

Spiritually Speaking

Lord, teach us to pray

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

The theme this Sunday is “prayer.” Last Sunday we reflected on the need of striking a balance between active life and contemplatives in action through the life examples of Martha and Mary from the Gospel of Luke. In the subsequent verse we see Jesus himself becoming an example of prayer life. The Chapter begins with this verse: “Jesus was praying in a certain place” (Lk 11:1).



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

At first glance, it seems our prayer must be very different from that of Jesus. He, after all, is the only Son of God. His prayer is a direct communication with the Father who begot him. In contrast, we are weak, sinful, distracted. Yet in essence, our prayer is the same. This might surprise you, but prayer is God speaking to God, a communication with the divine. Most of the time we try to make it a monologue instead of a dialogue, forgetting to listen to what He wants to communicate in return. St. Paul tells us plainly in his letter to the Romans: “We do not know how to pray.” The Holy Spirit prays in us “with groanings that cannot be expressed in speech.” (8:26)

I share from my personal experience: Often, as religious priests, our non-Christian friends ask us about the number of hours we spend in prayer every day. People often tend to associate holiness with the length of prayers, the number of prayers and the number of hours spent in prayer. If this is true, then we should be the holiest people in the world. Think of the thousands of hours that we have spent in prayer. A lot of ritual prayers, perhaps recited without conviction? Are we more holy than, let us say, a mother who is preparing food for her children, or our domestic staff in the kitchen? We are able to spend this time in prayer because others are working for us. The prayers we recite are genuine to the degree they help us to live a Christ-like life during the course of the day.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church begins its exposition of prayer with this quote from St. Therese of Lisieux: “For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” The Catechism then adds this classic definition: “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” (#2559)

This Sunday’s Gospel reading begins with the disciples requesting, “Lord teach us to pray.” What I understand of prayer is that it is not an attempt to inform God of our needs or to change Him. In prayer we change ourselves, seek His will and get ready to do what He wants of us. (Mary listened, said “yes,” and then went out to help.) Prayer is not even pleading with God so that His vengeance might be averted.

What prayer is, is best illustrated by Jesus. He gave no long discourse on prayer or spoke about any technique or place for prayer, and He was silent on postures needed for prayer or ceremonies associated with prayer. He showed that when we grasp God as a loving Father, words become secondary. In the prayer He taught, He spoke about doing God’s will, fulfilling a few basic needs in life and forgiving one another. God is not like us. He is far above our petty, selfish, calculating ways, shifting moods and hurting ways. He is love. He can only love.

Jesus often prayed, and He emphasized prayer as one of the greatest needs of human life. He always insisted that it was the source of His strength in living and serving God, Lk3:21 – He prayed at His baptism, Lk5:16 – He prayed during His temptation, Lk 6:12 - He continued all night in prayer, Lk 9:18 – He was alone praying, Lk 9:28 – He went up into a mountain to pray, Lk 11:1

Jesus was giving a model prayer upon which we are able to base our praying. It is a guide. The necessity to thank and praise God daily in our lives for the numerous blessings and graces we enjoy from Him. Secondly, a request for things in particular – remembering these only after thanking and praising Him. Pray for God’s Kingdom to come. Pray for daily bread. Pray for forgiveness.

BIC supports forest plan revision process

To the communities surrounding the Blue Mountains National Forests:

The Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) supports the USDA Forest Service’s plans to reinstate Forest Plan Revision for the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. The work completed by the BIC over the past two years has established key foundations that will be crucial components of an improved Forest Plan Revision process by reflecting local values, incorporating input and providing robust opportunities for meaningful engagement.

On March 14, 2019, the Forest Service deputy chief issued instruction to the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Regional Forester to withdraw the Blue Mountains Revised Land Management Plans, Final Environmental Impact Statement and draft Record of Decision. This decision came after nearly 15 years of a highly contentious public planning process in which numerous community members and leaders felt frustrated, misunderstood and ignored. The objection process yielded over 350 objections to the forest plans, which made clear that the public did not see how input provided had been incorporated nor did the plans fully account for the unique social and economic needs of the affected communities.

Following the withdrawal of the Blue Mountains Forest Plans, leadership from the Pacific Northwest Regional Office and the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests met with the Eastern Oregon Counties Association in April 2019, to coordinate, better understand concerns and identify opportunities to approach forest planning and management in a new way. The participants recognized the need to explore unique approaches and work together at a larger scale, which included other government entities within and surrounding the Blue Mountains geographic area.

The various government entities officially formed the Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) in November 2019, to serve as an overarching entity and develop joint recommendations on the most contentious issues identified in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision process. The BIC members include leaders from all 14 local counties, as well as federal, state and tribal government entities. The diverse membership of the BIC ensures numerous perspectives and interests are represented.

Over the two years since the BIC formed, members worked together to develop desired conditions for Forest Service consideration on several key and previously polarizing issues in the withdrawn Blue Mountains Forest Plans, including riparian livestock grazing, fisheries, hydrology, forest health and access. The BIC also commissioned and oversaw the completion of a socioeconomic analysis that will offer data to help consider impacts of forest management decisions to local communities.

The BIC-endorsed desired conditions serve as recommendations to the Forest Service to inform the Forest Plan Revision process (with a minority report included for the access issue). The collective work over the past two years has fostered trust and strengthened relationships between the key intergovernmental groups within the BIC and the Forest Service.

The BIC members and leadership from the Blue Mountains National Forests feel this unique approach will provide a crucial foundation for success in accomplishing Forest Plan Revision for the Blue Mountains in a timely manner. By building off the past plan revision analysis, the BIC’s endorsed desired conditions products, and connections that each member has with various community perspectives, we have an exceptional opportunity to develop updated Forest Plans for these National Forests that provide for the sustainable needs of the landscape and the needs of current and future generations.

Building off these accomplishments, the BIC believes that the Forest Service should move forward with the plan revision process under the 2012 Planning Rule, with the goal of working together to develop sustainable Forest Plans that reflect local values, incorporate input and provide robust opportunities for meaningful engagement. We support the Forest Service’s plan to establish a local team and would urge this be done as quickly as possible to maintain the forward momentum the BIC has achieved in these last two years. By working together through this intergovernmental forum, the BIC can serve as a bridge between the Forest Service and communities surrounding the Blue Mountains to help repair and build trust, provide clarity about the planning process and plan components, complement Forest Service public outreach efforts and bring continual feedback to the Forest Service regarding ways to improve the process or products.

While there will still be passion around important issues, we feel that through the joint efforts between the BIC and the Forest Service we have built important relationships and developed key recommendations that address much of the previous controversy. This has built a solid foundation to move forward now with Plan Revision.

Thank you for the consideration and recognition of the vast progress that has been made in the Blue Mountains. We look forward to working together with the Forest Service to steward these National Forest lands in a way that provides for sustainable land management while considering the communities’ economic and social-cultural health.

Sincerely,
Susan Roberts, Co-Convener
On behalf of the Blues Intergovernmental Council
BIC website: <https://bit.ly/3O2vUID>

Come Celebrate with us!
Al Osmin’s 80th Birthday

Dinner and Dancing
Heppner Elks Lodge
6:00 PM - Friday, July 22
Steak dinner \$30
Elks regular menu also available

Good News Only

By Doris Brosnan

Last Saturday the women of the Valby Lutheran congregation hosted a going away gathering for Jeanne Creswick. Jeanne and her husband, David, plan to move from Lexington next month to the Vancouver, WA area.

Also, last weekend, Merlin and Claudia Hughes enjoyed a visit from Claudia’s cousin Dave Eastman and his wife, Dess. The couple, from Henderson, NV, especially appreciate visiting the Ukiah and Butte Creek settings.

A friend of Kit and Shirley George recently gave them an official-looking metal badge, oval-shaped with a scalloped edge, that puzzled them. Stamped on the front: “Chauffeur 720 1942 State of Oregon.” Determined to solve their puzzle, Shirley persevered until she had an abundance of information: Beginning in the early 20th century, qualified drivers for taxi cabs or other paid car services were issued small metal licenses called chauffeur badges. In 1903, New York became the first state to issue a motor vehicle license for chauffeurs, also known as public hacks. Pinned to a coat or hat, these metal badges provided an easy way for drivers to display their certifications while operating their vehicles. While some badges were designed in the form of a state or a decorative crest, many were simply oval or shield-shaped affairs. Most

chauffeur licenses indicated the date of issue, the state certified, and the driver’s specific identification number. By the early 1950s, paper licenses had replaced badges, which were more expensive to produce. A complete run of chauffeur badges issued in the State of Oregon dates from 1909 to 1951. The badges are popular among collectors today, some more rare than others.

The largest, 2500-piece, 26 1/2”x38 1/4”, jigsaw puzzle this fan has tackled; called for attention and received only sporadic attempts for months. But never a quitter, she finally completed the challenge last week. And lo and behold, she was correct: pieces were missing from this used puzzle. Eight pieces. Well, the good news is that it is in the garbage, never to tempt and frustrate anyone again.

One reader wonders if an absolute authority exists for an age-old controversial question: Should the toilet paper unroll from over the top or from underneath? A recent surreptitious survey noted three over the top and four underneath, not enough to carry any weight but enough to cause one to wonder.

Sharing something that makes you smile is as easy as writing to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or calling 541-223-1490. Please, share.

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

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Lexington Burn Ban

A burn ban is in effect for the Town of Lexington beginning Monday, July 18, 2022

No open burning
No burn barrels

For more information, contact:
Town of Lexington (541)989-8515
or Fire Chief Charlie Sumner (541)403-2917

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