

REFLECTION

BLD NEWARK COVENANT COMMUNITY

COMPELLED TO WITNESS

I still remember my profound encounter with the Lord 17 years ago during my Baptism in the Holy Spirit. I was far removed from the faith....a cafeteria Catholic as most people would say. I had many questions... many doubts. Shepherding sessions took hours and still I was left unsatisfied. The Life in the Spirit seminar weekend came. I listened intently. I empathized with the witnesses. I participated in the Eucharistic celebration and offered my broken self to the Lord. During the moments leading up to the anointing, I surrendered. After wailing and crying out my inner hurts and pains, I rested in the Spirit. Robed in dazzling white, the Lord came and cradled me... I felt my burdens lifted up and like the mist, He vanished... It was an unforgettable encounter with Jesus. And life as I knew it then, has never been the same. ***"It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard."*** (Acts 4:20)

I felt a strong desire to share this unspeakable joy in my heart! Even at work, I wanted to use every conversation to extend God's love to those who were ready to listen. I had a thirst to know Him more. The words in Scripture touched me deeply and my heart was burning inside, as how the disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus described it. Assured of God's unconditional love for me and lavished by the gifts of His most Holy Spirit, my cup has been filled to overflowing. This is what moves me to action... to go and serve in mission and live out the great commission. ***"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit."*** (Matthew 28:19)

But the Lord's command is not an easy task to accomplish. Jesus must be heard in the words I say. Jesus must be seen in the way I act. Jesus must be felt in the way I reach out. Yes, an effective witness goes beyond one's words. A true witness glorifies the Heavenly Father by his actions so that God's light will shine. A Christian witness lives by what he preaches. As St. Francis would put it.... ***"Proclaim the gospel.... use words if you must."***