

Spiritually Speaking

Come Holy Spirit: renew the face of the earth

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church

The Church celebrated the solemnity of Pentecost on Sunday. Originally, Pentecost was a Jewish feast celebrated on the 50th day after the Passover feast. By Christians, it is a feast celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter, celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his ascension into Heaven.

The Pentecost and the Happenings: The Pentecost ranks among the greatest feasts of Christianity along with Christmas and Easter. It is considered the birthday of the mother Church. The Jewish Pentecost was actually a post-harvest thanksgiving celebration. That was the reason lots of people gathered in Jerusalem to thank the deities for the wonderful harvest they had had. Scripture describes that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and the Blessed Mother as fiery tongues. This transformed them into fiery preachers in their own way. All those who listened to the apostles on that day of Pentecost experienced a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of St. Peter. The early Christians became powerful witnesses and brave martyrs for their faith in Christ.

The Transformation on Pentecost: The Acts of the Apostles and the last chapters of the Gospels describe the apostles and their locked-down experiences and feelings. “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews” (John 20: 19). Though clearly mentioned as timid, frightened, or fearful, the disciples were transformed into powerful speakers, as the Acts of the Apostles describes: “Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd” (Acts. 2:14). What we notice is that timidity was transformed into boldness, and indecisions were transformed into persuasions. This is what happened on the day of first Pentecost. Now when we take part in the Pentecost of 2020, we need to pray to the Spirit of the Lord to come down upon our world and also transform us, who are going through the same lock-down experiences of the apostles of Jesus during the first Pentecost.

The whole universe is at present in the clutches of this pandemic called COVID-19, which has created some fear, disappointments, anxiety, distress, nervousness, and

depression, misery, melancholy. The COVID-19 tries to put us into the realm of “fear zone.” In the fear zone we did lots of things, thinking that a scarcity was going to happen. So, we began to grab things for ourselves. We grabbed food items, toiletries, medications etc., even more than we actually needed, which sometimes increased the feelings of panic and fear and led some persons to that realm of giving up, brokenness etc.,

The Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit: In St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians, he makes clear the difference between persons who are led by the human spirit and those who are led by the Spirit of God. He urges Christians to be always under the Spirit of the Lord. When we live by the Spirit of God, the qualities of that spirit will be visible in us. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (5:22-24). When we possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it automatically changes us into a new being/creation. The Holy Spirit in us helps us move from fear to freedom, from timidity to power, from victim to victor, from silence to proclamation, from being individuals to being community, from division to reconciliation. When the Holy Spirit comes to take possession of us, we possess the gifts of the Lord that actually help us renew the world around us. In the first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks about these gifts of the Holy Spirit:

1) Wisdom: Wisdom helps us to not get upset over little problems, not to put too much stock in passing events. We need the gift of wisdom to remember that people are more important than things and that God’s love is more than everything else.

2) Understanding: A person who is understanding, accepts others just as they are and cares for the people no one else notices. Those who understand us know our faults and imperfections as well as our strengths and good qualities. Such people are always ready to encourage and challenge us, and always ready to forgive us and give us

a second chance.

3) Knowledge: The ability to know is a gift from God; the development of this gift is our responsibility. Developing the gift of knowledge is what education is all about. It is important to remember, also, that human knowledge can be used for bad ends as well as good.

4) Right Judgment: Our greatest gift as human beings is the gift of freedom, the gift to decide for ourselves what we will make of our lives, the ability to make good and wise decisions. Right judgment also helps us to learn from our mistakes and to correct the problems caused by our bad decisions.

5) Courage: Courage is the strength to do the right thing in spite of the obstacles and difficulties that make it hard to do so. The gift of courage gives us the strength and stamina we need to keep on trying, day after day, to be the kind of Christian people we want to be.

6) Reverence: The Holy Spirit’s gift of reverence, a deep respect for God and others and all of creation. Reverence helps us to see the true value of every person and of all created things.

7) Wonder and Awe in God’s Presence: Wonder and awe in God’s presence is the gift by which we are given a sense of who God really is and who we are as creatures of God. What I understand by this gift is that this same God lives in my heart, listens to my daily prayers, cares about my tiny worries, and loves me in all my specialness and in all my weakness.

We need to have persons with these seven gifts of the Holy Spirit to change the world. The world stands in need of some sort of revamp as this juncture of the pandemic and the socio-economic realm is creating a huge crisis. Each person needs to come out of himself/herself for others, as agents of peace, joy, and tranquility. Someone who possesses these gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit can really be an agent of change. The Spirit will automatically prompt him/her to be the agents of alteration in their surroundings and from there to the world at large. Let our prayer be Come Holy Spirit: Renew the Face of the Earth.

Morrow County requests move to phase two reopening


Morrow County Commissioners sent a letter to Governor Kate Brown on June 1 requesting permission to enter phase two reopening on June 5. As described in “A Safe and Strong Oregon” executive order, the county is prepared to move into phase two after a successful 21 days for phase one.

According to the letter sent to the governor, Morrow County attested to the requirements which include, first responders having sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); currently having only 13 known cases of COVID-19 and successfully tracing all contacts for all

cases; having nine contact tracers, including two who are bilingual, in excess of the OHA recommendations based on the population of Morrow County; and has made no substantive changes to responses submitted in the phase one application.

Morrow County has been successful in follow-

ing the protocols and guidance of OHA and the CDC to keep positive cases to a minimum, reporting only one new case in more than 21 days. The most recent case was acquired out of state by exposure on the job. This successfully meets the less than five percent increase threshold.



Lexington Burn Ban

The Fire Chief of the Town of Lexington is imposing a closed season for open burning effective **Monday, June 15, 2020 until further notice.**

The burning ban is for the Town of Lexington and includes all burn barrels and open burning.



Effective June 15, 2020, the Fire Chief of the City of Heppner is imposing a BURN BAN.

This also includes Burn Barrels.

Residents can request Natural Vegetation and Debris Piles be burned by the Fire Department at this time.

Sign up list for Fire Department burning assistance is at Heppner City Hall or call Fire Chief Steve Rhea @ 541-980-4232 or Assistant Fire Chief Eric Chick @ 541-701-4910

The closed season will remain in effect until further notice this fall as per **ORS 478.960.**



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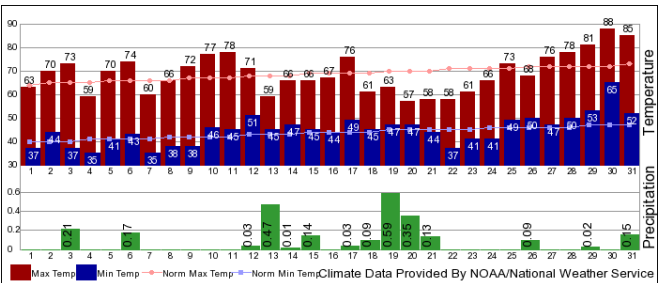


Heppner slightly warmer in May

According to preliminary data received by NOAA’s National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged slightly warmer than normal during the month of May.

The average temperature was 56.9 degrees which was 0.8 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 69.0 degrees, which was 0.3 degrees above normal. The highest was 88 degrees on the 30th. Low temperatures averaged 44.8 degrees, which was 1.2 degrees above normal. The lowest was 35 degrees, on the 4th.

Precipitation totaled 2.48 inches during May,



which was 0.82 inches above normal. Measurable precipitation, at least .01 inch, was received on 14 days with the heaviest, 0.59 inches reported on the 19th. Precipitation this year has reached 5.99 inches, which is 1.29 inches below normal. Since October, the water year precipitation at Heppner has been 7.37 inches, which is 3.97 inches below normal.

The outlook for June from NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center calls for near normal temperatures and near to above normal precipitation. Normal highs for Heppner rise from 73.0 degrees at the start of June to 81.0 degrees at the end of June. Normal lows rise from 47.0 degrees to 51.0 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.38 inches.

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