

Spiritually Speaking

Be watchful and vigilant

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

This Sunday's first reading is from the Book of Wisdom (18, 6-9). Wisdom was written about a century before the coming of Jesus, by a faithful, literate Jew living in cosmopolitan Alexandria, Egypt. One of his purposes was to bolster the faith of fellow Jews living in a world indifferent and sometimes hostile to their beliefs. The theme of the writer is how the providence of God has protected the chosen people throughout salvation history, especially during their oppression in Egypt and during the Exodus therefrom under Moses. In Exodus, chapters 11 and 12, while the angel of the Lord was striking down the first-born of Pharaoh and other Egyptians, the vigilant Hebrew slaves were both offering grateful sacrifice to the Lord and eating the meat of the lamb to fortify themselves for their coming escape from the slavery of Pharaoh. That night was the first Passover. Like those Jewish slaves in Egypt, we, too, are called to cling to the hope of a future that may seem too good to be true, and we, too, are expected to be steadfast in our faith, even when we see no signs of the fulfillment of God's promises.

The second reading is from Hebrews (11:1-2, 8-19). It contains the only explicit definition of faith in the Bible: "Faith is the realization of what is hoped for, and evidence of things not seen." Abraham heard the voice of God summoning him to a different land, where God promised to grant him many descendants. By faith, Abraham left his homeland, accepted God's promise that his descendants would form a great nation and was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command. Despite obstacles and setbacks, Abraham stayed obedient, "for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy."

The Gospel of Luke (12:32-48) is one of three eschatological discourses in the Gospel. All three of the Synoptic Gospels record Jesus's concern that his disciples keep alert, keep watch over themselves with careful attention. Jesus explains that we must be vigilant like the servant waiting for his master's unexpected return or like the wise homeowner who was well prepared for the unexpected break-in of a thief. Since the time of our death is quite uncertain, we, too, must be ready to meet our Lord at any moment. He should find us carrying out our task of love, mercy, and service, rather than leaving things undone or half-done. He should also find us at peace with God, ourselves, and with our fellowmen (Eph.4:26). There are four reasons the believer must keep watch: 1) Because the time of the Lord's return is unknown. 2) Because he has been given a specific task to have completed when Christ returns. 3) Because Christ is returning unexpectedly, suddenly. 4) Because he can be caught napping sleeping.

We need to be vigilant and ready to face the Lord. One of the traditional means for remaining alert is prayer. The most important element in prayer is listening to God – an attitude of attention to the "tiny whispering sound" of the Lord (1 Kings 19:11-12). Such attentiveness demands that we set aside a quiet time every day during which we can tune our ears to the divine sounds of love, harmony and peace. Let us recall the words of the Book of Revelation: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him and he with me" (3:20).

We need to wait for the Lord. "Waiting for Christ to return" means working for the coming of the Kingdom of God. This means doing God's will by rendering humble service to others, by combating poverty, by ending the hatred that divides us, by establishing peace among individuals and nations, by curbing the pride that causes us to become confrontational, and by building social structures that respect the dignity of individual humans. We must wait for the Lord in our daily lives by learning to see Jesus in the least of our brothers and sisters. The Lord comes unexpectedly into our lives everyday through events and people we meet. But the ultimate, unexpected coming of the Lord in our lives is the moment of death. We should be watchful to recognize the Lord and be prepared to meet him in the little unexpected opportunities of everyday life. This is the best way to prepare for the ultimate encounter with the Lord at the hour of death.

Heppner hosting volleyball camp

The Heppner Volleyball program will be hosting a Heppner youth volleyball skills camp next week at the Heppner High School gym. Cost will be \$20 and includes a team shirt.

The camp for 4th to 6th graders will be held Monday and Tuesday, August 8 and 9 from 5:30 to 7 p.m..

Camp for 7th and 8th graders will also be from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, August 10 and 11.

Those who are unable to attend but would like to play this year should contact their coach, Mrs. Payne (Jr. High) or Mrs. Rosenbalm (Colt).



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

MISLABELED TESTS

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for women who may be pregnant. Private businesses such as Boardman Foods have also joined in on these mitigation efforts.

On how the samples got messed up to be begin with, the Gazette contacted Doherty. He said it was testing done by the private business, not the county, that apparently made a mistake on Drago's water test. He said somehow another property's water sample with the high nitrate level was incorrectly assigned to Drago's address.

Following this mishandling of test samples, however, Doherty had announced at an open county commission meeting that the 68 ppm results were at that time the highest results recorded in the county. Doherty did not identify the property address but did say it was in the Irrigon area. Drago wants to know why this information was announced publicly as people might associate it with his property since it was being talked about. "Why was I being used as an example?" Drago wanted to know. "Sounds a little odd to me," he said.

Drago, who is 92-years-old said when word of the nitrate contamination first came out he and his wife were "very concerned"

and went to a doctor for examinations. He said the doctor told him if they were drinking water at that level of contamination, 68ppm, they would both be "very sick." We've been drinking the water for 10 years," he said of his well water, and both are in good health. He also said he has never had a nitrate filter installed on his well.

When asked who has access to all the water sample results now being collected, including addresses around the county, Doherty said he personally gets emails with all the results including property addresses, but he is not sure who else in county government gets this information. He said he doesn't know who sees the results when tests are conducted by the private businesses. Doherty explained that he contacted Roy Drago's son, rather than going directly to the property owners, about the high nitrate level because they are family friends and he wanted to tell them right away about the high nitrate levels.

On the integrity of the tests, Doherty said he has complete confidence. "I'm 1,000 percent behind the tests. I trust the process," he said.

Heppner temps slightly warmer in July

According to preliminary data received by NOAA's National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged slightly warmer than normal during the month of July 2022.

The average temperature was 73.0 degrees which was 2.0 degrees warmer than the normal average temperature for this month. High temperatures averaged 89.2 degrees with the high of 105 degrees being recorded on the 31st. Low

temperatures averaged 56.9 degrees with the low of 50 degrees being recorded on the 18th. There were 13 days with a high temperature above 90 degrees.

Precipitation was much below normal during July, totaling 0.03 inches, which was 0.28 inches below normal. Precipitation of at least .01 inch was reported on zero days. The heaviest amount of precipitation was 0.03 inches, which was reported on the 4th.

Marriage Licenses

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

July 6, 2022: -Jesus Emanuel Sanchez Arellano, 20, Irrigon, and Wendy Nicole Soto Cardenas, 19, Irrigon.

July 7, 2022: -Wacy Chance Coil, 30, Lexington, and Kylie Michelle Neuneker, 29, Lexington.

-Aracely Urenda, 31, Boardman, and Kenneth Paul Kippley, 40, Boardman.

July 27, 2022: -Juan Carlos Moreno Lara, 30, Irrigon, and Andrea Celina Islas Castaneda, 30, Irrigon.

July 29, 2022: -Heidi Melissa Garcia, 22, Umatilla, and Casey Emmett Horn, 40, Umatilla.

US Senate advances \$1 million for Irrigon business incubator

The City of Irrigon is positioned to receive \$1,000,000 for a business incubator facility thanks to a provision secured by Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley in annual spending legislation introduced in the Senate on Thursday. If signed into law, the bill would direct funding to Irrigon to construct a new facility that would meet area business needs with space for startups and growth of local businesses.

Once complete, the business opportunity incubator building would provide a well-maintained facility that can efficiently accommodate multiple use types, including distribution, manufacturing and warehousing to meet the needs of the region. With an estimated available space of 10,000 square feet, the building would allow a variety of small size spaces, with flexibility to accommodate specific business needs within the interior, including office space and restrooms.

"Irrigon is very excited about this funding," said Irrigon City Manager Aaron Palmquist. "This grant brings opportunities for sustainable growth in our community and our region. The incubator development project will help entrepreneurs take that first big step toward launching their own business."

Funding would address a longstanding need for economic development in Irrigon. Currently, Irrigon has limited locations for small businesses to start-up, which restrains economic development, particularly for disadvantaged populations. The new facility

would serve small to medium sized businesses with a focus on enhancing opportunities for minority business enterprises (MBE) and low-income populations.

The project represents a partnership between the City of Irrigon and the Port of Morrow, which will provide additional funding to complete the project.

"The City of Irrigon is grateful to the Port of Morrow for their generous financial and staff support for this project," noted Palmquist. "The project fits hand and glove with the current business developments happening in our community."

"The Port is proud to partner with Irrigon on this initiative, which will support new and emerging businesses with the space and opportunity they need to succeed," said Lisa Mittelsdorf, Executive Director of the Port of Morrow. "This facility will be particularly effective in creating opportunities for minority and low-income individuals in our community that need it most. We greatly appreciate Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden's work to secure this provision."

Funding was included as a Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) provision within annual government funding legislation introduced by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Senate legislation will still need to be reconciled with proposals from the House of Representatives as part of negotiations to finalize a bicameral, bipartisan agreement. Final legislation is expected later this year.



Lisa Mittelsdorf, Executive Director of the Port of Morrow



Aaron Palmquist, Irrigon City Manager

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