

**Spiritually Speaking**

**Ascension, an invitation to mount the throne of God**

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church



Fr. Joseph

On the seventh Sunday of Easter, the Church celebrates the Ascension of the Lord. As I was preparing for the homily, I was reminded of a story I received recently: A very poor family by the name of Carpenter lived in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. The oldest boy was given education in the city, with the help of some family friends who generously financed his studies when they realized he wanted to become a doctor. Carpenter graduated with honors but declined all job offers to practice medicine in the city. He decided to go back to the mountains, where there were many sick people and few doctors. For many years he ministered to the sick. Some paid, most couldn't. He gave his very best and helped everyone he could. In his old age he was in broken health himself and almost penniless.

Two small rooms above the town grocery store were his home and office. At the foot of the creaky stairs leading up to his office was a sign with these words: "Dr. Carpenter is upstairs." One morning someone climbed those stairs to find their devoted doctor dead. The entire community was plunged into grief. They wanted to erect some kind of monument to him, but they decided to simply write these words on a large tombstone: "Dr. Carpenter is upstairs."

What is the Ascension of Jesus? Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he ascended into Heaven. It was a moment of prodigious celebration. All the angels gathered around him and asked about his life and mission on Earth. Jesus was glad to share his wonderful life experience of living with mankind: his life struggle with priests and rulers on Earth and how they condemned him to die on a cross because he stood for the cause of the subalterns and the marginalized of the society, how he failed to impart the love of the Father to the priestly clan, their refusal to believe in God, and finally his dying on the cross for their salvation. The Lord has already built a bridge between Heaven and Earth. He has come and lived with us and set connectivity between God and human beings.

Why did Jesus ascend to the father? In the letter of St. Paul to Philippians is written: "Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to receive the glory due to Him as the victor over sin and death" (2:8-9). Jesus, in the Gospel of John, reminds in several places that he needs to ascend to the Father in order for the Advocate to come to us, and He reminds us that he ascended to the Father to prepare rooms for us, to welcome us all back to Heaven (14:2).

How to make ascension possible in our Life? St. Paul, in his letter to Colossians, gives us this intact message: "So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." This teaching of St. Paul reminds us believers that ascension is possible for everyone. He suggests, in fact, three ways to ascend to the father:

1) Material Ascension: With the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are being led to our material freedom. Poverty is converted to riches, lack is converted to abundance. The works of our hands are blessed (Deut. 28:12; Psalm 90:17). From a tendency of amassing wealth for ourselves, we need to have an option for the poor. When we look at the lives of most of the saints, we see very good examples of this material ascension in their lives. Saints like Francis of Assisi, who was born into a noble business family, but who became poor and chaste because his love of Christ made him leave aside everything and follow Christ.

2) Mind Ascension: There is an old proverb, "A sound mind dwells in a sound body." When our minds are engaged in material things and things of this world, we can say that we are in a mental slavery, which leads to acute depression, worry, anxiety, fear. Mostly the "haves" are more involved in things of this world and attached to things of this place.

3) Sensual Ascension: In this twenty-first century, everything seems available at our finger tips. There is a tendency in the present world to waste so much time in front of the social media, to take pleasure in that which feeds our sense organs. Our eyes and ears need to be controlled to ascend above this world of sensual pleasures.

On this Ascension Day, the Church proudly displayed the placard of hope and salvation: "Dr Carpenter is upstairs." But unlike the doctor boy who died, Jesus - the Divine Doctor of our souls - is alive and continues to heal people and bring salvation to all people. The Lord invites everyone on this particular day to ascend from our present style of life to him. The Church, consisting of all His believers, continues this ministry of teaching and saving people with His living presence and with the help of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit came down to empower the followers of Jesus to become effective witnesses of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is always with us to help us ascend from this present style of life to a worthy life through our words and actions.

**Scholarships awarded to local youth**

Maddie Lindsay, Tania Mendoza, Jessica Kempken, Kevin Murray, Sophie Grant, Faith Rosen, Bailey Botefuhr, Zoey Gilbert, Jazmin Haak, Cami VanArsdale and Haley Rae White were recently awarded scholarships by the Pioneer Memorial Hospital Foundation. The foundation also awarded \$23,000 to Pioneer Memorial Hospital for the purchase of a power loader for the new ambulance.

Maddie Lindsay was awarded the Dr. Wallace

Wolff Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$1,500. Maddie is attending University of Western States to obtain her doctorate of chiropractic degree.

The Earl and Hazel Wilson scholarships were awarded to Tania Mendoza, Jessica Kempken, Kevin Murray and Sophie Grant. Mendoza received \$1,500 to aid in her quest for a bachelor's degree in public health. Kempken also received \$1,500 to continue seeking her bachelor's degree in bio health sciences

with a focus in pre-pharmacy at OSU. Murray received \$1,200 and is attending OSU working toward a dental degree.

Sophie Grant and Faith Rosen each received \$1,000 Earl and Hazel Wilson scholarships. Grant is pursuing a degree in optometry at Pacific University and Rosen is attending BMCC for a nursing degree.

Also receiving scholarships in the amount of \$500 each were Bailey Botefuhr, Zoey Gilbert, Jazmin Haak,

Cami VanArsdale and Haley Rae White.

The Pioneer Memorial Hospital Foundation was formed in 1981 to promote good health through outstanding local medical care and to encourage and assist young people to enter careers in medicine through scholarships. It is non-profit and any donations given to aid in grants and scholarship are tax deductible. For more information, please contact Cari Scrivner at carolines@mocohd.org.

**4-H senior members earn scholarships**

Casey Fletcher of Heppner and Quinton Orr of Ukiah have each earned a \$550 scholarship from the Morrow County 4-H Association. Students eligible for the scholarship must have been enrolled in 4-H for at least three years during their high school years and at least one of those with Morrow County 4-H specifically. Awards are based on 4-H involvement, grades and community involvement.

Quinton Orr, Ukiah High School, participated in 4-H robotics, sheep, poultry, computers, cooking and



Casey Fletcher

served as a camp counselor and county ambassador. He will pursue higher education at Oregon Institute of Technology for engineering and robotics.

Casey Fletcher, Heppner High School, participated in market beef production and outdoor skills. He will dual-enroll at University of Oregon and Lane Community Col-



Quinton Orr

lege to pursue a degree in business administration and legal studies.

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults while participating in fun, hands-on learning activities. Youth can experience 4-H by becoming a member of a 4-H club, attending 4-H camp or joining after-school programs. 4-Hers can compete with their projects at local, state, regional or national levels and also attend conferences and events.

**Sheriff's Report**

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office has released the following information:

**January 10:** Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a report at Green acres on Paterson Ferry Rd, Irrigon that RP can hear yelling and things hitting the wall.

-MCSO received a report at Banner Bank on Main St N, Boardman a male is laying on the sidewalk, wallet and money on the floor.

-MCSO received a report at Irrigon Learning Center on Columbia Ln, Irrigon that there is a young woman that appears to be under the influence of something walking up and down the road. Unable to locate.

-MCSO received a report at Olson Rd/Wilson Ln, Boardman that vehicle was stopped on Wilson. Ruben Gutierrez was arrested by BPD for Hit and Run. Vehicle was impounded for no insurance.

-MCSO received a report at Seventh Day Adventist Church on NW Tumbleweed Blvd, Irrigon that subject saw a suspicious male in blue hospital pants and a tan jacket. He advised the thought this could be the escaped psychiatric patient from Pendleton. He saw him tuck into some tumbleweeds near the trailer park.

-MCSO received a report on SE Utah Ave, Irrigon that a dark green Dodge pickup went by at a high rate of speed. Unable to locate.

-MCSO received a report on SE Utah Ave, Irrigon that there was a vehicle that sped down the road. RP was irate because a deputy was not patrolling his neighborhood and instead was patrolling the interstate where OSP should be patrolling.

-MCSO received a report at SE Thirteenth St/E Hwy 730, Irrigon of a gold Thunderbird with excessive exhaust.

-MCSO received a report at SE Seventh St/SE Idaho Ave, Irrigon that a maroon Honda turned before RP could finish crossing the street.

-MCSO received a report on Hwy 207 Echo, Echo that RP heard an MVA out in her pasture. She is going out to check and will

call back with further information. RP advised of semi on its top in her pasture.

-MCSO received a report on Western Route Rd, Heppner that a Jeep Grand Cherokee is stuck in the middle of the road about 20 miles up Willow Creek.

**January 11:** Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a report at Green Acres on Paterson Ferry Rd, Irrigon that someone flattened some of her daughter's tires.

-MCSO received a report on Hwy 207 Spray, Heppner that a sign that says wreck ahead has blown into the NB lane. Referred to other agency.

-MCSO received a report on I 84 W, Boardman of assault. Marissa Danielle Daniels was arrested by MCSO for DUII, Dis Con II, initiating a false report. Lodged at UCJ, bail \$8,500.

-MCSO received a report at Willow Creek Rd/Shaw Grade Rd, Heppner of rollover, two adults, two kids, no entrapment. Patients transported to PMH. Vehicle towed by A1 Martin.

-MCSO received a report on Hwy 207 Echo, Lexington that someone stole his motorcycle.

-MCSO received a report on NW Water St, Heppner that the house down on the corner has a lot of garbage that the wind has blown into the street and into her yard.

-MCSO received a report on SE Utah Ave,

Irrigon that a blue Dodge extended cab came from Division and is double parked outside a residence honking his horn.

-MCSO received a report on I 84 W, Boardman of an aggressive driver, the truck ran her off the road. OSP advised.

-MCSO received a report on I 84 E, Boardman that a vehicle is unable to maintain speed and the passenger keeps rolling the window down as if they want to say something. Isaiah Tanimola Ifanse was issued warning for speed.

-MCSO received a report at Hwy 730/I 84 E, Boardman that a white Lexus SUV is speeding and swerving. Unable to locate.

-MCSO received a report on Paterson Ferry Rd, Irrigon that there was thin laminate boards and debris. She advised she cleared it from the roadway and it is no longer a hazard.

-MCSO received a report on Hwy 207 Echo, Echo of two pickups going well over 70 mph. MCSO made contact with three vehicles at the gas station in Heppner. Advised group of juveniles of the complaint and to stop their speeding.

-MCSO received a report at W Eighth Rd/Kangaroo Ct, Irrigon of a suspicious vehicle in the field. Victor Manuel Landeros Navarro was arrested by MCSO for DUII and reckless driving. Subject was lodged at UCJ with bail of \$10,000.

**January 12:** Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a report at NE Fourth St/NE Oregon Ave, Irrigon of a loud party in a single wide trailer on the corner. Unable to locate.

-MCSO received a report on SW Third St, Irrigon that a female is having dizzy spells, possible vertigo. Transported.

-MCSO received a report at NE Seventh St/NE Washington Ave, Irrigon that there is mail scattered all over the floor. Unable to locate.

-MCSO received a report on SE Utah Ave, Irrigon that a Dodge Stratus headed toward Brandon is parked on the wrong way. Female driver that was under the influence.

-MCSO received a report on Washington Ln, Irrigon that a 55-year-old male, cold to the touch, passed away last night.

-MCSO received a report at First St/Columbia Ln, Irrigon that there are people at this residence and they're not supposed to be there. People came from tree line. MCSO advised it was them in that area patrolling.

-MCSO received a report at Northwestern Motel on N Main St, Heppner that at the RV park there has been a dog barking nonstop for the last couple hours. Unable to locate.

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