



BLD WASHINGTON
BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS
COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsel

“FINISH YOUR LIFE ON THE CROSS”

Theme: Christ’s call for repentance exhorts us to carry our cross daily.

Word: Is 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-9,17-20,23-24;
Phil 2:6-11; Lk 22:14- 23:56

Order: Be Christ-like in enduring suffering.

(BLD Global Community reflection for March 2010)

REFLECTION:

As we enter the most solemn of the weeks of our liturgical year, we are invited to reflect on the final days of the earthly life of Jesus. It is a week of violent contrasts and surprises seeing the King entered Jerusalem on a lowly ass, sold by his own disciple with a holy kiss, betrayed by his most trusted follower and abandoned by the rest of his disciples. He was accused a criminal for his innocence, mocked as a king crowned with thorns. As He became sin, He was separated from his Father for the very first time and experienced the most unimaginable wrenching pain. Even the Father in heaven suffered a self-inflicted pain seeing His only begotten Son tortured to death for sins He did not commit. This is Jesus’ passion born out of love for us.

St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians touched on the theology of self-giving kenosis (a Greek word for emptiness). It is the total self-emptying and surrender of one’s will to God’s perfect will. Jesus made himself nothing, humbled himself, and became obedient to death.

As St. Paul’s letter to the Romans says, *“For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many were made righteous.”* During this holiest Lenten week, we witness the unraveling of the Paschal Mystery as the greatest love story of humankind. In Christ comes the greatest form of service, the crucifixion. In Jesus comes the greatest expression of love, the Cross.

We are a community of covenanted disciples and in line with our worship’s direction we are called upon to be imitators of Christ, that we carry our cross everyday and be Christ-like in enduring suffering. The passion is not only about the blood, the scourging and crowning with thorns. We need to strive beyond the metaphors of the crucifixion. It is something we are to imitate. It is about our moral and emotional athleticism. It is about the test inside of love, our own passion and death.

Jesus said, *“Learn from me,”* giving us a model to follow. Through Christ, He gave us a clear blueprint of how to live a fulfilled life. What does it really mean to us today to take up one’s cross? Is a cross a mere inconvenience of our earthly life?

For us disciples to take up our cross would be to take the suffering and inconveniences that are in front of us right now and use them to generate love, just as Christ perfected love on the cross. By commending ourselves to God in full trust and confidence, our dear God can make good out of any situation, relationship problems, and illnesses. The crisis we have today is not the rest of the story. It will be defined by our readiness to embrace our cross and retrace Christ's footsteps to Calvary.

We can accept our cross freely like Christ or carry it with resentment. When problems become almost unbearable we forget and abandon God as a distant cold deity. We set him aside and we live with the illusion of self-sovereignty over our lives.

At times we choose a cross that makes us feel best. We even carry other people's crosses yet we ditch out our very own cross. Occasionally we are asked to put down the cross we carry but we refuse to relinquish, or even disdain help from others. We create walls around us and we become too invincible and invulnerable. Yet our Redeemer allowed a Cyrenian to help Him carry the cross.

The Cross was Jesus' task set for Him and our cross is the task that God has set for us. To carry our cross is the acceptance everyday that to follow Jesus is to give up our right and expectation to control our lives. It is not our life anymore. All our want and our priorities are to be crucified. In return we get a life that actually will last but that life is not ours to own. When we carry our cross, we are condemned to death. We are dead and Christ lives in us. Just like the grain of wheat that falls on the ground, it remains a grain of wheat, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

We do not carry our cross for Christ. We carry it with His grace. As Pope John Paul II quoted a poet "Do not follow yourself with the cross of the Savior, but follow the Savior and your cross." Jesus carried the cross that was not His. It was yours and mine. He paid the highest cost, the cost of the cross, for us, the cost of repentance and conversion.

Directions:

1. Do not rebel against authorities. Do not turn your back to those in need. Do not shield yourself from criticisms
2. Relive the passion, death and resurrection of Christ in our individual and communal life.

God's Promise for the Week

***"The Lord God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced;...I shall not be put to shame."
(Is 50:7)***



Palm Sunday starts week close to Filipinos' heart

Filipinos value Holy Week so much that they call it "Mahal na Araw" to symbolize how much they revere the commemoration of Jesus Christ's final moments.

"To call something mahal means it is near your heart. The days unfolding are so dear to the hearts of every Filipino," said Fr. Genaro Diwa, head of the liturgical affairs ministry of the Archdiocese of Manila. Holy

Week is the series of Church observances commemorating the various events in the final days of Christ's life—His Passion and the events which immediately led up to it. It is the week which precedes the greatest of all Christian feasts, the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. It begins on Palm Sunday, commemorating Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and ends in the three sacred days of Holy Week. Maundy Thursday, derived from Jesus' "mandate" to love one another as he loves us, also celebrates Jesus' institution of the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Ordination. Good Friday commemorates Christ's crucifixion and death and Holy Saturday is the final night before the Feast of the Resurrection, which begins at the Easter Vigil.

Buildup to Easter - The Church provides the rites and worship dedicated to reenacting the final events of Christ's life so that Holy Week is generally a busy time for Catholics in the Philippines as they build up to the great feast of Easter. According to Diwa, the way Filipinos spend the week in total solemnity is something peculiar to the culture that values religious traditions. He said the Holy Week celebrations in Rome, where the seat of government of the Catholic Church is located, are nowhere as somber as in the Philippines. A foreigner observing the bustling streets of Manila would notice the sudden slack in activities during the seven days of Holy Week, he said.

'Everything stops' - "It is as if everything stops. Everything becomes slower. The liturgical celebration is so important that it affects the normal flow of life of Filipinos," he said. Holy Week in the Philippines starts with the celebration of Palm Sunday, or Passion Sunday. While the worship services are usually remembered for the blessing of the palms, Diwa said the palms are actually just an auxiliary to the faithful's understanding of the special importance of this particular Sunday.

It is on Palm Sunday that the story of Christ's Passion is read from the Gospel, which acts as a sort of preview for what will unfold during the rest of the week. Palm Sunday not only marks Christ's entry into Jerusalem but, more importantly, symbolizes the faithful's desire to accompany Christ, Diwa said.

Palms welcomed champs - The Jews waved palms to welcome Jesus' entry into their city, using the common symbol for discipleship. According to Diwa, the Romans also used palms to welcome their champions returning from war. "It is like saying, 'we will be with you until the end,'" said Diwa.

In the Philippines, each region and parish have their own traditions for celebrating Palm Sunday. Some hold solemn processions before entering the Church grounds to dramatize Christ's entry into Jerusalem. In some provinces, women, in a tradition known as "paglalalatag," lay pieces of cloth or mats on the road leading to the Church as devotional symbols of their welcome of the Messiah, Diwa said. The more devout among them use tapis (a piece of fabric used as a wrap-around skirt) that had been passed down from generation to generation specifically for the occasion. To dramatize Christ's entry into Jerusalem, old women in the province would lay their "tapis" on the ground for the parish priest, acting as the Christ figure, to walk on as he makes his way to the Church.

Sinners will rise - "The message of Holy Week for all the world is not only that Christ suffered and died for us, but that he also rose from the dead for us," said Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). He said the liturgical celebration also gives hope that sinners would rise again from their mistakes and sinful ways. He asked the Catholic faithful to be prayerful and reflective during the days of Holy Week and to focus their thoughts and actions on God. He also encouraged everyone to participate in the worship services prepared by their parishes.

[Source: http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20080316-124970/Palm-Sunday-starts-week-close-to-Filipinos-hearts](http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20080316-124970/Palm-Sunday-starts-week-close-to-Filipinos-hearts)

Why do the crowds cheer Jesus on Passion Sunday but call for his execution five days later?

The question of the crowd's turnaround from Palm Sunday to Good Friday is an important one. The Gospels may have created the impression in our minds that everyone in Jerusalem hailed Jesus as Messiah on Palm Sunday and that by Good Friday everyone in Jerusalem sought Jesus' death. In fact, neither statement is true.

Matthew 26:5 says that the Jewish leaders feared a riot among the people if Jesus was seized during the Passover festival. Mark 15:11 says that the chief priests "stirred up the crowd to have him [Pilate] release Barabbas for them instead." That crowd did not speak for all Jewish people in Jerusalem. Luke 23:50 says that, although he was a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea did not consent to their plan. In fact, the Palm Sunday/Good Friday time span does not represent a shift from total acceptance of Jesus to total rejection of him.

[Source: http://www.americancatholic.org/e-News/FriarJack/fj041403.asp](http://www.americancatholic.org/e-News/FriarJack/fj041403.asp)

Love Offering

Feb. 19, 2010 \$1,332.58
Feb. 26, 2010 \$1,307.00
Mar. 05, 2010 \$ 978.00
Mar. 12, 2010 \$ 828.00
Mar. 19, 2010 \$1,150.00

Thank you for your generosity!

Community Calendar

May 7-9
Life in Spirit Seminar #10 *
May 21-23
Youth Life in Spirit Seminar #4 *
Jun. 12
Agony in the Garden/
Washing of the Feet Retreat *
Jul. 9-12
Aspirants Retreat *
Jul. 31-Aug. 2
Family Encounter #4
Malvern, PA
Aug. 15
Community Day
Bretton Woods, Potomac, MD
Sep. 24-26
Solo Parent Encounter #3
Holy Family, MD
Nov. 12-14
Marriage Encounter #11
Dulles Hilton, VA

*Time & Venue – TBD

Please check our website www.bldwashington.com
for 2010 Schedule of Events.

March/April Calendar

Mar. 05 First Friday Eucharistic Celebration
12 Praise & Worship
19 Praise & Worship
26 Praise & Worship
Apr. 02 Good Friday (No Praise & Worship)
09 Praise & Worship
16 Praise & Worship
23 Praise & Worship
30 Praise & Worship

Stations of the Cross at OLV Church
7:00 PM every Friday during Lent

Teaching Schedule

Mar. 27, 2010
- Encounters with Jesus (Part 2)
Development of Gospels/Gospel of Mark
For LSS 9 & make-up for older classes
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
McCarrick Ctr (Rm 301), Wheaton, MD
- Christian Servanthood
For LSS 8 & make-up for older classes
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
McCarrick Ctr (Rm 301), Wheaton, MD
Mar. 28, 2010
Teachings of Jesus Christ DVD Series
For covenanted members
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
McCarrick Center (Basement)
Wheaton, MD

Reminder

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