



## This Sunday's Counsel

### THEME:

We prepare for Christ's coming when we humbly acknowledge our sins and repent.

### PROMISE:

"...according to His promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." (2 Pt 3:13)

### WORD:

Is 40:1-5, 9-11/ Ps 85:9-14/ 2 Pt 3:8-14/ Mk 1:1-8

### ORDERS:

- Prepare the way of the Lord. (Mk 1:3b)

### DIRECTIONS:

- Avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Spread the good news of our Lord's salvation.
- Practice humility and transparency.
- Be a good Christian witness.

## In The Manger, To Begin Again

### REFLECTION:

It is Christmas once again. The Christ Child is born in a manger, his parents by his side and a star brightly shines in the heavens. Shepherds and angels joyfully sing, "Hosanna to the king of kings." In awe and reverence,

three magi kneel before the one true king. Jesus is born with nothing but in reality he owns us and everything. Jesus, our God came into this world, and took on our flesh that He may make of humankind a new creation and that we may begin again.

"Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3-4). Jesus came into this world perfect in humility and as a helpless baby in a manger, he hid his glory and veiled his divinity. Only in that humble



way then may we come to our Father as a little child like Jesus, bearing his vulnerability and weakness worthy of Mother Mary's love, Saint Joseph's protection and God the Father's faithful providence. As little children let us always stay in the posture of humility

longing for God and family and friends, seeking the embrace of love, with ears open to the guiding voice of peace and with hearts drawn up to the cares of only the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"The Lord will always lead you. He will satisfy your needs in dry lands and give strength to your bones. You will be like a garden that has much water, like a spring that never runs dry" (Is 58:11). As in Isaiah, the Lord leads and satisfies, the Star shines on the shepherds, reveals the angels and satisfies the quests of the three kings. May the star be to us like the Holy Spirit, as its light

*Begin Again- See Page 2*

## Tending the Flock

## A New Humanity



On this Second Sunday of Advent the Word of God acquires the moving tones of the so-called "Second Isaiah", who announced to the Israelites, tried by decades of bitter exile in Babylon, liberation at last: "Comfort, comfort my people", the Prophet says in God's name. "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended" (Is 40: 1-2). This is what the Lord wishes to do in Advent: to speak to the heart of his people and through it to the whole of humanity, to proclaim salvation. Today too the Church raises her voice: "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Is 40: 3). For the peoples worn out by poverty and hunger, for the hosts of refugees and for all who are suffering grave and systematic violations of their rights, the Church stations herself as a sentinel on the lofty mountain of faith and proclaims: "Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God comes with might" (Is 40: 10).

This prophetic announcement is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who with his preaching and, later, with his death and Resurrection, brought the ancient promises to fulfillment, revealing an even deeper and more universal perspective. He inaugurated an exodus that was no longer solely earthly, in history, hence temporary, but rather radical and definitive: the transition from the kingdom of evil to the Kingdom of God, from the dominion of sin and death to that of love and life. Therefore, human hope goes beyond the legitimate expectations of social and political liberation because what Jesus began is a new humanity that comes "from God" but, at the same, time germinates on our earth, to the extent that it lets itself be fertilized by the Lord's Spirit. Thus it is a question of fully entering the logic of faith: believing in God, in his plan of salvation, and at the same time, striving to build his Kingdom. Justice and peace are in fact gifts of God, but require men and women to be the "good ground" ready to receive the good seed of his Word.

~ Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus Message, December 7, 2008

### Online Giving

You can now send your tithes and love offerings via **Paypal**. Donate link can be found at [www.bldtrenton.com](http://www.bldtrenton.com)  
 Or mail check to:  
 BLD Trenton Foundation, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 1367  
 Toms River, NJ 08754

### The Lord's Provision

**November 27, 2020**

Mail-in: \$100.00  
 Paypal : \$128.00

*Thank you for your generosity!!!*

### God's Blessings

#### Birthday

Jomar Javier	12/5	Norms Llave	12/7
Jerry Subang	12/5	Lucy Mabunay	12/7
Leo Alquiros	12/6	Anne Belonia	12/8
Jason Bustos	12/6	Ludy Cuasay	12/8
Thomas Edralin	12/9		

#### Anniversary

Mike & Argie Salada	12/5
John & Daday Young	12/7
Manny & Yoly Crisol	12/9

*Lord, let us see your kindness and grant us your salvation.*

### Community Prayer Time

Every Friday, starting at exactly 8:30 pm, all members are urged to pray together as one community the following:

*Prayer to Take Authority*

*Holy Rosary*

*Prayer: Oratio Imperata against the spread of coronavirus*

*"God Our Father, we come to you in our need, to ask your protection against the 2019 N-coronavirus, that has claimed the lives and affected many.*

*We pray for your grace, for the people tasked with studying the nature and cause of this virus and its disease and of stemming the tide of its transmission. Guide the hands and minds of medical experts that they may minister to the sick with competence and compassion, and of those governments and private agencies that must find a cure and solution to this epidemic.*

*We pray for those afflicted, may they be restored to health soon.*

*Grant us the grace to work for the good of all and to help those in need. Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.*

*Mary, help of all Christians, pray for us.*

*St. Raphael the Archangel, pray for us.*

*St. Rock, pray for us.*

*St. Lorenzo Ruiz, pray for us.*

*St. Pedro Calungsod, pray for us."*

### SIMBANG GABI Invitations

At **St. Benedict Church** in Holmdel on **December 15-23**  
 All masses start at 7 P.M., except for December 19 which will be at 7:30 P.M. Livestream available at St. Benedict's YouTube Channel.

At **St. Veronica Church** in Howell on **December 12, 14-18**  
 at 7 P.M., **December 13 & 19** at 5 P.M., and **December 20** at 12 noon. Facebook streaming also available.



### Forerunner

*Did you know?* The coming of God's Son to earth is an event of such immensity that God willed to prepare for it over centuries. He makes everything converge on Christ: all the rituals and sacrifices, figures and symbols of the "First Covenant". He announces him through the mouths of the prophets who succeeded one another in Israel. Moreover, he awakens in the hearts of the pagans a dim expectation of this coming.

St. John the Baptist is the Lord's immediate precursor or forerunner, sent to prepare his way. "Prophet of the Most High", John surpasses all the prophets, of whom he is the last. He inaugurates the Gospel, already from his mother's womb welcomes the coming of Christ, and rejoices in being "the friend of the bridegroom", whom he points out as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". Going before Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elijah", John bears witness to Christ in his preaching, by his Baptism of conversion, and through his martyrdom.

*~ CCC, pars. 522-523*

### Begin Again - Cont'd from Page 1

mold us, equip us with understanding and lead us to our Lord Jesus Christ.

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need. He lets me rest in green pastures, He leads me to calm water. He gives me new strength, He leads me on paths that are right for the good of His name"* (Ps 23:1-3).  
 On Christmas night, how fitting it seems then that it is shepherds who

invite us and say, "Follow me," and lead us as they were by the angels to Jesus.

*"The Lord is our judge. The Lord makes our laws. The Lord is our king. He will save us"* (Is 33:22).  
 Isaiah prophesies that unto us shall come our judge, our king and savior. But on this Christmas night, our finite minds will not rush into the future when the laws of the Lord will judge us, that a mighty gentle king shall reign over us and with his

life and example will save us. For the moment in our faith journey, let us rest content that Jesus is with us, that heaven's glorious host of angels, humble and simple shepherds and rich and wise men are in our company as we kneel before the Christ Child who thought it fitting that he start his life of majesty and grace in a stable and a manger. In humility, it is right and just that we begin again.





## This Sunday's Counsel

### THEME:

We prepare for Christ's coming when we testify that Jesus is our Light and Salvation.

### PROMISE:

*"He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation."* (Lk 1:49-50)

### WORD:

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/ Lk 1:46-50, 53-54/ 1 Thes 5:16-24/ Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

### ORDERS:

- Prepare the way of the Lord. (Mk 1:3b)

### DIRECTIONS:

- Avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Spread the good news of our Lord's salvation.
- Practice humility and transparency.



## Our Reason To Rejoice

**REFLECTION:** The 3rd Sunday of Advent is known as "Gaudete Sunday" or "Joyful Sunday." This is the day when we rejoice in our faith and celebrate the joy of the coming Messiah, our Emmanuel – God with us. He comes amidst the darkness that surrounds us, darkness that permeates all levels of society and culture – senseless violence, international turmoil, immorality and perversion, not to mention the present pandemic that we are experiencing. But today, we are reminded that because of God's great love for humanity, He sent His only begotten Son as Light who will lead us out of darkness. As we are drawn into Christ's radiant light, He reveals not only our shortcoming but He lights our way to salvation. Knowing and accepting this truth is our reason to rejoice.

While we are in the middle of our Advent journey and to enrich our preparation, we should keep in mind the three comings of Jesus – His birth, His coming to us in our daily lives through various ways, and His glorious coming in the end times, and how they relate to one another. Our preparation to celebrate His birth is an occasion for deeper reflection.



It is so fulfilling to experience the power of the Incarnation that God became human in the person of Jesus because of His love for us. The deeper we contemplate on this mystery, the further we enter into the grace of "God with us." We then see clearly the connection of Christmas with Easter: all of this is for us, for our salvation, to free us from the power of sin and death.

As Christians, we are redeemed, sanctified and are called "children of light." The radiance of the Great Light who dwells in our hearts should shine to people around us. Jesus say, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see

Rejoice - See Page 2

## Know Your Saints

### Saint Lucy: Patron of the Blind

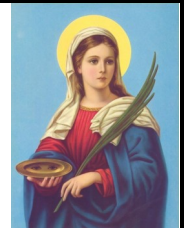
Born in Syracuse, Sicily in the year 283 to a noble family, Lucy was brought up a Christian by her mother Eutychia. Her name means "light" in Latin and is related to the word "lucid", which means "radiant, clear and understandable."

When her mother became very ill, Lucy helped her make a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Agatha in Catania. As her mother obtained a miraculous cure at the shrine, St. Agatha appeared to Lucy telling her she would someday be a martyr for her faith.

Years later, a pagan man stirred by greed wanted to marry Lucy. But she had made a vow to remain a virgin and serve only God. She had also distributed a great part of her fortune to the poor. The man was furious at her refusal and he denounced her as a Christian before Paschasius, the governor of Sicily, who then sent soldiers to kill her. But when they tried to move her, they could not do so. They harnessed her to bulls but she stood immovable. They covered her in oil and started a fire but it did not burn her. Her eyes were torn out but still she refused to abandon her faith. Finally, they stabbed her death, as the vision of St. Agatha had predicted. Before she died her sight was miraculously restored.

Lucy is a favorite saint of many around the world. In Sweden her feast day of December 13 is one of the shortest days of the year in the middle of winter. The Swedes celebrate this change of season with a Festival of Light. On this day the youngest daughter dresses in white and wears a crown of lit candles. She wakes the rest of the family with coffee, rolls and a special song. In other European countries young girls walk through the neighborhood holding candles and singing carols.

The name of St. Lucy is mentioned in the prayer "nobis quoque peccatoribus" in the Canon of the Mass, one of only eight women to be so honored.



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 Or mail check to:  
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 P.O. Box 1367  
 Toms River, NJ 08754

### The Lord's Provision

**December 4, 2020**

Mail-in: \$320.00  
 Paypal : \$29.04

*Thank you for your generosity!!!*

## God's Blessings

### Birthday

Cecille Vasquez	12/10	Kat Madamba	12/15
Faye Dizon	12/11	Eric Alberto	12/17
Alvin Hernandez	12/12	Leo Llave	12/17
Phoebe Panahon	12/13	Ricky Gomez	12/17
Chinky Rubiato	12/13	Dan Catarata	12/17

### Anniversary

Ed & Olyn Bautista	12/11
Bong & Faye Dizon	12/11
Abbot & Chie Del Pilar	12/14
Glenn & Jo Ramos	12/14

*I rejoice heartily in the Lord,  
 in my God is the joy of my soul.*



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*St. Rock, pray for us.*

*St. Lorenzo Ruiz, pray for us.*

*St. Pedro Calungsod, pray for us."*

## Prayer



A day lived without prayer risks being transformed into a bothersome or tedious experience. Everything that happens to us could turn into a badly endured and blind fate for us...Prayer is primarily listening and encountering God. The problems of everyday life, then, do not become obstacles, but appeals from God himself to listen to and encounter those who are in front of us. The trials of life thus change into opportunities to grow in faith and charity. The daily journey, including hardships, acquires the perspective of a "vocation." Prayer has the power to transform into good what in life would otherwise be a sentence; prayer has the power to open the mind to a great horizon and to broaden the heart.

*~ Pope Francis*

### Rejoice - Cont'd from Page 1

*your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven," (Mt 5:16).* Thus, our community theme for the week tells us: We prepare for Christ's coming when we testify that Jesus is our Light and Salvation. We cannot witness for Christ if we do not have His spirit in us that leads us to know Him intimately and experience His love.

Testifying for Christ means telling others what we have personally seen and experienced in our Lord Jesus. We can be like Philip; as soon

as he met the Lord, he excitedly told Nathaniel about Him. Witnessing does not require a special training. Believing in and receiving Jesus qualifies anyone to be His witness. All we do is tell our personal story of redemption – how we were burdened with sin and guilt, how we received Jesus and were cleansed and forgiven by Him. We can share how Jesus, after touching our heart and opening our eyes, gave us true freedom and peace. We can tell them how we always find ourselves in His presence whenever we turn to Him in our emptiness and despair.

It is never too late to start witnessing for Christ. We can consecrate ourselves anew and begin to speak for Christ. We may experience challenges of persecution and frustration along the way, but we can always unite our sacrifices and sufferings with His mission. We have to be steadfast and faithful herald who lead people to Jesus, our Light and Salvation. For Jesus promises us, that *"He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation,"* (Lk 1:49-50).

Adapted from [www.bldworld.org](http://www.bldworld.org)





# Community News

## This Sunday's Counsel

### THEME:

We prepare for Christ's coming when we submit to the will of the Father.

### PROMISE:

*"I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me."* (2 Sam 7:14a)

### WORD:

2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/ Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29/ Rom 16:25-27/ Lk 1:26-38

### ORDER:

- Prepare the way of the Lord. (Mk 1:3b)

### DIRECTIONS:

- Avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Spread the good news of our Lord's salvation.
- Practice humility and transparency.



## Blessed Among Women

**REFLECTION:** God's best servants are often ordinary people. Joseph and Mary, chosen to be the mother and foster father of the Messiah, were ordinary people from a small town called Nazareth. Mary was a young woman of humble origins, typical of the people of her day, and seemingly too insignificant for such an important task as becoming the mother of God. But God chose Mary for one of the most important acts of obedience He has ever demanded of anyone. Often, we may feel that our situation in life makes us unlikely candidates for God's service, but we must not limit God's choice because He can use us if we trust in Him.

God's plan involved extraordinary events in the lives of ordinary people. Until St. Gabriel's visit, Mary's life was going about well as she could hope. She had recently become engaged to a local carpenter, Joseph, and was anticipating married life. But Mary's life was about to change forever. God's blessing does not automatically bring instant success, fame or favor. His blessing on Mary, the honor



of being the mother of the Messiah, would lead to much pain; her peers would ridicule her; her fiancé would come close to leaving her; her Son would be rejected and murdered. But through her Son would come hope for the world. This is why Mary is praised by countless generations as "blessed among women." Her submission led to mankind's salvation. When our blessings lead to sorrow, think of Mary and wait patiently for God to finish working out His plan for us.

Our character is revealed by our response to the unexpected. Mary is greatly troubled by the angel's words and wonders what the greeting implied. *"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."* Why am I favored? But the angel gives an answer with further explanation. *"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High..."* (Lk

*Blessed - See Page 2*



I sincerely convey my prayerful wishes to the Bukas Loob sa Diyos (BLD) Global Community as we prepare for the celebration of the Christmas Season.

This Christmas message comes to you in the time of health crisis. We are still struggling to make sense of the Corona Virus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic that has caused so much suffering and loss to humanity. Today, most people are somehow restricted to go to Church to attend the Eucharistic celebration, or even go to the shopping malls to buy gifts due to the government's quarantine protocols.

Nonetheless, as Christmas Season draws near most people grapple with the basic questions about life: *Why am I suffering? When will my family experience peace and fulfillment?* Our ability to ask meaningful questions in the midst of pain and meaninglessness is among our greatest gifts. For this reason, we are able to transcend our present reality, and open ourselves to the Lord's ever new and creative possibilities.

This is a meaningful moment when faith and hope begin. It is true what Saint Paul says in his Letter to the Hebrews: *"Faith is the confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see."* (Heb 11:1) What our hearts yearn are not the glimmer of wealth nor the magnificence of Christmas ornaments, but the person of our Lord Jesus who will *"make all things new."* (Rev 21:5)

Be assured that, even in the midst of this pandemic, the Lord will come to you in His simplest form wrapped in swaddling clothes. He is the *"Prince of Peace"* (Is 9:5) who encounters us in His love and mercy.

As you behold the coming of our Lord Jesus with your family this Christmas Season, be always assured of my prayers as I remain

Sincerely in the Lord Jesus,  
**Reynaldo G. Evangelista, D.D.**  
 BLD Community Spiritual Director

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 Toms River, NJ 08754

### The Lord's Provision

**December 11, 2020**

Mail-in: \$580.00  
 Paypal : \$19.26

*Thank you for your generosity!!!*

## God's Blessings

### Birthday

Yoly Alcasid	12/18	Kagot Arigorat	12/21
Bill Bunoan	12/18	Criselda Gabriel	12/21
Isabel Guerrero	12/18	Timothy Canete	12/22
Ace Camposano	12/19	Elner Jamolod	12/23
Ross Jacinto	12/19	Nicole Salada	12/23
Tet Edralin	12/20	Julienne Balcon	12/24

### Anniversary

Jerry & Lieza Subang	12/21
Nest & Ling Navarro	12/21
Mon & Mense Miranda	12/22

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**Did you know?** Prayer knows how to calm restlessness. But we are restless, we always want things before asking for them, and we want them right away. This restlessness harms us. And prayer knows how to calm restlessness, knows how to transform it into availability. When we are restless, I pray and prayer opens my heart and makes me open to God's will... If in prayer we understand that each day given by God is a call, our hearts will then widen and we will accept everything. We will learn how to say: "What You want, Lord. Promise me only that You will be present every step of my way." This is what's important: to ask the Lord to be present in every step of our way: that He not leave us alone, that He not abandon us in temptation, that He not abandon us in the bad moments. ~ **Pope Francis**

### Blessed - Cont'd from Page 1

1:28-32). Mary was very much aware that in Israel at that time, everyone was awaiting the coming of the Messiah and she had no doubts about the truth of the angel's proclamation. However, her next question was very relevant. "How can this be since I do not know man?" (Lk 1:34). After all, faith must also be reasonable, and not blind. So we ask questions to enlighten our minds. And the angel continues to explain that "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you," (Lk 1:35).

The birth of Jesus to a virgin is a miracle that many unbelievers find difficult to accept. However, Luke holds this virgin birth to be true. Firstly, Luke was a medical doctor and he knew how babies are made. It would have been as hard for him to believe in a virgin birth, as it is with many contemporary scoffers. And yet he reported it as fact. Secondly, Luke was a painstaking researcher who based his Gospel on eyewitness account. Traditions hold that he talked with Mary about the events in the first two Chapters of his book. This is her story, not a fictional invention. And, thirdly, Christians and Jews,

who worship God as Creator of the universe have no doubt that He can create a child in a virgin's womb, if He so chooses, "for nothing will be impossible for God," (Lk 1:37).

Mary's answer was a wholehearted "Yes" and her humble response was: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your Word," (Lk 1:38). With her consent she made the mystery of the Incarnation possible. Thus God's promise is true for all of us today, "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me" (2 Sam 7:14A).

Adapted from [www.bldworld.org](http://www.bldworld.org)