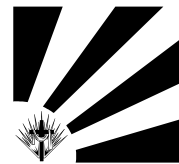




# VALLEY OF THE SON



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 6

December 2006

## Month of October

**WORD:** *We prepare for the coming of Christ when we fix our eyes on Him.*

**Dec 01:** Jer 33:14-16  
Ps 25:4-5, 8-9,10, 14; 1  
Thes 3:12-14, 2  
Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

**Dec 10:** Bar 5:1-19  
Ps 126:1-6  
Phil 1:4-6, 8-11  
Lk 3:1-6

**Dec 17:** Zep 3:14-18a  
Ps 12:2-6  
Phil 4:4-7  
Lk 3:10-18

**Dec 24:** Mi 5:1-4a  
Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19  
Heb 10:5-10  
Lk 1:39-45

### DIRECTIONS (BLD GLOBAL):

1. *Be ready and watchful and prepare your total being to be able to stand before God at all times.*
2. *Repent and reconcile with God, thru regular confession. Seek reconciliation with one another thru dialogue and forgiveness.*

### PROPHECIES (BLD GLOBAL):

1. *Increase and abound in love for Me and for one another, then you can raise your head and stand erect before Me at the end of time.*
2. *I seek a worthy habitation for My Son, my promised Redeemer; be ready to receive Him.*



## DCS Monthly Reflections

### Week#1 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent) - Love

**Theme:** We prepare for the coming of Christ when love for all abounds in us.

**Promise:** *“All the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.”*  
(Psalm 25:10)

**Order:** *“...conduct yourselves to please God”*

**Direction:** *“Be vigilant at all times and pray....”*

**Reflection:** Christ coming: The first coming, God came without any brilliance, unknown by most, prolonging the mystery of his hidden life by many years. When He came down from the mountain of the Transfiguration, Jesus asked His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ. Then He came like a shepherd to look for His lost sheep, and in order to get hold of the unruly animal, he had to remain hidden. Like a doctor who is careful not to frighten his patient right from the start, in the same way, the Lord avoids making himself known right from the beginning of his mission: He only does so imperceptibly and little by little. The prophet announced this event without brilliance with these words: “He shall be like rain coming down on the meadow, like showers watering the earth.” (Ps 72:6) He did not tear open the heavens so as to come on the clouds, but rather, He came in silence into the womb of a virgin and was carried by her for nine months. He was born in a manger as the son of a humble craftsman... He went here and there like an ordinary man; His clothing was simple, His table even more frugal. He walked without resting to the point of being tired out.

But His second coming will not be like that. He will come with such brilliance that it won't be necessary to announce his coming: “As the lightning from the east flashes to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Mt 24:27) It will be the time of judgment and of sentencing. And the Lord will not appear as a doctor, but as a judge. The prophet Daniel saw His throne, the river flowing at the base of the tribunal, and that device made entirely of fire, the chariot and the wheels (7:9-10)... David, the prophet-king, spoke only of splendor, of brilliance, of fire flaming on all sides: “Before him is a devouring fire; around him is a raging storm.” (Ps 50:3) All these comparisons aim at making us understand God's sovereignty, the brilliant light that surrounds him, and his inaccessible nature.

### Week#2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent) - Witnessing

**Theme:** We prepare for the coming of Christ when our words and actions proclaim our trust in Him.

**Promise:** *“The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”* (Luke 3:5b - 6)

*Continued next page...*

Reflections continued from 1st page...

**Week 2 continued:**

**Order:** "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths..."

**Reflection:** "Prepare the way of the Lord." This Advent seasons reminds us to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Each & everyone of us are being called to be witnesses of Him; to repent & turn away from sins and walk side by side with God all the time. In St. Paul's message to the Philippians, he says that as we continue to love God & do the good works for His glory, we are truly preparing the path until the day of Jesus Christ. We must be a true follower of the Lord not only through words but through actions & deeds as well.

**Week #3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent) – Righteousness**

**Theme:** We prepare for the coming of Christ when we practice righteous living.

**Promise:** *"Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."* (Phil 4:7)

**Order:** The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your request known to God. (Phil. 4:5-6)

**Direction:** Prepare for this Advent Season by practicing Christian love, sharing our resources and being honest & fair in our dealings with our fellow members & to all.

**Reflection:** *"Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise".* (Luke 3:11) As followers of Christ, we are challenged to live righteously; to preach the good news of Jesus and to act on what we preach. We are called to love others and be servants to each other. With a big community the challenge is multiplied; but rest assured, God is always at our side as we transform our lives to be true witnesses.

**Week #4 (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent) - Faith**

**Theme:** We prepare for the coming of Christ when we live in faith like Mary.


**Promise:** *"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."* (Luke 1:45)

**Order:** "...take care of this vine,..." (Ps 80:15-16)

**Direction:** "...protect what your right hand has Planted..." (Ps 80:16)

**Reflection:** *"All generations will call me blessed."* (Luke 1:48). In every generation, God raises up certain people to present a witness to the people of their age. In medieval times, Bernard of Clairvaux and Catherine of Siena were among those who spoke to their times. The sixteenth century brought us Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. And most recently, people like Maximillian Kolbe, Mother Teresa and Pope John II have become icons for our age. But above all of these figures stands our Blessed Mother Mary, whose role endures from generation to generation.

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**Pope Benedict's First Encyclical**  
***Deus Caritas Est*** ("God is Love")  
1 Jn 4:16  
(5th Series of 5)  
**"Love Is..."**

Going back to August of this year when the series on Pope Benedict's First Encyclical was started, it was opened with the question, *"...But What Is Love?"* To recap from that series, our beloved Pope explains that, "Love" is a word that can take on so many different meanings. We love our family, our country, our favorite foods, and our pets. But can we really grasp the full meaning of the good news that "God is love" (1 John 4:8), or the command "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12), based on the worldly definitions of the word? Our Pope expounded on "True Love" as he explored the concepts of *eros* and *agape*. He presented to us Jesus Christ who is Love Himself and how we can find true love and to make it a part of our lives: through the Eucharist and by letting our daily choices be led by Jesus' example of sacrificial love. Love also bears fruit as shown through the example of the saints. This life of love is not only possible, but is joyful and fruitful. It is given to us and is meant to be shared. When we live out Jesus' love as we perform the corporal and spiritual acts of mercy, we keep a balance when we remember that Jesus is present in those moments of service, and is working in the hearts of those in need, in His own time. We must therefore understand what we can and can't do, but still share the love of Christ with a person here and now.

**Love is...**As Pope Benedict writes at the beginning of this encyclical, faith is an encounter with a Person-Jesus Christ. In union with Him through the Church, through the Eucharist, we see reality in a new way. We see it as He sees it, which means we see all people through the eyes of Jesus:

*...in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know...I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ. His friend is my friend.* (Deus Caritas Est Part I, 18).

This gives us the answer to our earlier question, "What is love?" Love sees others with the eyes of the loving God. It opens us up to love as Jesus did, fearlessly and hopefully. In that, as she always does, the Blessed Virgin Mary leads the way:

*Holy Mary, Mother of God, you have given the world its true light, Jesus, your Son-the Son of God. You abandoned yourself completely to God's call and thus became a wellspring of the goodness which flows forth from Him. Show us Jesus. Lead us to Him. Teach us to know and love Him, so that we too can become capable of true love and be fountains of living water in the midst of a thirsting world.* (Deus Caritas Est 42)

## BLD Phoenix Rising

The legend of the Phoenix has been around for centuries. There are many variations, but the basic idea is this: The Phoenix is a supernatural creature, living for 1000 years. Once that time is over, it builds its own funeral pyre, and throws itself into the flames. As it dies, it is reborn anew, and rises from the ashes to live another 1000 years. It was Clement of Rome who became the first Christian at the close of the first century to interpret the myth of the phoenix as an allegory or symbol of the resurrection and of life after death.

In this community, I believe we too have experienced this dying and rising again. Like the legend of the phoenix, together in community, we have journeyed through the fires and flames of trials and tribulations. We have experienced setbacks, disappointments, and disillusionments. But like the mythological phoenix and instead of being consumed by the flames, we have not only survived but have been reborn into a vibrant, revitalized and growing community. We have endured and triumphed over a period of chaos and confusion.

Some of us may be tempted to take credit for our success. However, we all know that whatever accomplishments we have now is only because we have allowed the Holy Spirit to lead us. Through all our difficulties and challenges, we have remained focused on the True Reason and Source of Life for this community. It is because we have allowed Jesus into our lives, into this community, and trusted Him with all our hearts that we are where we are today. He alone, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, has been the One Who continues to lead this community to a new birth, to a new vision, and to a renewed mission.

Our struggles are not yet over and there is still much work to be done. Let us pray for the grace to persevere through our continued dying to self so that we can rise and be constantly transformed. Let us all continue to be thankful and hopeful that so long as we place our trust in Jesus and seek and follow His Will for this community, we will always be triumphant in any undertaking.

Unlike the mythological phoenix, we believe that the Lord has established the BLD community here in the desert for a specific purpose and for a defined mission. As we prepare for the commemoration of the birth of our Savior, let us look forward to our re-birth and renewal as individuals and as a community so that the Lord can use us mightily in the furtherance of His mission here in the Valley of the Son.

***“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (John 3:16)***

## MONTHLY TEACHINGS

**Dec 8 (after Praise & Worship):**

**Topic: Mark**

(For all-especially LSS 4 graduates)

**DCS Reflections** *Week 4 continued...*

Let us think about our Mother Mary's influence. More churches are named in her honor than for any other person. For centuries she has been the subject of countless paintings, sculptures, hymns, poems and plays. Millions of prayers and petitions rise to her every year. As Mother of the Church, she has captured the hearts and imaginations of believers in every age and in every land.


It is almost instinctual for us to turn to our Blessed Mother Mary for help. Accepting her as our mother, we sense that she loves us deeply and that she knows and sympathizes with us. We trust that, just as she did at the wedding feast of Cana, Mama Mary takes our requests and gives them to Jesus, expecting that they will be answered. Our Blessed Mother is also the Lady of Good Counsel and the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, and so we know that she will pray for us and counsel us "according to the will of God." (Romans 8:27).

Brothers and Sisters, today, on the eve of Jesus' birth, let us take all of our needs and requests and lay them at our Blessed Mother's feet. Pray for yourself, your family, your church, your community, even the world.

Mother Mary, we turn to you for protection, Holy Mother of God. Listen to our prayers and help us in our needs. Save us from every danger, glorious and blessed Virgin Mary." AMEN. †

### THE ADVENT WREATH

One of the most recognizable Catholic symbols of the Advent season is currently the Advent wreath. The concept of the Advent wreath actually originated in pre-Christian times when people would gather evergreens and light candles to ward off the darkness of winter and serve as a sign of hope that spring would come. By the 16th century, Catholics in Germany began using the wreath as a sign of Christ's coming. From there the tradition slowly spread throughout the world as Germans immigrated to various countries.

The circular wreath represents the fact that God has no beginning and no end. The evergreen branches stand for everlasting life. Four candles—representing Christ as the light of the world—adorn the wreath. Traditionally, three of the candles are purple, a sign of penance. These candles are lit on the first, second and fourth weeks of Advent. On the third week a rose (pink) candle is lit. This week is known as “Gaudete” Sunday, Latin for “rejoice.” The rose candle symbolizes joy. (Make sure to check out the priest's vestments at Mass on this Sunday. They might be rose to match the rose candle that you will be lighting.) The candles should be lit each day of the appropriate week and for the subsequent weeks. For example, during the third week you will light two purple candles and the rose one. 

## December Schedule

**Dec 1:** 1st Friday Mass -7:30 PM (OLV)

**Dec 8:** Praise & Worship-7:30 PM (OLV)

**Dec 9: CHRISTMAS PARTY-6:00 PM**  
(at the Most Holy Trinity Bingo Hall)

*In lieu of Praise & Worship the  
BLD Community invites all to  
attend the Filipino Mass (Simbang Gabi) on  
Dec. 15 and Dec. 22, at OLV at 7:00 PM*

**All members of BLD Phoenix are also invited  
to come and celebrate the  
Christmas Eve Filipino Mass on Dec. 24  
at OLV at 7:00 PM**

(This Mass is sponsored by BLD Phoenix)

**Dec 29:** Praise & Worship-7:30 PM (OLV)

## Church Calendar

**Dec 8** Feast of the Immaculate Conception  
(Holy Day of Obligation)

\*please check your local parish for Mass Times\*

## Birthdays

- 2 - Eeve Tejada (YE 2)
- 6 - Fr. Joshua Alvero
- 7 - Lulu Lam (ME 2 Newark)
- 13 - Eunice Lureñana (ME 1)
- 20 - Maria Hilary Cassano (ME 5)
- 26 - Eva Ward (ME 4)
- 30 - Steve Hey (ME 4)
- 31 - Alvin Beronia (YE)



## Anniversaries

- 20 - Ramon & Fe Querol (ME 4)
- 30 - Pedro & Cita Rivera (ME 3)
- 25 - Simon & Lulu Lam (ME 2 Newark)
- 22 - Lee & Arlene Junia (ME 2)
- 11 - Fr. Reggie Carreon (ME 5)

## **THE LORD'S PROVISIONS**

Cash flow as of November 2006

*Receipts* \$  
*Disbursements* \$  
*Surplus (Deficits)* \$

\*See Treasury Logbook for details-available at Registration Area or see Treasury Ministry Heads Pedro & Cita Rivera\*

**Thank you for your generosity!**

**www.BLDPhoenix.com**

## Ministry Announcements

### Intercessory Ministry

Please update petitions monthly for continuous prayers and/or update ministry heads for answered prayers. You may please make/update prayer requests through a link in the website or e-mail ministry heads Denny & Nina Custodio at [dennyc1220@cox.net](mailto:dennyc1220@cox.net).

### IDLC

To all DCS and Ministry Heads (and all those involved in handling minors) please take the Safety Environment Training for Ministries offered by local parishes. You may check the Diocese website for training schedule:

<http://safeenvironmenttraining.org/index.php>

### Married Life Apostolate (MLA)

M.E. #6 is fast approaching. It is scheduled on Feb. 2-4, 2007 at the Franciscan Renewal Retreat Center. All couples sacramentally married are welcome to attend. Application Letters and Brochures for the MEW are available at the Registration Area every Friday. These are also available from MLA Coordinators Joseph & Milrose Kodumal, and also from Evan & Joie Pangilinan and from the website for download.

### Secretariat Ministry

Personal data forms are already available at the Registration Area (and the website). This is for all encountered members/LSS graduates to update the community database. All forms are to be turned in to Secretariat.

### Service Ministry

**Caroling** schedule is as follows: **Dec. 10; Dec. 16 & 17.**

Please see Denny & Nina Custodio/Manny & May Siongco for East/West Valley Groupings.

The BLD Phoenix **Annual Golf Tournament** will tee off on Jan. 6 at the Bougainvillea Golf Club (5740 West Baseline Rd, Laveen, Arizona 85339). Registration has started and Hole Sponsorship Letters are now available from Service Ministry.



**AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM  
BLD PHOENIX**