

Spiritually Speaking

What I command you is to love one another

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church

On this Sunday, we celebrate our Lord's universal love, the fullness of which is expressed in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. He has no favorites. Rather, He freely communicates His love and spirit to all who accept Him. As we reflect on the theme of this Sunday, I am reminded of the previous Sunday's theme to "remain" in His Love, or to be grafted to the person of Christ and be fruitful. A fruit tree that produces no fruit is useless. A lamp that gives no light is useless. A Christian who does not love his neighbor is in the same category. But it was God who first loved us. He wants us to repay His love by loving one another. We know we fail to love others as we should. Let us have the courage to look at our failures and to admit them.



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

The Acts of the Apostles, 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48, is an account of the conversion of Cornelius and his family, and how they received the Holy Spirit. As Peter described it, this shows that "God does not have any favorite." In other words, God's salvation and love is universal. While reflecting on the readings, I recalled the song which says: "Jesus's love is so wonderful, so wide you cannot get out of it, so high you cannot get over it, so deep you cannot get under it..." Simply put, God's love does not discriminate. He wants everyone who would sincerely believe in Him to be saved and participate in Him through the Holy Spirit.

The First Letter of St. John (1Jn 4:7-10) admonishes us to love one another because love is of God. Where love prevails, the kingdom of God can be witnessed among them all. This particular letter invites every one of us to remain in this love, and, of course, to love one another as Christ loved us. Being created in the image of God, we must exhibit this love, a simple theme beautifully explained in the letter of St. John: when we love others genuinely, we are truly being and acting like God. When we love sincerely, we testify that the spirit of God dwells in us.

The gospel of the day is actually the continuation of the previous Sunday, the theme called "Remain in Christ's Love," or being grafted in the love of Christ. First of all, we should realize the love Jesus challenges us to practice is practical and emotional. We need to feel warm thoughts for others, but we also do need to act lovingly towards them, even when they are unwelcoming to us. When this discussion and teaching began, Jesus initiated it with an act of love, washing the feet of the disciples (John 13:3-5). Affection will sometimes grow as we serve others. But even when it does not, the command to love remains.

The nature of Christ's love is full of humility, sacrifice, and service. Our approach to others should be characterized by these traits. "What I command you, is to love one another." As a command it means that we do not have any option than to love one another. The reason is simple. We ourselves are products of love. This love flows from God to Christ and from Christ to us. Our love needs to echo the character of Christ's love. It is a sacrificial love. Strong emotion and sentiments may accompany it, but they are not in themselves love. They are simply modes of expressing love. It is the commitment of the will that keeps sacrificial love steadfast and unchanging. That is, the will to endure or persevere. This is the mark of a good and true Christian love. Hence, sacrificial love must be patient. It shows forbearance even under provocation. It is steadfast despite opposition, and difficulties. True love is hard. It is demanding. It requires virtue and brings out the best in all involved in the love relationship.

We must be full of Jesus's love to have any love to give to others. How do we remain in His love? By keeping His commandments. We manifest God's love best when we are in the right relationship with God. When we let God's, love fill us and spill out into others, it is amazing what God can do through us. I think that Mother Theresa truly understood and lived this Gospel. Her way of life and her goal was to do everything with love – to see the face of Christ in everyone with whom she came into contact. How could Mother Theresa care so tenderly for the dying and the miserable. She obtained much grace to love like Jesus loves through loving her brethren. There are many saints who did the same. Let us look to them as shining examples of how we can live Jesus's command to love one another. Have we the courage to live in God's love by loving the things that God loves? This will bring us a great happiness, for we can count on the love of God who never fails to love us, because what he command us, "is to love one another."

Area students awarded scholarships

The South Morrow County Scholarship Trust has announced the recipients of the 2020-2021 scholarship. Roy Collins, Eva Martin and Madelyn Nichols will each receive \$1,000; Hunter Greenup, Kayla McAninch and Jessica Medina will each receive \$800; Sydney Wilson and Blake Wolters will each receive \$500. They were selected on the basis of academic achievement, chosen field of study, financial need, school participation, degree of effort in seeking sources for college and personal characteristics for success and school citizenship.

Roy Collins is the son of Tim and Jeannie Collins of Heppner. He attends Heppner High School and after graduation, he plans to attend Northwest Line-man College in Idaho. Roy has maintained a high GPA and received many academic excellence awards throughout high school. He is a member of the National Honor Society, FFA and FBLA. Roy has participated and lettered in football, basketball, and baseball. He has volunteered for many community events such as Booster Club Auction, St. Patrick's Celebration and the county fair.

Eva Martin is the daughter of Brent and Jill Martin of Lexington. She attends Ione Community Charter School and after graduation, plans to major in business and marketing. Eva has maintained a high GPA while being a member of FFA, 4-H and National Honor Society and participating and lettering in volleyball, basketball and softball. She is an ASB Officer, an outdoor school counselor, referee for Jr High Volleyball and organized a fundraiser for a wildlife relief fund.

Madelyn Nichols is the daughter of Russ and Toni Nichols of Heppner. She attends Heppner High School and after graduation, she will attend Eastern Oregon University to pursue a degree in Molecular Biology as a first step to becoming a physician assistant or family physician. Madelyn is an active member of TSA, ABS, drama and FBLA. She has participated or lettered in cross country, basketball and track and field. She will be able to continue her athletic career at EOU on their cross country and track and field teams. Madelyn has helped with many school and community activities including Booster Club Auction, HES Carnival, Catholic Church drama productions and youth track.

Hunter Greenup is the son of Travis and Tiffanie

Greenup of Lexington. He attends Heppner High School and after graduation, he plans to attend Volta Lineman School. Hunter is a member of FFA and has participated or lettered in football, basketball, trap shooting and golf. He has volunteered for the Wranglers program and the 4-H organization.

Kayla McAninch is the daughter of Jason and Stephanni McAninch of Heppner. She attends Heppner High School and after graduation, she plans to attend Blue Mountain Community College to pursue a degree in nursing. She participated or lettered in cheerleading, volleyball, basketball, golf and FFA. Kayla has volunteered for Booster Club Action, Mustang Mop-Up and several food drives.

Jessica Medina is the daughter of Martin and Obdulia Medina of Ione. She attends Ione Community Charter School and after graduation, she plans to attend a 4-year college to pursue a criminal justice degree. Jessica participated or lettered in volleyball, basketball, softball, track and FFA. She volunteered for the community clean-ups, book fairs and youth sports.

Sydney Wilson is the daughter of Steve and Mindy Wilson of Heppner. She attends Heppner High School and after graduation, she will attend Walla Walla Community College to pursue a nursing degree and be a member of their volleyball team. Sydney participated or lettered in volleyball, basketball, softball, track and field. She volunteered for the Booster Club Auction, youth sports

camp and the HES Carnival.

Blake Wolters is the son of Kirk and Amy Wolters of Ione. He attends Heppner High School and after graduation, he plans to attend Western Oregon University to study kinesiology and sports science. Blake is a member of FBLA and participated or lettered in football, basketball and track and field. He volunteered for youth sports camps, Booster Club Auction and made blankets for Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

The Board of Directors include president Adam McCabe, vice president Andrea Nelson, treasurer Tricia Rollins, secretary Brandi Sweeney, Martin Vito, Carri Grieb and Karen Holland. The South Morrow County Scholarship Trust, Inc was established with the mission to grow funds to provide scholarships to graduating seniors from Heppner and Ione High Schools and to take the place of the Troedson Scholarship Fund which will discontinue in 2023. Tax deductible donations can be sent to SMCS Inc, PO Box 102, Ione, Oregon 97843.

The Coach Del LaRue Scholarship was developed in memory of Del LaRue, a long-time teacher and coach at Ione High School. Del had a passion for coaching basketball and track and field and loved seeing students set and achieve their goals. After retiring from teaching, Del continued to coach track for twelve additional years, during this time he helped many student athletes achieve their goals and was honored as national Track and Field

Coach of the Year.

Eva Martin is the daughter of Brent and Jill Martin of Lexington. She attends Ione Community Charter School and after graduation, plans to major in business and marketing at Oregon State University. Eva has maintained a high GPA while being a member of ASB, FFA, 4-H and National Honor Society. She participated and lettered in volleyball, basketball and softball. Eva has volunteered at school and in the community including youth sports referee, book fairs, blood drives, community clean-ups, community garden and outdoor school.

This fund awards one \$1,000 scholarship to a college-bound Ione high school senior based on demonstrated academic achievement, community involvement and with preference given to students who have participated in the Ione High School Track and Field Program. Students must be continuing their education at a community college, trade school, or four-year college or university. Applicants must have a minimum 3.0 accumulated GPA, attended Ione High School all four years of high school and shown involvement in community activities. The South Morrow County Scholarship Inc Board of Directors awards the scholarship on behalf of the family.

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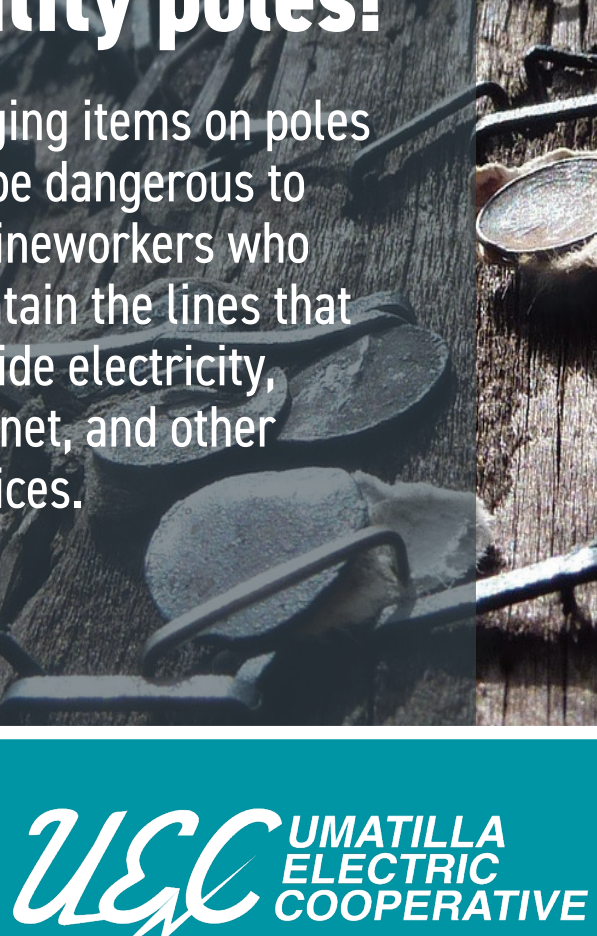


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