

Guest Editorial

Yes, you can market your business during Covid-19 closures

By Greg Smith

There is not a single person who has not been affected in some way by the fact many businesses have been forced to temporarily close. However, don't assume you should not continue to market your business, especially as the economy begins to open. Here are some tips to consider:



Greg Smith

-Stay connected with your customers. If you do not have a website or social media presence, create one now. Offer a sign-up portal and send emails about products available, changes you anticipate making to your business once the economy opens and let them know you care about them and their families.

-Offer ways people can continue to purchase your products or services online, including gift certificates. Social media ads to boost awareness are effective and affordable.

-Fortunately, not all customers have lost their jobs and want to support their favorite hometown businesses. Consider having some t-shirts or hats designed and offer them online. You may be surprised how quickly they sell and are a great way to advertise.

-Come up with a fun contest or way to interact with your customers. This might include a photo contest in which people upload candid shots to your Facebook page of their pets or children. One business encouraged clients to share their favorite recipes online. Perhaps a prize might include a gift card or discount to be used when your business reopens.

-This is a great opportunity to find ways to help support your community. There are many avenues available to assist others and if you are not in a financial position to do so, initiate a food drive or encourage people to donate blood. There are many needs.

-Spiff up your store. Take this opportunity to consider painting, rearranging and updating displays and planting flowers. Wash windows and even the outside of your building. This will provide an inviting, fresh look for your customers when they return.

-Consider joining other businesses in sharing the cost of buying radio or newspaper ads.

Marketing really is about developing long term relationships. Offering products and services customers want to buy, providing outstanding service and being personable are all part of an effective marketing plan. Top of the mind awareness has never been more important, so being resourceful and creative will help you be resilient and among those standing after this crisis is over.

Finally, it is imperative to learn from this instantaneous and dramatic economic downturn. Be determined to get a handle on your finances, better manage your cash flow, update or create your business plan, and most importantly, create a rainy-day fund as anything can happen at any time.

Greg Smith is the Director of the Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center.

Windmills are going up near Lexington



And there you have it one windmill up and ready to go. Photo on the left was submitted to us by a reader around first part of March. Photo on right this week.



One windmill ready to go

Spiritually Speaking

What are you talking about (Lk 24:17)

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church

The whole world is going through the threat of COVID-19. Any time anyone calls someone the first question is, "How is the situation in your place? Is everything under control?" I used to get plenty of calls from overseas to find out whether I am safe or not. I am sure these days every one of us has only one thing to discuss, in the context of the wide spread of COVID-19 and the number of people who are infected, how many died in different parts of the world, who died etc., something similar is the scenario of the disciples of Emmaus that we see on the 3rd Sunday of Easter's Gospel reading.

We discussed the two disciples shadowing Christ and His untimely death. These two disciples are returning to their own hometown with broken hearts, disappointments, hopelessness. I am sure that the whole world is now almost in the same situation of these two disciples. I am sure many of us are feeling distress, fear, mental disturbances, dissatisfaction, disappointment. In spite of this pandemic disease putting us all in distress and dismay, the Risen Lord invites all to a reflection as Isaiah says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways" (Is 55:8). The Emmaus journey and its various stages follow:

Walking away from Peace to trouble: In the first part of the Emmaus description, we see two disciples of Christ make a trip back to Jerusalem, which was known as the place of peace, their own native town, Emmaus, the place of hot springs. They are walking away from Jerusalem, for they feel it is not safe to stay there because of all that happened with the crucifixion of Jesus the Nazarene. From the place of peace they are moving to troubles.

Caring Stranger's accompaniment: Gospel of Matthew concludes with these words, "And I will be with you always, to the end of ages" Matthew 28:20. The Lord is always faithful to his promises. We, as human as we are, make promises to the Lord, but we are not able to keep our promises. Even if we walk away from him like the wounded animal about which Francis Thomas describes in his poem "Hound of Heaven," The Lord chases us and follows us to console and comfort us. The Lord has given

us the sacraments and the Holy Scriptures as sources of encountering him in our troubled moments. Usually when we face difficulties and problems, we have a tendency to walk away from Him. Like the Hound of Heaven, he accompanies us, as we have noticed in the episode of the disciples of Emmaus. The Lord never leaves us to wander or stroll. He explained the whole scriptures to them, but their hearts were locked up or closed, they could not recognize him.

Recognizing the Lord, in the Breaking of the Bread: The disciples did recognize the Lord in the breaking of the bread at the dining table, and the Lord left us a memorial of him in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. The ways to meet the Lord is in the reception of the sacraments and in the reading of the scriptures. But these days we are not able to come together as believing communities. Church leaders have asked us to follow the norms of the government, so we do not gather. The Lord predicted this situation well in advance during his priestly prayer in the Gospel of John: "The time is coming, and is already here, when all of you will be scattered, each of you to your own home, and I will be left all alone" (John 16:31).

What I am encouraging believing communities these days, is to spend time reading the scriptures and becoming empowered in the word of God. Since we have no way of approaching the sacraments these days because of the lock down, we need to become strengthened in the word of God. In the Emmaus experience, the Lord is, in fact, testing the disciples about their scriptural knowledge. These days I spend lots of time reading the New Testament, at least. It will be a nice habit to share with your family or friends, some healing miracles of Jesus Christ. The Lord cures so many people in the four Gospels. You can every day share one the healing miracles of Jesus Christ with family or friends and become a witness of Jesus Christ, instead of spending too much time on electronic media and filling our minds with the negativity of COVID-19 and its rampant spread in our cities and towns.

Let's be strengthened in the spirit of the Lord. As we heard in the Gospel of the third Sunday of Easter, the Lord accompanies the disciples of Emmaus and enlightens them on scriptures and asks them to believe in the scriptures. Stay at home, read the scriptures, and stay safe. With others we can be empowered in the word of God through phone messages and other social media; we can share with others scripture knowledge and fill our surroundings with a positive energy of Jesus Christ who is risen from the dead.

Forest Service seeks campground hosts

Campgrounds remain closed, Forest Service pre-planning for summer needs if restrictions eased

The Umatilla National Forest is looking for volunteers to spend the summer as campground hosts at the Jubilee Lake, Woodward and Bull Prairie Lake campgrounds.

The Forest Service's top priority is the safety and health of employees and the public. At this time, all developed recreation sites are closed. The Umatilla National Forest intends to bring in campground hosts for the summer but may adjust based on the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic, the state's executive orders, and the status of the closure order for the Forest's developed recreation sites. As Oregon and Washington state lift Stay at Home executive orders, the Forest Service will work with state and local health agencies to transition Forest Service operations and services as local conditions warrant. If current stay home and closure orders are still in effect, the Forest Service

will defer campground host start dates until restrictions are lifted or cancel the volunteer program. A decision on campground hosts will be made by mid-June and Forest Service personnel will notify all volunteers at that time.

A campground host greets campers, provides information on the surrounding area and generally makes campers feel at home. Hosts will visit with campers and day-use visitors, clean and maintain restrooms, restock supplies, occasionally clean up after campers and carry out minor maintenance as needed. They keep an eye on things and set a good example for others in the campground.

Individuals or couples can apply to be hosts. Host applicants may be subject to a criminal background check.

Those who apply will need to supply their own trailer, camper or motor home. Campground hosts will be provided a campsite,

usually near the main entryway to the campground.

Jubilee Lake Campground is located 12 miles NE of Tollgate and is the largest developed campground on the Umatilla National Forest offering 53 campsites, four picnic areas and a 2.8-mile accessible hiking trail around the 92-acre lake. For more information on becoming a Forest Service Volunteer Campground Host at Jubilee Lake Campground, please contact Kiyoshi Fujishin at the Walla Walla Ranger District (509) 522-6277 or Kiyoshi.fujishin@usda.gov.

Woodward Campground is located right off Highway 204 at Tollgate and offers 14 tent/trailer sites, four picnic areas, four accessible toilet facilities, and views of Langdon Lake (however Langdon Lake is a private lake and access to the lake is not allowed). For more information on becoming a Forest Service Volunteer Campground

Host at Woodward Campground, please contact Kiyoshi Fujishin at the Walla Walla Ranger District (509) 522-6277 or Kiyoshi.fujishin@usda.gov.

Bull Prairie Lake Campground is located 36 miles south of Heppner and offers 30 tent/trailer

sites, 12 picnic areas, a beautiful 28-acre lake with four floating fishing docks and a 1.5-mile paved accessible trail. For more information on becoming a Forest Service Volunteer

Campground Host at Bull Prairie Lake Campground, please contact Janel Lacey at the North Fork John Day Ranger District (541) 427-5394 or janel.lacey@usda.gov.

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