

Spiritually Speaking

Come down immediately

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

Last Sunday when I went into my hometown Parish Church, I was given the reading about the conversion of Zacchaeus, mentioned in Luke 19; therefore, I reflected on his conversion and how we can turn ourselves to God. Lent is a time to look into oneself - to see how, through sin, we have run away from God and turned to worldly and material possessions.

Sin is the breaking of one's relationship with God, seen in the life of Adam and Eve, with Cain and Abel, and with how God confused the people while they were building the tower of Babel. God continuously calls us to conversion and waits for us to return to Him like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, or He runs after us like the hound of heaven in the poem of Francis Thompson. Jesus and John the Baptist both began their ministries of preaching with an ardent plea to turn away from sin (Mt. 4: 17); "The time has come," Jesus said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the Good News." (Mk. 1:15).

Jesus did not leave behind a list of sins, but He showed the meaning and seriousness of sin by the way He responded to events and situations. He redefined many of the existing teachings on sin (Mt.5:21f). According to Jesus, sin meant a) refusal to help those in need (Mt. 25: 41-46; Lk. 16: 19f); b) waste of talents (the one who buried the talent is condemned) (Mt. 25.24-30); c) unwillingness to forgive (even after experiencing forgiveness for oneself) (Mt. 18:21f); d) Pharisaism (condemning others and despising them) (Lk. 18:11-12; Mt. 23:13f); e) cult of pleasure (makes one lose the power of reasoning as in the case of Herod) (Mt. 14:1-12); f) waste of grace (taking things for granted) (Lk. 20:9f; Mt. 23:37); g) refusal to accept and stand by one's own people (Lk. 15: 25-32); h) ingratitude (though we have received much more than we truly need or deserve) (Lk. 17:11-19); i) selfishness and hoarding (lack of trust in the providence of God) (Lk. 12:13-21); j) casting aspersions on the character of others (the unpardonable sin) (Lk. 7:39f).

When I read the story of Zacchaeus, the following came to my mind as points for our reflections and our spiritual growth this week: We read in the Gospel of Luke (9:4) that Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree to have the glimpses of Jesus at least once in his life. When Lord Jesus reaches the spot where Zacchaeus was waiting to see Jesus, He looks up and calls him to come down immediately. Jesus tells him that He is planning to stay with him that day. Similarly, the Lord is inviting each one of us to come down from our own self-made glories and presumptions. We, too, need to have the same inclinations and likings as Zacchaeus had for Jesus to see the face of the Lord at least during this season of lent.

Like Zacchaeus, we, too, have made a sort of high pedestal of our own pride and arrogance. When smugness enters into our lives, we, too, keep our own kith and kin and neighbors away from our daily life.

Jesus invites each of us to come down from the heights of wealth, possibly, that we have accumulated for our personal benefits. Or is it from living without bothering ourselves with our fellow beings, neighbors when they go through highest amounts of pain and misery? Instead, we close our eyes towards them.

Though we do these things and run away from God, He does not keep track of our sins, mistakes, and errors (cf. Lk. 15:21f). But we ourselves do. Our guilty conscience torments us (Lady Macbeth, Herod). We punish ourselves. The season of lent is an invitation to our readiness to forgive, and contrition is more important than whispering sins to the priest. Readiness to change is a necessary condition. (Zacchaeus Lk. 19:8). No sacrament works like magic - either it is an occasion for personal transformation or an empty ritual. The season of lent is a time for all of us to prepare ourselves for the forgiveness of sins from God. Confession truly is good for the soul and is the celebration of our homecoming. Either we can enter the home like the prodigal son in the parable or sneak back into the pigsty.

Marriage Licenses

The Morrow County Clerk's office has released the following report of marriage licenses:

February 3, 2022: - Jennifer Yvonne Bash, 40, Ione, and Matthew Louis Spargo, 38, Pocahontas, AR.

February 18, 2022: - Linda Louise Keith, 35, Heppner, and Jose Elias Saucedo III, 45, Heppner.



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

Mary Elizabeth (Bailey) Riggs

Mary Elizabeth (Bailey) Riggs was born on October 31, 1944, in Ogden, UT to James and Wanda Bailey. She died March 4, 2022, at the age of 77.

Mary was raised and attended school in Stanfield. She married Chuck Ferguson early in her life. She spent the last 30 years with her best friend and partner John Estes.

Mary was a member of the Stanfield Moose Lodge and the Heppner Elks Lodge. She loved spending time with her sons and family enjoying the mountains, fishing, hunting, camping, riding horses and 4-wheelers, playing cards and dice, teaching her grandkids how to cook and sew and many other things. Mary also knew no strangers and was a friend to many.

She is survived by John



Mary Elizabeth Riggs

Estes of Heppner; sons, Chaney (Pam) Ferguson of Colorado Springs, CO; Charles (Jodi) Ferguson of Lexington; Scott Ferguson of Prosser, WA; Keith (Kristin) Ferguson of Sumner, WA; eight grandchildren and one great granddaughter; brothers, Robert, Paul and Lawrence Bailey and sister, LuCynda Keltz.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Wanda Fowler; brothers, James, Gordon, Russell, Roger and Chuck Bailey.

A celebration of life will be held at Stanfield Moose Lodge on March 19 at noon, with a potluck to follow. Donations may be made to Willow Creek Terrace Assisted Living, 400 Frank Gilliam Drive, Heppner, OR 97836.

Good News Only

By Doris Brosnan

What are the odds of this story from the tiny town of Heppner, OR, USA? Florene Robinson has been in touch for a long time with an Australian cousin of her husband Dean, and just recently also established contact on social media with another of his Australian cousins. (Generations ago, the family patriarch emigrated to Australia and stayed there with some family though two sons returned to the states.) In conversation with the newer contact, Florene mentioned the other's name as they talked about family, which elicited a response of, "Do you know her?" Long story shorter; the father of both women had married more than once; the newer contact had the name of a half-sister but had never been able to find her. Florene acted as go-between for the two newly discovered sisters who live not many miles apart.

As Nancy Gochnauer headed for Missouri a week ago Tuesday morning, caravanning in her car between a pickup/trailer and a U-Haul truck, she knew she was leaving the St. Patrick's senior apartments in good hands. Nancy's managerial responsibilities have been handed over to DeRina Howard, who reports no vacancies at this time but offers the office number for inquiries: 541-676-5380.

Feeling a bit low? Sit

on one of the Main Street benches for any length of time, and you might start to feel a bit higher, maybe even a bit like dancing a jig, for the Irish music broadcast along the street can be a bit uplifting.

As the St. Patrick's celebration returns after the two-year hiatus, hopes are high that the crowd of visitors will also. Finding parking spaces this weekend will be less challenging for our visitors because the city has leveled and graveled the lot by the May Street bridge so it will be available for parking.

The city crew has been sprucing up for our weekend company: street-sweeping, mowing, repainting the street shamrock. The school lawns look good, too.

Good news: As the Irish celebration winds down on Sunday, Daylight Savings Time will have returned at 2 a.m. Time to spring forward.

Chilly but mostly sunny weather seems to be welcoming back the schools' athletes out for baseball, softball, golf, and track. Tennis, anyone?

Only a few minutes are probably needed for jotting down your positive news and sending it to dbrosnan123@gmail.com? Or you can also call 541-676-5382 or 541-223-1490.

Here's hoping that some good news comes to everyone reading this.

Obituaries

Russell Bryon Seewald

Russell Bryon Seewald, dedicated husband, father, grandfather and friend, passed away in his sleep at home in Kennewick, WA on Friday, February 25, 2022.

Russ was born to Richard and Gloria Seewald in Caldwell, ID on July 21, 1962. He graduated from Vallivue High School in 1980 before attending College of Idaho, both in Caldwell. At C of I, Russ met his wife, Seewald Kim, and graduated in 1987. He then started his 30+ year career in banking, mostly as a loan officer.

Russ and Kim married on January 6, 1991, and soon after welcomed their first child, Spencer. In short work, the family grew to five with the births of Shelby and Savannah.

Through the years, Russ enjoyed playing golf, fixing cars and time with his family. He loved visiting Phoenix, making annual trips to golf with his friends and frequenting his vacation home in Scottsdale.

Russ and Kim called the Boise area home for almost 50 years. They moved to Heppner, OR in 2011 where Russ worked for Bank of Eastern Oregon, and then to Kennewick, WA in 2015, still making frequent trips back to Boise.

His race spectating, auto repair skills and lead foot combined to become a love affair with auto racing. In the summers, he could often be found at a number of racetracks in the northwest and beyond, while in the winters, he was tuning and repairing his race cars - always a BMW, preferably black.

Being a grandpa came

naturally to Russ. His grandkids loved his neck kisses with the tickly scratch of his chin whiskers. He loved having the kids watch car racing with him, when they would sarcastically taunt



Russell Bryon Seewald

Grandma with cheers of "Go, race car, go!" Russell is survived by his wife, Kim; their three children Spencer, Shelby (Bonderman) and Savannah (McCarl); four grandchildren, Alayna, Clara, Calvin Russell and Carly; his brother, Brad and his uncle, Ron.

Russ fought a short bout against throat cancer. His family appreciates the dedicated staff of the Tri-Cities Cancer Center and Genesis Care.

In his memory, donations can be made to his memorial fund, which will first be used to purchase a memorial park swing, and then to support the Tri-Cities Cancer Center and Genesis Care. [https://everloved.com/life-of/russell-seewald/donate/] Please join his family for drop-in memorials: Sunday, March 6 at Zee's Rooftop from 2-6 p.m. (250 S 5th St #900, Boise, ID); Sunday, March 13 at CG Public House from 1-4 p.m. (9221 W Clearwater Ave, Kennewick, WA 99336).

His friends and family are invited to share happy memories and celebrate Russ' life in the way he would want to be remembered - as a loving and caring man who enjoyed life.

A special tribute will also be planned during a car race this summer.

CRP signup deadline approaches

The USDA Farm Service Agency's General Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup deadline is Friday, March 11. General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and

enhance wildlife habitat on cropland.

Producers interested in enrolling in General CRP should contact their local FSA office before close-of-business March 11. To find a USDA Service Center/ FSA office, please visit https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app.

Justice Court Report

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

-Abel Santos Ramirez, 28, Ione, was convicted of no operator's license, fine, \$265; driving uninsured, fine \$265; failure to drive within lane, fine, \$265; and open container, fine \$265.

-Kannon M. Walkins, 20, Heppner, was convicted of violation of basic rule, fine, \$265 and failure to carry proof of insurance, fine, \$265.

-Donald R. Martin, 51, Heppner, was convicted of driving while suspended, fine, \$440 and driving uninsured, fine, \$265.

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