



# BUKAS LOOB SA DIYOS

“OPEN IN SPIRIT TO GOD”

BLD St. Catharines, District in Process

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## MESSAGE FROM OUR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

*Easter Greetings! Alleluia!*

*This is the day that the Lord has made!*

*Let us rejoice and be glad!*

Peace! What a feeling to shout to the world that we Christians are Easter people. Indeed we are. Our fruitful Lenten journey has brought us to this glorious Easter celebration. Today the Church rejoices with Mary, our Mother, for indeed the Lord is risen. Surrexit Dominus vere! Alleluia! Regina Caeli, laetare! Yes, Queen of heaven, rejoice! Let all creation rejoice and proclaim the Lord Jesus is truly risen.

St. Peter's discourse proclaims the Paschal mystery of Christ (cf. Acts.2:22) St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, witnesses to and spends his whole life proclaiming the Lord Jesus, the mystery of the Resurrection and the power of the cross. (1Cor.15:13-28) Countless numbers of early Christians chose martyrdom over the empty promises of this world. Their blood spilled for the glory of God spurs us on to live and preserve our faith. The likes of St. Justin, martyr and renowned philosopher and teacher, St. Catherine of Alexandria, "beauty and brains" martyr with many titles, St. Augustine, "the wisest of the wisest", who would probably eclipse the reigning champion of "Jeopardy", St. Thomas Aquinas, who posits that faith and reason are not in conflict but are complementary to each other and San Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila who never tires of dying a thousand times as a Christian and a multitude of holy men and women prove that the foolishness of the cross is our way to eternal life. If these saints and super heroes of our faith were with us today, they would have marched against those who purposely and maliciously destroy Christianity and paganize it with secularism and rationalism.

And we? What is our response? Let us listen to St. Paul. "You have been raised to life with Christ...(Col.3:1ff) By His blood, He has saved us. Through His power, He has raised us. To God be the glory...! So onward Christian soldiers! Until we receive the crown of everlasting glory and see God "face to face." Amen.

Happy Easter to one and all!

**Fr. Manuel L. Serranilla, Jr.**

## LSS #8 REUNION

On January 14, 2007, graduates of Life in the Spirit Seminar No. 8 had their Grand Reunion at the Cathedral of St. Catharines. The celebration started with the community attending Mass officiated by the Rev. Bishop James Wingle. The Bishop conferred a special blessing and empowerment upon the new graduates.



*Jubilee Song by LSS #8 Graduates.*

Lunch followed at the basement of the Cathedral, generously provided by all members of the community. The graduates had a special presentation of interpretative dance to the Jubilee Song. The highlight of the reunion is the sharing of some of the graduates on how our Lord has touched them during the Seminar Weekend and their new life in the Spirit. Thanks to all the sharers for the witness of God's power in our lives.

## NEW YEAR, NEW FORMAT

With the new year, we have started a new monthly format for the Corporate Worship every Friday.

1st Friday of the month - Teaching night with a short Praise & Worship

2nd Friday of the month - Praise & Worship with personal testimonies of God's love from two community members

3rd Friday of the month - Praise & Worship with Living Word Group (LWG)  
(pls. see inset on page 7-8)

Last Friday of the month - Healing Mass

Please invite your family members, friends and brothers and sisters in the community who haven't been to our Praise & Worship to come and experience with us this new, exciting endeavor.

## OTHER NEWS

### Youth Life In the Spirit Seminar

Congratulations to Matthew Panday and Paul Respicio who attended the Youth Life in the Spirit Seminar Weekend given by BLD Toronto on March 9 to 11.

*"My experience during the YLSS was better than I expected it would be. It was good to have my friend, Paul, join me. It was interesting to hear the sharers' stories about their life and their own experience with God and the YLSS. Overall, there were some funny moments and serious moments where we had to reflect. My shepherd was nice and easy to get along with. He said I can always call him if there were any problems in the past or any problems that would happen in the future. The baptism was all right. It wasn't really a surprising moment because from my experiences during Healing Masses, I somewhat knew what to expect. The food was very good. If we were finished and wanted more, there would always be extras. Like I said before, the YLSS was better than I expected it to be. The experience makes me want to recommend it to my friends."*

Matthew Panday

### Lenten Retreat

(Submitted by: Rey Perlas, Word Ministry)

***"The retreat was a weekend of intimacy with our Lord Jesus Christ and we are blessed for being part of it."***

Ministry members attended the Lenten Retreats: “Washing of the Feet” and “Agony in the Garden” sponsored by BLD Toronto District. Father Tito Ignacio, spiritual director for BLD Trenton, New Jersey conducted the weekend retreat. His powerful teachings conveyed to us once again what it means to be a follower of Christ, especially from the perspective of being in community. We were struck by his message of how we should be a community of “towel and basin” - a community of service; instead of being a “cloak and sceptre” community, trying to rule it over others. He also delighted us with his great sense of humour.

The Agony in the Garden made us appreciate more how Jesus’ unceasing intercession on our behalf brought us back to the Father’s favour. We became more aware that being an intercessor is not easy and entails a lot of personal sacrifices. But with the grace of God, we can be elevated beyond our fallen human nature and be transformed more and more in the image of Christ.

Here are excerpts from some of the St. Catharine’s participants on how the retreat touched them:

*“When Menchu washed and kissed my foot tenderly, I felt a strong tug in my heart as if Jesus Himself was doing it. His message is strong and clear - that we do the same.” (Mabel)*

*“The weekend was a wonderful reminder for me, as a BLD member claiming to be a disciple of Christ, of what should truly motivate all my actions: to love as I have been loved [by Christ].” (Avic)*

*“This was my second experience of being washed in the feet by the elders. The first time, I was really overwhelmed by the sincerity of the love extended to me. As a nurse, it symbolized to me deep caring, the same thing we do to our sickest patients as they cannot wash their own feet. On Saturday, the experience washed away all my vanity and pride and made me feel humbled, yet exalted by the gesture of love shown to me.” (Fe)*

*“The Washing of the Feet is very touchy especially for me (Carmen) not knowing what to expect. The moment I saw Olie & Menchu coming my way holding that towel, basin and water on their hands, I saw our Lord Jesus, coming my way with a smile on His face saying “Here I AM my child, “I forgive you, I love you, sin no more.” I was so touched that my heart was beating so fast and I could not hold the tears in my eyes. I felt so ashamed of myself, feeling so sinful and unworthy and yet He did it to me. I truly felt God’s Love. Sunday, the second day, the “Agony in the Garden” retreat is even more touchy as each of those couples sharing their story with us, I felt God’s sufferings, all the pains, anger and the unforgiveness in me, had been released. It is truly a cleansing experience in our part. Praise the Lord!!” (Roy & Carmen)*

Thank You - BLD Toronto District for inviting us to the Washing of the Feet and Agony in the Garden Retreat last weekend, March 17-18.

## NEW MINISTRY COORDINATORS

The following members of BLD St. Catharines have been appointed as incoming Ministry Coordinators. Installation of the new Ministry Coordinators took place at the Healing Mass officiated by Rev. Bishop James Wingle on February 23, 2007.



Praise: Tho & Maggie Respicio  
 Encounter Programs: Cip & Emmy Tabios  
 Liturgy: Gerry & Zeny Ongcangco  
 Intercessory: Art & Fe Edralin (Interim)  
 Word: Rey & Mabel Perlas  
 Teaching: Roy & Carmen Mitra  
 Service: Romy & Minda Panday (Interim)  
 Treasury: Tellie Ferrenbach  
 Secretariat: Poch & Avic Robles

### District Council of Stewards (DCS)

Management: Romy & Minda Panday  
 Formation: Art & Fe Edralin  
 Evangelization: Danny & Myrna Zapata

On March 31<sup>st</sup> the first District Leaders Council (DLC) Assembly was held at the Perlas Residence in Markdale, Ontario. The gathering started with a mini Praise & Worship led by our community shepherds, Olie & Menchu Ealdama, followed by a potluck lunch. The business meeting took place at the little “cottage” ending at 4:30 p.m., then everyone went to St. Joseph’s Church for Palm Sunday Eucharistic Celebration.



## Rene and Thelma Honoured

On February 23, 2007, after the Healing Mass concelebrated by Bishop Wingle and Father Manuel Seranilla, Rene and Thelma Ongcangco were given due recognition for their more than 10 years of service of leading the BLD St. Catharines Community. After their Marriage Encounter weekend in the Fall of 1993 (M.E. #5, Toronto), Rene and Thelma, along with two other couples, were led by the Holy Spirit to form the BLD community in St. Catharines, starting with a small prayer group. Through the grace of God, this community has grown and with the help of BLD Toronto mother district, BLD St. Catharines became BLD's first official outreach in Canada. We have now been conducting Life in the Spirit Seminars and Marriage Encounter Weekends for the past 10 years. Congratulations Rene & Thelma!

## Seven Last Words

As a Lenten community reflection, we had the Annual Seven Last Words on March 23rd with seven members sharing how experiences in their lives are united to Christ's passion and sufferings and how significant they are to His last words on the cross.



Thanks to all the sharers:  
Manuel Serranilla, Marg  
Charmaine Baguio and Dely Fernandez.

Maria Robins, Irene Gumolda, Fr.  
Camajen, Nelda Gumolda,

## LIVING WORD GROUP

Every third Friday of the month after our corporate worship, we come together in smaller groups to focus on God's Word and relate the readings to our daily lives. LWG is meant to help members of the community know more about God, our relationships with Him and our neighbors and consequently to reflect on God's work in our daily lives through His Word in the Bible.

The basic flow to LWG:

1. As a group, select a moderator and assign readers
2. Opening prayer
  - Invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit
3. Reading of the Word
  - Typically the readings for the coming Sunday
  - It is important to conduct the readings reverently and to listen with an open heart, allowing the working of the Spirit to guide us to the words, phrases and verses which cause us to reflect
4. Sharing
  - As we are touched by certain passages in the readings, so we are moved to share our thoughts, feelings and experiences.
  - Each participant has the opportunity to share
5. Closing Prayer

### **Guidelines for Conducting LWG**

Please observe these seven simple rules remembered by the acronym LIPJASS.

- L** Listen;  
Do not:
- I** Interrupt,
- P** Preach,
- J** Judge,
- A** Advise
- Keep the sharings:
- S** Secret,
- S** Sacred

**Listen** – each of us is uniquely created by God therefore our circumstances differ. If we listen carefully and attentively, we learn much from others in the group as the Lord uses them to speak to us. Oftentimes, our loving presence is sufficient to lighten the burden of the sharer.

Do not **interrupt**. We can affirm by nodding our heads in agreement or saying "Amen", but avoid interjecting any of our thoughts or reflections. Allow the speaker to work their way through their reflection.

Do not **preach**. We share how God works through us, by our own experience and humble understanding. Preaching is when we generalize God's specific work in us to others. A simple rule is to use the first person when sharing. Use the pronoun "I" rather than "you" or "we".

Do not **judge**. Respect whatever the sharer reveals from his or her past. God's grace is present in all our lives and He has the sole authority to judge.

Do not give **advice** unless asked. We seek the Lord's guidance in understanding His Word. We trust in the Lord's grace during this time.

**Sacred** and **Secret**. Everything that is shared is sacred and confidential. We pray to God to help us honor and keep all sharings sacred and secret as we ourselves keep trust and confidence in God alone.

Through the LWG we share ourselves with each other. We share the victory of Christ in our lives, uplift and encourage others, or find support, love and prayers from our brothers and sisters.

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DATE	PROGRAM/EVENT	VENUE
Saturday, May 12, 2007	Dinner/Dance Fundraising	Our Lady of Peace Parish Hall Stanley Avenue, Niagara Falls
Thursday, June 7	Teaching by Fr. Tito Ignacio	TBA
Weekend, June 8 to 10	Singles Encounter #10 (BLD Toronto)	Mount Alverno Retreat Center
Weekend, July 13 to 15	Marriage Encounter #7	La Consolata Missionaries Toronto
Weekend, July 27 to 29	Youth Encounter #10 (BLD Toronto: for ages 14-19)	Mount Mary Retreat Center Ancaster
Monday, August 6	Community Picnic	TBA
Saturday, August 11	Midland Pilgrimage	Midland, Ontario
Weekend, November 9 to 11	Life in the Spirit Seminar #9	Michael Brennan School St. Catharines

We welcome contributions/articles to the BLD Newsletter. Please send them to Rey & Mabel Perlas (Word Ministry) at [mabelperlas@xplornet.com](mailto:mabelperlas@xplornet.com) - subject line: Newsletter Contribution