

**Spiritually Speaking**

**Enter through the narrow gate**

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph

Christ warned His contemporaries not to pin their hopes of salvation on the mere fact that they were members of God's Chosen People. He urged them to make their way in "by the narrow gate." He meant they should deny themselves and strive, by the grace of God, to live good lives, live by the values of the Kingdom. We should rely on God's gratuitous love for us, and our whole aim should be to return that love. This Sunday, the church reminds us that the Lord will gather not only Jews and Christians unto himself at the feast of His Kingdom. He will also gather people from all nations, all those who are willing to submit to His loving care.

The readings of this Sunday bear a very strong message of hope, of the reunion and restoration of the people of God. The prophet Isaiah (66:18-21) is about the return of God's people to Jerusalem. It assures us that God will be ready to fulfil His promises to us. The prophet makes three prominent points to reflect and meditate upon: God will soon fulfil His promise of restoring us to Himself, to show His saving power; God's purpose for this gathering and for every work He does is for the glory of His name; and God will also make us His ambassadors to other nations. He promises thus: "I will give them a sign and send some of their survivors to the nations... that have never heard of me or seen my glory." This also underscores the missionary dimension of our baptismal call. God initiates it and then uses us to accomplish it. "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news." This good news is that God will restore our lost glory, for the sake of His own glory.

The reading from Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13 reminds us that obedience and discipline will help us respond and effectively return to the Lord. The path to this return will definitely not be an easy one. We shall encounter thorns and pains. As a loving father, God will also rebuke and discipline us. However, this is to correct and guide us through the right path. I was reminded of William Shakespeare's Hamlet, wherein he writes, "Sometimes, I must be cruel, in order to be kind." As a loving father, this is the way God also handles us at times. He is the potter, and we are the clay. He crushes, treats us hard, and finally molds us into a beautiful shape (Jer 18: 1-17). So, we must learn to endure as Christ did through His suffering and death on the cross (Phil 2, 4). This is important if we are to witness the glory of God. Success is achieved through hard work and hard work through discipline and obedience.

Luke 13:22-30 begins with the question-answer format in which Jesus answers a very difficult question: "Sir, will there be only a few saved?" His response is very simple and intelligent: "Try your best to enter by the narrow door... Rather than occupy oneself with arguments about the number of those to be saved, it is better to work hard in order to be saved." Through this, Christ reminds us that the invitation to His feast is open to all. However, each person must struggle to be there. We must play well the roles entrusted to us. This is the only way we can be guaranteed a place in the feast of the Kingdom of God.

Today's Gospel invites every one of us: If you want to be saved, enter by the narrow door. The gate is open. Free entry. No formalities, no restrictions, no bribes, taxes, watchmen, guards. But the gate of His cross is narrow. He came to open the gates of heaven. Whether we want to enter depends on us. He gives us the freedom to accept or reject this invitation. Not by judging salvation by someone's bank account, external appearance, position of importance, etc., God goes by the size of your heart, your love, your generosity, the quality of your character. God says that in heaven we take no body by color, size or shape. God wants all people to be saved, to be happy with Him forever. People of every place and time have repeated the question: How can I be saved and reach heaven? The answer is found in the words of Christ: "Seek first the kingdom of God and all the rest will follow."



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

**Electric Co-Op seeks director nominations**

Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative has opened nominations for three director's positions in zones two, five and six. All are for three year terms.

Zone No. 2: That territory served or to be served by the Cooperative within the incorporated city limits of Heppner, Oregon.

Zone No. 5: That territory served or to be served by the Cooperative lying South of the Township line dividing Township 2 South and 3 South and East of the Morrow-Gilliam County line and in Wheeler County that area East of the range line between Range 24 East and 25 East.

Zone No. 6: That territory served or to be served by the Cooperative within the incorporated city limits of Condon, Oregon.

The members of the nominating committee are Jeff Bailey, Heppner (541-676-5969) for Zone 2; Roscoe Qualls, Heppner (541-676-9705) for Zone 5 and Frank Bettencourt, Condon (541-384-2420) for Zone 6.

The nominating committee will accept nominations up to and including the last day of August 2022. Nominees must be members of Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative, Inc. and they must reside in, and receive electrical service in, the zone in which they will be running.

**Safety, schools primary focus**

As communities are getting ready for the upcoming school year, safety remains a primary focus for school leaders and law enforcement across Morrow County.

On August 8, Morrow County agencies participated in a regional School Security Summit hosted by the Intermountain ESD in Pendleton. School administrators from Morrow and Lone school districts, along with representatives from Boardman Police Department, Boardman Fire and Morrow County Sheriff's Office all participated in a review of the regionally adopted school safety protocols from the "I Love u Guys" Foundation.

"The safety of our students and staff are always our first priority and we are fortunate in Morrow County to have an outstanding wraparound program that includes school counselors, Community Counseling Solutions school based cli-

nicians, school resource officers (SROs), school nurses and CARE coordinators," said Matt Combe, Morrow County School District Superintendent.

Combe reiterated that school safety isn't a one and done training. Morrow County schools will continue their training on school safety and reunification processes later in September supported by presenters from the "I Love u Guys" foundation and the community SROs.

"The Lone School District looks forward to the continued working relationship with MCSD and all of the supporting agencies in the county. ISD will continue to focus on safety, and we look forward to working with MCSD in September to ensure that all services in Morrow County are working collaboratively to keep our staff, students and community safe," stated Keven Dinning, Lone School District Superintendent.

**Sheriff's Report**

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office has released the following information:

August 5: MCSO received report of a theft of fuel from MCGG/Paterson Ferry Rd., Irrigon. They requested extra patrols.

-MCSO received request for extra patrol for the lone area due to harvest traffic and trucks speeding through. MCSO responded and reported that everything was clear.

-MCSO received request for extra patrol with vehicles speeding through N.E. Oregon Ave. and North First St. in Irrigon twice daily.

-MCSO received report from a subject on Columbia Ave. N.W. with the caller advising her daughter's dad was causing a disturbance. Boardman Police Department responded, and the parties were separated.

-MCSO received report of a semi knocking down a gate at the Irrigon city reservoir. MCSO responded and took a report.

-MCSO received request from a subject on Butter Creek for a wellness check on her children.

-MCSO received report of drivers going the wrong way up Morgan St. in Heppner and a request for extra patrol.

-MCSO received report of a number of things stolen from outside their house on Olson Rd. in Boardman and a lot of tracks around their property. MCSO responded and placed the incident under investigation.

-MCSO received report of four or five vehicles parked in front of houses the caller doesn't live at. The caller requested contact with a deputy. The incident was unfounded.

-MCSO received report from a subject on Court St. in Heppner who said the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife had a skunk in one of their traps, but she hasn't been able to get a hold of them. ODFW was advised.

-MCSO received request for extra patrol on Olson Rd. in Boardman due to theft. They were advised to be on the lookout for a motorcycle or hatchback.

-MCSO received report from a subject on S.E. Utah Ave. in Irrigon that a silver Dodge Caravan and a black Yukon went past his house at a high rate of speed toward 10th. MCSO was unable to locate the vehicles.

-MCSO received report of a theft of a gun on Little Butter Creek in Echo.

-MCSO received request for extra patrol at N.E. Ave. and North First St. in Irrigon for speeding vehicles twice a day.

-MCSO received report that Joe Don Garza was arrested by the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office on a Morrow County warrant for Failure to Appear/Criminal Mischief K, Criminal Mischief II and Criminal Trespass. He was lodged at Umatilla County Jail with a bail of \$20,000, and on a Morrow County Circuit Court warrant for Failure to Appear II to be lodged at

Umatilla County Jail with \$20,000 bail.

-MCSO received report of four huskies running around the Wilson Lane/Olson Rd. in Boardman. MCSO was unable to locate the dogs.

-MCSO received report from a subject on S.W. Second St. in Irrigon that neighbors were letting their dogs bark continuously. MCSO Deputy stationed in the area was unable to locate any dogs or any dogs barking.

-MCSO received report from a subject on N.W. Gale St. in Heppner of a deceased deer in his backyard. He advised that it would be okay for ODFW to go onto his property and remove it.

-MCSO received request for extra patrol behind the Oregon Trail Library in Heppner for vandalism and people sleeping in the park.

-MCSO received report of a smaller silver car with Oregon plates tailgating and almost hitting the caller's vehicle while passing. MCSO was unable to locate the vehicle.

-MCSO received request for extra patrol on Olson Rd. in Boardman because of theft. The caller advised to be on the lookout for a motorcycle or hatchback.

-MCSO received report of harassment on Faler Rd. in Boardman. The caller advised that his neighbor tried to hit him with his vehicle and also tried to get his dogs to attack him. He said that it was an ongoing issue and requested phone contact.

-MCSO received report from a female at the Glen Haven Apartments on N.E. Pioneer Drive in Heppner who said another person was sitting behind her back porch and staring at her. The caller requested contact.

-MCSO received report of suspicious activity on Highway 730 in Irrigon. The caller reported a black bag out on the street next to a mailbox and a lady walking on the highway. The caller didn't know if the two were related. The caller believes someone was stealing from inside the antique store next door.

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**Neighborhood Center**

**Fair & Rodeo Bag Sale!**

**Saturday August 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**8:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**First Bag is \$15.00 Second Bag is \$5.00**

Come in and fill a bag with clothing, shoes, movies, CDs and books for the whole family! Household items are 50% off this day only. Proceeds from this bag sale support our food pantry.

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