

Spiritually Speaking

Has no one condemned you?

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

On the fourth Sunday of Lent, we read and reflected on the parable of the Prodigal Son. Which of the two sons can we compare to Saul, who later became the Apostle Paul? Many of us will quickly answer, "the younger son." Paul lived a rebellious life and then experienced a total conversion to the ways of God, right? Wrong. Paul never lived a wayward life. Right from his youth, he lived a strict religious life. He was like the elder son, who was always law-abiding and intent on doing his father's will. This week, we read of a woman caught in adultery, who, from an encounter with Christ and His mercy, turns into a new person.

We read in the Gospel of John (8: 1-11) the immortal words of Christ to the woman caught in adultery: "Has no one condemned you? Neither will I condemn you. Go in peace and sin no more." Therefore, we can see that we have no need to be afraid to let Christ see our sins. We have nothing to obtain from Christ except forgiveness. Let us pause to call to mind our sins, especially the harsh and unfair judgements we sometimes pass on others, like the crowd did in this parable of the woman caught in adultery.

We have an innate stone-throwers tendency. We cannot tolerate the sinner. Sin stinks when it is committed by others, and we want to clean it up. But not so when it is committed by ourselves. We need to look at our own house before we start throwing mud at others. It is impossible to throw mud without some of it sticking to your hand. This means that the very act of condemning others involves a sin on our part. The first letter of John says, "If we say we are without sin, we deceive ourselves." If Jesus, the One without sin (Jn 8:7), can forgive sinners, how much more should we sinners forgive each other?

When the accusers had left, Jesus turned to the woman and asked, "Is it true what these men said?" She nodded her head. "That means you were in sin then," He continues. Once again, she nodded her head. "To be in sin is to be in darkness. You were not made for darkness but for light," Jesus said and then paused some time and asked, "Has no one condemned you?" "No one, Sir," she replied. "Well then, neither will I condemn you. Go in peace, walk in the light, and do not enslave yourself again." A faint smile appeared on her tear-stained face. She was dismissed with infinite gentleness and the most delicate of reproofs. How differently it might have ended but for the compassion of Jesus. The empathy of Christ really made her turn over a new leaf. She left her sinful ways and became an ardent follower of Christ.

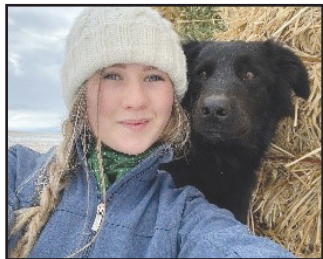
In the same way, He is waiting for all of us to return to Him with a repentant heart. Surely, He will encircle us with His love and affection and knows that we all need His forgiveness. He will be there to rescue us from our stone throwers, and the same words will be repeated to us: "... well then, neither will I condemn you. Go in peace." The comforting words of Christ. According to the Law of Moses, Lev 20:10, an adulterer should be stoned to death. They used this occasion to trap Jesus... If Jesus allowed her to be stoned to death, He could not be called the merciful teacher. If He forgave her, He would be accused of infringing on the Law.

The story is told of a young French soldier, who deserted Napoleon's army but who, within a matter of hours, was caught by his own troops. The penalty for desertion was death. The young soldier's mother heard what had happened and went to plead with Napoleon to spare her son's life. Napoleon heard her plea but pointed out that because of the serious nature of the crime, her son clearly did not deserve mercy. "I know he doesn't deserve mercy," the mother answered. "It wouldn't be mercy if he deserved it." That is the point of mercy, nobody deserves it. Everyone deserves true justice. Mercy, on the other hand, is a sheer gift.

In the story, Jesus is asking us all to be like Him, to be compassionate and empathetic towards our fallen brothers and sisters.



Fr. Thankachan Joseph



Haylie Peterson

The Oregon Wheat Foundation recently announced the recipients of twelve scholarships to Oregon high school seniors. Each of these students will receive a \$1,500 scholarship to support studies at their selected university, community college or vocational/trade school. This year was a particularly competitive application round, with three times the number of applications in comparison to 2021.

Last year, the Foundation grew the dollar amount available for each individual scholarship from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per student. This year, in recognition of the number of applicants, the Foundation extended the number of statewide scholarships to be able to support more students. "It is through the generous contributions of our wheat industry that the Foundation has a healthy base of resources to support the next generation through these scholarships," stated Dale Case, Oregon Wheat

Foundation Board Chair. "The board was unanimous in its decision to expand the scholarship program and we thank the donors who make it possible."

Two Ione students were selected by the Foundation to receive this year's scholarships, along with 10 other high school seniors from around the state. The recipients included Grace Ogden and Haylie Peterson who will graduate from Ione this spring.

Grace Ogden will graduate from Ione High School and plans to attend Oklahoma State University, with a double major in ag communications and animal science. She is the daughter of Jarrod and Alison Ogden. Grace is active in 4-H as a County Ambassador, is a member of the National Honor Society, plays varsity volleyball and tennis and is Associated Student Body President. She has been a student intern with OSU Morrow County Extension and an intern for Representative Greg Smith, in addition to working farm labor and driving combine at Ogden Farms and Weedman Ranches. She is also extremely active in FFA, serving as Chapter President and District Vice President and obtaining her State FFA degree.



Grace Ogden

Haylie Peterson will also graduate from Ione Community Charter School and plans to attend Blue Mountain Community College, with an emphasis in ag production. She is the daughter of Treve and Liz Peterson. Haylie is a member of the National Honor Society, involved in Ione FFA, a member of the student body and active in multiple sports including varsity basketball, volleyball and tennis. She is a Morrow County 4-H ambassador. In addition to working on her family ranch, Rocky Bluff Ranch, Haylie most recently interned with Beef Northwest Feeders. She plans to return to the family ranch and farm after getting her degree.

Other seniors who received scholarships were Nathan Bingaman and Kendra Counsell, Imbler High School; Sydney Dodge and

Kinley McAnally, Pendleton High School; Hannah Kortge and Gabriel Petroff, Dufur High School; Tegan Macy, Culver High School; Kailey McGourty, Vale High School; Cassidy Schumacher, Scio High School; and Lannie Stonebrink, Enterprise High School.

Students were evaluated based on academic record, leadership, community service and the submitted essays. "The achievements of all the students submitting an application to the Foundation reflects a very bright future for our industry. I am excited by the potential reflected in this graduating class of seniors and look forward to their continued contribution to agricultural community," stated Amanda Hoey, Oregon Wheat CEO.

The Oregon Wheat Foundation annually awards scholarships for high school seniors. Scholarship awards may be made to a qualifying student from each of the participating counties, which include Baker/Union, Gilliam, Klamath, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Walla Walla and Wasco. In addition, awards may be made in the Willamette Valley region and in the Central Oregon region.

MCHD still requires masks

By April Hilton-Sykes

Morrow County Health District CEO Emily Roberts told the board at their Monday night meeting in Ione, that she doesn't anticipate a change in mask mandates until the end of April. Masks are still required within the district until then. "We're not ruling out PPE (personal protective equipment) until then," said Roberts. "People haven't been to work with any illness, and I'd like keep it that way," she said.

Kathleen Greenup, RN, chief nursing officer (CNO) with the district, said that MCHD has received over 1,000 testing kits which can be handed out to whoever needs one. Greenup announced that she is resigning from her CNO position but says she will remain with the district as a nurse "on the floor".

Reviewing ambulance response statistics, the board learned the Boardman Ambulance, operated by Morrow County Health District, had a response time of 5.05 minutes for 51 runs in January and 5.02 minutes for 48 runs in February.

Irrigon Ambulance reported a response time of 11.97 minutes for 43 runs in January and 8.9 minutes for 18 runs in February. Heppner Ambulance had a response time of 12.5 minutes for 20 runs in January and 23 runs in February.

In addition to the CEO and board, Chief Operating Officer Troy Soenen and Heppner Clinic Director Katelin Tellechea attended the meeting.

In other business, the board:

-approved an agreement for health care staffing

with MedCall NorthWest, Inc., for employment of independent medical professionals on a parttime or temporary basis.

-approved an independent contractor agreement with Pioneer Memorial Physical Therapy, LLC, for the services of a physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech language pathologist and/or physical therapist assistant to provide direct patient care, among other services.

-approved a request from Katie Siri-Murray for a \$3,114 for two standard adult and pediatric automatic defibrillators for the Heppner Community Foundation facilities for use at the Gilliam Bisbee Building, a community event center, and a fitness center, Lott's Fitness on Main St. in Heppner.

-approved a year-long contract with Tom and Karen Wolff, Heppner, for lease of a rental space that the district uses primarily for housing visiting physicians. Board member Aaron Palmquist noted the agreement already had a rate increase built in it.

-received the following "unaudited" profit and loss statement through February: gross patient revenue-\$1,059,421, less the \$3,553 provision for bad debt, less \$145,061 for contractual and other adjustments, plus \$218,296 in tax revenue and \$259,544 in other operating revenue for \$1,395,753 in total operating revenue; less \$1,371,896 in total operating expenses and a \$15,581 non-operating gain for a \$39,438 gain for the month.

-received the following hospital report: Pioneer Memorial Hospital had two

in-patient admissions for February, two swing bed admissions, one death, six admitted for observation, one admitted for hospital respite, one swing bed admission, 574 total outpatients with emergency room admissions, 70 emergency room encounters, 1,399 lab tests, 78 x-ray/ultrasound tests, 54 CT scans, one MRI scan, and one respiratory therapy session.

-received the following clinic reports: Pioneer Memorial Clinic in Heppner had 268 provider visits, Irrigon Medical Clinic had 271 provider visits, Ione Clinic had 65.

-received the following report: Home Health had 195 patient visits; Hospice had two admissions; Pharmacy had 1,978 drug doses for \$126,442 in revenue.

-held an executive session following the public meeting.



Troy Soenen



Katelin Tellechea

WCVEDG to hold annual luncheon

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group will be holding its annual luncheon Thursday, April 7 at noon in the Gilliam and Bisbee Building. Lunch will be hosted and be served by The Gateway Café.

There will be a presentation by The Howard

and Beth Bryant Foundation and Superintendent Dirk Dirksen will give a brief update on the Morrow County School District's upcoming bond measure. Please RSVP to the Heppner Chamber, heppnerchamber@gmail.com, by Monday, April 4.

THE GATHERING EVERY WEDNESDAY

Where: Ione Community Church

When: Wednesdays 5:30 - 7:30

The Ione Community Church is hosting The Gathering, a time for members of the community to come together and connect. Social hour and games following dinner for everyone

5:30 pm DINNER

6:15 MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP & BIBLE STUDY FOR ADULTS



"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20 KJV

Birthright of Morrow County is seeking volunteers. We are a pregnancy resource center located on Willow Street of Heppner. 2 or 3 hours a week. Weekly volunteers and subs needed. If interested, please call: 541-676-0530.

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

ESTATE SALE for Eddie Gunderson
810 Hep-Spray Hwy
April 1st & 2nd from 8am to 3pm.
Misc.household items, furniture, fridge, shop tools/items, sewing machine, etc...
All priced to sell!

Valby Lutheran Church
Valby Road
Ione Oregon. 97843
Church Services
1st & 3rd Sundays
10:00 AM
Available for:
Weddings • Funerals
Family Events
541-422-7300
Old Country Church All Are Welcome

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