels, providing for him, and was one of the women who stayed with Jesus as he was

crucified when the apostles, including her son James, had fled.)

The other apostles were furious at this request. But Jesus used this opportunity to teach all of them that in order to be great one must be a servant.

James and John did show further lack of understanding of their friend and Lord when he was turned away by Samaritans. They wanted to use their newfound authority as apostles not to heal but to bring fire down on the town. (Perhaps Jesus gave them their Sons of Thunder nickname because of their passion, their own fire, or their temper.) Jesus did reprimand them for their unforgiving, vengeful view of their power.

But despite all these misunderstandings, it was still James, Peter, and John that Jesus chose to join him in prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane for his final prayer before his arrest. It must have hurt Jesus that the three of them fell asleep on this agonizing evening.

James did drink of the cup Jesus drank of, all too shortly after the Resurrection. Acts 12:1 tells us that James was one of the first martyrs of the Church. King Herod Agrippa I killed him with a sword in an early persecution of the Church. There is a story that the man who arrested James became a convert after hearing James speak at his trial and was executed with him.

James is called James the Greater because another younger apostle was named James. He should not be accused with this James, or the James who is a relative of Jesus, or the James who was an elder of the Church in Jerusalem and heard Peter's defense of baptizing Gentiles. James, son of Thunder, was dead by then.

Legends have sprung up that James evangelized Spain before he died but these stories have no basis in historical fact.

James is the patron saint of hatmakers, rheumatoid sufferers and laborer.

Source: <http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint>

Prayer to Saint James the Apostle

O glorious Apostle, St. James, who by reason of thy fervent and generous heart was chosen by Jesus to be a witness of His glory on Mount Tabor, and of His agony in Gethsemane; thou, whose very name is a symbol of warfare and victory: obtain for us strength and consolation in the unending warfare of this life, that, having constantly and generously followed Jesus, we may be victors in the strife and deserve to receive the victor's crown in heaven. Amen

July Calendar

- July 03 Eucharistic Celebration
- 10 Praise & Worship
- 17 Praise & Worship
- 24 Praise & Worship
- 25 New Creation Realities
- Christian Maturity Program 1 (Part 2)
- 31 Praise & Worship

Please check our website www.bldwashington.com for 2009 Schedule of Events.

Community Calendar

- August 9, 2009
 - Community Day Bretton Woods Germantown, Maryland
- September 18-20, 2009
 - Singles Encounter No.4 Homewood Suites, Dulles, Virginia
- November 13-15, 2009
 - Marriage Encounter No. 10 Dulles Hilton, Dulles, Virginia

Love Offering

- July 03, 2009 \$1,277.00
- July 10, 2009 \$ 822.00
- July 17, 2007 \$1,162.00
- July 24, 2009 \$ 657.00

Thank you for your generosity!

Reminder

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