

**Month of May**

**WORD:** *To form Christian disciples requires total commitment to be a "living" Christ.*

**READINGS**

- May 4** Acts 1:1-11  
 Ps 47:2-3, 6-9  
 Eph 1:17-23  
 Matt 28:16-20
- May 11** Acts 2:1-11  
 Ps 104:1,24,29-30,31,34  
 1Cor 12:3b-7,12,13  
 Jn 20:19-23
- May 18** Ex 34:4b-6,8-9  
 Dn 3:52-56  
 2Cor 13:11-13  
 Jn 3:16-18
- May 25** Deu 8:2-3, 14b-16a  
 Ps 147:12-15, 19-20  
 1Cor 10:16-17  
 Jn 6:51-58

**DIRECTIONS (BLD GLOBAL):**

1. Listen, understand and be a visible shepherd to your lambs. Extend to all, the same love and peace that our Lord Jesus has given us.

**PROPHECIES (BLD GLOBAL):**

1. "Go, make disciples of all nations." Take this to heart and do what I command you for there are multitudes of people who still do not know and believe in Me. Bring Me to them.
2. As the Father, the Holy Spirit, and I are one, so should you be in your family, your community, and with the Church.
3. My Spirit will enlighten your hearts that you may know the hope that belongs to My call.

**ORDER**

"Go make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mat 24:19-20)

**Reflections for May**

The word for the month of May - **To form Christian disciples requires total commitment to be a "living" Christ** - challenges, and at the same time, invites each and every member of our Community to a renewal in our Life in the Spirit to become authentic disciples of Jesus by "living" him. **"God created man in his image; in the divine image he created male and female he created them"** (Genesis 1:27). That is our divine inheritance, which became veiled or hidden but was restored to us in the Paschal mystery of Christ. It is an invitation because when we revisit our roots we might find many things that we would rather not unearth as they might open hurts and wounds that we would rather commit to the depths of the soul. Considering the many confusing values in this world today, it is a challenge provoking our inherent yearning to be restored to our life with the Father.

Every Sunday of May this year is a Feast day that is central to the tenets of our faith. Those who belong to Christ through faith and baptism must confess their baptismal vow before men... Whoever says, "I believe" says "I pledge myself to what we believe" (CCC pars.14 & 185). What better way to respond than by being a "living" Christ to our brothers and sisters in our mission fields?

The **1st Sunday of May** is the **Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension**. The drama of Easter, which began with the resurrection of Jesus, is coming to an end. But reality shows that Easter is about life – life bursting forth triumphantly from the tomb. The feast we celebrate this Sunday is the good news that Jesus lives on. And he lives on not just in the heavens where he ascended, **"When he had said this... he was lifted up and a cloud took him from their sight"** (Acts 1:9), but at the very center of our lives. Many instances in Scriptures show us that he is alive after he rose from the grave. Now it is our turn to show in many convincing ways that he is alive in us. The Gospel, the good news, we are to proclaim is that our lives have been changed because of the One who lives on in us, and we continue to rise from the tombs of our lives. To be alive is not just to be physically present in this world. To be truly alive is to live in him, and move and have our being in the life of Christ. And with this life your own life is transformed because you have come to know Jesus through our different Encounter Weekends, through Scripture, the sacraments, through fellowships and WSC's with our brothers and sisters in Community, and in the depths of your own heart.

The **2nd Sunday of May** is **Pentecost Sunday**. The Solemnity of Pentecost commemorates the giving and coming of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel tells us that the Holy Spirit is the gift of the Risen Christ, the main effect of which is peace. It is the fruit of the forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God, made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ. This Shalom-peace is the fullness of salvation; it is the peace different from any other, because it is a peace that is breathed upon us by Jesus – the Holy Spirit, the giver of life confirms this interior gift (John 14:27). The Acts of the Apostles, on the other hand, tells us about the dramatic exterior manifestations of the Spirit upon the apostles gathered together in prayer at the upper room. These include tongues of fire, strong driving wind, speaking in tongues.

*Continued on page 4...*

## St. Ignatius Meets St. Francis?

An Ignatian Silent Retreat at the Franciscan Renewal Center

**O**n the weekend of April 11-13, BLD Phoenix sponsored an Ignatian Silent Retreat at Arizona's own Franciscan Renewal Center. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we were also led by a human spiritual director, Manuel "Manny" Flores, SJ. Father Manny is a Filipino Jesuit assigned to the Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, in Quezon City. He joked that the Society of Jesus has the longest period of training and formation for any religious order because Jesuits are slow learners!

Ignatian Silent Retreats are normally eight-day retreats, and Father Manny led the "lambs" through the process of reading, reflection, and prayer. Illustrating our insignificance compared to our world, solar system, and universe, Father Manny explained that it is God who is the center of our universe and the purpose for our creation. From our own insignificance in our universe, we are invited - called by God - to be part of something much greater and much more significant. He calls each of us to join Him in his Divine Plan.

Father Manny introduced the various topics for the lambs, which contained subtle, and often not too subtle, challenges. When it comes to evangelization and conversion, he explained, relatively few people are brought to our church through advertising and most other means. It is personal invitations from Catholics to friends, coworkers, and others that bring over 80% of new Catholics to the church! Here the challenge was very real and personal - each of us is responsible for building up our church by personal invitations to others.

The simple questions that Father Manny presented led to deep reflection. The questions began by God asking each of us, "How are you, my child?" We also reflected on the questions: What is God's will for me? Why do I serve God? The desert beauty of the Franciscan Renewal Center was an ideal setting for individual prayer, reflection, and reading. God provided His own creatures - cottontail rabbits, ground squirrels, lizards, and numerous birds - to help inspire our prayer, reflections, and writing. God's creation also served to remind us that although we were on an Ignatian retreat, we were at a Franciscan venue!

And what would any BLD Phoenix activity be without "BLD" (breakfast, lunch, and dinner)? Tito Evan and Tita Joie worked tirelessly in their planning, including arrangements for wonderful meals. Their efforts showed in the flawless success of the retreat. God blessed us with a weekend of tremendous insight and reflection, perfect weather, and with our newest BLD friend and guide, Fr. Manny.



## A Community of Encountered Couples and Families

Joyfully invites you to share the Fruits of the Marriage Encounter Weekend (last of 2 Series)

The Marriage Encounter Weekend is nearing and with this being the 8th encounter, there are still many unanswered questions about the ME. Every encounter, the Marriage Life Apostolate gives out a pamphlet together with the ME invitation letter and the application form. The following are just excerpts of the ME weekend process. More questions will be answered next issue.

### HOW DOES A MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER ENHANCE A MARRIAGE?

The fundamental difference between marriages that are good, average or poor is the level of communication between husband and wife. In all marriages, there are times when we take each other and our relationship for granted. **The Weekend presents each couple with the opportunity to get off the "Modern World Treadmill", to stop and take a fresh look at the "two of us, our marriage and our priorities".** We learn a communication technique which shows and encourages us to explore the important areas of our life together in a spirit of love and understanding. **The Weekend offers every couple the insights, the tools and the confidence to enrich their marriage and to strengthen their love for one another. For many couples, "Their Weekend" is one of the most significant experiences of their lives!**

### COMMON CONCERNS AND ANSWERS

*"We already have a good marriage."*

**Response:** The difference between a "good" marriage and a BEAUTIFUL marriage is the Marriage Encounter experience. Even if many difficult marriages are made right in the Encounter, many more couples with already good marriages have received continuing blessings after the Weekend.

*"We already have good communication between us."*

**Response:** Please take a closer look. Can you truly communicate with each about your intimate feelings, aspirations, fears, anxieties? Do you have oneness and accord in your major decisions?

*"We're too busy. We don't have time."*

**Response:** Isn't a weekend a small price to pay for the joy, the peace, the blessings and the power of a lifetime made fuller by the Encounter? All you have to do is give one weekend to each other.

*"We're too young."*

**Response:** That's wonderful! Wouldn't you want to prevent growing old too fast, growing old alone? Wouldn't you want to be trained in living fully with each other as early as possible?

*"We're too old."*

**Response:** Then, you can be young again! Don't you agree there's always something new in you? Isn't there something you may have missed because you were not always aware of what was really in your spouse's mind and heart? Wouldn't you want a fresh look at each other?

*"I don't feel at ease in Spiritual Retreats"*

**Response:** That's how many of us felt before (and even during) our Encounter Weekend. But when we saw and met others like us who had successfully coped with the initial "uneasiness" we soon felt very much at home with the "spirituality" of the encounter. And later, we wanted more of it.

## May 16-18, 2008 - Life in the Spirit Seminar #6

May 16, 2008 Friday at 0730 PM

Invocation Mass at Our Lady of the Valley  
3220 W Greenway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85053

May 17 & 18, 2008 Saturday & Sunday

LSS Proper at St. Stephens Church  
2310 N 56th St., Phoenix, AZ

**To all BLD LSS graduates:** Please approach LSA Gladdine & Gerry Bautista or LSS #6 Seminar Coordinators Pedro & Cita Rivera and sign up to serve for the coming LSS #6 on May 16-18. Thank you and God bless.

### **BLD Phoenix Encounters & Seminars 2008**

May 16-18: Life in the Spirit Seminar #6

June 6-8: Marriage Encounter #8

July 25-27: Youth Encounter #4

Oct 17-19: Life in the Spirit Seminar #7

### **Marriage Encounter #8: June 6-8, 2008**

**ME 8 Application Packets** are now available from the Registration Area, MLA (Joseph & Milrose Kodumal) and through the BLD Phoenix website.

### **THE LORD'S PROVISIONS**

Cash flow as of April 2008

*Receipts* \$2,612.93

*Disbursements* \$1,087.90

*Surplus (Deficits)* \$1,525.03

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

**Thank you for your generosity!**

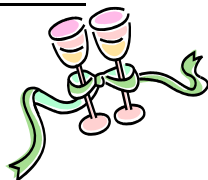
### **MAY BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 - Joie Pangilinan (ME 5)
- 3 - Mary Ann Korte (ME 3)
- 5 - Rob Dinglasan (ME 5)
- 14 - Michael Cassano (ME 5)
- 15 - Eden Sebial (SPE 1)
- 15 - Erlinda Clarin (SPE 1)
- 16 - Lina Alba (ME 1)
- 18 - Ning Laforteza (ME 1 Reno)
- 19 - Michael Querol (YE 1)
- 19 - Chita Dilema (May 19)
- 23 - Jun Saguid (ME 6)
- 30 - Jess Laforteza (ME 1 Reno)



### **MAY ANNIVERSARIES**

- 1 - Pino & Edith Ceniza (ME 7)
- 7 - Evan & Joie Pangilinan (ME 5)
- 19 - Steve & Dory Hey (ME 4)
- 27 - John & Joyce Clark (ME 1)
- 28 - Joseph & Milrose Kodumal (ME5 NWK)
- 29 - Ramon & Helen Gutierrez (ME 7)



## MAY : THE MONTH OF MARY, THE MONTH OF FLOWERS AND THE "SANTACRUZAN"

**F**lores de Mayo (flowers of May), may refer to the whole Flower Festival celebrated in the month of May in honor of the Virgin Mary. In the Tagalog region, this custom and celebration started after the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854.



When the rains begin to pour after a long dry spell, flowers magically bloom overnight. And being predominantly Catholic, the Filipinos celebrate the beneficial rains by venerating the Blessed Virgin Mary. The townsfolk gather the colorful flowers to decorate the Parish Church altars and aisles. They bundle the blooms in exotic arrangements for the many different festivities all together referred to as the "Flores De Mayo" (Flowers of May).

In many parishes, these afternoon festivities culminate in an elaborate procession to the Church where an evening mass is celebrated. The procession is called "Santacruzán" (Festival of the Holy Cross), a commemoration of the finding of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem by Saint Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. After the Holy Cross was found in Jerusalem and brought back to Rome, there was a joyful celebration for thanksgiving.

Many towns celebrate Flores De Mayo with the community congregating in the afternoons to pray the rosary, offer flowers to the Virgin Mary, and share homemade delicacies and snacks. Children and adults wearing their Sunday best, sing and dance to welcome the rains that will water the new crops. Nine days of prayer (a novena) in honor of the Holy Cross precedes the Flores de Mayo or Santacruzán. This festival was introduced by the Spaniards in the Philippines and has since become part of Filipino traditions identified with youth, love and romance.

The highlight of the procession is the majestic "Reina Elena" (Queen Helena) who walks with her consort, "Prinsipe Constantino", under a huge canopy of May flowers. Immediately behind her is a float carrying the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, followed by a brass band that lends the festive sounds to the procession.

This Filipino tradition ("The Queen of May Festivities"), introduced by the Spanish conquerors, is more than 100 years old and lives on even in Europe and America. Filipino Communities and Associations all over the world celebrate the Santacruzán with the same pageantry and glamor as the townfolk in their homeland.

In the past, Filipinos in this Parish (Our Lady of the Valley) held to the tradition and observed the practices of Flores de Mayo on the last Sunday of May. A procession of the different characters of Santacruzán and children dressed up as angels bringing the letters that reads "Ave Maria" was held. This year, as the last Sunday of May, happens to be the Catholic Church's celebration of the Solemnity of **Corpus Christi**, Filipino parishioners at OLV will only be offering flowers either before or after the Filipino Mass but nevertheless, still reflect veneration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Usually, there will also be fellowship and sharing of homemade delicacies and snacks after the Mass as with tradition.



**May 25 - Filipino Sunday Mass at 5 pm**  
at Our Lady of the Valley  
(Sponsored by BLD Phoenix)

[www.BLDPhoenix.com](http://www.BLDPhoenix.com)

## Ministry Announcements

### Intercessory Ministry:

- ◆ Please update petitions monthly for continuous prayers and/or update Intercessory 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. Please check the Diocese website for training Schedule <http://safeenvironmenttraining.org/index.php>

### Secretariat

- ◆ Please wear your community I.D. If you do not have one contact Evan & Joie Pangilinan directly or e-mail: [evanjoie@yahoo.com](mailto:evanjoie@yahoo.com).

### Word:

- ◆ Share your walk/faith/transformation in the Lord or an answered prayer with the community thru an article (350 words max). E-mail to [eunex@aol.com](mailto:eunex@aol.com).

### Reflections continued from page 1...

The effect of the Spirit's coming is unity and understanding among peoples who speak different languages, in contrast to the story of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). Here, with the coming of the Spirit, the opposite effect is manifested. People from different nations understand each other. By this, the Spirit proclaims that humanity is once again reconciled with God through Christ's humility and obedience. In our own Pentecost experience when we encountered the Holy Spirit during our Life in the Spirit Seminar, we became "living" Christ sharing his peace as we received the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The **3rd Sunday of May** is the **Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity**. This highlights another tenet of our faith and gives us insight into the relationship between the three Persons in One God. In God there is communion between the three Persons:

the Father, the Son, and their common Holy Spirit. We emphasize the oneness of God even as we celebrate the mystery of the Trinity. God is one, but God is also relational, inviting each one of us into the intimacy of Triune love, as we discover the community of God. **God is Father**. Not only is he Creator he is our Father who gives himself completely and perfectly to us, his children.

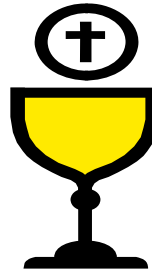
**"Everything that I have is yours"** (Luke 15:31). As we walk with him we are challenged to 'live' him, ready to forgive unconditionally (Matthew 18:22). **God is Son**. In the Nicene Creed we profess – 'God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten not made, one in being with the Father.' He makes himself known to us through Jesus Christ who redeems us - our Emmanuel. We are to 'live' Christ in our obedience to the Father and walk with him in a special way in the Eucharist. **God is Spirit**, the love of the Father and the Son.



### Reflections for May continued...

The Spirit unites all and it is important that we walk with him so we may be united with others. No matter the differences, the Spirit can make us one – in our families, in our communities, we need the Spirit of love to make us one and heal our weaknesses.

The **4th and last Sunday of May** is the **Solemnity of Corpus Christi**. Another mystery that is central to our faith is our belief in Jesus' real presence in the Eucharist. We believe it because the Son of God told us so (John 6:55-56). More than a social occasion shared with friends, the celebration of the



Eucharist is a meal with obligations attached. It is a symbol of commitment and participation in the mystery of Christ's life, and more than simply asking us to remember him, Jesus wants us to be recipient and sharers of the life he has laid down for us, and to be our source of life. He is present in the Eucharist to stay with us forever, so that there will be no separation, for he loves us to the very end. To eat his flesh and drink his blood is to assent to all that we receive and believe. It is a conscious action, a decision to enter into union with Jesus and with the community. This is an oft-forgotten aspect of the Eucharist. Christ wants to give us the means to unite ourselves with one another, that we may become companions - in Latin, 'cumpanis' - literally 'bread-sharers.' We put Jesus' wishes into practice, with one mind and one heart, and together. Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist is a conscious action, a decision to enter into union with Jesus and with the community. Union, however, can only occur when we allow ourselves to be stripped of all that gets in the way of this intimate encounter. When we say "Amen" we are agreeing to open ourselves to the process of transformation. Just as bread and wine are changed into his Body and Blood, so too do we need to be changed into the substance of Christ. What we eat and drink we become. We put ourselves into a process of radical self-emptying through which our identity becomes that of Christ; to become Christ means that we can no longer live out of the narrowness of our own needs and vision, but must embrace the needs of those around us. Realizing all these implications, we can then prepare ourselves adequately for this encounter with Christ and worthily receive God.

In his discourse as the Good Shepherd several Sundays ago, Jesus reveals the purpose of his coming – **"I came that they might have life and have it to the full"** (John 10:10). To be a "living" Christ therefore, the authentic Christian disciple must no longer live his own life, but must now 'live' Christ (Galatians 2:20). Having cast aside his former way of life, the disciple acquires a fresh, spiritual way of thinking and is able to 'put on the new man' created in God's image. God wants to make us new in the attitudes of our minds through the power of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, so that we can become Jesus (Ephesians 4:22ff). To be "living" Christ therefore, demands total commitment to the faith we profess.

St. Paul tells us how this renewal takes place: **"If we have been united with him through likeness to his death, so shall we be through a like resurrection. This we know: our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might be slaves to sin no longer. A man who is dead has been freed from sin. If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are also to live with him"** (Romans 6: 5-8).