



Month of March

WORD: Obedience and commitment to Christ is faithfulness to God's covenant.

READINGS

- Mar 01 Gn 9: 8-15, Ps 25: 4-9, 1Pt 3: 18-22, Mk 1: 12-15
Mar 08 Gn 22: 1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18, Ps 116: 10, 15-19, Rm 8: 31b-34, Mk 9: 2-10
Mar 15 Ex 20: 1-17, Ps 19: 8-11, 1 Cor 1: 22-25, Jn 2:13-25
Mar 22 2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23, Ps 137: 1-6, Eph 2:4-10, Jn 3: 14-21
Mar 29 Jer 31: 31-34, Ps 51: 3-4, 12-15, Heb 5: 7-9, Jn 12: 20-33

Facts of Our Faith

WHAT IS LENT...? Lent is the forty day period before Easter, excluding Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday). [This traditional enumeration does not precisely coincide with the calendar according to the liturgical reform. In order to give special prominence to the Sacred Triduum (Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday, Easter Vigil) the current calendar counts Lent as only from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday, up to the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Even so, Lenten practices are properly maintained up to the Easter Vigil, excluding Sundays, as before.]



In the first document of the Second Vatican Council, the bishops of the world wrote: 'The season of Lent has a twofold character: primarily by recalling or preparing for baptism and by penance, it disposes the faithful, who more diligently hear the word of God and devote themselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery.' (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 109) At the time, what seemed new about that statement was the phrase 'recalling or preparing for baptism.' For those who experienced Lent before Vatican II, Lent was all about penance. Today, the Church asks that we focus on the baptismal features of Lent as well as the penitential elements. The challenge for Catholic households today is to discover a way to live Lent that is faithful to the intent of the Church. We have to create a plan for Lent that is not going to seem like drudgery. According to Pope John Paul II: 'The whole period of Lent—since it is a preparation for Easter—is a systematic call to this joy that comes from the effort of patiently finding oneself again. Let no one be afraid to undertake this effort' (The Light of Christ, 1979).

Prayer to be Freed of the Sin of Anger
O meek Savior and Prince of Peace, implant in me the virtues of gentleness and patience. Let me curb the fury of anger and restrain all resentment and impatience so as to overcome evil with good, attain your peace, and rejoice in your love. Amen.

WHAT ABOUT ASH WEDNESDAY...? Ashes symbolized mourning, mortality and penance in the Old Testament times. The priest blesses the ashes and imposes them on the foreheads of the faithful, making the sign of the cross and saying, 'Remember, man you are dust and to dust you shall return,' or 'Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.' We again convert our hearts to the Lord, who suffered, died, and rose for our salvation. (The Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is called 'Shrove Tuesday' where blessed palms from the past Palm Sunday are burnt to be blessed and used for Ash Wednesday).



WHY ARE SUNDAYS EXCLUDED FROM THE RECKONING OF THE FORTY DAYS...? Because Sunday is the day on which Christ arose, making it an inappropriate day to fast and mourn our sins. On Sunday we must celebrate Christ's Resurrection for our salvation. It is Friday on which we commemorate His death for our sins. The Sundays of the year are days of celebration and the Fridays of the year are days of penance.

HOLY WEEK 2009

April 5 - Palm Sunday to April 12 - Easter Sunday

SACRED TRIDUUM 2009

April 9 - Mass of the Lord's Supper

April 10 - Good Friday (NO BLD Praise & Worship)

April 11 - Holy Saturday/Easter Vigil

Please check your respective parishes for Mass & service times during the Holy Week and Stations of the Cross schedule throughout lent.

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I am a Roman Catholic. I have always been one. I believe in God with an almost fanatical, childlike acceptance that practically borders on fatalism: yes, whatever happens happens because it is all in the great design of an omnipotent God. But there comes a time in a person's life when he starts questioning the divine order of his very being. One moment, everything is rosy, happy, solid, rational, and then, without warning, everything turns upside down! Chaos, tumult, turmoil, tremors ... how can this be happening? And to me! Everything is unbelievably unnatural, like somebody just impetuously hits a great switch, turning off everything just like that. Yeah, just like that with no concern for my well-being, my feelings, my life. And for the first time in my life, I felt lost. It's as if my very soul was wrenched from me!

I have enjoyed the good life, doubly enjoyed it when I walked down the aisle with the man of my life by my side. The bliss, the joy, was indescribable. We were blessed with two lovely children, a girl and a boy. My seventh heaven was complete. We moved from New York to Chicago with God's graces following us all the way. The man of my life was a perfect provider and a perfect father. We never wanted of anything... there was always food on the table, the usual raucous children's party on the kids' birthdays, and more. And then appeared the first storm cloud in the Garden of Eden: he was diagnosed with cancer. The malignancy was held in check by regular treatments at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. Life went on, the tumor was in recession, no cause for alarm. We moved to Arizona and settled here comfortably. Not too long afterwards, our complacency was shattered when it was diagnosed that the tumor was back with a vengeance and going out of control! It was a long, uphill battle for survival, a dizzying roller coaster ride with only one inescapable end in sight.

Father Suarez from the Philippines offered a small amount of solace and hope. We took the long voyage to California just so my husband can be blessed, and anointed by the healing hands of Fr. Suarez. The following day, God showed us a mini-miracle. On that fateful day, my husband woke up and went to the bathroom without any assistance. He or rather, we, were beside ourselves with joy. For the first time in months, he finished a full-course meal, feasting on his favorite dish: crabs and shrimps. But it was too good to be true. Only a few days after we returned home, the cancer came back. This time, his fate was truly in God's hands. He spent more time in the hospital than he would at home. I can never forget the last day he spent in his beloved home. We pushed him around the block in his wheelchair, with him cracking jokes all the time. When we got home, he asked to be left alone in front of the house. We acquiesced, and left him by himself for about a half hour. That night, we rushed him to the hospital where he stayed until the fateful moment, when he himself commended his spirit unto the hands of God! Nevertheless, my faith started faltering, when my childish belief in my God started falling into pieces.

I couldn't accept it. I have been good, I have kept His word, I have been kind to His flock. And this is what I get in return. It seemed all wrong. I still kept the Sabbath holy but the religious fire in my heart seemed to have fizzled out altogether. My faith in God and in my fellowmen wavered. *Continued on page 4...*

Love Doubles Bowling

The Brunswick Zone Bowling Lanes came to life in Mesa



last February 14 with the BLD Love Doubles bowling spree. From the Mark 10 to the Adults, many members of the BLD community came together for a Saturday of fun, food,

lots of love, and of course visits to canal alley. Winners for the tournament were Eunice Lurenana, James Laforteza, Jo Saguid and Nelson Reyes. The Mark 10 players each received 5 dollars for their great game.

As our Mark 10 members commented about the Love Doubles Bowling "It was fun especially getting five dollars



after bowling!" says Jaya Junia. "It was really fun especially the arcade. The best part was that I got five dollars, and of course, I love bowling because the bumpers were up," says Kitkat Bautista." "It was a really good experience for all members from BLD, especially for Mark 10 when the machine broke and we got strikes all the time, playing in the arcade after, and of course getting five dollars," says Alanah Brockman.



More than winning, it was a day for the community to just relax and bowl away on Valentines Day. Our thanks to Tito Manny, and Tita May Siongco, the new Youth Min-

istry Coordinators, for organizing the event. Thank you. And when is the next bowling weekend?



March Teaching Schedule

Teaching: Gospel of Luke and Gospel of John
When: March 22, 2009 at 12noon to 4PM,
Where: VHC Offices 1212 N Spencer St., Mesa 85203
This is for ALL Encounter and LSS Graduates (Adults)

Youth Teaching

Teaching: Praise & Worship Workshop
When: March 21, 2009 (Saturday) from 10AM-4PM
Venue: 16013 N 58th St., Scottsdale 85254
This workshop is required for all Youth Ministry Prayer Leaders (IACTS & P/W) and is open to all Youth Ministry Members.

New Service Ministry Coordinators Appointed

Why do we serve? Did we ever think about serving in a ministry as a positive way to nurture our new-found relationship with the Lord? In retrospect, it is encouraging that we are given the opportunity to serve God through the BLD community. Luke 10:27 reads, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Christ exemplified these very words during His earthly life, though knowing that He is God. He emptied himself and assumed the condition of a slave. His death to redeem us from sins was His ultimate service to the will of the Father. Community life does not merely involve attending corporate worship and reading Scripture; it needs to put the Lord's instructions into action. This is what ministry work entails. "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me." John 12:26

BLD Phoenix warmly welcomes its newly appointed Service Ministry Coordinators, ME 4's very own, Ramon & Fe Querol. In spite of a sense of hesitation from the couple paired with hefty questioning hearts about this task presented to them, with such obedient servant hearts, the Querols mentioned, "we do not know yet what to do but we are here to serve for the glory of God, and not for any other reasons".

Service Ministry, often quickly connotes making sure everybody is fed, cleaning, menial & marshal duties, etc. These are yet just icing on the cake - this ministry has a larger responsibility and that is to bind the community together as one, instilling the value of righteousness, servanthood, humility and obedience among the members. Let us offer our support and prayers to our beloved new Service Ministry heads as they embrace changes and challenges. May the sacrificial love of Christ be instilled in each one of us in carrying out such servile tasks. As we live our lives in the Holy Spirit, we live the spiritual gifts and share the fruits through our work in ministry. May we allow our spiritual lives to grow as we serve Christ.

Our shared norms exemplify the Christian ideals of self-giving and serving; by the grace of God, we experience joy in serving, of receiving while giving. Truly, as each one in community is called to serve whether in the Service Ministry or other ministries, let us be happy to serve the Lord in others, recalling His words in Matthew 10:8, "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give". †

New Youth Ministry Coordinators Appointed

On February 13, 2009 at Our Lady of the Valley Church, the BLD Covenant Community in Phoenix, AZ witnessed the anointing of the newly appointed Youth Ministry Coordinators, Manny and May Siongco, members of M.E. Class # 4, BLD-Phoenix. Their appointment was the result of the discernment by BLD Phoenix's District Council of Stewards (DCS), and was recommended by BLD Newark's District of Servant Leader (DSL) to the Executive Council of Servant Leaders (ECSL) in Manila, who confirmed their appointment. The couple was empowered by the DCS and the Community to promote the ministry's vision and mission. They were also reminded to be "firm and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9)

During the short anointing ceremony, Manny and May were exhorted to "Tend the flock of God in your midst, (overseeing) not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief steward is revealed, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:2-4).

BLD Youth Ministry at Cibola Vista Resort

The Youth Encounter Class #4 held their 4th Reunion last Sunday, February 22, at **Cibola Vista Resort & Spa, Lake Pleasant Road, Peoria, AZ**. The Youth Ministry was very thankful to Gilbert and Alma Yap, the parents of Gillien (YE4), for reserving the place for us.

Graduates from YE # 0 to 3 also came and joined the Mini-Praise & Worship (IACTS) led by Gillien Yap & Valerie Zapanta - Dispo. It was really a great and Spirit-filled experience to see everybody singing, praying and giving thanks to our Heavenly Father for all the blessings He showered to all the kids and our beloved BLD-Phoenix Youth Ministry.



After the food was blessed, there was plenty of pizza, chicken, pasta and drinks to go around and a wonderful Praise Ministry Jam Session. Before the kids went to the heated pool for a dive, Tito Manny & Tita May Siongco were introduced as the new Ministry Head Coordinators. Tito Manny gave the youth words of encouragement, advice and assurance that they will always be loved and supported. The Youth Ministry Tri-Core had the great opportunity to discuss important and pressing matters with the Pastoral Apostolate Head, Youth Ministry Head and Adult Class Shepherds.



Marriage Encounter #9 is on March 27-29, 2009

at Camp Pinerock 1400 Pine Dr. Prescott 86303

Please contact ME 8 members for application & more information or visit www.BLDPhoenix.com.

Auxies: Please inform ME 8 members & shepherds if serving the whole weekend or only part of the weekend.

SPE 3 Grand Reunion

Solo Parent's Encounter #3 had their grand reunion last Saturday, February 21, 2009. It was an absolute blast! The candidates were in great spirits as they started arriving one by one or in car pool groups around 4 pm. They started the reunion by choreographing a dance to the Bee Gees song: How Deep is Your Love, and it was followed by some hula lessons from Tita Purita Fernandez which they integrated into their class presentation.



Following the class presentation practice, the Solo Parents started their prayers and sharing with Eva Tejada and Linda Clarin leading the IACTS. All in all, the 13 graduates from

Arizona plus 1 who is a California resident attended the grand reunion.

At around 6 pm, the rest of the BLD community, as well as some other invited guests, started arriving for dinner. The food was wonderful. We had crabs the size of a person's head, pancit, chicken barbecue, mechado, and many more! We had many desserts including ginataan, home made biko, and birthday cake to celebrate Patricia and April's birthdays in the month of February. After dinner, the class regaled us with their presentation and amidst the laughter and enjoyment – we really found that there are great entertainers in the Solo Parent #3 group. It was a great encounter with wonderful support and turnout from the BLD community. †



BIRTHDAYS	
4 - Cal Obispo	21 - Joel Maravillas
7 - Charlene Saberon	23 - Eddie Kemmerer
8 - James Velasco	25 - May Siongco
9 - Natalie McLaughlin	26 - Van Espiritu
10 - Cely Andaya	27 - Paolo Castro
15 - Nikki Magnaye	29 - Imelda Abrea
16 - Ariana Baldevia	30 - Leah Alata
16 - Marcial Ocampo	30 - Katlindt Bautista
19 - Caryl Garcia	
ANNIVERSARIES	
12 - Bing & Myra Magnaye	
12 - Rob & Wendy Dinglasan	
12 - Cal & Amor Obispo	
16 - Joel & Chay Maravillas	

Once More With Friends continued from page 2...

I lived from day to day. Christmas came and went, just another dreary, lonely day. May and Manny were there too. For some years, the two of them had been bugging us (me and Rudy) to go attend the religious encounter and we always declined the invitation. This time, May and Manny were relentless in their invitation, almost demanding. They were joined by Lina and Alex and they simply proved overwhelming. They just wouldn't take NO for an answer. I braced myself for the encounter. I was not only hesitant, I had become a doubting Thomas. Okay, I told myself. I'll humor these people. I might as well play along.

And so it was on that cold day in January that my son drove me all the way to Lake Pleasant never expecting that it was going to be a dramatic turning point in my life. And so I came, and so I saw, and so I was conquered. Never have I been among so many friendly souls, never have I felt so much outpouring of compassion from people whom I have never even known before, never have I felt so much unselfish love from people sharing exactly the same feelings as I do. After the SPE sessions were over, I felt a great weight lifted from my soul. I felt my heart flutter, then beat as before. I turn my face towards heaven once more, and I see my husband smiling down at me, and beside him, smiling too, is Jesus! Thank you Lord. I am once more with Friends!

MARCH FEASTDAYS

March 19 - Feast of St Joseph Husband of Mary

Prayer: Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church, watch over the Church as carefully as you watched over Jesus, help protect it and guide it as you did with your adopted son. Amen.

March 25 - Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord

"It was the will of God, that the redemption of mankind should depend upon the consent of the Virgin Mary. This does not mean that God in His plans was bound by the will of a creature, and that man would not have been redeemed, if Mary had not consented. It only means that the consent of Mary was foreseen from all eternity, and therefore was received as essential into the design of God." -St. Thomas (Summa III:30)

Life in the Spirit Seminar #8 (LSS 8)
 June 19, 2009 Invocation Mass
 June 20-21 LSS Day 1 & Day 2
 Queen of Peace Parish, Mesa, AZ

LSS 8 Orientation
 April 17, 2009 - after Praise & Worship at OLV

LSS 8 Salubungan
 May 1, 2009 - after Healing Mass at OLV

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS
 Cash flow as of February 2009

<i>Receipts</i>	\$2,741.40
<i>Disbursements</i>	\$1,224.14
<i>Surplus (Deficits)</i>	\$1,517.26

For more details, see Treasury Ministry Heads, Pedro & Cita Rivera.
Thank you for your generosity!

Monthly Counsels

First Sunday of Lent : Witnessing

Theme: We are faithful to God's covenant when we live the Gospel.

Promise: *"Good and upright is the Lord, thus he shows sinners the way. He guides the humble to justice, and he teaches the humble his way."* (Ps 25: 8)

Reflection: Before his public ministry, Jesus was led by the spirit to the desert where he was tempted by Satan. This desert experience of Jesus speaks to us for the need of discipline and preparation before we accept our missions as individuals or as a community. We must enter our self-sought deserts and retreat from ourselves, flee from the din and noise of our workplaces and the distractions of the world so that we may find wisdom, refreshment and energy in rest, prayer and silence. In our busy lives, we all need vacation and peace, recovery and belief in the gospel. Jesus, guide us in humility and penance as we approach the Father. Help us believe in the good news of salvation through the witness of our lives.

Order: *"Repent, and believe in the gospel."* (Mk 1:15)

Direction: Throughout Lent and the whole year, believe in Jesus. Accept our deserts and trials. Trust in God's promise.

Second Sunday of Lent: Holiness

Theme: We are faithful to God's covenant when we listen to Jesus.

Promise: *"I will bless you abundantly...and in your descendants all nations of the earth shall find blessings – all this because you obeyed my command."* (Gen 22: 17a-18)

Reflection: Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured before their eyes. Like them, I have seen Jesus in all his goodness and glory on occasions that I consider my happiest moments, like my wedding day as one example. On that day, I felt God's special presence. I also see Jesus in brief moments during hours of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. God is generous. I do not doubt that he blesses me anyway whatever I do, though I am unworthy, because he loves unconditionally, yet I believe that if I sincerely try to love him all the time, that disposes me to a more heightened sense of him. I see God in our community amongst many in BLD who are a perennially giving, helping, serving and sharing people. I see Jesus amongst our brothers and sisters whose humility inspires emulation. Father, help me to be holy.

Order: *"This is my beloved son. Listen to him."* (Mk 9:7)

Direction: Do not ever withhold your talents. Share them. Serve God always. Be humble. Be obedient.

Third Sunday of Lent: Obedience

Theme: We are faithful to God's covenant when we zealously obey His commandments.

Promise: *"The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true, all of them just."* (Ps 19:9)

Reflection: We are no different from the moneychangers whom Jesus drove out of the temple with a whip out of cords. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christ loves us and has a zeal for each one of us as he has for his Father's house. "Destroy this temple," he said to the Jews, "and in three days I will raise it up." Destroy my body, Jesus, and raise it up again as you please. Take out of my body the inclinations for self satisfaction, idleness, pride and deceit. Take out of our community capriciousness, pettiness, half heartedness and lukewarm commitment.

Third Sunday of Lent Reflection continued:

Replace these faults with the meaning and purpose of a life that is inspired by faith and obedience to your commandments.

Order: *"Keep my commandments."* (Ex 20:6)

Direction: Obey God's commandments. Do penance. Repent. Believe in the resurrection. Start a new life of hope..

Fourth Sunday of Lent: Charity

Theme: We are faithful to God's covenant when we do good works in His name.

Promise: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith."* (Eph 2:8)

Reflection: There are days when like the Israelites of old we heap up infidelity upon infidelity. We add fire to gossip. We encourage malicious speech. From the Israelites, we have not learned the lesson that because of their unfaithfulness, they were put to the sword and those who escaped were sent into exile. That I must always be faithful to God is clear to me. Why then do I neglect my daily prayers? Why do I sometimes forget my responsibilities to my spouse and children? Why gamble, drink alcohol to excess, buy things and take trips beyond my means? Every Friday, most everyone in the community goes to BLD Praise and Worship. Most practice self denial and do corporal works of mercy. They go to frequent confession and communion. This is the kind of community I have been looking for. It is held together by fellowship, self responsibility and an exceptional witness to Christ in word and in deed. In the BLD way, let me also strive to live God's truth and come to the light.

Order: *"Whoever lives the truth comes to the light."* Jn 3:21

Direction: Do good works. Believe in God. Be faithful and stay loyal.

Fifth Sunday of Lent: Service

Theme: We are faithful to God's covenant when we serve Him wholeheartedly.

Promise: *"The Father will honor whoever serves me"* (Jn 12: 26b)

Reflection: The old covenant that the Lord made with Israel was written on tablets of stone. That covenant was broken. "I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts," said the Lord of his new covenant. For instance, God has inscribed in my heart the law of fidelity to my wife. What it really means is that I love my wife not because of that law but because she is most deserving of my love and how deeply I could hurt her if I were to become unfaithful. So it must be for the BLD community's fidelity to the Lord. Our work as a community, our caring for our brothers and sisters, our faithfulness to our God-appointed tasks, must all be done wholeheartedly, not as a matter of law and duty, but as a matter of love and honor. Every piece of work, every service must be done out of love. The Father will honor whoever serves him with love.

Order: *"Whoever serves me must follow me."* (Jn 12:26)

Direction: Serve God wholeheartedly. Be humble. Serve promptly and cheerfully.