

BLD WASHINGTON



BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsel

THE PRODIGAL SONS

Theme: Christ's call for repentance exhorts us to be reconciled with God and one another.

Word: Jos 5:9a, 10-12; Ps 34:2-7;
2 Cor 5:17-21; Lk 15:1-3,11-32

Order: 1. Be reconciled to God and one another; 2. Be ambassadors of Christ.

(BLD Global Community reflection for March 2010)

REFLECTION:

A distinguishing mark of a disciple of Christ is his or her willingness to forgive and to seek reconciliation regardless of the circumstance. In conveying this, we are led to one of the best known parables of Jesus, the Prodigal Son. His story gives a pure, condensed wisdom about God's unlimited love, about ourselves and about life as it provides a model on forgiveness.

The parable begins with the story of the younger son. We learn that he asked his father to advance his inheritance then traveled to a foreign country where he spent all his money on foolish and sinful pleasures. There, two disasters struck. He ran out of money, then ran into a famine so jobs were hard to find. Hitting rock bottom, he came to

his senses. He decided to go home, apologize to God and to his father for his sins but to his surprise, his father did not want to hear the apology. His father did not care about the hurt done him. The only thing the father cared about was that his son, who once was lost, now was home where he belonged.

The story of the older brother was quite different but it's clear that he too was a prodigal son. . The older one argued that the young wayward brother did not deserve the welcome accorded to him. The story suddenly becomes a tale about two prodigal sons.

The father replied that the older son had absolute security and his respect. "Be forgiving and generous-hearted. Your brother was dead and has risen again." Rejoice for his return to grace and this home of love. Yet he remained unforgiving, no matter how much his brother repented.

The parable of the prodigal sons tells the story of each son but doesn't tell us if the older son eventually relented or how the younger son lived in response to his father's welcoming love.

Jesus invites us to ask ourselves, which brother are we? The truth is that most of us exhibit the characteristics of both the younger and older brother. Now, which are we most like? Do we relate more to the younger son, who found his way back and sought

reconciliation with his Father? The younger son learned an important lesson while starving in a foreign land. He learned about priorities. He learned that his father was a life-giver. St. Paul in tonight’s epistle preaches that we should stay free from the trappings of the world and to dedicate ourselves to the Lord because the primary reason for living is to bring glory to God. The world and all its things will pass away, but we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will endure forever.

Or, are we the older son, jealous that somebody else is receiving God's love? Do we resent God for being loving and forgiving?

Our membership in BLD calls us through a ministry of service and reconciliation – to be Christ’s ambassadors sent to bring His message of reconciliation to the world. This means that we must serve as examples of forgiveness and reconciliation. BLD will not fulfill its purpose for existence if we, its members, are not given to reconciliation. Perhaps Jesus left the story of the Prodigal Son unfinished to challenge us to decide how we would respond? Human beings have emotions and will become angry and hurt one another. This is what it means to be human. It is okay to become angry. The question is, can we forgive?

As disciples of Christ, we have an even greater reason to forgive. Throughout His public life and ministry, Jesus witnessed to what it means to be a forgiving person. He counseled Peter to be far more forgiving than Peter would ever have considered: to forgive seven times seventy-seven times (Mt 18:21-22), a metaphor for infinite forgiveness. No matter how often we are hurt, our challenge is always to forgive. Jesus not only modeled what it meant to be a forgiving person, he continually taught, especially through parables, the necessity of forgiveness.

God offers us His covenant love that desires to reconcile us with Him and to begin a new life, *to become new creations of the Almighty Father, and be Ambassadors of Christ.* Jesus loved and saved and we are called to do no less. We have a God

whose reconciling love remains deep, that even in our darkness and anger, He gives this promise in Psalm 34:7 that ***“When the poor one called out, the Lord heard and from all his distress he saved him.”***

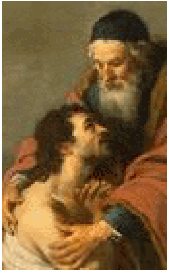
Directions: Be imitators of Christ in all your thoughts, words and deeds.

God’s Promise for the Week

“When the poor one called out, the Lord heard and from all his distress He saved him.” Psalm 34

Congratulations Newly Committed Members!

The BLD Washington Community congratulates its newly committed members!!! The Commitment Ceremony held on March 5th was fittingly marked by the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Truly, the Lord has continued to bless our community with rich soil and a plentiful harvest as personified by the following: Jimmy Almendrala, Liza Almendral Geoff Ampoyo, Chat Ampoyo, Miko Capulong, Manny Dialino, Lita Dialino, Oscar Hernandez, Pinky Hernandez, Dong Jomuad, Tess Jomuad, Enrico Marzan, Angelyn Marzan, Lettie Salazar, and Pilar Walsh. With thanksgiving in our hearts, we offer our newly committed members our warmest affections! *“We ought to thank God always for you, brothers, as is fitting, because your faith flourishes ever more, and the love of every one of you for one another grow even greater.”* 2Thessalonians 1:3



Reconciliation and Healing

Lent is a wonderful time to celebrate the reconciling love and the healing graces our Lord offers us. Like all religious experience, it takes preparation.

Preparing

Reconciliation is what God does. We prepare for it by opening ourselves up, by reflecting upon the areas of darkness in our lives into which God so deeply desires to shine a light. It might begin with the simple question: [Where might God be offering me forgiveness and healing?](#)

If my answer is, "I don't know," then I have some reflection to do. I can examine my life - what I have done and what I have failed to do - and see what graces are offered me there. If I've come through that "era" of saying that any guilt, anything that makes me feel bad about myself, is a bad thing, to be avoided at all costs, then I might have a difficult time coming to genuine sorrow for my sins. If this is the case, I need to "go to work" on my reflection, asking God to rouse a sense of embarrassment, leading to deep sorrow, for any way I may not have been faithful, honest, loving, self-less or generous - in my relationship with God, with my family, with others. I can look at each of my responsibilities - as a citizen of a city and a country and the world, a neighbor, an employee, a member of a parish or congregation, as a parent or a spouse or as a son or daughter. God will always shine light into these important parts of our lives, to help us experience remorse and a genuine desire for forgiveness and healing. The point here is not ultimately to focus on ourselves. God always reveals us to ourselves, so that God might reveal to us our need for a Savior. The focus is on God's

reconciling, healing love. As John says, "*God showed his love for us when he sent his only Son into the world to give us life. Real love isn't our love for God, but God's love for us. God sent his Son to be the sacrifice by which our sins are forgiven.*" *1 John 4:9-10*

It may be that I have experienced troubling guilt - coming out of deep childhood trauma or a long-standing sense of shame. This may plague my ability to feel good about myself at all, and therefore to be able to reflect upon my sins - the ways I fail at loving. I can still prepare for genuine reconciliation by preparing to better trust God's love for me, based upon two convictions: First, God's love is un-conditional. It is not conditioned on my being better, or my overcoming anything, or even my being good at all. God just loves me. I am always precious in the eyes of the One who made me and desires to embrace me with the gift of complete freedom, in everlasting life. Secondly, God knows everything, including what I'm struggling with or suffering under. And, the God of all compassion, understands me and loves me. It may be that my greatest sin - the place where I need the greatest sorrow and desire for forgiveness and healing is my lack of trust in God's complete and unconditional love for me. We can be certain that that is a gift God deeply desires to offer me.

It may be that when I ask myself the question about where God might be offering me forgiveness and healing, I might first come up with a single thing that seems "big" to me. I might say, "I feel sorry for how I treat my spouse or my children." I might focus on a long established habit of self-indulgent sexual fantasy, pornography on the internet. I may feel the most sorrow for what I fail to do - all the "good intentions" that never make their way into action. It is so important not to stop there. None of the "big" things about which we might immediately feel sorry for sums up

all of who we are before God and others. They may be very important in giving some clues or some leads in identifying some larger patterns. For example, if a "big" thing that worries me is that I tend to be "loose" with the truth, at times, I can ask what that means, what it reveals about me. I may discover that the real pattern of sin has to do with a deeper dishonesty or lack of integrity: hiding from God; leading a double life; not being who I really am called to be; trying to manage my life on my own terms; manipulating others for my own needs and desires. When the Light of God's love shines into this level of self-awareness, then I am touched by a powerful experience of reconciliation. Even here, in a place I might be most embarrassed and feel most naked, God is loving me and offering me wholeness and joy.

Celebrating Reconciliation

Reconciliation is what God does. Receiving it and celebrating it is what we do. For those of us who are Catholics, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a most natural way to celebrate God's reconciliation. We used to think of this sacrament as only about "confession" - that it was like a dumping ground for my sins, where I got forgiven, and I had to "pay a toll." One of the great recoveries in our Christian history is to re-discover the meaning of this sacrament.

It is God who forgives sins. And God forgives us the very moment that we come to the experience that we need forgiveness (which itself comes through God's grace). At that moment, I feel sorrow and a desire for forgiveness and healing. In that moment, I am reconciled with God. The reunion, the bond, the connection, the joy are all there. Three more things remain: to receive it deep within my heart, to celebrate it, and to participate in the healing process.

When I experience God's forgiveness and love, I am invited to savor it and let it touch me deeply. Experiencing compassion, patience, understanding, and forgiveness is itself transforming. If I fail to appreciate what I have just received - freely and

undeserved - then I will take it for granted and risk moving on without a real healing happening.

Then, I need to celebrate the reconciliation I have received. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation - individually or in common - I have the wonderful opportunity to ritualize that celebration. In the Sacrament, my personal journey is joined with the mystery of God's saving love, as seen in the scriptures, and in God's desire to save us all. There, in ritual form (even if it is just me and the priest) I "step forward" and admit that I am a sinner, express my sorrow, and I name the places in my life where God is shining a Light into what I have done and what I have failed to do. Then, God's forgiveness is proclaimed "out loud" - for me to hear and rejoice in: "May God grant you pardon and fill you with God's peace."

An integral part of the reconciliation involves the healing process. If I sprain my ankle, the doctor will offer me a number of therapies for healing - ice, for the first 24 hours to reduce the swelling, wrapping it, elevating it, and then gradually and carefully using it, until it is healed and strong again. Part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to seek and practice a "remedy" or "medicine" for the healing I desire. Often that will simply be prayer. Often, expressing my gratitude to God is one of the most important steps on the road to recovery from my independence from God. Sometimes, I will need to practice a therapy that is more carefully planned - making choices about what I can practice doing and what I can practice avoiding.

May our Lord grant us all the gift of reconciliation, and may we all receive it and celebrate it well in the holy days ahead.

Source:
<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/reconciliation.html>

Love Offering

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

Thank you for your generosity!

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 Center (Rm 301), Wheaton, MD

Christian Servanthood

For LSS 8 & make-up for older classes
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
McCarrick Center (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.

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 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*

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.