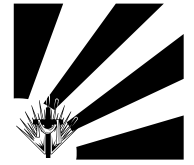




BLD PHOENIX

VALLEY OF THE SON



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 3

Lent Year C

March 2010

Month of March

WORD: *Holiness in Christ, our Spiritual Rock, calls for repentance.*

READINGS:

- March 7** Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15
Ps 103:1-4,6-8,11
1Cor 10:1-6,10-12
Lk 13:1-9
- March 14** Jos 5:9a,10-12
Ps 34:2-7
2Cor 5:17-21
Lk 15:1-3,11-32
- March 21** Is 43:16-21
Ps 126:1-6
Phi 3:8-14
Jn 8:1-11
- March 28** Is 50:4-7
Ps 22:8-9,17-20,23-24
Phi 2:6-11
Lk 22:14 to 23:56

MONTHLY COUNSELS

Mar 7: 3rd Sunday of Lent (Steadfastness)

Theme: Christ's call for repentance exhorts us not to fall back into sin.

Promise: *"He redeems your life from destruction; he crowns you with kindness and compassion," (Ps 103: 4)*

Reflection: On the ordinary days of our lives, we meet extraordinary things that no longer astound us. We expect to wake up every morning like the constant sunrise. When nighttime comes, we expect warm pillows and good dreams worthy of our busy day. There is not one thought to the mighty miracle that every morning God wakes us up to be ready for another day. What happens, we might wonder if one morning God decides not to sustain the day's munificence that wakes us up, that keeps the sun in the sky and that allows us the blessings of air and water and food and peace? It is the same for the nightly ritual of God's providence. What happens, we might wonder if just once God decides not to give us the sleep we long for after a hard day's work - the beds are wet from a leaky ceiling; the children are hungry because there is an outage; we have a headache and we have no more pills. We have described unlikely events about our days and our nights. Simple curiosity alone about such possibilities, if it rouses our souls, offers us an extraordinary opportunity to take a closer look at our faith. Moses **was surprised to see that the bush, though on fire, was not consumed.** The bush that is our life keeps on burning and is not consumed because there is a God who sustains it. Unlike Moses, we do not **go over to look at this remarkable sight.** Life goes on. We take things for granted. We ignore the world's wonderful things that are free and without cost. When God saw Moses come over to look at the bush more closely, he said, **"Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."** Do we ever pause to ponder on that remarkable truth? Our human body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit, where God dwells, which he sustains, which he loves, to which he promised heaven, for which he died, it is sacred. **"Remove the sandals from your feet."** Before God's sacredness, we must shed our smugness and disbelief. Before his divinity, we must bear the willingness of our ordinariness to yearn for more if only God could invite our arrogance to so yearn. If we believe, we must believe more constantly and more firmly. If we are committed to the Lord, we must commit more sincerely. If we are already serving him, we must serve *all the way*. Steadfastness of faith requires us to abhor mere lip service to God's dwelling in our very being. We must acknowledge his presence and manifest it with steadfastness, kindness, compassion and joy.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, long and too long have I ignored the myriad miracles that you have showered into my life, forgive me. Long have I have lived yielding no fruit. My unworthiness is before me always. Help me my Lord that I do not fall back into sin. Amen.

Order: **"Take care not to fall."** (1 Cor 10: 12)

Direction; Own up to your faults and repent. Give thanks to God for many blessings - your spouse, your children, your life of peace and harmony. Apologize for all the hurts you have brought to every one in your life. *Continued next page...*

FAQ REGARDING LENT

Q: Are parishes supposed to cover statues in their church during Lent? **A:** Statues may be veiled beginning on Passion Sunday and remain so through Holy Saturday. Especially in a church with a great deal of devotional areas and images, this can be a method of focusing worshippers on the central mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection.

Q: Why is there no holy water at the entrance of the church during Lent? **A:** Actually, holy water is to remain in the entry to churches until the commencement of the Triduum on Holy Thursday. Only then it is to be removed and replaced after the Triduum. This highlights the relationship between holy water - itself symbolic of sacramental grace given to us by God - and the Paschal Mystery, celebrated in the finest way in the Triduum...More on page 4...

THE LORD'S PROVISIONS

Cash flow as of February 2010	
Receipts	\$2,736.02
Disbursements	\$3,188.74
Surplus (Deficits)	\$(452.72)

Finance & Faith- Sirach 5:8 says, "Do not depend on dishonest wealth, for it will not benefit you in the day of calamity." Honesty and integrity are hallmark qualities of stewards of Providence. Nothing, including great temporal wealth, is worth risking eternity with the Lord. Your financial life is an open book to the Lord. Live it accordingly. -Phil Lenahan Veritas Financial Ministries www.VeritasFinancialMinistries.com

Website: www.BLDPhoenix.com

Group E-mail: BLDPhoenix@yahoo.com

Counsels continued from page 1...

Mar 14: 4th Sunday of Lent (Commitment to Reconciliation)

Theme: Christ's call for repentance exhorts us to be reconciled with God and one another.

Promise: "When the poor one called out, the Lord heard, and from all his distress he saved him." (Ps 34: 7)

Reflection: Don't we all seek to leave the place of our birth, the ancestral home where we grew up and strike out to get rich and famous on our own? We are all people of ambition, freedom and independence. We like to sever our roots that we feel tether us. We cannot bear anyone who stands between us and our horizons. In our pride, we refuse to enjoy what we see as mere crumbs of happiness. We want happiness *all the way*. We may sometimes think we can do without our parents. We do not have to be near them, so we pack up and go away, the farther the better. Watch me fly. Watch my sky. Don't call me. I'll call you. Lavishly we were loved. Is that how we learned to squander? Away from our roots, we eat and we are still hungry. We are sated and we are still greedy. We spend until we are spent. We deplete our resources and our excesses deplete us. In our conceit, we sometimes think we can even do without God. Where has he been anyway? Only when we are reduced to hunger, emptiness and dire poverty do we think of home. "**Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.**" Even at the time we grovel in our colossal failure, we have low brow expectations of home and family. Meager is plenty - an old shirt will do, a bowl of soup will do, old sandals will do in the home where we were once a prince. O, how we have shrunk the image of our father to the shrunken image of ourselves that the secular world has given us! Don't you hear what the father is saying? "**Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast.**" O, what a universally purging and communicable experience is this cleansing, redeeming explosion inside of us that makes us shudder to our soul that we are welcomed back home even when we **no longer deserve to be called a son.** We become deaf and mute and blind with tears. We cannot hear the father say, "**I have removed the reproach... from you.**" O God, you are the approachable father, the father who is always there, our beloved father who is beyond all expectations. God gives mercy according to love not according to need or desire. Remember though, that we have an older brother who is rightfully tempted not to rejoice with us. Understand that he really has a point. "**All these years he served and not once disobeyed.** Let us go and embrace our brother. How can we celebrate? How can we rejoice without him? What good is it being home if we cannot reconcile with everyone we love? We had come back home. We are no longer the same. Christ is in us. We are **a new creation.**

Prayer: Dear Father, I exult in your mercy and goodness. Let me reconcile with you from whom I have strayed away. Let me embrace my brother whose obedience I had envied and who may have envied my experiment at freedom. Fill his heart and mine with love. Amen.

Order: "**We must celebrate and rejoice.**" (Lk 15: 32a)

Direction: Reconcile with your enemies. Forgive their lapses of good sense. Make amends to everyone for your insolence, indifference and pride. Pray more fervently for those who have offended you.

Mar 21: 5th Sunday of Lent (Compassion, Readiness to forgive)

Theme: Christ's call for repentance exhorts us not to condemn others.

Promise: "Neither do I condemn you." (Jn 8: 11)

Reflection: "**Am I my brother's keeper?**" (Gn 4:9b) We are our brother's keeper. We are not like the Levite or priest. We are the concerned Samaritan, the servant for good, the dispenser of good will. We are not accusers. "**Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.**" We are not judges. "**Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women.**" We are not instigators. "**So what do you say?**" Instead of our brother's keepers, have we become their tormentors? Instead of instruments of assistance for one another, have we become one another's detractors? Instead of cutting some slack for others knowing we are all at risk for failure and helping them out of their wickedness the best way we can, are we instead secretly glad they had been uncovered in their iniquity as long as we ourselves are scot free? Are we sometimes glad at the expense of others? Do we harbor one little bit of that malicious glee at the misfortune of others? For ourselves, and for others, is it not life we seek not death? "**Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.**" It is not justice we must seek from God for no one is just in God's sight. What we seek is mercy. God's mercy exhorts us to have compassion for others and forgiveness of their wrongdoings even as God himself forgives us our own transgressions. What we seek is patience over the failure of others so that in turn they may have forbearance over our own failing. We must persevere in our task of making up for our faults and hope to develop the loving and forgiving attitude of God who says, "**Remember not the things of the past.**" He has forgiven us. He wants us to be sorry and move on. "**See, I am doing something new.**" We are a people of new life. We are a people in process. We are a people still turning our lives around. God wants us to start anew in Christ. Let us begin to consider all our past as rubbish for **the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus.** Let us drop the impulse of wishing to pick the first stone and cast it out at others who may be worthier than we are for we are all sinners.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, I am deeply sorry for all my sins. I thank you for not condemning me. Neither must I condemn anyone who may have hurt me. The burden is on me to make myself more agreeable, more loving and more sincere with everyone I meet. Amen.

ORDER: "**Forget what lies behind...continue toward the goal of God's upward calling.**" (Phil 3: 14)

Direction: Forget past grievances. Do something new. Be forgiving. Sin no more. Resolve to do everything for the love of God.

March 28: Palm Sunday (Spiritual Endurance)

Theme: Christ's call for repentance exhorts us to carry our cross daily.

Promise: "The Lord God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; ...I shall not be put to shame." (Is 50: 7)

Reflection: God exhorts us to carry our cross daily, yet we hesitate and even grumble. He calls us to a life of acceptance, humility, and spiritual endurance, but our half-hearted commitment would just have *Continued on pg 4...*

GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

One of the greatest blessings I received within the last few years was the gift of knowing a modern-day prophet (a young saint-in-the-making, if I may) in the person of a religious brother from the Oblate Apostles of the Two Hearts (OATH). He recently just made his Perpetual Vows as a religious on January 31, 2010. He also is not a stranger to a few of us in the community. As he asked me (and those who will be reading this) for continuous prayers as he pursues this life that God called him to live, he also infused, in a way that is simple and most easily understood, a reminder about Lent - simple yet challenging but life-changing as well as life-saving...EL

AVE MARIA!!! Peace from the Hearts of Jesus and Mary!!!

The Glory of these 40 Days of Lent is always a time of "Self-Confrontation" for us to realize our sinfulness, wretchedness, and weakness so that we can turn to God and claim His grace for mercy, healing, and strength. There is no Easter Season without first undergoing a Lenten Season. Now is the time to live and practice the true "SPIRIT" of Lent which is a time of prayer and penance.

Penance can come to us in many forms. Some common and traditional forms of penance are: **Prayer** - Lent is a time to speak to God. Yes we know that Latin is the official language of the Church but the language of God is SILENCE. The SILENCE of God is very clear, audible, loud for those who listen through prayer. Prayer, the lifting of our Hearts and Minds to God, is not merely about talking to God but about listening to God. Let us intensify our prayer. The best way to intensify our prayer is especially through the highest form of prayer, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If possible, let us try our best to even attend Holy Mass every day. **Fasting** - On Bread and Water. A full stomach is an enemy of good meditation. Of course, if we are not of age, if we have to be sustained with food because of our work, or if health does not permit, then we are exempted. If you desire to practice fasting, keep in mind that you are meant to feel hungry. That's the whole point of fasting. We are to experience the dryness of the bread and the plain taste of water. When it starts to get painful, we can offer the pain as a sacrifice and being in the state of grace, we can unite it with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ (Salvifici Dolores, Pope John Paul II). Remember, prudence is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and you would really need to strike a balance. If your health is being affected and if doctors order you not to fast, please sustain yourself with the proper foods. There is also another form of fasting which is fasting from sin, comfort, worldliness, materialism, and our predominant passions. **Abstinence** - We can practice abstinence by refraining from eating red meat. All of us have our favorite foods. Another offering we can make is refrain from the food we like. *The body is a very good master but a very poor servant.* It is so easy to listen to the wants of our flesh. If we can learn how to control our appetite, we would be able to plunge deeper in our spiritual life. How can we say no to sin, especially impurities, when it is right in front of our face, if we cannot even say no to food when it is in front of our face? **Almsgiving** - Almsgiving means to give to those who are in need. Just look around, there are many who are least fortunate. Many people like to give when they are stable and when it would not affect them if they would give. Yes that is good but what is the true spirit of charity and generosity? It is when we give a part of us especially when it hurts. It is giving without

Jesus on the cross. He allowed Himself to be pierced by a lance and so that ALL of His Precious Blood, the last drop, would be spilled out for love of us. **Perfection of our Duties** - If we are a parent, let us be a good parent. If we are a child let us be good children to our parents. If we have work, let us be just in work and not cheat others. Above all these duties, being Catholic is our greatest duty. Let us perfect our Christian duty and do everything, even to the point of radicalism, to save our souls and to save other souls. We can do this by securing that we and our loved ones are in the state of grace. We can do this by picking up a very thorough examination of conscience and make a checklist of all of our sins from our last confession and those we may have forgotten to confess. After prayerfully examining our conscience, then we can run to confession. *Lent is a time of mercy and love.* Of all the times throughout the year, this is the time we can start anew with God. Yes, we have had our short comings and our mistakes, but remember while we are still alive and breathing, now is the time of mercy. When we would face our judgment after death, the mercy of God would come to an end and His justice remains. This is when we would be judged "black and white". Everything that was hidden would be revealed. There are no if's or but's when we are facing the Divine Mirror of Justice. Before God on judgment day, we cannot claim ignorance before God and say "I did not know." We have the solid truths founded in the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church and the teachings of the Holy Father as our foundation. In all actuality, He has been doing so much to bring us to conversion, but for some, they just don't want to listen.

If we do this, I can guarantee that you will have the best Easter Season that you have ever experienced because you can rightfully say that you went through "Calvary" with Jesus, you died with Jesus, and now experience the Glory of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Lastly, let us never forget that the Blessed Mother never left the side of Jesus. At the height of His suffering, she was there. When you start to experience the pains and difficulties in your desire to perfect your prayers and penances, remember Mama Mary is with you every step of the way. Turn to Mary, cry to Mary, hold on to Mary! During these difficult moments, whether you realize it or not, she's there at your side, crying with you, and embracing you just like she did to Jesus. Let us unite our pains, suffering, sacrifices together as we console the Hearts of Jesus and Mary! Please pray for me and my community.

To Jesus thru Mary,
Brother Stanislaus Kostka Maria OATH
OATH Australia Local Servant

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 - Rock & Rosie Calvo
- 8 - Jerome & Sharon Fernando
- 9 - Ross & Maria David
- 12 - Bing & Myra Magnaye
- 12 - Cal & Amor Obispo
- 16 - Joel & Chay Maravillas

“PRIESTHOOD 101”
During this Year for Priests

Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed this the “Year for Priests”! This year is meant to benefit our priests, but it is also meant to benefit us, the laity. Our priests give their lives for us—their lives are literally spent in service to us. Therefore, a Year dedicated for them is also for us.

The Grandeur of a Priest’s Grace and Office

Priesthood necessarily involves the grace of the Holy Spirit. It was the grandeur of both this grace and the priest’s office that led the young priest St. Gregory Nazianzus to say: *“We must begin by purifying ourselves before purifying others; we must be instructed to be able to instruct, become light to illuminate, draw close to God to bring Him close to others, be sanctified to sanctify... Who then is the priest? He is the defender of truth, who stands with angels, gives glory with archangels, causes sacrifices to rise to the altar on high, shares Christ’s priesthood, refashions creation, restores it in God’s image, recreates it for the world on high and, even greater, is divinized and divinizes.”*

To have your questions regarding a call to the priesthood answered, visit www.diocesephoenix.org, enter site and go to VOCATIONS, or contact Fr. Paul Sullivan, Vocation Director for the Diocese of Phoenix, frsullivan@diocesephoenix.org, or call 602-354-2004.

Counsels continued from pg 2...us wave our palms at a safe distance rather than carry the cross and drink **the cup**. It may not even have moved us to be grateful that Jesus had said on the cross, **“Father, forgive them, they do not know what they do.”** From the beginning Jesus taught us life’s lessons not in token subtleties and chance encounters but in startling and perilously heroic realities. As a newborn in the manger, was he not completely helpless, without power and utterly vulnerable? He would have perished without human care, love and touch. As a child, he submitted to obedience. As an adult, he demonstrated the attributes of spiritual humility all men aspire for, the spiritual endurance that befits the Son of Man through, with and in whom we must all be reconciled to the Father. His life was total abnegation, a life of perfect submission to the Father’s will. **“I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.”** He took on our flesh that he might humble himself, **becoming obedient to the point of death.** Loyal and faithful to his last breath, he surrendered to the will of the Father, **“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”** By the example of his witness, he reminds us of the redeeming function of suffering, that there is no disgrace in carrying one’s cross, that it is proper to own up to and be responsible for our actions and decisions, to wave our palms, to praise him aloud with joy and bless him as our king, ready to drink **the cup**. To our Lord and our God who for our sake drew out from his humanity the plaintive cry, **“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”** we must also cry out with borrowed faith from the good thief’s newly found endurance, **“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”**

Prayer: Dear Jesus, teach me to submit to the will of the Father in imitation of your example. I am not abandoned. You are always with me. Amen.

Order: **“Pray that you may not undergo the test.” (Lk 22: 40b)**

Direction: Carry your cross with fervor. Endure trials and suffering that come your way for the love of Jesus. Persevere in prayer. The Lord God is our help. # -RSC.

March Teaching Schedule

Teaching Topics: Fraternal Correction, Christian Speech
 For: Post-LSS and Encountered Adults
 When: **March 28, 2010** at 1 to 4PM
 Where: Victory Home Care Offices
 1212 N Spencer St., Mesa 85203
 Please bring your Bible, Notebook and Pen!

“And He gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God.”
(Ephesians 4:11-14)

March 19 - Feast of the St. Joseph, the Husband of Mary

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

4 - Cal Obispo	21 - Joel Maravillas
10 - Cely Andaya	23 - Eddie Kemmerer
15 - Nikki Magnaye	25 - May Siongco
16 - Ariana Baldevia	27 - Paolo Castro
16- Marco Ocampo	29 - Imelda Abrea
20 - Luigi Castillo	30 - Katlindt Bautista

FAQ REGARDING LENT

Why Don’t Roman Catholics Sing the Alleluia During Lent?

Throughout the liturgical year, the Catholic Church makes certain changes to the Mass to reflect the liturgical season. Next to the change in the color of the priest’s vestments, the absence of the Alleluia during Lent is probably the most obvious.

The Meaning of the Alleluia

The Alleluia comes to us from Hebrew, and it means “praise Yahweh.” Traditionally, it has been seen as the chief term of praise of the choirs of angels, as they worship around the throne of God in Heaven. It is, therefore, a term of great joy, and our use of the Alleluia during Mass is a way of participating in the angels’ worship. It is also a reminder that the Kingdom of Heaven is already established on earth, in the form of the Church, and that our participation in Mass is a participation in Heaven.

Our Lenten Exile

During Lent, however, our focus is on the Kingdom coming, not on the Kingdom having come. The readings in the Masses for Lent and in the Liturgy of the Hours focus heavily on the spiritual journey of Old Testament Israel toward the coming of Christ, and the salvation of mankind in His death and resurrection. We, too, are on a spiritual journey, toward the Second Coming and our future life in Heaven. In order to emphasize that journey, the Church, during Lent, removes the Alleluia from the Mass. We no longer sing with the choirs of angels; instead, we acknowledge our sins and practice repentance so that one day we may again have the privilege of worshiping God as the angels do.

The Return of the Alleluia at Easter

That day come triumphantly on Easter Sunday— or, rather, at the Easter Vigil, on Holy Saturday night, when the priest chants a triple Alleluia before he reads the Gospel, and everyone present responds with a triple Alleluia. The Lord is risen; the Kingdom has come; our joy is complete; and, in concert with the angels and saints, we greet the risen Lord with shouts of “Alleluia!”