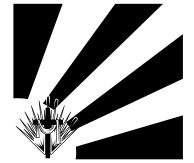




BLD PHOENIX

VALLEY OF THE SON



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 12

Advent Year A

December 2010

Month of December

WORD: *Walking in the light of the Lord requires spiritual preparedness.*

READINGS

Nov 28	Is 2:1-5 Ps 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 Rom 13:11-14 Mt 24:37-44
Dec 5	Is 11:1-10 Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17 Rom 15:4-9 Mt 3:1-12
Dec 12	Is 35:1-6, 10 Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 Jas 5:7-10 Mt 11:2-11
Dec 19	Is 7:10-14 Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 Rom 1:1-7 Mt 1:18-24
Dec 26	Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 Col 3:12-21 Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

MONTHLY COUNSELS

December 5 2nd Sunday of Advent (Repentance)

Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to be sincere in repenting of our sins.

Promise: *"The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord."* (Is: 11:2)

Reflection: We complain incessantly. We expect too much. We are never fully satisfied. Thank God, we are not in charge of our lives. God is in charge. If we were in full control, whom could we blame for wasted hours and opportunities, for unfulfilled promises, for the many chances at greatness and holiness that we did not heed at all? Our faults are before us always. For a child of God, it is unbecoming to complain, to look for someone else to blame and to invent excuses for self accomplished failures. God wants us to be honest, to sincerely own up to our mistakes and to earnestly begin again. When we have done evil, we must claim what we have done wrong. When we have lied, we must confess to our untruth. When we have been cruel, we must beg the kindness of those whom we have hurt to make things right again. That process is not easy, but **God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones.** With God's help, nothing is impossible. **The baby shall play by the cobra's den and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.** Indeed **"There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain,"** says the Lord. If we admit to the harlot and the thief and the crooked and the corrupt that we are sometimes, then can we see truly the sinful attachments and unlawful inclinations of our lives that have been barriers that obscure our understanding of God's love and mercy. Through John the Baptist who **wore clothing of camel's hair** and whose **food was locusts and honey**, we are reminded that with such austerity of manner and strict discipline we should be able to separate ourselves from all things that corrupt. We could scorn all things of the flesh and triumph if we heed what he said, **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** Ours is eternal vigilance and spiritual preparedness because sin does not assail us at all times. We must sincerely repent of our sins to make us better men and be ready to **produce good fruit as evidence of our repentance.**

Prayer: Dear Jesus, I am heartily sorry for all the sins of my life. I thank you for this deep sense of sin that stirs me to seek for your grace and mercy. Help me that I may never again proceed to do anything of myself, but let your spirit rest upon me. Reign over me. Lead me and guide me. Amen.

Order: **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** (Mt 3: 2)

Direction: Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. Nurture others in the community through gentleness of words. Witness by noble example.

December 12 3rd Sunday of Advent (Joy)

Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to joyfully await the coming of the Lord.

Promise: *"They will see the glory of our Lord, the splendor of our God."* (Is 35: 2b)

Reflection: **"Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"**

John's question may well be interpreted as an expression of doubt in a moment of weakness. If it were so, it teaches us that even John is not exempt from uncertainty. **Among those born of women**, who has not been downcast, downhearted or discouraged? Who has not limped or stumbled in our own darkness? What is more likely however is that John asked the question not for himself but on behalf of his disciples. He knows Christ of whom he speaks, **"I am not worthy to carry his sandals."** John asks so that Jesus may instruct his disciples and confirm what he has already preached. *Continued next page...*



SOLO PARENTS ENCOUNTER #3

January 14, 2011

Lake Pleasant Desert Outdoor Center

Please contact any Solo Parent Ministry member for more information.

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Cash flow as of November 2010

Receipts	\$ 556.60
Disbursements	\$ 870.47
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (313.87)

Website: www.BLDPhoenix.com

Group E-mail: BLDPhoenix@yahoo.com

Counsels continued from page 1...To the Baptist's credit, he does not ask for a sign, and yet Jesus said to John's disciples in reply, **"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them."** Jesus affirms John, **"What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?"** John is certainly bold in his conviction, steady in his faith and has not wavered. **"Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces."** John is austere, is roughly dressed and is in a dungeon, in jail because of what he stands for. **"Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet...Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has not been one greater than John the Baptist."** Evidence shows that doubt is nowhere in the Baptist's heart. In his heart, John knows the law that roused him to proclaim the Christ. He knows too that the Christ lives and cannot die. In all that the Baptist does and did, he was taken for Christ but he had no wish to increase by the words of men. His only desire is to decrease before the Bridegroom. In his heart the Baptist may have said, "I am not he. I am only his herald. Rejoice in the coming of the Christ. **Repent!"**

Prayer: Dear Jesus, I wait for your coming. Although like John the Baptist I have worked no miracles I joyfully speak of your kingdom. It makes me happy to be your voice. Let me spread your word where the greatest need of it is as you guide me to where that place is in my life. Amen.

Order: **"Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord."** (Jas 5: 7)

Direction: Be strong. Fear not. You must be patient in waiting. Complain not. Grumble not against one another. Do not be judgmental of one another.

December 19 4th Sunday of Advent (Holiness)

Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to obey our call to holiness.

Promise: **"One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean... shall receive a blessing from the Lord, a reward from God his savior."** (Ps 24: 4-5)

Reflection: Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, **she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.** For a perverse generation always asking and looking for a sign, this sign is the fulfillment of the divine promise, the fruit of God's love for all creation. **"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son."** Mary is pregnant and Joseph knows that he is not the father. This is a great scandal. It foreshadows the other scandals in the life of Jesus. He will dine with sinners. He will be the friend of prostitutes and tax collectors. He will touch lepers and the dead. He will call himself the Son of God. If these were not enough, he will be nailed to the Cross, the ultimate scandal of all. Does Joseph know the truth? Some day this son will say, **"Blessed is the one who takes no offense at me?"** (Mt 11: 6) Joseph does not know and is unwilling to expose Mary to shame. Some similar dilemma or scandal or heavy burden await us at our own spiritual crossroad. How will we fare? The angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream and says. **"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her."** Each of us in our various lives, each of us will get to our crossroad. God's call to holiness will speak its clear voice. Who are you? Where are you going? Did I not ask you to follow

me? I love you so much that I hope it costs you as much to follow me. Indeed, for the sake of love, may it cost as much to follow God. May it cost us our very life to do so, to own up to our true identity, to honestly know where we are headed and to finally yield to God's call because he has waited for so long. There is a thief and a saint in all of us. One feasts on ambition, pride, pomp and selfishness. The other fasts, prays, shares and owes no allegiance except to the Lord. Which one of these two is staying home with us for the rest of our lives? The **one whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean** is staying and he is dining with God tonight.

Prayer: Jesus, I make you wait while I compete for status and prominence. While my eye is on achievement I let things of value slide. Thank you for your patience. And thank you for gently teaching me that the only obedience that matters is the obedience of holiness. Thank you for giving me your Holy Mother who always intercedes on my behalf. Amen.

Order: **"Take Mary...into your home."** (Mt 1: 20)

Direction: Encourage devotion to Mary. Pray the rosary with the family and the community. Believe in the Immaculate Conception. Trust in the power of Mary's intercession.

December 26 Feast of the Holy Family (Unity)

Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to imitate the ways of the Holy Family.

Promise: **"Blessed is everyone who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways! For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; blessed will you be, and favored."** (Ps 128: 1-2)

Reflection: God's will to save, to safeguard and protect is never thwarted. God always finds a way for his word to achieve its end. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, **"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him."** What God did for the Holy Family, he does with us his extended family. Explain then the squalor and grief in some families as a result of our human condition? Are there not families with errant fathers? Are there not faithful husbands with wayward wives? What of orphans and widows and the many other faces of brokenness when man's best efforts and promises have failed and the lesser self has taken hold? Where is God in such disunity? Life has sad concerns and harsh realities do not go away. How easy it would be if like Joseph, we take our families, **flee to Egypt, and stay there until** God calls us back. When the human circumstances that seek our family's breath and life are gone, the angel of the Lord will appear and tell us: **"Rise...and go to the land of Israel."** In our moral dilemma, where is this **Egypt** we could flee to in hiding or **the land of Israel** we could go back to in safety? Or is this all a dream? Is God's promise not true after all? Let us back track and examine the problem. It is not within our power to do anything. Check. It is not our work that makes things happen. Check. It is the work of Christ who lives in us, who wills and acts in us that makes things happen. Say that again, slowly. It is the work of Christ who lives in us, who wills and acts in us, **if we cooperate with him according to his good purpose,** that makes things happen. Nothing happens in our lives that we do not willfully and willingly consent to like Joseph did. He listened. He was obedient. He did not argue. He acted as prompted and led by God. *Continued next page..*

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2010

On Saturday, December 11 at the Madonna Hall of Queen of Peace Parish in Mesa, the BLD Phoenix family gathered together in fellowship and to celebrate Christmas as a community. A festive spirit was apparent in the air and jubilation as everyone bumped into both old, familiar faces and new ones.

The occasion commenced with an anticipated Eucharistic Celebration for the 3rd Sunday of Advent officiated by BLD Phoenix Spiritual Director, Fr. Reggie Carreon and co-celebrated by Fr. Joe Cornelia. At the end of Mass, the image of the Holy Infant Jesus was on the spotlight while Praise Ministry led the community to sing 'Silent Night' to give each one the opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of this season. A moment of silence was also offered for those brothers and sisters we lost this year.

The BLD (in jest, called *Breakfast.. Lunch...Dinner*) family dined on a sumptuous fare while being serenaded by the young members. A significant Christmas message was also delivered by Formation Apostolate.

As the flow of the event carried on, we all shared our bursts of laughter especially from our witty emcee (bless his heart). Our heartfelt gratitude also goes to those generous donors/sponsors who provided prizes for the raffle. We also thank those who shared their time and talents by way of a presentation where each one was nothing short of amusing. Lastly but not the least, a sincere thank you to everyone who came and especially to the organizers of this year's Christmas Party. Class ME 8 delivered a superb Christmas event for the community.

In the spirit of this season, we prepare for the Lord's coming and may our hearts be like the manger, simple, but ready and worthy, to hold the Child Jesus. Here's wishing everyone a merry, meaningful Christmas and a blessed New Year! - EL

Counsels continued from page 2...It is not that easy. Maybe, it is not even humanly possible for us to explain the vagaries and misfortunes of our lives but if we let the peace of Christ control our hearts, if we do our best to keep unity in our family and we keep our communion with God, blessed is everyone who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways!

Prayer: Dear Jesus, I trust and believe in your love. Help me to change my hidden hostilities to an openness of heart to your mercy. Help me to change my selfishness to generosity. Teach me how to parent, protect and safeguard not only my family but the little, fearful child in me. My household so dearly wishes to imitate the ways of your Holy Family. Amen.

Order: "Let the peace of Christ control your hearts." (Col 3: 15)

Direction: Fear the Lord and imitate his ways. Trust in his mercy. Safeguard everyone who needs compassion and protection. Always obey the leading of the Lord. -RSC

*"Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."
So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph,
and the infant lying in the manger.*

Luke 2:15-16



!!! TEACHING MINISTRY UPDATE !!!

December 17, after Praise & Worship
Mock Teaching, **Rooms 5 and 6**

January 21, 2011, after Praise & Worship

Topic: **Matrimony**

Attendance: **EVERYONE** is invited, youth, adults, visitors.

Speaker: **Lorane Ward**

January 7 and 28, 2011

**Mock Teaching for ALL OTHER Teachers Development
Program Graduates**

PLEASE SCHEDULE WITH FORMATION APOSTOLATE

BIRTHDAYS

2 - Eevee Tejada	13 - Eunice Lureñana
2 - James Laforteza	13 - AJ David
5 - James Laforteza	13 - Jack Wallman
7 - Lulu Lam	20 - Maria Hilary Cassano
7 - Ross Carballo	24 - Noei Carballo
8 - Ludy Cuasay	26 - Eva Ward
12 - Ray Ansay	27 - Maribel Siongco
12 - Meloy Larracas	30 - Judy Bautista
12 - Kat Clavecilla	30 - John Minch

ANNIVERSARIES

11 - Fr. Reggie Carreon	22 - Lee & Arlene Junia
12 - Manny & Ruby Dizon	22 - Art & Marissa Crisostomo
12 - Nelson & Malou Reyes	23 - Joe & Lydia Saguid
14 - Johnny & Remy Devera	25 - Simon & Lulu Lam
20 - Ramon & Fe Querol	24 - Ross & Noei Carballo
21 - Rollie & Justice Tabora	25 - Jun & Lina Saguid
22 - Ariel & Judy Bautista	30 - Pedro & Cita Rivera

2011 ENCOUNTERS AND SEMINARS

January 14 - Solo Parents Encounter #3

February 4 - Singles Encounter #3

June 17 - Life In The Spirit Seminar #10

July 29 - Youth Encounter #7

September 23 - Marriage Encounter #12

November 11 - Youth Life In The Spirit Seminar #5

Please note the dates and take the opportunity to send out invitations in advance to your family and friends.