



BLD WASHINGTON
BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS
COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsel

Tune In To God, Tune Up Your Faith

Theme: We seek heavenly things when we firmly believe in God.

Word: Acts 5:12-16; Ps 118:2-4,13-15,22-24;
Rev 1:9-11a,12-13,17-19; Jn 20:19-31
(2nd Sunday of Easter; CV: Faith)

Order: “..Do not be unbelieving, but believe “
(John 20: 28

(BLD Global Community reflection for April 2010)

REFLECTION:

“To seek heavenly things” is to seek God Himself; all the goodness associated with heaven comes with Him. To firmly believe in God is to trust that He, who loved us and sought us first, will be true to His promise to share His divine life with us - even though we don’t and can never deserve it. It is only through God’s grace that we have this hope to live in communion with Him forever.

Faith is both a grace and a human act. A grace, because “*man must have the grace of God to move and assist him; he must have the interior helps of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and converts it to God, who opens the eyes of the mind and makes it easy for all to accept and believe the truth.*” (CCC 153) A human act, because “*believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by*

command of the will moved by God through grace.” (CCC 155)

In the readings, grace consists of the gift of healing bestowed on Peter, the vision of the Lord granted to John, the Risen Lord’s appearances to His disciples, and His gift of the Holy Spirit. The human acts are Peter’s obedient faith, the belief of the sick and those who carried them that the Lord was in Peter, John’s deep prayer on the Lord’s day, the disciples’ joyful belief in the Risen Lord, and Thomas’ overcoming his unbelief with his faith-filled declaration, “my Lord and my God”.

From the readings, we learn that our response of faith requires being tuned in to God, and being attuned to God in turn helps our faith. To be tuned in to God is like setting our radio or TV to a Christian station, EWTN, or other channels with wholesome family programming. This means tuning out voices, messages and idols that turn us away from God: all that is fleshly and worldly, the spirits that are not of the Lord. However, this does not mean the loss of free will. “*To be human, man’s response to God by faith must be free, and...therefore, nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act.*” (CCC 160).

Tuning in to God is to fix our eyes on Jesus, our sure access to the Father, the Beginning, the Way, and the End of our journey to God. It is to tune in to the Lord’s example during His public ministry. In Jesus, we find the embodiment of the life we too must live, a life devoted to seeking a lasting unity

with the Father, a life of faith, of prayer, of obedience to God's will, and of loving and selfless service to others, especially the needy.

Tuning in to God is to abide in *the Holy Spirit, who alone enables us to say that Jesus is Lord* (1 Cor 12:3) and *to call God, Abba Father* (Gal 4:6). *“To be in touch with Christ, we must first have been touched by the Holy Spirit”* (CCC 683). It is the Spirit who sanctifies us, brings us to communion with God, that we may bear much fruit.

Tuning in to God is to share in the Lord's Cross and Resurrection. Jesus promised, “And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself” (Jn 12:32). The nail marks on His hands and the wound on His side attest to His being lifted up, to His divinity. Only the One who comes from above can return to the Father above. They attest to the power of God over death, to the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to unshackle us from the chains of sin and death that bound us to earth and to earthly things. They attest to the truth that in Christ our Lord, heaven, the things of heaven, all that is pure and holy - are within the reach of those who believe.

As Jesus is lifted up, so are we and our faith lifted up. Regardless of circumstances - whether in sorrow, pain, want or fear, during those times when the nail marks and side wound of Jesus seem like our own, when we are hard-pressed and are falling – our faith in the Lord Jesus, as our helper and savior, will give us the strength and courage to persevere. Our faith will remain firm, that in Jesus alone is Heaven, and in Him alone is Life! Jesus, our Lord and our God, is risen!

Directions on tuning in to God, tuning up our faith:

1. Talk about God's word. Make it your way of life that people will see and know Jesus in your person. Be the light and salt of the earth. Live Jesus daily.

2. Be active in declaring the works of the Lord. Use your spiritual gifts as witness to the power of the Holy Spirit and continue to proclaim the Good News through our encounter programs and mission work.

God's Promise for the Week

“...believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.” (Jn 20: 31b)



***Sunday
Mass:
Easter
All Year
Long***

***by Pope John
Paul II***

The Lord's Day—as Sunday was called from Apostolic times—has always been accorded special attention in the history of the Church because of its close connection with the very core of the Christian mystery. Sunday recalls the day of Christ's Resurrection. It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death, the fulfillment in him of the first creation and the dawn of “the new creation” (cf. 2 Cor 5:17).

In commemorating the day of Christ's Resurrection not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church seeks to indicate to every

generation the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny lead.

The fundamental importance of Sunday has been recognized through two thousand years of history and was emphatically restated by the Second Vatican Council:

"Every seven days, the Church celebrates the Easter mystery. This is a tradition going back to the Apostles, taking its origin from the actual day of Christ's Resurrection—a day thus appropriately designated 'the Lord's Day.'"

The Second Vatican Council teaches that on Sunday "Christian believers should come together, in order to commemorate the suffering, Resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus, by hearing God's Word and sharing the Eucharist, and to give thanks to God who has given them new birth to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (cf. 1 Pt 1:3).

Sunday is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human.

Day of the Risen Lord and of the life-giving Spirit

Although the Lord's Day is rooted in the very work of creation and even more in the mystery of the biblical "rest" of God, it is nonetheless to the Resurrection of Christ that we must look in order to understand fully the Lord's Day. This is what the Christian Sunday does, leading the faithful each week to ponder and live the event of Easter, true source of the world's salvation.

According to the common witness of the Gospels, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead took place on "the first day after the Sabbath" (Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1). On the same day, the Risen Lord appeared to the two

disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35) and to the eleven Apostles gathered together (cf. Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19).

A week later—as the Gospel of John recounts (cf. 20:26)—the disciples were gathered together once again, when Jesus appeared to them and made himself known to Thomas by showing him the signs of his Passion.

The day of Pentecost—the first day of the eighth week after the Jewish Passover, when the promise made by Jesus to the Apostles after the Resurrection was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—also fell on a Sunday (cf. Acts 2:1, Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4-5).

This was the day of the first proclamation and the first Baptisms: Peter announced to the assembled crowd that Christ was risen and "those who received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). This was the epiphany of the Church, revealed as the people into which are gathered in unity, beyond all their differences, the scattered children of God. It was for this reason that, from Apostolic times, "the first day after the Sabbath," the first day of the week, began to shape the rhythm of life for Christ's disciples (cf. 1 Cor 16:2).

In effect, Sunday is the day above all other days which summons Christians to remember the salvation which was given to them in Baptism and which has made them new in Christ. "You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12; cf. Rom 6:4-6).

The liturgy underscores this baptismal dimension of Sunday, both in calling for the celebration of Baptisms—as well as at the Easter Vigil—on the day of the week "when the Church commemorates the Lord's Resurrection," and in suggesting as an appropriate penitential rite at the start of Mass the sprinkling of holy water, which recalls the moment of Baptism in which all Christian life is born.

When he appeared to the Apostles on the evening of Easter, Jesus breathed upon them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20:22-23). The outpouring of the Spirit was the great gift of the Risen Lord to his disciples on Easter Sunday.

It was again Sunday when, 50 days after the Resurrection, the Spirit descended in power, as "a mighty wind" and "fire" (Acts 2:2-3), upon the Apostles gathered with Mary. Pentecost is not only the founding event of the Church, but is also the mystery which forever gives life to the Church.

Such an event has its own powerful liturgical moment in the annual celebration which concludes "the great Sunday," but it also remains a part of the deep meaning of every Sunday, because of its intimate bond with the Paschal Mystery. The "weekly Easter" thus becomes, in a sense, the "weekly Pentecost," when Christians relive the Apostles' joyful encounter with the Risen Lord and receive the life-giving breath of his Spirit.

Source:
<http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/CU/ac0399.asp>

April Calendar

Apr. 02 Good Friday (No P&W)
09 Praise & Worship
16 Praise & Worship
23 Praise & Worship
30 Praise & Worship

Love Offering

Mar. 12, 2010 \$ 828.00
Mar. 19, 2010 \$1,150.00
Mar. 26, 2010 \$ 962.00
Apr. 02, 2010 (No P&W)

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.

Reminder

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