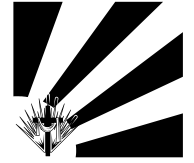




BLD PHOENIX

VALLEY OF THE SON



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 2

Year A

February 2011

Month of February

WORD: *Our heavenly Father is glorified by our good deeds.*

READINGS

- Feb 6** Is 58:7-10
Ps 112:4-9
1Cor 2:1-5
Mt 5:13-16
- Feb 13** Sir 15:15-20
Ps 119:1-2,4-5,17-18,33-34
1Cor 2:6-10
Mt 5:17-37
- Feb 20** Lev 19:1-2,17-18
Ps 103: 1-4,8,10,12-13
1Cor 3:16-23
Mt 5:38-48
- Feb 27** Is 49:14-15
Ps 62:2-3,6-7,8-9
1Cor 4:1-5
Mt 6:24-34

ASH WEDNESDAY 2011 - March 9

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten Season. Please check local parishes for service times.

PRAYER FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, the all-holy one, who gives us life and all things. As we go about our lives, the press of our duties and activities often leads us to forget your presence and your love. We fall into sin and fail to live out the responsibilities that you have entrusted to those who were baptized into your Son. In this holy season, help us to turn our minds and hearts back to you. Lead us into sincere repentance and renew our lives with your grace. Help us to remember that we are sinners, but even more, help us to remember your lovingmercy. As we live through this Ash Wednesday, may the crosses of ashes that mark our foreheads be a reminder to us and to those we meet that we belong to your Son. May our worship and prayer and penitence this day be sustained throughout these 40 days of Lent. Bring us refreshed and renewed to the celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Cash flow as of January 2011
Receipts \$1,953.02
Disbursements \$1,380.41
Surplus (Deficit) \$ 572.61

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MONTHLY COUNSELS

February 6 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Witnessing)

Theme: Our heavenly Father is glorified when we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Promise: *"Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer, you should cry for help and he will say, 'Here I am.'" (Is 58: 9)*

Reflection: Somewhere you might come across the ancient story of a truth seeker whose quest was for the authentic religion. I had come across it once and I do not remember where. The seeker finally thought he found what he was looking for but he had one question before he could join, "Does your religion do miracles?" The disciple said to the truth seeker, "It depends what you call miracles. Some call it a miracle when the Lord does the will of the people. We call it a miracle when the people do the will of God." That is what our faith asks us to do, to do the will of God. It teaches us to carry our cross, to follow Christ and to be a witness to his Good News. Our faith tells us, **"You are the salt of the earth."** This means that we should bring the savor of our lives to others, to bring to others and share with them God's blessings, influence and example. Our faith tells us, **"You are the light of the world."** This does not mean we have to parade our faces, our strut and stuff. As light does to show others their nature and condition, their beauty and the not too great aspects of themselves so must we but always in the light of charity and God's grace so that when they see themselves they may glorify God by what they are brought and moved to do in what they see and do not see in us. **"A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden."** We must always be conscious that others far and near see us and watch us. Without guile and insincerity we must cause no one any harm or injury. We must be as true to the ultimate source of everything that is in us and as pure to the purpose that the Creator has planned for us. **"Just so your light must shine before others."** Who we are and what we have become cannot be concealed nor do we have any reason to hide anything in our truth. As we witness to Christ we must count for something. We must document that we live for the cause for which we were born. We must be the light that shines its very life to our dark world.

Prayer: I thank you Lord for life, family and friends, my failures and the lessons I have learned. I thank you for a few achievements which could not have happened if it were not for you. When I call you answer, when I cry for help, you say, **"Here I am."** I thank you Lord for being you. Henceforth Lord, help me to live the spirit of this change, namely, that I should be the one always saying to you, "Lord, **here I am.**" Amen.

Order: **"Your light must shine before others." (Mt 5: 16a)**

Directions: Strive to do corporal works of mercy. Visit the sick. Comfort the lonely. Invite friends to prayer and celebrate mass with you and your family.

February 13 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Holiness)

Theme: Our heavenly Father is glorified when we obey and teach his commandments.

Promise: *"If you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you; if you trust in God, you too will live" (Sir 15: 15)*

Reflection: **"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets."** Christ knows what he has come to do, to make reality what was prophesied about him, to complete God's design, to fully accomplish the Father's will. What about us? What have we come to do?

Continued next page...

Counsels continued from page 1...

Whose will do we intend to accomplish? **“Not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place.”** Even as he warns us, God is gentle. He invites us to yield obedience to him for the smallest departure from it offends so holy, merciful and generous a God. **“Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”** The Lord even lauds the scribes and Pharisees because of their knowledge of the law and the righteousness with which they endeavor to honor it. Jesus expounds on what certain conduct ought to be in a series of **“You have heard that it was said... But I say to you...”** statements which contrast what the Old Testament said and what Jesus now says. The supreme authority on the law himself is expounding on it and he is telling us to honor it and obey it but to keep the law to its meaning. Indeed he is not setting himself against the law but our false interpretation of the law. So when he talks about murder, he wants us to discover its real meaning. **“You shall not kill”** does not limit itself to the mere external act but it includes the internal thoughts and feelings that brought the heinous act to conclusion. Thus does God hold us to perfect account that includes our failure to fulfill the littlest good purpose of behavior. He is telling us that to be angry or to speak senseless and hurtful words violates the spirit of the sixth commandment. **“If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother...”** Even in gift giving Jesus tells us it is not a matter of the gift but the right heart of the giver. Even in the matter of common and casual talk, he tells us not to swear, not to treat irreverently any of God’s created things, not to pledge or swear by what belongs to God. When you let God expound on what his commandments mean, that is, when we ponder what God’s commandments really seek us to do, we realize that God desires us to be holy, no more and no less. We do realize that if we earnestly seek to be like Christ, our every desire and our every thought may have a wayward or errant motive or that it may have wayward, errant or unintended consequences, and God wants us to think our desire or thought through him and by him before we act. To be holy after all requires exactly that. Everything we do must be through, with and in God.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, teach us to know, honor and obey your commandments. There is more to just the word of the law. Nor must we interpret it to fit our individual concept of justice. Teach us to keep the law to its meaning. Help us to love you and to be holy and to live the spirit of your teachings. Amen.

Order: **“Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’”** (Mt 5: 37a)

Directions: Obey and teach the Ten Commandments. Love one another. Be your brother’s keeper. Watch and care for one another.

February 20 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Selfless Love)

Theme: Our heavenly Father is glorified when we love others with the unconditional love of Christ.

Promise: *“You may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes the sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.”* (Mt 5: 45)

Reflection: **“An eye for an eye,”** this concept of proportionate justice is probably best confined to judges who sit in courts or to

God who is judge over us all. This privilege ought not extend to private behavior or become the excuse to take revenge. God intends us to be against evil but not to set ourselves against the evil person. Instead of conflict and rather than fight, God intends that we suffer the affront and **turn the other cheek** as a means to stop violence on its track. It is the unexpected gesture of love that God wants to govern our actions. **“Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go for two miles.”** Love, kindness and compassion disengage the possibility of more transgressions from those who commit them. Change if not transformation occurs in those who are caught in the surprising response of love which was the same in the beginning for those who have been perfected into the change themselves. **“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”** Love so defined is not approval of the enemy’s conduct but wishing his person well despite one’s disapproval of his conduct. Love is not returning evil for evil. It desires that you meet with kindness the one who seeks you harm. It strives for you to make a rule of your behavior that it must be consistently, completely and appropriately manifested regardless of cost to oneself confident in reason that God in his mercy desires it to be so. Selfless love is no easy task. It goes against the grain of our conditioning that life is about great things, heroic events and grandiose moments. In truth, love is born out of the tedious repetition of many little things like forgiving every offense, making no rash judgment, attributing the best motive to every action, being universally gracious and giving to the one who asks. As for the latter, it is better to always give than to turn away and deny the one who legitimately needs. Diligent practice of such little courtesies and kindnesses is inconsequential in itself but it plants the seed of love. Out of such a seed when it finally takes root does selfless service become the fragrant blossom of the soul.

Prayer: Dear God, in the world is the harsh reality of insults, persecutions, evil words and lies. Blessed are you my God who has saved me and taught me how to love. Lead me away from the world. Lead me to you. Lead me to love. Amen.

Order: **“Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.”** (Mt 5:44)

Directions: Love one another. Forgive one another’s faults. Bear no grudges.

February 27 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Trust)

Theme: Our heavenly Father is glorified when we trust in his divine providence.

Promise: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you besides.”*

(Mt 6: 33)

Reflection: Christ himself beckons to us on our way to receive the Eucharist. It is Christ’s body we are going to receive. How deeply do we trust that to be true? How real is our emptiness that desires to be satisfied? How burning is our thirst that seeks to be quenched? These are honest questions. Indeed, how casually and not fervently do we approach God’s sacredness? How awed are we that in his infinite majesty he condescends to come to us? Before so mighty a presence did not Moses once say, **“I am terrified and trembling?”** (Heb 12: 21b). *Continued next page...*

SOLO PARENTS ENCOUNTER #4

SPE # 4 was held on Jan 14 to Jan 16, 2011 at the Desert Outdoor Center in Peoria, AZ. We thank our God for a weekend filled with love and praises to Him. Because of our faith and full trust in Him, the Solo Parent Encounter # 4 was successful! We are also very grateful to all for your endless support - from prayerfully inviting all the candidates and helping us with the fundraising. It was indeed a very successful event. We give Praise and Glory to God! The candidates were all touched by the chosen sharers sharing their life stories, and realized that they are not the only one who had the same circumstances in life. Sorrows were turn into dancing! It was truly God’s plan. Who else could make things possible but the Mighty Healer! The most fun ever is when the sponsoring class performed their harana with the songs “I Will Survive” and “All the Single Ladies” and the final one, “You Are Not Alone”. The food for the weekend was great, even the Spiritual director, our beloved Msgr. Schetelick ate the famous “jeproks” dish. Everything went smoothly, auxies worked in a very harmonious way, smiling faces everywhere and the food was done great because of the love for Christ. It was truly the work of the Holy Spirit! Sponsoring class did it for the love of Christ! EG

Counsels continued from page 2... Observe and examine the last time we had received the Lord. Were we wholly attentive, conscious to the last fiber of our being? Or were we hopelessly distracted by sight, by sound and other worldly senses? Did we have attentive reverence as we walked to the altar asking God’s mercy to forgive us and perhaps with moist eyes did not a sense of unworthiness overwhelm us before so generous an almighty God? By the conduct of our souls when we approach the Eucharist shall we be able to judge ourselves on how faithfully we can or cannot serve two masters. With two masters, there will always be a division of attention and priority. There will always be a conflict between adherence to one and neglect of the other for how could we heroically uphold two contradictory loyalties? A jealous God is our God. How do we afford him our supreme affection? There is no other master from whom we do not have to ask what we need. There is no other master who can match our God’s infinite patience the way he puts up with our half heartedness. There is no other God who would stoop from his heavenly height to reach out to us and lift us out of our darkness and confusion. There is no other God who so loves us he would suffer and die to save us from sin and give us eternal life. **“Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”** Is there a God whom we can trust with such solicitousness for our essential needs? **“Do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will take care of itself.”** There is no other God who would so generously invite us to live holy lives so that in his grace he may grant us a holy death and be happy with him forever in the next life. **The birds in the sky, the wild flowers, the grass of the field** and the whole of creation, if to all these that God keeps close to his heart he gives such great blessings, why would this God of love be so stingy in conferring to us far greater blessings? Why would not this God be more mindful of us whom he calls **my people?** As for me and my household, we believe and love this kind master who is our Lord and our God. **Prayer:** Dear God, apart from your grace we cannot add days or years to our lives. Thank you for telling us to have complete trust in you. Thank you for reminding us that we have no need to borrow tomorrow’s problems for today. Thank you for telling us that your mercy suffices. Your bounty will take care of what is to come. Amen.

Order: “Seek first the kingdom of God.” (Mt 6: 33a)

Directions: Do not worry about tomorrow. Trust the Almighty. Serve God alone and no other -RSC

BIRTHDAYS	
2-Crosby Cortez	20-Johnny Devera
7-Julie Ann Fernandez	21-Peter Parian
12-Rosie Calvo	22-Remy Devera
13-Maria Korte	23-Jerome Fernando
13-Esther Ruales	24-Venus Fuentes
13-Jong Gabriel	26-Bheng Gaña
17-Art David	
ANNIVERSARIES	
8-Mike & Maria Cassano	
17-Jong & Malie Gabriel	

2011 ENCOUNTERS AND SEMINARS

June 17-19: Life In The Spirit Seminar #10

July 29-31 - Youth Encounter #7

September 23-25: Marriage Encounter #12

November 11-13: Youth Life In The Spirit Seminar #5

