

BLD WASINGTON



BURÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS

COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsel

Steadfastness

Theme: Christ's call for repentance exhorts us not to fall back into sin.

Word: Holiness in Christ, our Spiritual Rock, calls for repentance.

Order: *"I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish." (Lk 13:5)*

(BLD Global Community reflection for March 2010)

REFLECTION: Everyone was glued to CNN 24/7 over the weekend as a terrifying 8.8 magnitude earthquake hit Chile, said to be 800 times stronger than the one that struck Haiti. Seismologists sent warnings of potentially deadly tsunami to 53 countries along the Pacific Rim, including Hawaii, Japan and even the Philippines. The whole world was once again shaken, as one calamity after another is unleashed upon various parts of the globe. The series of disasters – from raging flood waters to furious snow storms and recurring earthquakes - instill dread in our hearts that we might be in line for the next catastrophe.

Given this scenario, as disciples of Christ, what are we to do? Could this be the Nineveh

of our own time and generation, a modern day scenario reenacting Jonah's journey through the city of Nineveh announcing, *"Every man shall turn from his evil way... God may relent and forgive, and withhold his blazing wrath, so that we will not perish."* (Jonah 3: 8-9). In the today's gospel of Luke, Jesus himself gives a stern warning, *"But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did."* (Luke 13:3). Jesus, as we know, was referring to their souls and the need to repair the harm done to their covenant relationship with God.

In the same gospel, Jesus demonstrates the enduring mercy of a loving God through the parable of the fig tree. Despite our unworthiness and lack of fruitfulness, our merciful God offers another chance and opportunity to make amends, *"...Leave it for this year also and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future,"* (Luke 13:8). Our lives may be barren like the fig tree, and weakened because sin prevents us from producing any fruit. But the Lord gives us ample chances through His amazing grace, to be nurtured and cared for, until we can come around and show signs of producing fruit in time. He does not want to blame us but wants to save us from being cut down and cast into eternal damnation. Through His infinite patience, God offers forgiveness to repentant souls.

God's mercy and love make it possible for us to turn away from sin and live a new life. But

we need to cultivate the seed that has been planted in us, so we can flourish and bear fruit. Our community, Bukas Loob Sa Diyos provides fertile ground and ample opportunities to nurture our spiritual lives through teachings and formation programs, praise and worship, mission work and other spiritual activities, all designed to fertilize the soil of our hearts and enable us to flourish and grow spiritually. As true disciples of Christ, we never stop changing, growing and learning everyday until one day, we reach our final destination.

Nearly three weeks into Lent, the urgent call to repentance is clear. The Greek word for repentance - metanoia - implies a change of heart, a spiritual conversion, a turning around and turning back, in this case, to God. Lent, which runs for approximately forty days, is time well-spent checking the state of our own soul, reflecting, re-evaluating and renewing ourselves. It is God's primary attribute to have mercy upon us as long as we are steadfast in repenting of our sins and have a firm resolve to sin no more.

Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten message for the year 2010 is noteworthy. While focusing on the theme of justice, he nevertheless dwells on the significance of conversion, "*Conversion to Christ, believing in the Gospel, ultimately means this: to exit the illusion of self-sufficiency in order to discover and accept one's own need – the need of others and God, the need of His forgiveness and His friendship.*" To elucidate the point, he highlights the importance of humility as a virtue to live by, most especially during the Lenten season. The Pope especially reminds us of the need to humble ourselves, to make a good confession and receive communion during this season, "...*Humility is required to accept that I need Another to free me from 'what is mine,' to give me gratuitously 'what is His.'* This happens especially in the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist."

Amidst the uncertainties we daily confront in the face of global calamities that may come our way without warning, it is reassuring to hold on to God's promise in the book of Psalms, "***He redeems your life from destruction; he crowns you with kindness and compassion.***" (Ps 103:4). Lent is the time to prepare ourselves, that no matter what happens, we may remain unfazed by the wrath of nature. And when that moment finally comes, we shall neither perish nor be cut down like the barren fig tree.

Prayer

Oh Lord, during this season of Lent, give me the grace to truly repent of all my sins and be reconciled with You and my neighbors. I know that You are a God of second chances and You are intent on saving me. Make this a special time for me to be purified and enlightened that I may bear fruit and be a living witness of Your love and grace. And as I renew my life, keep me close to your bosom that I may never fall away from you ever again. In Jesus mighty name I pray, Amen.

Directions:

1. Have a regular conversion of heart by attending daily masses, reconciliation with God through the sacraments, regular visitation to the Blessed Sacrament, reading and studying and living God's word.
2. Revive Luke 15 program under pastoral ministry to seek and minister to the stray and lost members of the community.
3. Implement pastoral counseling program as prescribed by ECSL.

God's Promise for the Week

***He redeems your life from destruction;
He crowns you with kindness and
compassion.***" (Ps 103.4)



"My dear one, come to Me."

Lord, I think I hear Your voice, but there are all these things that I need to get done today. As You can see, my life is very busy ...

"My little one, come with Me. As Lent begins, come closer to Me and walk with Me. Be My companion throughout these 40 days."

Lord, I really don't have a lot of time. Besides, I don't think You know what You're asking. I'm not sure You really want me with You. If I were You, I wouldn't want me with You. Do you know what kind of person I am? Do You know how many times a day I have rejected Your gifts and despised Your friendship?

"I know well the extent of your misery, but My mercy is greater than your sins. In My mercy, I meet you where you are and I call you to Myself. I will even give you the strength to come to Me. All I want from you is your 'yes.' Do not argue with Me about finding time. I will give you the grace to find the time as well as to persevere through your distractions. So come, let us be on our way.

A Lenten reflection written as a dialogue between the Lord and the soul inspired by the Diary of St. Faustina and Scripture.

[Source: http://marian.org/divinemercury/story.php?NID=3817](http://marian.org/divinemercury/story.php?NID=3817)

Love Offering

Feb. 05, 2010 No P&W
 Feb. 12, 2010 No P&W
 Feb. 19, 2010 \$1,332.58
 Feb. 26, 2010 \$1,307.00.

Thank you for your generosity!

March Calendar

Mar. 05 First Friday Eucharistic Celebration
 12 Praise & Worship
 19 Praise & Worship
 26 Praise & Worship

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

Community Calendar

May 2010
 Youth Life in Spirit Seminar #4 *
 May 7-9
 Life in Spirit Seminar #10 *
 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
 Sep. 24-26
 Solo Parent Encounter #3
 Holy Family, MD
 Nov. 12-14
 Marriage Encounter #11
 Dulles Hilton, VA

*Date/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.