

# An invitation to be like Him

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

We are busy people who all need a break from busy lives not merely to recharge our energies but to ponder on a deeper question: "What is my life all about?" While even a believer needs a break, paradoxically, there is no break from loving and living. And through the readings of the day, we are made to reflect on the care and concern of Christ.



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In today's first reading, Prophet Jeremiah (23:1-6), chastises the leaders of Israel for neglecting their duties to the people. The kings of Jeremiah's time were not good leaders, being either weak or cruel. They had to shoulder the blame for the misfortune that had befallen their people.

But God will not let His people languish. He is a God who cares, and He will show His care by giving them a new leader, a new prophet, a new shepherd. This prophecy of Isaiah would be fulfilled in Jesus the Good Shepherd.

In St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (2: 13-18), Paul focuses on the caring qualities of Christ the Good Shepherd, who by His death showed how much He cared for us, and through all that He endured, He broke down the walls of separation between Jews and Gentiles and united all peoples as children of one Father. The caring person, like Christ, has to be a self-giving person.

In the Gospel reading from St. Mark (6: 30-34), the disciples report to Jesus the outcome of their first apostolic mission. Jesus listens to their reports and notices that they are weary and suggests that they need a break. "You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest a while." To retreat is to pull back, to withdraw from what one is doing. All human effort in the world is of no avail in the apostolate unless it is powered from within by the divine energy of grace. Seeking out a lonely place is not an escape from reality. Those who are busy with

the work of the Lord must return to the center within and be alone with the Lord of the work. In the alone-place we encounter the Great Alone. Having come apart to be alone with God, the Lord's invitation is to rest a while and restore our energy. Yet there is no holiday or break from love, from living our faith at all times and in every circumstance. While Jesus sends His disciples to rest awhile, He himself does not seek rest but is moved with compassion and so He attends to the multitude.

In this passage, Christ becomes a beautiful example for all the parents of today who are weary and tired due to their tireless hard work and have no time for their children and other family members. As Christ became a model, let us try to spend time together along with our family and kids. Spend some time in prayer with all the members of the family to thank and appreciate all the blessings that we have received through Christ.

We are people who are really involved in active lives, some people seeming to have no time to even breathe, so busy they are with their daily routine. There are two thoughts that arise from this type of lifestyle: How can we shoulder life's burdens if we have no contact with Him who is the Lord of all good life? Second, there is the danger of too much withdrawal. Prayer that does not issue in work is not real prayer. We must never seek the fellowship of God to avoid the fellowship of men but to fit ourselves better for it. The rhythm of the Christian life is the alternative meeting with God in the secret place and serving men in the marketplace. Christ becomes a real hero by way of empathy towards His disciples when they return. As sheep without a shepherd, He went out of His way to reach out to them and care for them. The three readings of the day remind us that every Christian ought to be a person who cares about others. We sometimes tell people that we care about them, yet we fail to prove it by our good deeds as Christ Himself did.

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## MCHD promises transparency

To the editor  
In the recent article, Morrow County Health District Board of Directors Responds to Recent Changes and Events, New Interim CEO Announced, the community learned of a change in the leadership at the MCHD. In situations like the one we have witnessed, there is the usual promise of transparency and the rebuilding of community confidence.

But before we get all giddy at this exciting news, we need to give attention to a possible long-term solution that the article only gives an 'oh, yeah, by the way,' mention. It says, 'Additionally, the executive leadership team, and the Board have committed to participate in an extensive leadership development process...working with a highly experienced...executive leadership coach...' Like many organizations who use consultants, there is a time of eagerness and anticipation, but after a short time the culture falls back to what it once was. How do we know this? The MCHD has used the services of Impact Communications before. What's more, this is not uncommon for most organizations. After spending a lot of mon-

ey on consultants, things usually go back to the way they were. In the case of the MCHD, the culture of fear may return.

In the last article I wrote, I referred to Board Oversight of Culture for High Performing Hospitals, by healthcare consultants Mitchell Rabkin, MD and Susan Friedman. They also stress the importance of measuring and caring for the organizational culture in healthcare. While the role of various activities is critical, they emphasize that organizational culture usually does not get board's attention. Culture is the result of leadership decisions shaping policies, processes and procedures, and how seriously these are internalized throughout the organization. While culture is not treated as important, it is the result of leadership decisions.

An ingrained, poor organizational culture reads as follows: excessive turnover because of poor management; unenforced or inadequate personnel policies; unclear description of roles or relationships; lack of openness; poor reception or handling of complaints by employees or patients. These situations lead to low morale, inefficiency, costly re-work, loss of talented staff, customer loss, sagging reputation as a place to work and patients' diminished expectations of technical quality of care and human concern. Sound familiar?

While bringing back Impact Communications is a step in the right direction, that is all it is. A step. There needs to be a committed follow through by the leadership of MCHD and the community as partners. There should be an innovative approach to measure the success of a changed culture and that retains employees and patients alike. When an acceptable organizational culture succeeds and continues to succeed, then the leadership can boast of their energetic, transparent interim CEO. Dr. Carmelo A. Di Salvo

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**STF PURPOSE**  
This Advisory Committee is established in the interest of transit system users (seniors, disabled, veterans, Hispanic and any other pertinent person groups) in Morrow County. Its purpose is to advise the Morrow County Commissioners and The Loop on matters that pertain to the Special Transportation Fund and all matters regarding the transportation needs of those utilizing the transit system. The Advisory Committee will make recommendations that encourage and promote the accomplishments of those needs that directly affect the welfare of those who desire and/or require such services.

*If you are interested in serving in this committee, please contact Katie Imes at The Loop: 541.676.5667 or kimes@co.morrow.or.us*

**Looking for Committee Members**

**We Have Two Vacancies in the STIF Committee**

**STIF PURPOSE**  
The Committee shall assist the Commissioners in tasks and duties supporting local and regional transportation services funded through the State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) and allocated to Morrow County, for distribution to Public Transportation Service Providers within and adjacent to Morrow County.

*If you are interested in serving in this committee, please contact Katie Imes at The Loop: 541.676.5667 or kimes@co.morrow.or.us*