



Community News

Volume 17, Issue 12	THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT		Dec. 15, 2023
This Sunday's Counsel	"Salvation is for those who prepare for Christ's coming with joy, hope and vigilance"		
<p>THEME: We prepare for Christ's coming when we testify to the Light who is Jesus.</p> <p>WORD: Salvation is for those who prepare for Christ's coming with joy, hope and vigilance.</p> <p>PROMISE: "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it." (1 Thes 5:24)</p> <p>ORDER: Make straight the way of the Lord.</p> <p>DIRECTION: Be kind to one another and share your blessings.</p>	<p>We are a week away from Christmas, and for good reason, this Sunday is called "Joy Sunday" or rejoice used to be called Gaudete Sunday. There is greater joy flooding our hearts. This is the central message this Sunday, because the celebration of the birth of our Savior is near and his light shines in the darkness. Nothing can extinguish it. So, in our liturgy, we use a pink candle to express the joy we feel for his coming, tender and fragile as a baby. And this candle together with the other candles, announces the true light of which John the Baptist spoke.</p> <p>In the first reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet describes the coming of the Lord as "the oil of gladness instead of mourning". He continues, "I will greatly rejoice in the</p>		<p>Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness". That is right, dear siblings, we are made righteous in our Lord, and we are glad because joy comes from him. Therefore, whenever we are conscious of the salvation that our Lord gives us, joy fills our lives. And we are joyful not because of our successes or achievements for the present day, but because God's love is greater than all the pain and suffering that surrounds us. To be Christians is to spread the perfume of joy. Others can sense it and see it, and there is something more than us filling our lives. And you have heard the famous phrase attributed to St. Francis de Sales: "A sad saint is a sorry saint".</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued in page 2)</p>
ASPIRANTS' RETREAT WEEKEND 2023			

"For he is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your heart," - Psalm 95:7- 8a

Our BLD Camden community was blessed with seven aspiring disciples who attended the most recent Aspirants' Retreat on November 17 - 19 at Franciscan Sisters Missionary of the Infant Jesus. Originally, 8 committed members completed ten sessions of discipling process led by Les/Sylvia Angelia, Ruben/Emmy Maranan and Aster/Cynthia Guanzon as disciplers; however, only seven members attended the retreat. Through teachings about discipleship, the disciples become equipped for community life and assist them in discerning their calling as covenanted members. It was a spirit-filled weekend with Fr. Tito Ignacio as the retreat master and the Spiritual Director. All the topics presented were focused on life of a disciple of Christ. All the disciples spent a lot of time praying and discerning in front of the Blessed Sacrament. As a community, we assist and guide them as they take another step of their spiritual journey through this community.

The aspirants were: Kathleen and Dennis Cardente, Philip and Doris Bridgeman, Nuska De Castro, Julie Gracia, BJ Anne Dilag.

Please see photos on pages 3, 6 and 5.

Source: BLD Camden

Teaching Calendar

Dec 17 - Sun - Christian Servanthood via Zoom for aspirant graduates. Email to follow for details.

COMMUNITY EVENT

No Praise & Worship on Dec 22 and Dec 29.

Dec 16 (11am - 4pm) BLD Christmas Party @ Holy Eucharist Parish Hall. Please contact Mila Carandang @ 609 - 670 - 9457 for details.

Dec 17 - 5:30 am, Simbang Gabi at Christ Our Light Church, Cherry Hill.

Dec 18 - Outreach Programs for school Children and Aetas of Botolan, Zambales, Philippines. Contact Annabelle Maccherone for details.

Dec 23 - Promedics Skilled Nursing & Rehab (Manor Care) - Christmas Gift Giving. Contact BJ Dilag for details.

Lectors

Dec 15	N. Juliano	L. Juliano	B. Urbiztondo
Jan 5	N. deCastro	M. Ayon	R. Bridgeman
Jan 12	D. Cardente	K. Cardente	P. Cruz
Jan 19	E. Robin	R. Dizon	J. Gracia
Jan 26	J. Maccherone	A. Maccherone	BJ. Dilag

Lord's Provisions

Nov 17	Aspirant Retreat Weekend	\$674.00
Dec 1	HEALING MASS	\$378.00
Dec 8	Praise and Worship	\$407.00

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Third Sunday of Advent**

salvation for all, which does not end; it continues to be in progress, eternally. At first it seemed to have failed miserably, but God's plan does not go according to our human logic.

In history, we have read how many have spent their years thinking about happiness. Thus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in her calling to be the mother of our Lord, received this role with joy amid all the hardships she faced, which is why, in the Magnificat, we hear with joy: **"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior"**. This exultation of Mary comes from the depths of her being, and thanks to her, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ has been made possible. Now all of us venerate the mother of God as an example of holiness, faith, and joy. She gave us an example

Rosary Leaders

Jan 5	Youth Ministry	Jan 26	Elsie Robin
Jan 12	Linda Juliano		
Jan 19	Aster Guanzon		

Prayer Warriors

Jan 5	FIRST FRIDAY HEALING MASS		
Jan 12	Yip/Nelsa	D/K Cardentes	
Jan 19	A/L Palmeros	N/L Julianos	
Jan 26	J/L Padolinas	J/A Maccherones	

Intercessory Prayer

Jan 5	Healing Mass	Jan 26	GRP 1
Jan 12	GRP 2		
Jan 19	GRP 3		

GOD'S BLESSING

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Jose Padolina	18	Judith Belonia
5	Salve Palma	26	Susan Thompson
5	Rodolfo Franco	30	Elena Abastillas
18	Mary Valencia		

DECEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

14	Bobby and Kate Ilagan
17	Jim and Sandy Scheiner
18	Nap and Linda Juliano
20	Bobby and Lina Sumanga

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of how, amid adversity, rejection, poverty, persecution, all the tears and uncertainty she had to face while carrying her child in her womb, she resolutely embraced the special plan that God had in store for her. Her attitude was an immense joy that endures forever. **"From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name"**

In the gospel; Jesus' praises John for his role in preparing the way of Jesus. John came for testimony to testify to the Light so that all might believe through him. Jesus is the light, **"I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not work in the darkness but will have the light that comes from God's presence"**. Just like the lighthouse that guides the ship, Jesus directs us towards God's light. He guides us from the darkness of sin, life and struggles. As Christians and as BLD members, we need to keep Jesus' light shine in our lives. We can spend more time with God, humbling ourselves and come and follow His words. We can serve Him through our community or parish church. Let us all be a light to others especially to the new members of BLD community and act as disciples of Christ.

Source: BLD Camden

ASPIRANTS' RETREAT WEEKEND, NOVEMBER 17 - 19, 2023



***Photo shows: ASPIRANT GRADUATES
(FRONT L-R) Dennis and Kathleen Cardente, Dorie and Philip Bridgeman,
(BACK L-R) Julia Gracia, BJ Dilag, Lalaine Academia (BLD Trenton), Nuska de Castro***

A Disciple's Prayer

JESUS,

my Lord and my brother, let me do your work for your sake and not for my own pride and self-satisfaction. As long as I want what You want, I will act prudently and safely. Let me not try to rush what must be done slowly. If I fret at my failures I am working for myself and not for YOU. Your will is to be done, not mine. I hope to attempt all the good within my reach, but I will not be over-anxious about the results. If I lose my presence of mind and my peace of soul, it is because I am thinking more of your work than of Your will. I need only do my best. The rest depends on the people around me, and Your grace.

Let me never think that I am bigger or more able than YOU. I now put all things into Your hands.....AMEN.

Please see additional photos on pages 6 and 7

Source: BLD Camden

ASPIRANTS' RETREAT WEEKEND, NOVEMBER 17 - 19, 2023
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS OF THE ASPIRANT GRADUATES

No. 1

I was preparing for the first day (11/17/23) of the Aspirant Retreat, not because it was my birthday but because, I will have my 3 days of deep communion with our Lord. Prior to this day I was praying the Surrender Novena for 9 days and doing the Rosary, asking for the intercession of Mama Mary to prepare my heart, mind and spirit and to completely let go of my old self, so that I can embrace what our Lord Jesus Christ wants in my life. During my silence prayer of the Liturgy of the Hour I can hear a soft voice whisper on my ear saying **"I am not looking for the smart person or teacher, just deny yourself and follow me"** that voice made my concrete decision to be a humble disciple of Christ.

In this BLD community God implanted the seed of faith in my heart to grow and bear fruits. I am grateful to serve the Lord with all my heart.

No. 2

This retreat helped me to understand more our Lord's plan for people. The classes provided by our Spiritual Director for the retreat, Fr. Tito gave an insight in how to be more one with God, follow God's Word and spread God's Word in our actions and behavior as Catholics. And of course, with interjections of his humor that kept my attention more closely.

My spouse was also at the retreat which started on her birthday. Being there on her birthday brought her more joy to be there, which inspired me. I shared her joy and the wanting to be there and be more closely involved with the program.

No. 3

The most touching moment for me in the last Aspirant's retreat was when we were asked to reflect on the Stations of the Cross. I was praying that I will not be assigned to reflect on the third station where Jesus Falls the first time and the Twelfth Station - Jesus dies on the cross. I was avoiding these two stations because it touched the very core of my life. Jesus suffering in his first fall reminded me of my own personal suffering of falling into my sin the first time. I will never forget the pain of being betrayed, abandoned and alone in my life. My only hope and source of strength was Jesus.

When Jesus died on the cross on the twelfth station, it reminded me of my mother who recently passed away. After sharing all my heartaches and burdens, I felt relieved realizing that God was with me in every step of the way, that I was not alone. As he said in **Ecclesiastes 3:1 "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven"** It was a long journey before attending the Aspirant Retreat, but I know this will be a start for new beginnings of my life.

No. 4

From the hustle and bustle of daily life, the aspirant retreat weekend was a breathtaking experience for me. Time spent to pray, reflect and listen to God's message was the greatest gift I gave to myself. To be a True disciple of Christ, as part of His calling and being a member of BLD Community, takes commitment and discipline.

Lord, I need you. Keep me close to you and give me persistence to stay in your word so I can fulfill my mission by your wisdom and grace.

No. 5

To Service not to be Served. It is scary to be honest. To accept a big responsibility that is waiting for me. Am I ready? I asked myself during the Aspirants Retreat and Lord gave me His answer in **John 17: 7-11**

"Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them".

These words gave me an assurance not to be afraid because, He is calling me to serve Him and He will be with me because I believe in Him. He sends the Holy Spirit to guide and guard me as I fulfill my mission to serve my God, and I Thank you Lord for choosing me.

Please see additional photos on pages 6 and 7

(continued in page 5)

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS OF THE ASPIRANTS' GRADUATES

No. 6

I am grateful that God has called me to join the Aspirant Retreat, and I accepted it. I could have say no, but I did not.

The retreat has helped me to deepen my relationship with my God; it gives me peace, joy, contentment, strength, and inspiration, knowing that I am spending more intimate time with Jesus side by side with my husband, who is also building his own experience, and relationship with the Lord.

One activity that struck me most was the assignment to reflect on the Station of the Cross, Jesus Meets His Mother. What assured me from this activity is Mary finds purpose in suffering. Mary saw her son being tortured and ridiculed by choice, and yet she is strong and determined to support and love her son unconditionally. So, I decided from that moment, with God's grace, that I would act like Mary more and be always grateful for her role as the Mother of Jesus who is also our Mother Intercessor. I could suffer in love instead of bitterness; I could walk beside those suffering with compassion instead of indignance. Jesus also shows me not to give up; Jesus continues His chosen journey because He is obedient to His Father and His love for humanity. With this example, I ask myself, how do I make my sufferings more like Jesus?—Perseverance and trust in Jesus. I will try my best not to complain about any of my challenges in life. Instead, I will offer them to the Lord to strengthen my faith so my perseverance and trust will be like my second nature to the Lord; it is also my desire to be a faithful servant to the Holy Trinity.

*Before the Aspirant Retreat, I longed with God but with more fears of how I could tackle the trials and challenges that God could give me. After this retreat, I became more enthusiastic that no matter what happens, the Holy Trinity is with me. God says, **“You cannot be my disciple unless you carry your cross and follow me.”** So, here I am, Lord, willing to carry any challenges and sufferings You want me to experience and accept any talents and calling You may give me. I will leave to You, Lord, my insecurities, doubts, selfishness, and all other characteristics in me that don't belong with You, my God. I ask You, Jesus, to lead and show me the way, as You said in **Micah 6:8 - “To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”***

*My prayer is for Jesus to give me the specific gifts of wisdom and understanding that I may need so I may able to apply His plans for me accordingly while able to utilize whatever talents and uniqueness in me to become a good disciple to the Lord. I also desire that our whole family will be like in **Joshua 24:15, “As for Me and My Household, We Will Serve the Lord.”** In God, I trust, and His will be done!*

No. 7

For me, the aspirant retreat was a moving experience. It helps me deepen my belief and faith in God. I never thought tears would come from my eyes during my contrition prayer. I learned that I must pick up my cross and follow Jesus, because I accepted Him as my savior. The trials and tribulations are always with me. I noticed that obedience allows me to remove my doubts and slow me down as God's servant. It gives me more commitment to my beliefs. I want to let go and let God control my life because nothing is lost, but I gained so much.

*So here I am, Lord; I need you all the time. I offer to come to do Your will. I trust You, and help me God, the way, as You said in **Micah 6:8 - “To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”***

*My prayer is for Jesus to give me the specific gifts of wisdom and understanding that I may need so I may able to apply His plans for me accordingly while able to utilize whatever talents and uniqueness in me to become a good disciple to the Lord. I also desire that our whole family will be like in **Joshua 24:15, “As for Me and My Household, We Will Serve the Lord.”***

In God, I trust, and His will be done! God, I trust, and His will be done!

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Photos continued from page 3



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