

A Christian first follows Jesus, not politics

By GLEN MAIDEN
Special to The Daily Astorian

2015 will be a year that transcends mediocrity, yes?

For people of faith we have witnessed the explosive decision of the U.S. Supreme Court on marriage, the sexploits of a sandwich icon, the Ashley Madison hack striking down a Christian reality show star, and the condemnations of a global leader on the indiscretions of his clergy against children.

Where do we move from here?

Our faith as followers of Christ is simple and complex at the same time. Simple because a Christian first follows Jesus, not politics. Complexity emerges through our conservative, liberal, straight, gay, privileged, and poverty culture.

Let's begin simple. Our call it is to follow Jesus in love and truth. We are mandated to be imitators of his image as dearly beloved children. We never compromise truth or conscience.

At the same time our de-



meanor as children is humility. I enjoy saying, "I am not humble, but humility finds me regularly."

The humility of Jesus is stunning. He drove no Escalade, avoided the celebrity cult like the plague, and history shows no record of sexploitation of his followers or anxiety over Internet hacks.

Can I be honest? I follow Jesus because of his affinity for the jackass instead of the motorcade and his tender compassionate love for the donkey writing these words.

I follow Jesus because his image is apolitical. His words rise far above the din of campaign slurs and personal acrimony.

His words and way connect the 18 inches from head to heart because he loves so richly, he forgives so completely, and the humility of

Jesus touches my narcissism with hope.

How goes 2015 for you? Did you make the Ashley Madison cut? Still traumatized by political tomfoolery, and postmodern jackassery?

Me too. Let's have coffee. Soon.

The great hymn says, "Jesus is my portion." He is my delight. He is my hope of this planet. I find the words of Jesus humble, and his love ... well ...transcendent.

Glen Maiden serves as senior pastor of North Coast Family Fellowship. He is a father and husband, itinerant preacher, drug and alcohol consultant, author, coffee enthusiast, and certified sex addiction therapist candidate. The fellowship's website is www.ncffchurch.org. Learn more about Maiden on his blog at www.glenmaiden.com.



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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Corvallis native traveled with Pope Francis during recent U.S. visit

Cihak a monsignor working at the Vatican

By ANTHONY RIMEL
Corvallis Gazette-Times

CORVALLIS — Pope Francis' recent visit to the United States was the subject of virtually endless TV news coverage and front page stories. He spoke to a joint session of Congress, met President Barack Obama and celebrated Mass before huge crowds, including Madison Square Garden, where he drew a crowd of 18,000.

And at the pope's side during those masses was Corvallis native John Cihak, now a monsignor working at the Vatican.

Cihak has worked at the Vatican with the Congregation for Bishops for six years. But since 2010, he's also taken on a second role: he's one of nine



President Barack Obama meets with Pope Francis at the White House in September.

Papal Masters of Ceremony, who assist the pope during ceremonies and masses. He's only the second American in history to hold that role, and through it he's traveled with the pope internationally to Korea, Sri Lanka and, most recently, to the United States

in late September.

Outpouring of warmth

Cihak, who graduated from Corvallis High School in 1988, agreed to talk to the Gazette-Times about his personal experiences traveling with Pope Francis, but emphasized

that he was not speaking on behalf of the Vatican or Pope Francis.

He said what struck him most about the trip was the outpouring of warmth and support he witnessed.

"It's a strange combination of excitement and being

humbled," he said of traveling with the pope.

He said one of the moments that stood out to him from the visit was at the end of the mass at Madison Square Garden, when Cardinal Timothy Dolan thanked the pope for visiting.

By Cihak's account, the place exploded into applause for several minutes.

"I love for the Holy Father to receive that kind of warmth ... he was enjoying himself. It was a moment of closeness that really struck me."

'Nothing but kindness'

Cihak, 45, said he would respect the pope's privacy by not talking too much about him personally, but did say the pope knows him by name and is very warm personally.

"In every encounter I've had with him he's been nothing but kindness," he said.

He said Catholics all hold the pope in high regard, but the media has really picked up on how strongly Catholics respond to Pope Francis.

"People feel loved by him and like he understands them. That's why that response can be so easily seen."

Cihak said many of his former classmates at Corvallis High contacted him during his visit to congratulate him on the role.

Cihak said during high school he didn't think about becoming a priest; in fact, he said, he thought he would become a doctor. At his 10-year high school reunion, well along with his career in the priesthood, he was voted as the person who had pursued the "least likely career."

Proud of Corvallis

"Corvallis always helps me keep my feet on the ground," he said.

Cihak said he still has family in Corvallis and visits every summer. He said he likes the small town atmosphere of Corvallis, and its proximity to farms and the country.

"No matter where I go, I'm always proud to say I'm from Corvallis," he said.

9-1-WHAT?

THE BEST OF THE WORST CALLS TO ASTORIA 911 DISPATCH

Drunk soccer

If you are going to play soccer in the street in Warrenton and what not, don't do it loudly. Or drunk.

Follow reporter Kyle Spurr on his 9-1-What? Twitter watch, where a few of the sometimes head-scratching calls to area dispatch take center stage. The full feed is at www.twitter.com/9_1_WHAT.

9-1-WHAT?

{10/5 @ 3:01 a.m.} Officers responded to a report of a disturbance. It was just a young child having a temper tantrum. [#Seaside](#)

7:45 AM - 6 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT?

{10/5 @ 5:13 a.m.} Man in all black acting suspicious, drooling from the mouth. [#Astoria](#)

7:45 AM - 6 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT?

{10/5 @ 11:47 a.m.} Intoxicated woman throwing garbage in the Columbia River and touching people as she passes. [#Astoria](#)

7:47 AM - 6 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT?

{10/6 @ 1:41 a.m.} A young man and woman were seen cutting flowers out of a garden, and walking down the street with the flowers. [#Astoria](#)

7:47 AM - 6 Oct 2015

9-1-WHAT?

{10/5 @ 11:26 p.m.} People playing soccer in the street loudly and sounding intoxicated. [#Warrenton](#)

7:47 AM - 6 Oct 2015

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