

**Spiritually Speaking**

**Love of God: through your brothers in need**

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

The two greatest commandments that the Lord leaves with humanity are the first, to love God, and the second, to love our neighbor. We speak to God when we pray, but do we speak to all our neighbors who need special care? What is my approach to the neighbor who is in need of my help?

In the Book of Deuteronomy (6:2-6), Moses reminds the people of the great commandment to love God, which means to keep His commandments and to walk in His ways. Moses, in his farewell message, reminds us that being faithful to God and His commandments is the best way to prosperity and eternal life. He concludes with the famous call known in Hebrew as Shema Yisrael (Hear, O Israel)! It is the centerpiece of Jewish morning and evening prayer, and forms parts of some Christian prayers. I think the second is very difficult, but if we can obey the second, we can and have indeed obeyed the first. This is because God lives in our neighbor. We cannot hate or do harm to our neighbor for any reason and still claim we love God. We need to observe and put into practice what Moses taught in this book of the Torah.

In Mark (12: 28-34) is the repetition of in the first reading's message. When Jesus was questioned by a scribe asking Him about the greatest of the commandments, Jesus replied, "The first is this: Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (12: 29-32). When I read this passage, I remembered something from sometime back in a parish in which I was serving as associate pastor. (The name of the person involved is changed.) One afternoon someone called and asked me, "Father, are you free some time to help Mrs. Molly?" Mrs. Molly's husband was seriously ill and had been admitted into the intensive care unit of a hospital. The authorities allowed one person to stay with him. The only person he was really comfortable with was his wife. The only piece of furniture in the small cell, in addition to his bed, was a small stool. Molly spent eight days in that cell looking after her husband, without ever lying down. The person who called me asked me to substitute for her on the fourth day. When I asked her how she managed that, she told me: "Looking back, I, too, do not know how I managed it. I suppose that when there is a real need, we somehow find the strength." How did this middle-aged woman find such stamina and strength? Love gave her the strength she needed. Deep down we all know this. When we really like to do something, or meet someone we love, or help a person we really care about, we have great reservoirs of energy.

I was also reminded of another story about two brothers who worked together on the family farm. One married with a large family, the other single. The brothers shared equally the day's harvest and profits. One day, the single brother decided to secretly leave a sack of grain every night in his brother's shed, reasoning that since he was single, his needs were not as great as his brother's. Likewise, his brother had similar thoughts, but in reverse. He felt that his single brother, not having a wife and children to care for him in his old age, needed a little something to ensure his future. Each night, he would take across a sack of grain to his brother's shed. Years passed. Both men were puzzled because their supplies of grain never dwindled. Then, one dark night, the two bumped into each other, realized what had been happening all those years, and dropped their sacks and hugged each other.

Are you a person who is approachable by others at any time? We need to remember the answer to the question, "Lord when did we see you as a stranger, hungry or thirsty, sick or in prison and did the necessary things for you?" The master will answer you, "In truth I tell you, insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine you did it me" (Mt. 25:39-40).

**MCSO board to hold work session**

Morrow County School District Board of Directors will hold a work session, Monday, November 8, 2021, 6 p.m. at Morrow Education Center and via zoom. The purpose of the

work session is review of OSBA's superintendent search proposal.

The regular board meeting will follow at 7 p.m.

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**Common sense group steps up**

To the editor;

Advocates for Common Sense and Liberty is a fresh body of Morrow County citizens that are stepping up to find solutions to the current Covid restrictions, solutions that bring us together instead of dividing us. For instance, these Morrow County neighbors advocate liberty: a personal choice to take the shot and/or mask or liberty to resist these mandates. These citizens advocate common sense solutions not arbitrary mandates. The next meeting will be Monday, October 31 at 5 p.m. at Two Old Hags Pizza in Heppner.

"There can be no keener revelation of a societies soul than the way it treats its children." (Nelson Mandela) This column is written especially to Morrow County's school board members because the greatest issue facing our county is the care, treatment and protection of our youth. My father was on the Morrow County school board during the 40s, 50s and 60s so I witnessed firsthand the dedication and commitment required to be a board member. He lost half his business because of unpopular positions he advocated. Nevertheless, we need to be reminded that school board members are elected to represent Morrow County citizens not the governor of Oregon. These taxpayers and the businesses they own pay over \$12,000,000 dollars in taxes to fund Morrow County schools and therefore the school board is accountable to these citizens, not questionable, liberty choking mandates.

The current child/adult face mask mandate is not an Oregon law, it is not based on science, it has no peer reviewed documented evidence of efficacy, it does not protect children or adults from Covid 19 or the Delta variant. If there is established science, documented evidence or peer reviewed studies proving the efficacy of these mandated masks I exhort the school board, medical community and/or Morrow County superintendent to publicly produce this evidence. If the only reason our youth are being forced to wear this face mask for up to ten hours a day is because our school board and superintendent chose to obey a governor's edict instead of the citizens that elected them and pay for our schools, then that needs to change. If the citizens do not exercise their constitutional authority over our local schools and the care and treatment of our children, the next edict will be forced vaccinations for our children to attend

our government controlled schools. This cancer will only metastasize with compliance.

What can the citizens do to protect our youth? Let me share some ideas. 1) Citizens can organize to attend Morrow County school board meetings and ask for a board vote on protecting our youth from these worthless face masks. 2) We can go to the schools and peacefully and respectfully protest. 3) We can refuse to pay taxes to fund schools that abuse our children. 4) We can establish public meetings and forums to educate our community on the dangers of face masks (and vaccinations) being forced on our children (and adults). 5) We can organize stay at home school days demonstrating our children belong to their parents not a school system with no local control.

Allow me to share just the tip of the iceberg of the documented evidence that proves these mandated face masks are not only worthless, but they are also medically, emotionally and psychologically harmful to our (your) children and adults. Check any fall football game (local, college, professional) if you still believe in facemasks.

The Covid 19 School Response Dashboard, including the School Supt. Association "found that schools and school districts without mask mandates had a lower case ratio (Covid 19) than schools with mask mandates (the same is true of states without mask mandates versus states with). Wearing a mask longer than four hours for Covid 19 containment decreases cognitive precision, increases headaches and sweating, encourages dehydration, increasing bacterial infection risk... (prolonged) face masks cause carbon dioxide reloading and hypercapnia (excess carbon dioxide in the bloodstream) trapping CO2 rich respiration exhalations at the mask interface forcing rebreathing of CO2..." (medRxiv.org, meta-analysis, Children Health Defense, Damien & Daniel Guerra) "Children rely on facial expressions to interpret what they hear. They respond to facial expressions to interact and respond appropriately to teachers and peers." (Deseret News, Aug. 13, 21, Autumn Foster Cook).

If the school board and superintendent require forced face masks on our youth solely because of a governor's yet to be determined court contested mandate without a valid medical, scientific or educational rationale, then the citizens must stand united to end this child abuse and protect our children. They are not old enough to protect themselves.

Stuart Dick, Irrigon

**A dangerous step**

To the editor;

I am confused. When Trump was in office, he initiated the production of the COVID-19 vaccine, and all the democrats were condemning it. I heard some of them say they wouldn't get the shot if Trump had anything to do with it. Now, Biden is in office and the very same goofy democrats are pushing the vaccine. They are trying to encourage the people to get vaccinated.

All of my life, different prophets have warned of the Anti-Christ. Without the mark of the beast, you can neither buy, sell or trade. Today, you have to show proof that you are vaccinated to get into some restaurants, get on an airplane, ride the bus, etc. I have often wondered how this mark could come to pass. Now I understand how it could happen.

Biden has mandated that everyone get vaccinated, or they will lose their jobs. Local and family-owned restaurants could face heavy fines if they allow someone to enter their business without proof of

vaccination. This makes me wonder who's coaching Biden in the background?

I am vaccinated of my own free will. If you feel inclined to be vaccinated, do it. I encourage you to consider it. It is safe and it works. However, do it of your own free will, not because Biden is forcing it upon you. If you choose not to be vaccinated, it is your God-given and constitutional right to be free to choose.

If you people are willing to give up your freedom, let's mandate gun control. There is no difference. Both are oppressive, ineffective and forms of Socialism. This is a small step on a dangerous path towards our loss of liberty.

P.S. Where will all the refugees live you people that think a mandate is the right way to go. Maybe we should have a mandate to force you to house a refugee family and give them an extra car you may have.

Jerry Koeppel  
Vernal, UT  
(visitor to the Ontario area)

**Paving starts**



Paving has started on the big street rehabilitation project in Heppner. Above: pavers lay asphalt on Chase Street. Below: paving is done on the back side of Thomson Court next to the post office downtown on Main Street.



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