

Spiritually Speaking

Second Sunday of Advent: Prepare the way

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

The readings of this second Sunday of Advent recall God's saving deeds in the history of Israel, culminating in the coming of the promised Messiah.

The prophet Baruch (5:1-9) depicts the situation of Israel: The enemies practically destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC and deported many Jews to Babylon. Almost fifty years later, Cyrus, the Persian emperor, defeated Babylon and decreed that the exiles could return to their homelands. Many Jews returned to Judah and Jerusalem, but some stayed among the pagans. They became known as the Diaspora ("dispersion") Jews. Although they were cut off from the temple and the sacrifices of the community, most of them remained faithful to their ancestral religion. They nourished their faith with the teaching of God's word by prophets, scribes and priests, primarily in their synagogue gatherings. They continued to feel their kinship with Judah's Jews and to write of their longing for Jerusalem and its temple. The Prophet Baruch voices a hope for release from exile and oppression by portraying Lady Jerusalem, who, like a priest, takes off the robes of mourning and puts on the cloak of God's justice and the mitre that displays the glory of God's name. And by the prophet Isaiah, the people exiled in Babylon were told that their God would lead them home, just as He had led their ancestors through the wilderness to the Promised Land, assured that all obstacles would be removed so that this could be accomplished. Isaiah's version is familiar to us, quoted by John the Baptist in today's Gospel.

Paul, in the Letter to the Philippians (1:4-6, 8-11), prays that they be filled with joy as they await the day of Christ. Paul reminds us that our remembrance of God's saving deeds during the Advent season is meant to stir our faith and to fill us with confidence so that "the One who began a good work in us will continue to complete it" until He comes again in glory. This Pauline Letter warns early Christians of the second coming of Jesus, referring to it as "the day of Christ" and "the day of Christ Jesus." The passage stresses everyone's need for that perpetual readiness found in a righteous life.

The Gospel reading from St. Luke (3:1-6) communicates John the Baptist's preaching in the wilderness. He preached about the baptism of repentance, not a proselyte baptism converting Gentiles into Jews, but instead, a baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and it required repentance (metenoee, a change of being), implying a turning to proceed in a new direction. Baptism itself is a purification ritual and John was inviting people to be purified of the unholy elements in their lives. Today's Gospel offers the powerful message of John the Baptist, a message for all ages:

- 1) John preached condemnation. He preached the truth of what men were and what they had become: "vipers," poisonous. They had allowed themselves to be poisoned and were poisonous to others.
- 2) John preached repentance. Man must first repent and then produce fruit, fruit that is worthy, consistent with repentance – showing a changed heart and a turning away from sin.
- 3) John preached against pride. The people of John's time wrongly believed that they were acceptable to God simply because they were Jews, children of Abraham and godly forefathers whose righteousness saved them. How they lived mattered little. Similarly, we can wrongly think, "I have godly parents, I have been baptized, I am better than so many, I belong to the church choir..." and many other pious associations.
- 4) John preached judgement. God is the divine woodcutter who cuts down the trees. The axe already lies at the roots of the trees. The trees are not yet cut down, but all human beings are warned. There are many trees, some lofty, some stately, some diseased, some bearing good fruit, some bearing bad fruit, some bearing no fruit at all. All trees that do not bear fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire.
- 5) John preached social justice. The people responded positively and wanted to know how repentance would affect their lives. What kind of fruit should they bear? John answered in practical terms. To the average person he said to share surplus food and clothes with the starving and the naked. To tax collectors he said, "Do not rob the people, just collect what is authorized." To soldiers he said, "Do not abuse your power. Do not scare people or use violence against them."



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

Obituaries

Henrietta "Luella" Taylor

Henrietta "Luella" Taylor, 90, of Hermiston, died Saturday, November 27, 2021, at Regency Nursing Home in Hermiston, OR. A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, December 6, 2021, at the Mayville Cemetery at Mayville, OR.

She was born December 21, 1930, at Spearfish, SD, the daughter of Edwin and Leslie Knust Schmidt. On February 26, 1949, she married Robert R. Taylor of Fossil, OR, at Goldendale, WA. The couple had two sons and cared for two nephews.

Luella attended Multnomah College School of Nursing and University of Oregon School of Nursing with reentry at BMCC after her boys were grown. During her nursing career she was employed locally at Good Shepherd Hospital, Hermiston Good Samaritan Nursing Home, Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner, the Condon Nursing Home and the medical clinics in Fossil and Condon. Early in her nursing career 1949- 1950, she recalled working at the old Morningside Hospital and Anspaugh Nursing Home in Portland.

Following her retirement from Good Shepherd, she contracted with the Department of Human Resources as a private PASSAR screener for Umatilla, Gilliam, Wheeler and Morrow counties. As this

required quite a lot of traveling, her husband was her chauffeur.

They lived in Lexington for a time when they both retired, and later moved to Sun Terrace in Hermiston in July 2010, Robert passed away in 2015. Luella remained there, where she kept busy sewing aprons for the staff, collecting bobbleheads and pandas, working puzzles and playing pinochle.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 66 years, her parents, three stepsisters, Shirley Eddy, Arvilla Jones and Graves Hite and her brother, Norman Newton of Oregon City.

Survivors include her two sons, Robert R. Taylor Jr. (Darla) of Othello, WA and William J. Taylor (Colleen) of Baker City; four grandchildren, Traci Davis, Thad Taylor, Heidi Lagao and Casey Taylor, 11 great-grandchildren, three great-great grandchildren and two nephews Steve Conley and Larry Conley.

Any memorials may be sent to the Good Shepherd Medical Scholarship Fund, Wounded Warriors or the charity of your choice.

Sweeney Mortuary of Condon is in care of arrangements. The online condolence book is available at www.sweeneymortuary.com.



Henrietta "Luella" Taylor

Gary Warren Jones

Gary Warren Jones, 83, of Heppner, OR, died Wednesday, November 24, 2021, at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner. A private family graveside service will be held.

He was born in Heppner on September 18, 1938, the son of Paul W. and Gladys A. Johnson Jones. He was raised and attended school in Heppner, graduating from Heppner High School.

After high school Gary went to trade school in Portland, OR for auto body paint and repair. He went on to work for Jack's body shop in The Dalles and Hood River. He lived in Hood River for 30 years before returning to Heppner in 2003.

Gary was a member of the Hood River Jaycees, Heppner Elks and IOOF. He was a founding member of the "Over the Hill Gang" 4x4 club in Hood River and a longtime member of the Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association. He enjoyed hunting in eastern Oregon, 4x4 racing, riding quads at the dunes and while wintering in Yuma, AZ. He loved to

restore classic cars and was a member of the Hermiston Cool Rides Classic Car Club.

He was preceded in death by his parents, youngest sibling, Ray Jones and a grandson, Jake Rollins.

Survivors include his wife, Doris of 46 years; daughter, Holly Stickney (Phil) of Lyle, WA; son, Guy Jones (Shelly) of Hood River, Teresa Butler (Frank) of McMinnville, OR, Tracey Klink (John) of Millis, MA; a sister, Sandra Blake of Heppner; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

The family expresses gratitude to nephew, Nick, for all his help and chauffeuring the last few years. "Your gentle soul and compassionate care have been a blessing to all of us," stated a family member.

Memorial contributions may be made to Pioneer Memorial Hospice, PO Box 9, Heppner, OR 97836.

Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner is in care of arrangements. The online condolence book is available at www.sweeneymortuary.com.



Gary Warren Jones

~ 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.

Omnicon is coming

To the editor: OMNICON is coming. Close the schools; close the borders; man the checkpoints to avoid all without vaccine papers. Tighten the lockdowns.

Like Covid 19, a Fauci/Chinese bioweapon as exposed in the House Foreign Affairs report titled "The origins of COVID-19: An Investigation of the Wuhan Institute of Virology" we do understand Omnicron is coming. But are we to trust the science induced lockdowns and forced vaccinations thanks to the omniscient, unchallengeable counsel of Dr. Fauci? Did not Omnicron come via vaccinated masked passengers from South Africa and now the rest of masked and mostly vaccinated airline passengers throughout the world? Science, according to Dr. Fauci, will require the Global World governments, to never relent until they have mandated forced vaccinations and stricter lockdowns on every nation in the world. In Australia, where our family lives, you cannot participate in society and soon you will not survive without the jab.

Thomas Paine said it best in 1776, "These are the times that try men souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in crisis shrink from service... but he that stands now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have the consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."

How are we to stand against this tyranny? We must heed the courage of those before us that faced similar tyranny. In 1941, when all Europe had yielded to the tyranny of Hitler, one brave man of integrity and courage rallied his countrymen to resist the evil of the hour. "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never in nothing, great or small, large or petty- never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy." (Sir Winston Churchill)

How are we to know this latest Omnicron virus is just the next step in the biblical 'Beast' system that will bring the whole

world under the control of 'antichrist.' Follow the money. Fauci, Gates, the world pharmacology cartel, Communist and Socialist dictators, and the world's billionaires have become obscenely wealthy and powerful during this pandemic. "The world's 2,365 billionaires enjoyed a \$4 trillion boost to their wealth during the pandemic." (The Philadelphia Trumpet, Andrew Miller, p. 16, Nov. Dec. 21) Capitalism is being destroyed, the middle class is disappearing and 320 million citizens on planet earth have been driven into poverty and malnutrition. (Op. Cit. p. 16)

The new science of Fauci's world lockdowns will cause a devastating shortage of everything from food to services, to supply lines of all commodities. In Matthew chapter 24 Jesus foretells this hour of great tribulation with manifestations of pestilence, famine, and warfare. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12) Jesus is speaking about believers (Christians) that turn away from God because they were not prepared or forewarned to endure this time of great tribulation. Jesus exhorted his followers "to endure to the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24:13) Jesus is the only answer to the present hour of iniquity. He is no longer the sacrificed lamb on the cross. He is now a man of war coming soon to end this wickedness. He will return just like he promised on a white horse. "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses." (Rev. 20: 13,14a)

Do not yield to this tyranny my brethren. Samuel Adam's said it best in the grim early days of the war that birthed our liberty. "If you love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude than the animated contest of freedom- go from us in peace. We ask not your counsel or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that you were our countrymen."

Stuart Dick, Irrigon

Death Notices

Phyllis M. Piper – Phyllis M. Piper, 81, of Lexington, died Friday, November 26, 2021, at Hermiston, OR. She was born April 8, 1940, at Heppner. A full obituary will follow in next week's edition of the Heppner Gazette-Times. Arrangements are pending at Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner.

Christmas at Ione Community Church

470 E Main Street, Ione, Oregon
Church School & Adult Study at 10:00 am
Advent Worship at 11:00 AM with Lighting of the Advent Candles each Sunday until Christmas.

Children's Christmas Program Dec. 12th as a part of morning worship -with potluck following.



Christmas Candlelight Worship
Christmas Eve -
Dec. 24th at 7:00 pm.



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Pastors Invited to Submit Christmas Messages

The Heppner Gazette-Times will publish Christmas messages from area pastors on **Wednesday, December 22nd**

The deadline to submit messages is **Monday, December 20th at 5 p.m.**

COVID Boosters Available Now
Fast. Easy. Convenient. Walk-ins welcome.

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