

Spiritually Speaking

Do you also want to leave?

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

At this time of pandemic, it is an apt question the Lord is placing before us: Do you want to leave the places of worship? We see in the Gospel of today, at the conclusion of Jesus's instruction, many disciples leaving Him when they found His teaching on "the Bread of Life" too hard to understand. Christ asked His disciples, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answers Him, "Master to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." The twelve apostles make a decision to continue to stay with Jesus. Today too, 'the Eucharist' is a cause for division. Let us ask mercy and forgiveness from the Lord for the many sins committed against the Body of Christ, the sacrament of our salvation, especially the sin of division among Christians and for our wrong choices in life.

The book of Joshua (24: 1-2, 15-18) narrates a similar story, in which the people are asked to take a stand, for or against the Lord. Joshua became the leader of Israel after the death of Moses in their journey to the Promised Land. Once they reached their destination, they did not forget the Lord who accompanied them throughout their journey. They also had to decide to serve the one God or to continue with other gods. This decision always sounds simple but is very complex, just as it is for us. So often we say that we will serve the Lord, and yet we go on as if we are serving other Gods. Our values remain foreign from this God who reveals Himself to us in the Scriptures. It is easy to say, "I am a Christian," and it is truly difficult to be Christian. What is my response as we are faced with this pandemic situation? Do I truly practice piety and trust in the Lord?

St Paul's letter to the Ephesians (5: 21-32) describes the institution of the Sacrament of marriage, to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church. For him, the cornerstone of any marriage is mutual love. Paul elaborates that in a familial context, love is not a theoretical concept but is something that is to be practiced in everyday life. He is speaking about a mutual care for one another that comes from another time and another culture. We must listen attentively as we hear so often in the books of Wisdom: Be attentive to each other.

The Gospel from St. John (6: 60-69) asks us all to make a choice as did Simon Peter, to follow the Lord. Many of the followers of Jesus left Jesus because of his teaching that He Himself is the Bread of Life and that we must eat His body and drink His blood, which was a hard teaching and instruction for many of His followers. If that teaching were only symbolic, it would not have offended those followers. So many today, even among Catholics, no longer believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist after the prayers of consecration by the priest. Only when the strength of that teaching is present can we understand why followers left Him in His own time and why people today still find it difficult to accept the Divine Presence, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Holy Eucharist.

When we come to communion in our Catholic Church, we affirm that Christ is truly present, not just as symbol and not just as remembrance—but truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. This is why the early Christian believers could rejoice and could be strong when they were persecuted. They knew that Jesus was with them always and every moment in this Sacrament. We started through a tough time when the corona virus originated in 2019. From then onwards, the Church and the sacraments were almost absent from some lives. These people were frightened away from approaching the sacrament as the source of medicine and divine presence in those moments of anxiety and worry. The second variant of the Delta virus is spreading fear and worry among us all. Let us hold on to the Lord Jesus and ask Him to heal our society and the persons who are affected by this virus, to touch them and heal them. The Lord is still again inviting everyone to remain with Him. What is your decision?



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

Umatilla National Forest to further reduce area closure

With continued reduced initial attack on new fires across the Forest, Umatilla National Forest officials further reduced the area closure on Aug. 13, reopening access to most of the Umatilla National Forest lands in Oregon. National Forest lands within proximity to active large wildfires (the Lick Creek, Green Ridge and Elbow Creek fires) will remain closed to public entry.

The modified closure prohibits access to all Umatilla National Forest lands in Washington state (on both the Pomeroy and Walla Walla Ranger Districts) and closes lands surrounding the Elbow Creek Fire on the Walla Walla Ranger District in Oregon, which encompasses lands south and east of where Alder Creek intersects with Forest Service Road 62 to the forest boundary. Public entry is prohibited in the areas identified in the closure, which includes lands, roads, trails and recreational facilities.

Visitors planning a trip to areas within the closure should cancel any plans for the next several weeks. These areas remain closed to protect public and firefighter safety as the forest continues to actively suppress wildfires, while also responding to new smoke reports.

A detailed map describing the updated closure area is available on the Forest website and at any Forest office. Closure barriers and signs will be posted on the ground.

Fire danger on the Umatilla National Forest is still extreme. For areas that will re-open to the public, Phase C Public Use Restrictions will be in effect. Under these restrictions:

-Campfires are pro-

hibited on the Forest. Use liquid and bottle (propane) gas stoves only.

-No internal combustion engine operation (including chainsaws), except for motorized vehicles.

--Electrical generators operated under the following conditions are allowed:

---in the center of an area at least 10 feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material, or;

---when fully contained within a pickup truck bed that is empty of all flammable material, or;

---when factory installed in a recreational vehicle and the generator exhaust discharge is located in the center of an area at least 10 feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.

-No off-road/off-trail vehicle travel or travel on roads not cleared of standing grass or other flammable material. Vehicle travel is never permitted on currently closed forest service roads where access has been impeded or blocked by earthen berms, logs, boulders, barriers, barricades or gates, or as otherwise identified in a closure order.

-Smoking is allowed only in enclosed vehicles and buildings, developed recreation sites, or in cleared areas.

Violating closures and fire restrictions is a violation that carries a mandatory appearance in federal court, punishable as a Class B misdemeanor with a fine of up to \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or up to six months in prison, or both.

For more information regarding restrictions, please contact the information hotline at 877-958-9663.

Justice Court Report

Morrow County Justice of the Peace, Glen Diehl, has released the following Justice Court report:

-Michael D. Lynch, 62, Heppner, was convicted of dog at large, fine, \$110.

-Shayla J. McClure, 34, Prosser, WA, was convicted of VBR, fine, \$165.

-Kegan C. Steagall, 18, Lexington, was convicted of failure to obey traffic

control device, fine, \$265.

-Rien C. Maret, 21, Heppner, was convicted of dog at large x2, fine, \$220.

-Juvenile, 17, Stanfield, was convicted of VBR, fine, \$265.

-Kassey A. Wilson, 30, Hermiston, was convicted of VBR, fine, \$265.

-Lisanne K. Currin, 55, Heppner, was convicted of VBR, fine, \$165.

Library district to hold meeting

The Oregon Trail Library District board meeting will be held Wednesday, August 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the Irrigon branch via Zoom. Items on the agenda include swearing in new directors and electing a president and vice president. Minutes and financials

will be reviewed as well as the ethics policy.

New business will include setting the October meeting date and the director report.

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10. Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

Censorship controls the people

To the editor:
Every Communist/Marxist/dictatorship in history has one central tenant that must be established in order to control the people: censorship. All forms of information; news, research data, medical/ political / educational studies must be controlled and manipulated by the state. Any research data, documented peer studies, or any information that contradicts that state political agenda must be censored as misinformation. The state is the sole arbitrator of what the people are allowed to believe and what they are allowed to read and view.

The heavy hand of our present government including the local school board is no longer of the people, by the people and for the people. This government demands lockdowns, private medical mandates and yielding personal liberty to promote what the state calls our common good. The surrogates of the state, the national mass media, Google, Twitter, Amazon, the CDC, the WHO, the FDA, Dr. Fauci and his subordinates at the Wuhan lab, in lockstep, all cook the facts to justify every lockdown and oncoming mandates. All information, documentation, scientific peer studies that undermine the government dictatorship must be censored as misinformation.

The Bible, also censored in our schools and government, nevertheless warns mankind of the coming world totalitarianism. Jesus spoke, "Take heed that no man deceive you...For nations shall rise against nation...and there shall be famines and pestilence, and earthquakes in diverse places...For then there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." (Matthew 24: 4, 7. 31) Pestilence is "a deadly and overwhelming disease that affects the entire community." Pestilence is also a "contagious or infectious disease that is virulent."

Our government (and

governments of the world) are using the pandemic/pestilence to strip our God given, constitution protected liberty and freedom by manipulating a man-made pestilence developed in a "gain of function" lab in China funded by USA tax dollars under the direction of Anthony Fauci.

Our children are being used as pawns. They are being forced the wear face masks that have no evidence of protection while the multiple and insidious dangers are censored. We are teaching our kids to live in fear of a flu that hardly affects them and if it does, they build antibodies that protect them. In 15 minutes in a 30 by 30 classroom all students are breathing the same air and these face masks have no medical protection against breathing this virus. Children cannot comprehend or protect themselves against this fear mongering. Parents can. This is child abuse. The Morrow County School board is run by Kate Brown and Dirk Dirksen, not the locally elected school board. The only action they will honor is pulling your children out of these government schools. These government schools no longer require math or reading proficiency (Senate Bill 744) and they cannot deny interscholastic activities, including sports ORS 339.460.

These soon to be mandated vaccines are not true vaccines, they are experimental gene therapies. They will soon be approved by the FDA which is controlled by the same drug companies that produced the vaccines. Here is the uncensored truth: natural immunity/antibodies and trust in God are our best defense and hope against this pestilence. God's word tells us to "fear not" 365 times, a "fear not" for every day of the year. Trust God my fellow American/Oregonians. He will protect and sustain those that trust in Him throughout this time of tribulation.

Stuart Dick, Irrigon

District Attorney's Report

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson has released the following report:

-Eric Sebastian Shaver was convicted of attempted burglary in the first degree and escape in the third degree. He was sentenced to 16 months prison and six months of post-prison supervision.

-Hershel Douglas Gas-

kill was convicted of strangulation and sentenced to 36 months formal probation, 80 hours community service, no contact with victim or witnesses, alcohol evaluation and comply with all treatment, anger management evaluation and comply with all treatment and mental health evaluation and comply with all treatment.

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