



BLD WASHINGTON
BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS
COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsel

Submission

Theme: We are disciples of Christ when we obey His word.

Word: Disciples of Christ have love for one another.

Order: Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

(BLD Global Community reflection for May 2010)

REFLECTION:

Brothers and Sisters, when you go through the readings of the 6th Sunday of Easter, you will notice three things they have in common, and that is, as Christians we are called to do all things with the Spirit of Christ. In other words, we all are called: (1) to walk in Christian spirit; (2) to do all things in the Spirit; and, (3) to walk with the Spirit of Christ.

To walk in the Christian spirit involves embracing of certain characteristics. The first, and the most important, is the attribute of unity, all members being of one spiritual mind. Through unity, there is harmony. Through harmony, there is strength. Through strength, there is perseverance in the living faith. And in the end, those who are joined in the Christian spirit achieve their goal - eternal life and salvation through Jesus Christ.

As we see in the First Reading, the Christian spirit does not come by itself. One has to strive towards it

by seeking the divine will of God and then embracing the authority of the Church. In the early days of the Church, certain individuals came down from Judea and taught that unless one was circumcised according to the custom of Moses, he could not be saved. Seeking the divine will of God on the matter, Paul, Barnabas and some of the others were sent to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders. Consequently the Church authorities made a decision and sent Barsabbas and Silas to report back to the believers. Through these progressive actions is seen the Christian spirit at work.

In the Second Reading, we perceived the Christian spirit at work through some of the descriptive words that are given to us. *"I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb,"* [Rev. 21:22-23]. Here we are able to perceive the unity of the people under one God, the Lamb. There are no idols. Nor are there any man-made religions whose leaders get the credit for establishing faiths that differ from the sacred teachings of Jesus. And, we also perceived the people's quality of holiness because they all belonged to the city of Jerusalem, the Holy City.

In the Gospel, we read and perceive that the Christian unity reigns among those who obeyed the command of Jesus. The command of Jesus was, *"Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them,"* [Jn. 14:23]. Those

who love Jesus are of one spiritual mind with the others who also obey the command of the Lord.

When considering our presence in the celebration of the Eucharist and/or our Corporate Worship, oneness of mind and heart are signs of our Christian spirit. United in one faith in the Lord Jesus, we gather for Sunday and corporate worship to praise and adore the Lord, our God. In the Catholic spirit, we are united to receive the blessings that are bestowed upon those who receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist that is the Living Bread.

The second common factor that is found in all of the three readings is that we are called to do all things in the spirit. Jesus said, *"The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth,"* [Jn. 4:23-24].

What does it mean to do all things in the spirit or to worship in spirit? It means that when we received the Sacrament of Baptism, just as Jesus was raised from the dead, we become a new creation raised from death to walk a new life in Christ [Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12] (628). Without the Sacrament of Baptism through water and Spirit, we could not enter the Kingdom of God, [Jn. 3:5].

This gift of God, instituted through Jesus Christ in the New Covenant, fulfills the promises of the Old Testament. During the Sacrament of Baptism, we receive a new heart and a new human spirit, [Ezek. 11:19-20; 18:31]. Through our new heart, we have become children of light. We are blessed with a spiritual mind that enables us to worship God in spirit and in truth.

In the Gospel, we hear Jesus say, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid,"* [Jn. 14:27]. When we do not do all things in the spirit, our hearts are troubled. We are afraid because deep inside we know that we are in disobedience and in

the wrath of God. We are afraid because the Spirit of Christ talks to us in our hearts and reminds us that we are not walking in the spirit. The peace of Christ comes to us when we obediently submit ourselves to God's divine will through the authority of the Church. Then, we are blessed with divine peace; we are no longer troubled or afraid. The mixed feelings we may have, fade away.

The third common factor in the readings is that we are called to walk with the Spirit of Christ. When we walk with the Spirit of Christ, we shine in the fruit of the Spirit. These are *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control,"* [Gal. 5:22-3].

Those who walk with the Spirit of Christ are led by the Spirit. When the apostles and the elders reviewed the issue of circumcision that Paul and Barnabas brought before them, it was done with the guidance and leadership of the Holy Spirit. This truth is affirmed in the content of the response that the Church authority sent to Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, which read: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." In other words, they were walking in the Spirit of Christ, proclaiming spiritual wisdom that had been made known to them through the Holy Spirit.

During the reading from the Gospel of John, Jesus made reference to the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father would send in His Name. Such was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost [Acts 2:1] when the Lord Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit upon His disciples, [Jn. 20:22; Acts 2:2-4]. At that moment, the official ministry of the Holy Spirit began on earth.

In making known to us the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit's ministry is twofold: To build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, the seat of its visible nature in Rome, and its invisible reflection in the holy city with its seat in Jerusalem where the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church had its beginnings. The unity of the two forms the mystical Body of Christ, the Church also being known as the Bride of Christ.

The second goal is to sanctify us in Christ so we may be purified and transformed in the likeness of Jesus.

In consideration of all what has been said until now, in the Christian spirit, we are called to do all things in the spirit with the Spirit of Christ. The three applications of the word "spirit" cannot be separated. It is by the power of the Spirit of Christ that we become new creations, that we are being transformed into holy beings, and that we are being moved to imitate the love of Christ towards all our brothers and sisters. Without the Spirit of Christ, we would be spiritually dead.

Through the same Holy Spirit, we are drawn towards Jesus in the unity of the Christian spirit. Through the same Holy Spirit, we are sanctified in the likeness of Christ. Through the same Holy Spirit, the works of God are manifested through our humble persons who are subject to Christ in obedience and humility.

Directions:

1. Pray to the Holy Spirit for discernment
2. Defer/consult to higher authorities for guidance.

God's Promise for the Week

"...my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him." (Jn 14:23b)



Seeking the Giver and Not Just the Gift



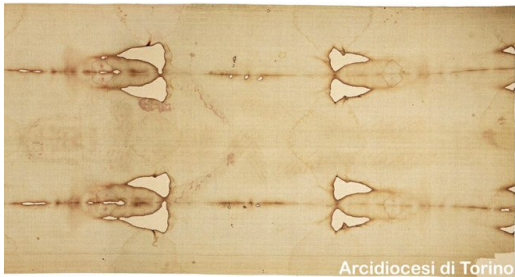
This past week, Pope Benedict XVI paid a visit to the most revered Shroud of Turin. The shroud is believed to have been the burial cloth of Jesus Christ and as such, Christians around the world view it as sacred. Locked up in a cathedral in the city of

Turin in Italy, the shroud was open for scientific authentication in the late 80's. Initial carbon dating findings in 1988 dated the shroud from 1260-1390, therefore suggesting that the shroud did not belong to Jesus. Notably, while the scientists dismissed the validity of the shroud, they were never able to explain how Jesus' image was reflected. Later, a study performed by a scientist from the original team exposed anomalies in the 1988 study, hence, opening the shroud's authenticity for further investigation.

Where do all these findings leave us? The Associate Press reports that after some meditation, Pope Benedict said "The Shroud of Turin offers us the image of how his body lay in the tomb during that time (of death); time that was brief chronologically _ about a day and a half _ but was immense, infinite in its value and significance," Benedict said. It seems that while the Holy Father considers the shroud (the gift) in high regard, he is exhorting us to hold on instead to the core of our Christianity – faith in Jesus Christ himself. Both the fields of Science and History have provided religion with many pieces of evidence of Jesus' life. Often, findings of the academic community that support Christianity satisfy the minds of the religious and propel them to practice their faith with renewed energy. Personally, a sign I read in the Grotto in Emmitsburg helps me to accept the mystery of the life and death of Jesus Christ. It reads, "With God no explanation is necessary. Without God no explanation is enough."

“Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal." So they said to him, "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God that you believe in the one he sent." John 6:26-29

This Easter season, let us especially pray for an increase of faith. As a community, let us ask the Blessed Mother for her intercession, that we may echo her fiat and open our hearts to Christ’s plan for us. Most of all, let us always be reminded that as we seek God’s gifts, we should remain focused on the giver of the gifts – God.



(Pope Benedict XVI recently announced that the Shroud will be displayed from **April 10 - May 23, 2010**, the longest period in its history. This will be the first opportunity for the public to view the Shroud since the extensive restorations of 2002)

Reminder

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

Love Offering

Apr. 09, 2010 \$1,086.00
Apr. 16, 2010 \$1,233.00
Apr. 23, 2010 \$2,038.00
Apr. 30, 2010 \$1,047.00

Thank you for your generosity!

April/May Calendar

May 07 LSS Invocation Mass
May 14 Praise & Worship
May 21 YLSS Invocation Mass
May 28 Praise & Worship

Community Calendar

- May 7-9** Life in Spirit Seminar #10
Holy Family Seminary
Silver Spring, MD
- May 21-23**
Youth Life in Spirit Seminar #4
Holy Family Seminary
Time and Venue - TBD
- Jul. 31-Aug. 2**
Family Encounter #4
Malvern, PA
- Sep. 24-26**
Solo Parent Encounter #3
Holy Family Seminary
Silver Spring, MD
- Nov. 12-14**
Marriage Encounter #11
Dulles Hilton, VA

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