

**Spiritually Speaking**

**Do you call on the Lord daily?**

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

This week's central theme is the overflowing kindness and compassion of an affectionate, loving and pardoning God. The Prophet Jeremiah (31:7-9) clearly portrays a forgiving and compassionate God who healed the spiritual blindness of His Chosen People, who walked from His affectionate and caring love into the path of sin, which led to captivity by the Babylonians. Subjecting them to captivity and then liberating them depicts a compassionate and merciful father. The Book of Jeremiah uses the image of the small number of people who escaped Assyrian captivity in 721 B.C. to describe the return of the Babylonian captives as they are led on their joyful journey home to Jerusalem. The passage foretells God's promise to give His people life in all its fullness. Through their exile and suffering, the people learned to humble themselves and turn to God with sincere repentance.

The Letter to the Hebrews (5: 1-6) defines Jesus as the priest of the new covenant. It compares Him to the class of ancient priests (sympathetic and patient, not glorifying Himself) and then distinguishes Jesus from the others (because the Father called Jesus His Son). The people, addressed in this letter, had been put out of the synagogues when they accepted Jesus. The writer of Hebrews tries to comfort them by depicting Jesus as a superior replacement for the priests they had formerly depended upon. The Jewish high priest was a sinner, and this role was to offer sacrifices to God and serve as a representative of the people. But Jesus was sinless, and He offered Himself as a sacrifice for sins, and He continues to act as our mediator at "the throne of grace." Further, Jesus the Son of God was appointed directly by God to an even better priesthood ("the order of Melchizedek" Ps 110:4). Hence, through Jesus the high priest, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence and boldness, and we can expect mercy and favor from God.

The Gospel of St. Mark (10: 46-52) describes Jesus's final journey to Jerusalem through Jericho, where He meets Bartimaeus, the blind man of Jericho: Jesus spots a particular blind man in the crowd. (The story of Bartimaeus is the last healing miracle recorded in the Gospel of Mark.) The story is presented dramatically. While the majority of those who received healing in the New Testament are not mentioned by name, in this case, the beggar's name, meaning son of Timaeus, is given. When the people told Bartimaeus the news of Jesus's travel through the city, he began to shout his remarkable statement of faith: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus is surrounded by a large crowd. Amidst the noise and dust, people are pushing around for attention and beggars cry out for alms. In spite of this uproar Jesus hears one voice crying out. Who would have expected a messianic greeting from a blind beggar? In spite of the crowd's objections, Jesus stops and, recognizing Bartimaeus' faith, calls the blind man to Him. (Psalm 146 proclaims that God gives sight to the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down and loves the righteous.)

Through the healing of the blind man of Jericho the Lord wants us to reflect: 1) Instead of remaining in spiritual blindness, let us pray for spiritual sight. Each one of us suffers from spiritual blindness – greed, anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, evil habits etc., which prevents us from seeing the goodness in our neighbors and God's presence in them. A clear spiritual vision enables us to see the goodness in others, to express our appreciation for all that they have been doing for us, and to refrain from criticizing their drawbacks and performances. 2) "Cry out" to Jesus, as Bartimaeus did. Like Bartimaeus, we must seek Jesus with trust in His goodness and mercy. Sometimes our fears, anger, and habitual sins prevent us from approaching God in prayer. Even when we feel that our prayers are not answered, we should keep calling the Lord. 3) We need to have the courage of our convictions. We need to be like Bartimaeus, rebuked by the crowd for shouting for help, by refusing to be silenced by secular leaders of our society. He kept on calling on God, "Jesus, Son of David have pity on me" (47). Let us also call on the Lord, like the blind man of Jericho did.



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

**CBEC to hold 'drive-in' annual meeting**

Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative (CBEC) will be conducting their annual meeting a little differently this year. "To keep our members and employees safe during the pandemic, we have reached outside the box and will be holding an old-fashioned, outdoor 'drive in' annual meeting," the press release stated. On November 4, 2021, at 12 noon, members are asked to drive to the Morrow County Fairgrounds parking lot, facing Wilkinson Arena, for a brief meeting to achieve a quorum – the goal being to update the bylaws to allow for virtual meetings in the future.

Attendees will be provided with a box lunch to enjoy during the brief meeting and a goodie bag full of items. Members are asked to please make sure to vote by mail so they will be entered into the drawing for a very nice door prize (one per zone). Visit the website to see a copy of the

proposed bylaw changes: [www.cbec.cc](http://www.cbec.cc).

It is the intention of the board of directors to get through these challenging times as smoothly as possible. Fifty members are needed to attend this meeting to meet a quorum. This year there are several by-law changes that need to pass to allow the cooperative the opportunity to hold virtual meetings. The board of directors and Columbia Basin Electric do not intend to hold virtual meetings; however, under the current circumstances, they would like to have the option in place. They hope they will not have to implement virtual meetings, as they enjoy seeing members in person every year.

Please help your cooperative out this year by showing up for this brief meeting. CBEC hopes that everyone stays healthy and happy for the new year and that things return to normal soon.

**MCS D reviews state report cards**

While the district and school report cards released by Oregon Department of Education do not paint a complete picture of the 2020-21 school year, Morrow County School District continues to look at key pieces of data in their efforts to improve student engagement and graduation outcomes.

The district and high school level report cards provide some key information about student success both from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. Graduation data posted in the report cards is reflective of the graduating class of 2020 and highlight that at 92 percent, the district's graduation rate is 9 percent higher than the state average.

MCS D also maintained the 9<sup>th</sup> grade on-track to graduate rates, which remain a solid indicator for graduation outcomes. Across the district, 94 percent of freshmen earned six or more credits during their 2020-21 school year despite the challenges of distance and limited in-person learning.

More significant is that as the district looks across their student demographic groups, there are not significant achievement gaps between groups. Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said that one of the things the district continually focuses

on is providing services specific to student needs; this work is reflected in the graduation rates for historically underserved populations, which are at or above the district and state averages.

The district regular attendance data, while not comparable to past years due to changes in reporting rules, does provide some information for buildings. "Looking at our regular attendance rates as compared to similar districts, we cannot overemphasize the importance of our efforts in opening our schools to in-person learning early in the 2020-21 school year," stated Dirksen.

**DEADLINE:  
MONDAYS  
AT 5PM**

**Planning seeks volunteers**

Are you interested in land use and development? Would you like to be a part of setting land use policy in Morrow County? If so, Morrow County is seeking volunteers to represent the Boardman and Ione area on the Morrow County Planning Commission.

Volunteers would be appointed to a four-year term ending December 2025. At the end of the term there is the option for re-appointment for another four-year term if interested.

Planning Commission meetings are held once per month, with the option of in-person and remote par-

*~ 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](mailto:editor@rapidsolve.net) or upload to Heppner.net.

**Second amendment only thing left**

To the editor;  
"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed What is the militia? It is the whole people, except a few public officials." (George Mason, founding forefather)

The Second Amendment was proposed by James Madison "to allow the creation of civilian forces that can counteract a tyrannical federal government." ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com))

The covid pandemic has given license to the American government (federal, state, local) to abrogate our constitution, our liberty, our personal medical freedom; with only the Second Amendment left to provide the "security of a free state." Heppner author Scott McEwen's next book on the Second Amendment will be a must read.

Never trust government. Our forefathers knew full well the greatest threat to the security of a free state would be government, our own. There is a nefarious reason you cannot purchase ammunition for your firearms. The fact you cannot find ammunition or reloading materials is a violation of the Second Amendment. You cannot keep and bear arms if you have no ammunition. A myriad of lawsuits bankrupting ammunition manufacturers and a shrinking class of investors unwilling to take heat from leftwing gun-control groups have made draconian COVID 19 ammunition restrictions a clear and present threat to

our Republic.

So, is taking up arms, as our revolutionary forefathers, the answer to the American government tyranny oppressing our Republic and way of life? This is not the same oppressor our forefathers faced centuries ago. It is vital that we understand this is God's battle, not ours. "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." (2 Chr. 20:15) There is a growing frustration and increasing temptation to see either armed force or compromised resigned compliance as the only solutions to our present quandary.

God's word answers our present quandary in Revelation 13:10. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity, he that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." If we heed to the temptation of teachers of compromise and compliance we will end up in captivity. If we will place our trust in the sword we will die by the sword. We must be patient and put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of our forefathers. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit sayeth the Lord." Zech. 4:6. We may well be forced to pick up the sword but only in defense when all other measures have been exhausted.

Juli Kennedy is spot on. Our battle and responsibility are "to stand against fear." Trusting the God of our forefather's is the antidote to the poison of fear. Stuart Dick, Irrigon

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**The Loop is looking for Members for the Special Transportation Fund (STF) Advisory Committee**

The STF Advisory Committee is established in the interest of transit system users in Morrow County.

Its purpose is to advise the Morrow County Commissioners/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.

*the loop*  
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](mailto:kimes@co.morrow.or.us)

**ATTENTION HUNTERS!!**

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**ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:  
MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.**