

Spiritually Speaking

Re-route and come back

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

I am sure many of my readers have driven vehicles to some previously unknown locations. In such situations, we can always depend on the global positioning system (GPS). GPS has made a huge impact in our lives, and GPS devices have become a standard part of travel life, and when we get lost or fail to follow the directions provided to us – as I have done several times - it helps us re-route and find our destination. We have followed our spiritual journey with the idea of returning to the Lord and used the spiritual GPS. Already four Sundays have passed, and we are moving towards the fifth Sunday of Lent, which is inviting us to enter into a relationship with the Lord and thereby encounter the Lord. The themes during Lent are requesting us to re-route and come back, take a U- turn, etc.

The reading from prophet Jeremiah (31:31-35) is an assurance of God's constant manifestation with us. It also reminds us of what God is about to do: "I will make a new covenant and never call their sin to mind...then, I will be their God and they will be my people." God is ready to set aside a relationship that was destroyed by infidelity. He wishes to restore a broken relationship. On our part, we must be ready to accept this new covenant with God. Unlike the previous covenants He made with humankind, it is not written in books or carved on stones; instead, it is engraved in the heart of man. This new covenant offers us salvation and life. So, as we continue our walk this Lent, let us know that God is willing to fulfil His promise, and nothing can stop Him. All He demands from us is to be ready to accept this new covenant made in Christ Jesus. Are you ready to be part of this new covenant?

The reading from the letter to the Hebrews (5: 7-9) reminds us of the Gethsemane experience of Jesus. It reminds us of the great sacrifice of Christ. It teaches us the obedience of Christ; He obeys to the point of death. Though He could have avoided it, Christ Jesus surrenders to the will of His heavenly Father. First, this was in order to fulfil the promise of His Father. Second, it was in order to save us. "...He learned to obey through suffering...He became for all who obey Him the source of eternal life." Are we ready to follow the precepts of Christ even to the point of great pain and agony?

The Gospel of John, an example of straight talk of Jesus, is actually called a Gospel of Signs. Seven signs are explained in his Gospel, although from chapter one to 13, Jesus speaks of six signs in a language quite difficult for the common person to understand. The seventh sign is His death and resurrection. It comes right after Jesus's entry into Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday. He and His disciples have come to Jerusalem for the Passover festival; Jesus has climbed onto a donkey and ridden in procession through the city gates like a king coming into his capital, with His disciples waving palm branches and the crowd cheering and shouting, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel!" (John 12:13). It must have been an impressive sight. The second part of the Gospel speaks about the grain of wheat dying and producing much fruit. We are called to be like the grain of wheat - we need to die daily to our bodily as well as worldly passions. It may be bit difficult to begin, but surely the sprout of the seed that you have planted will take root in you.

We started the Lenten practices and Lenten observances with an intention of meeting the Lord in our lives, and I am sure all these various themes have been guiding us all into that relationship. The Lenten practices of fasting and almsgiving we have taken upon ourselves should lead us to see the Lord in our surroundings. In the readings is the message that we need to encounter daily sufferings, pain, and difficulties. But the cross is not our final destination. It is only a stage on our journey, not only through Lent, but in our lives, too. We have to stay at the cross before we experience the joy of the resurrection. To reach the final destination, the Lord is requesting us to re-route and come back, take a U- turn, etc. Maybe these re-routes can lead us closer to Jesus. Perhaps these re-routes have come in the form of a life situation, change within our family and circle of friends. Maybe they have come in learning new truths about ourselves and others. Regardless of what causes the re-routes, we should consider how we can re-route ourselves in ways that will bring us to our spiritual destination. May God help us in our spiritual GPS as we journey towards Him.

Good News Only

By Doris Brosnan

Keep those good news items comin' in, everyone. We all enjoy sharing someone else's positive experiences.

Signs of making headway against the ever-changing virus include the reduction of Morrow County to a low risk level, allowing for a little more social interaction while continuing to be careful. Pats on the backs to all who continue to be conscientious and cautious.

Another sign is the increase in some travel now allowed, and Greg and Janet Greenup are among the beneficiaries. Janet reports, "Greg and I spent a week in Arizona, returning Sunday, March 7. We stayed with Phil and Sandra Ayers in Gold Canyon. We saw a spring-training game between the Cubs and Mariners in Mesa, ate, visited the Chapel of the Holy Cross in Sedona, ate, visited the Hopi cliff dwellings in Walnut Canyon, Tortilla Flats and ate again. The weather and company were perfect. Bill Doherty and Bill and Robin Canaday joined us on the flight home."

I am also benefitting from a travel plan allowed by my daughter. Now that I have had two vaccinations, she says I can visit Salem this week, seeing her family for the first time since October. I am especially pleased with being able to visit Danny in his care facility – a true face-to-face (with a mask on.) in his room instead of a FaceTime call. If all continues to go well, visiting of residents at Willow Creek Terrace, both outside and inside visits, can now be arranged by calling the Terrace.

Last weekend, Archie and Diana Ball welcomed a young man familiar to many Heppnerites. Ryan Duncan, son of Bob and Sue, came for a great weekend visit.

Although the St. Pat's celebration was again postponed this year, at least one of the famous leprechauns livened up today with visits and antics at the Willow Creek Terrace and about town.

Church has food boxes available

Food boxes will be given away Sunday, March 21, from 2 to 3 p.m. (or while supplies last) at the back door of the Hopeful Saints Parish Hall at the corner of Church and Gale, Heppner.

This gift at the beginning of spring break is especially intended for families with hungry children at home during the school vacation, but it is available to

Erin go brag. A new life for the Nazarene Church building lies ahead, as it is being repurposed by the new owners, Morrow County Health District.

Ione community members are invited to meet the four individuals who have applied for the school superintendent position. Great opportunity tomorrow at 5 p.m. could impact a decision and the future of the schools.

Good news from Lexington includes Mayor Juli Kennedy and other volunteers working together to organize a May Day parade. Call the town hall at 541-989-8515 for additional information or to offer your assistance.

Willow Creek is such a valuable asset to Heppner. For one thing, it is a big attraction to some individuals who enjoy its ambiance on a regular basis. One section of which this is true is its banks on both sides of the bridge that crosses to Heppner Elementary School. Unfortunately, some people who hang out there have been careless with their debris, creating unsightly areas of left-behind trash. But the good news is that the creek is lower now than it will be soon, which will enable those individuals to correct their mistake. Garbage bags are readily available, and a concerted effort by the frequenters will create a healthier, renewed-pristine, inviting, spacious area to enjoy.

If you jot down your good news as an email or call it in, I know the readers will be glad you did. (I am repeating a few ideas: new babies, marriages, anniversaries, new jobs, new businesses, visitors, travels, vacations, adventures, promotions and successes, education and sports news, great pets, children's' accomplishments.) Anyone who has a tidbit is invited to email it to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or to call 541-223-1490.

Hoping some good news comes to everyone reading this.

Town and Country event rescheduled

Heppner Chamber's Annual Town and Country Community Awards event has been rescheduled for Thursday, June 17, 2021. The theme for the event will be "An Evening with the Stars" and will be held at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building, starting at 6 p.m. Tickets will be available for purchase starting in May.

Nomination forms are available to nominate your

recommendation for Woman of the Year, Man of the Year, Business of the Year, Citizen-Educator of the Year, Lifetime Achievement and Youth Award. Nomination forms will be accepted at the Heppner Chamber office until Friday, May 14, 2021.

Contact the Heppner Chamber of Commerce for additional information.

New visiting protocols in place at Willow Creek Terrace

The welcome mat is out again at Willow Creek Terrace. Everyone on the Hill views the latest changes in mandates governing visits with great enthusiasm because visitors can now make appointments to actually come see residents.

Indoor visits will be contingent upon no positive COVID-19 exposure within the Terrace or to a recent visitor, or Morrow County's positivity rate increasing again to high or extreme. Administrator George Nairns reports the excitement generated over being able to plan for visitors inside soon, as everyone looks forward to the return of many visitors. She issues a kind plea to all to wear face coverings and practice distancing, to help protect our residents.

Outdoor visits can be scheduled, as well, and a would-be visitor is asked to call for an appointment two hours ahead. This will allow staff to assist a resident to get prepared to go outside. If not scheduled ahead, the individual may need to wait. Outdoor visits are limited to tow-three visitors, and children must be supervised by an adult at all times. Some areas are designated for outside vis-

its: the back patio areas, the south-end patio, the gazebo and the front yard.

Due to limited space indoors, a visitor must set up an appointment that must be arranged at least 24 hours in advance by calling 541-676-0004. A staff member will document visitor, date and time, and resident to be visited. The schedule for indoor visits, which can last up to 30 minutes, will include Mondays through Fridays at these times: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. Presently, no visits will be scheduled for Saturdays or Sundays. To begin with, a visitation area will be designated for these visits. The 30-minute limitation will allow proper sanitation between uses of that space. If the area is already scheduled when a person wishes to use it, the staff member will offer an alternate date and time to facilitate the visit.

If a person has been ill, traveled on public transportation or had a known exposure to illness, he/she should schedule a visit for another time.

The Willow Creek Terrace residents and staff look forward to welcoming visitors and can answer related questions at 541-676-0004.

HHS asks for help with contact tracing at events

Heppner High School athletic director Greg Grant is asking all parents and fans to help the process for fans to attend games. "We really are working hard to provide as many opportunities as possible for parents, family and friends to attend our games this year. We need help with those attending to assist us in these ways." The kids really do enjoy having fans there. Grant lists the requirements for attending the games:

-As soon as you get your ticket, fill out the QR code survey for Covid tracing at least a day ahead. This allows us to get you into the game on time and have your information recorded early. This is vital to managing the contest and alleviates congestion at the gates.

-You must present your ticket to get into the game.

-Please understand that once you are admitted into the game, if you leave, we cannot allow you to return.

-Please follow guidelines for bathroom use, entry, exit and distancing.

-Face masks must be worn by spectators at all contests.

-Avoid congregating before, during or after.

Please contact Heppner High School, grantg@morrow.k12.or.us or call 541-676-9138 ext. 2512 for additional information.

Anyone who is unable to attend can log in at <https://www.nfhsnetwork.com/schools/heppner-high-school-heppner-or> to access the games. All home contests stream for free.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR FIRE CONSULTANT

Morrow County Public Works Projects - Morrow County, Oregon

Morrow County, Oregon, requests proposals for a qualified Fire Consultant to provide services for Morrow County Parks. Contractors submitting qualifications shall be considered based upon the following general evaluation criteria:

1. Fee schedule.
2. Experience.
3. Method of approach.

Copies of the Request for Qualifications may be obtained from Morrow County

Public Works, P.O. Box 428, 365 W Hwy 74, Lexington, Oregon 97839, (541) 989-9500, spointer@co.morrow.or.us

Complete proposals will be accepted at the same address no later than 4:00 p.m., March 25, 2021. Any questions or concerns may be addressed to Sandi Pointer.



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