

Spiritually Speaking

Father Thankachan Joseph
St. Patrick Catholic Church Heppner



Manifest the Lamb of God

From this Sunday's Scripture readings, we get the message that Jesus was sent by God to this world with a purpose of building a bridge between heaven and earth, for God wants all to be saved.

The Prophet Isaiah (49:3, 5-6), tells us about the Servant of Israel: He is a servant who will glorify God through his work. The Lord, in turn, will glorify His servant as no person on earth has ever been glorified. The servant's effort is to bring back to the Lord not only the people of Israel but all people. Who is this servant? When Isaiah wrote about the servant of God, he was speaking about himself, chosen by God while in his mother's womb (Isaiah 49:1). He readily agreed to be God's messenger: "Here I am, send me!" (Isaiah 6:8). He announced, contrary to what the Jews thought, that God's plan was to save everybody, not only the Jews. Isaiah saw himself as a powerful light casting its rays to the ends of the world.

The Gospel reading is from the first chapter of John, wherein we see John the Baptist witnessing Christ to the world. He came to witness Christ and he does it so well through his life. John describes Christ as "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:30). According to John the Baptist, sin is the great stumbling block to God's plans of salvation. We know how Adam and Eve blocked God's plan of salvation through their disobedience. Their sin was the first link of a long chain, and we add our share to that sin with our sins. That is why Paul insistently says that "Everyone has sinned" (Rom. 5:12). And we need to admit our transgressions. That is the reason John tells us that "If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves" (1 John 1:8).

John the Baptist is trying to describe sin. Sin is not only breaking a rule given by God but also our refusal of God's love and going against His efforts to save us. For example: Imagine a person about to fall into a gorge, biting the hand of his rescuer trying to pull him up at the risk of his own life. This would be a picture of what sin is. In order to fully understand sin, we should first understand the immensity of God's love in saving us, the tenderness of the love we reject.

The role of John the Baptist was to introduce Him to the fallen world. John the Baptist reminds us of someone who was a facilitator, who set the pace. His job was to prepare the way for someone else, someone greater than he. That someone was Christ. When Christ appeared, John slipped into the shadows. He knew exactly what his role was: only the messenger who announced the King. He lived for it, seeking nothing for himself. In today's Gospel we have the plain, yet powerful message of John the Baptist, wherein he preached about the Messiah and His existence. The Messiah was more worthy and more powerful than he. He was not even worthy to undo the strap of His sandals. He proclaimed, "I baptize you with water, but He with the Holy Spirit." John also compares Jesus to a lamb, keeping in mind the existing Jewish custom: Every morning and afternoon, a lamb was sacrificed at the Temple of Jerusalem for the sins of the people of Israel (Exodus 29:38-42).

That is why Jesus chose to die on the feast of the Passover, giving a clear sign that from then onwards, men should turn to Christ and not to animals to have their sins forgiven. Jesus made pardon available to all by shedding His blood on the cross. That is why Peter tells the Christians (1 Pt. 1:18-19): "Remember the ransom that was paid to free you... it was not paid in silver or gold, but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot or stain, namely, Jesus Christ." Jesus continues His work of destroying sin through Baptism. Jesus destroys sin the very moment man repents. Thus, He continues to be at all times the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Angels and saints praise Him under this glorious title in heaven. Rev. 5:12 says: "The Lamb that was sacrificed is worthy to be given power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing."

Good News Only by Doris Brosnan

Good News that some readers might not yet be aware of since the pandemic interruptions is that the library in Heppner is open daily from 10 to 6, except on Sundays and Mondays, and it has so much to offer! One example is its "Crafty Nights," and tonight's adult craft is "mixed-media-canvas" at 6 p.m. A visit to the library will impress the visitor with its vast shelves of books, educational resources, tutorials for students, the internet access, the young-readers room, audio books, movies, and if something is not in this library, a search of the Sage Library system of several libraries will surely find it and have it here pronto!

Looking for a Tuesday-afternoon activity? Good News for Bingo players: Play begins at 1 p.m. in the dining room of the St. Pat's Senior Center, and it is a pretty inexpensive entertainment and social outing.

The weather calmed down and became comfortable for the 4-Corners Snowmobile Club's recent annual Play Day at Kelly Prairie. Tom Wolff's reports of 52 snowmobiles and 13 tracked side-by-sides included his observation that an increasing number of tracked (and heated) side-by-side units seems to reflect that some members are "growing more mature." Members made the most of the spectacular day with time for a fundraising effort, a great dogs-and-chili meal, a trail ride and a poker run.

John Edmundson reports that Pat and he were reminded this past weekend of the benefit of having a person endowed with "above-average tallness" present and available to help us short people with things we can't reach: On Friday the electrician Adam Wight, with his 6' 10" assistant, Justin McAnisch, checked out a ceiling light fixture, without a ladder. And on Sunday, our son, Jeff, at 6' 3", repositioned a smoke detector and helped with putting Christmas decorations away on high shelves, also without a ladder.

Shirley Connor is proud to report the latest good news about grandchildren from Asotin, WA: Greg and Jodi Connor's two students at Lewis and Clark College in Lewiston, ID, are on the honor rolls. Jake, a senior majoring in computer science, is on the Dean's List. Kenlie, a sophomore majoring in radiology, is on the President's List. Their older sister, Nicole, graduated two years ago from Lewis and Clark and is now a radiologist in Clarkston. Shirley adds that the three students' educations were and are being paid for by themselves with hard-earned and saved money from years of various jobs.

From Oregon State University comes the list of Heppner graduates on the university's fall honor roll, requiring a 3.5 grade-point or higher: Carson Brosnan, a senior; Kason Cimmiyotti, a freshman; Tatum Clark, a senior; Keegan Gibson, a junior; Gibson McCurry, a senior; and Cami VanArsdale, a junior. And on the honor roll of nearby Linn Benton, Conor Brosnan is another HHS graduate listed. Impressive, All! (The Good News column welcomes such good news about area young students from all institutions.)

Yes, as one reader has pointed out, the support that members of the community offer when someone faces a tragedy is definitely a positive.

When something brings a smile to your face, how about taking a few minutes to send details to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or call 541-223-1490?

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

Boardman officers involved in shooting

No one injured, shooting under investigation

Oregon State Police report an ongoing investigation following an officer-involved shooting in Boardman last week.

On Wednesday, Jan. 4, two Boardman Police Officers attempted to contact Matthew Louis Spargo, 39,

following a complaint that he had violated a restraining order. The officers located Spargo in a vehicle and conducted a traffic stop, which resulted in an officer involved shooting. Neither Spargo nor the officers were injured in the incident,

Pranger retires

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plant designated by the government as harmful to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife or property. They're typically invasive species that reproduce quickly and outcompete native plants. It was those biological invaders that Pranger was out to conquer, often with creative techniques.

"I was heavily invested in biological control," he said. "I had some pretty good successes in different areas."

He said the state works with around 70 different bio-controls, and each has to go through rigorous testing and approval to make sure they target the problem plants and only the problem plants.

"Because they don't want them hopping over to grandma's roses or grandma's tomatoes," he said.

One of his successes was with the reduction, if not total eradication, of knapweed.

"It was a running joke when I started that knapweed was the Morrow County flower," said Pranger.

He tried a new method of bio-control, the knapweed seedhead weevil. The weevils, which were imported directly from Turkey and Greece, lay eggs on the plant's seedheads. The eggs then hatch, and the larvae eat the seeds. It was a highly individualized approach, and it worked.

"You know you're doing something right when you get ranchers asking for more," Pranger said, "because they're seeing results."

Pranger said he also had good success with similar bio-controls for yellow star-thistle, dalmatian toadflax and purple loosestrife. He knows the

weeds aren't eliminated but said that kind of success was what made his job worth it.

"That was probably the most rewarding thing about the job—working with those things that will continue on after I leave," he said. "The bugs will still be here."

During his time in weed control, Pranger was also involved in several work-related associations—he was president, vice president and board member of the Oregon Vegetation Management Association, spent four years in the Oregon County Weed Control Association, where he was also president, and served four years on the state's Oregon Invasive Species Council.

As fulfilling as he found his work, however, he said it was time to retire.

"I was ready. It was time for new blood," said Pranger said of handing the weed control reins to Corey Sweeney in November.

In addition, his wife, Anita, had retired after 30 years with Morrow County. Pranger looks forward to their retirement together, and to spending more time with the grandkids. The Prangers have three grandchildren, two in Silverton, OR and one in Medford, OR.

"It'll give us time to do some things while we're young," he said.

He said he will miss the people he worked with at the road department, calling them "a great bunch of people," but it sounds like he has no shortage of plans for a relaxed retirement.

"Probably lots of golf and hunting," he said.

"Maybe a little traveling."

is being conducted. The OSP is leading the investigation with the assistance of the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, Pendleton Police Department and the Morrow County District Attorney's office.

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