

Spiritually Speaking



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St. Patrick Catholic Church Heppner

The Shepherd leads, feeds and protects His sheep

The Catholic Church always keeps the fourth Sunday of Easter as “Good Shepherd Sunday,” reminding us of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who gives good examples of leading, feeding and protecting His flock entrusted to His care. We are all called to be shepherds.

The dictionary meaning of “shepherd” is “a person who protects, guides, or watches over a person or group of people. In the Christian term, shepherd mostly refers to a pastor, a member of the clergy, etc.” Shepherd is not limited to clergy alone. All who provide care and protection of someone else are generally doing shepherding. For example, parents, teachers and employers are all shepherds. Shepherding is nothing but self-giving for the sake of someone else, a sacrificial love, dedication, commitment toward the flock that is in one’s care.

John in his Gospel explains a good shepherd as one who guides, feeds, and protects the sheep from all dangers of life. Those of you reading my article, I am sure are in one way or another a shepherd.

Guide the sheep: It is the duty of the shepherd to show the sheep greener pastures to graze. Today, the sheep under your care are looking for good models. There should not be a disparity in our doing and talking, for dichotomies are confusing. When you spend time with your family together, try to be a good example to family members.

Feed the sheep: Psalm 23 begins with, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not lack.” I am sure all of you are working hard and spending time to earn enough so you can provide better things to your family. Again, in Isaiah we see, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd” (40:11). Are you only worried about providing material things? Do you pray together with your family? Do you provide for the spiritual growth of sheep under your care? I know many parents will look for the best school, best sports centers, and other matters pertaining to this world. How many of you really spend time with children to impart spiritual matters in the time you spend with the family? Have you ever asked your kids to lay aside electronic gadgets to spend a little more time in prayer?

Protect the sheep: Jesus says in John (10:11), “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.” I am sure this is true of every parent. Recently, I have seen on Facebook a young deer going to drink water from a lake. As it is gulping water, a crocodile comes to eat up the young one. Noticing the danger, the mother deer comes across the younger one and becomes the prey to the crocodile—a good example of laying down one’s life for the sake of someone else. It is the case of every parent.

Good Shepherd Sunday invites us all to be like Jesus, who declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd who has come “that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). He is the Good Shepherd who lay down his own life to protect His flock. In those days, shepherds guarding their flocks by night would gather their flocks into enclosures and sleep by lying across the entrances so that a wild beast would have to attack the shepherd before attacking the sheep.

We need to ask ourselves two important questions: 1) Am I a faithful member of God’s flock? Only those sheep who follow the guidance of the shepherd could ever hope to arrive at the green pastures or be safe from the greedy wolves. 2) How can I participate more closely in the work of shepherding God’s flock in my family? On account of the infidelity of the shepherds to their divine calling, God made this promise to His people that He Himself was going to be their shepherd, their good shepherd (Ezekiel 34:15-16). This promise was prophesied by Ezekiel: “You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. So, they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals” (34:3-4). Like the Good Shepherd, let’s try to lead, feed and protect the sheep under our care with dedication, commitment and, above all, unconditional love of Jesus Christ.

MCSO swears in new deputies



Morrow County Sheriff John Bowles swore in two new deputies last Tuesday, April 18. Morrow County Sheriff’s Office welcomed Jovanny Bedolla Chavez as a new marine deputy and was able to congratulate long-time reserve deputy Steve Larsen on his promotion to patrol deputy. -Photos courtesy of MCSO

Good News Only by Doris Brosnan

“The grass is always greener on the other side” is a well-known adage, and its truth could have roots (get it?) in situations similar to this writer’s yellowish lawn compared to the neighbor’s across the street, which is lush, dark green! “Unfair!” the shout goes up as the fertilizer goes down....

Congratulations to Allison Ball, who was recently named “Athlete of the Week” at Whitworth University in Spokane, WA! This Pirate is a runner, and run she did that week, holding first place in the 4x100 relay, first in the 200-meter dash, and second in the 100-meter dash. “Allie” is the daughter of Duane and Stephanie Ball and the granddaughter of Diana Ball and Les and Kathy Payne.

Florence Nolan, native Heppnerite and once long-time resident, has recently had a change of “digs.” She had been living close to son Mike, in an assisted-living facility in Everett, WA, but had been hoping for some time to return to Oregon, mainly because daughter Terri and family live in Redmond and daughter Christina recently moved there from CO. Florence’s wish came true last week when she moved into a studio apartment in Brookside Place, the facility at which Christina works. It’s not Heppner, but Florence expects being near her daughters and in her apartment fixed just the way she wants it to be a close second. She keeps up on Heppner news and welcomes calls from friends, 360-322-0642.

Last week, John Edmundson was pulling weeds at the golf course, lost his balance, and fell. He got a cut in his left eyebrow, scrapes on his forehead, cheek, and knees, a wrist sprain and a bruised back. Fortunately, a couple of his golf buddies saw him fall and quickly became “first responders,” got him to his feet, determined that he was conscious enough to drive home, and called Pat, his wife, to let her know that her bloody husband would be arriving shortly, probably needing to go to the MCHD Clinic. The Clinic got him in right away and the doctor treated him and sent him on his way to healing and recovery. No, despite how he looked, he hadn’t been in a fight! The moral to the story is that good works do get punished. The “bottom line” is that the weeds are laughing because they didn’t get removed! The main bottom line is that Heppner is a community in which people look out for each other and give help when needed. Consequently, Heppner is a great town to live in.

So much sadness and stress come into lives every day, maybe reading some tidbits of good news can at least offer a few moments of relief and smiles. Please share with the readers by sending your good news to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or calling 541-223-1490.

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

Heppner FFA shows off shop skills at BMCC



The beginner team of (L-R) Keeley Nairns, William Lehn, Austin Willis and Quaid Jensen receives the third-place banner from district officer Roselle at the shop skills contest in Pendleton. -Contributed photo



Aden Lathrop (left) and Cooper Wight show off their advanced ag mechanics third place banner at the recent BMCC contest. -Contributed photo

Heppner FFA members showed up full force in the hands-on learning contest of shop skills recently at BMCC in Pendleton.

The advanced team of Aden Lathrop and Cooper Wight brought home third place.

Individually, Lathrop took first in advanced OA welding and Wight got second in both advanced MIG and advanced wiring.

The beginning team of Austin Willis, Keeley Nairns, Quaid Jensen and William Lehn also brought home third place, as well as individual recognition.

Jensen got third in wiring and ended up in a three-way tie for master mechanic. Lehn got third in OA welding, Nairns got fifth in plumbing and Willis got fifth in OA welding.

Irrigon seeks grant

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Wyden, but the next step in the process is to apply directly to the agency managing the funds—in this case, the SBA.

Irrigon Councilor Heather Bishop asked if there were already protocols in place for which businesses would be selected. Palmquist responded that those would be developed later but that it was a federal requirement that the funds be used for businesses owned by women, minorities or underprivileged populations.

“And a million is enough to get that going and off the ground?” Bishop asked.

“We hope it is,” said Palmquist. “Cost of goods are going up. We’re already scaling back the size of the building.”

Once the SBA receives and approves the funding, the city can expect to see the funds this summer. The project probably will not be complete until late 2024 or into 2025. Palmquist said that, according to the SBA, the city has five years to complete the project once funds are awarded.

The council also unanimously approved a renewal of the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office law enforcement contract with the city for fiscal year 2023-24. Updates to the contract include additional noted reporting, specific times contracted for service and the annual rate.

MCSO is contracted to provide at least 2,080 law enforcement hours per year in Irrigon, or 173 hours per month, at the rate of \$105,000 for the year, to be paid quarterly.

In his report, MCSO Undersheriff Brian Snyder said he wanted to highlight MCSO Deputy Jacob Stutzman and Detective Dalton Garcia for their roles in solving a recent burglary off Ninth St. He told the council the officers had investigated and solved the case and recovered several of the stolen items. Their work had also led to solving a burglary out at the tribal police department.

“I just kind of wanted to put them under the spotlight,” he said.

In other business, the council conducted the first reading of Ordinance 259-23, Lexipol Irrigon Law Enforcement Policies. Lexipol is an organization that manages policy manuals and has legal and law enforcement professionals to help organizations with their policies. Snyder said about 95 percent of the agencies in the state use Lexipol to manage their policy manuals, including MCSO.

“It is a large document, it’s a database,” he said, adding that a printout would be more than 800 pages.

A manager with access can see who has read and acknowledged the policies, and the training capabilities cover areas beyond law enforcement.

“There’s a variety of areas that the city, the staff of Irrigon can benefit from just because of all the other different training opportunities that you have to give credit for to meet your yearly requirements, such as sexual harassment, suicide prevention, mental health, ethics,” said Snyder. “It’s all there. It’s universal.”

He also said that every

policy comes as a standard best practice, but that policies could be revamped to fit individual organizations.

In her report, Irrigon Mayor Michelle Patton reported that the Time To Shine chamber of commerce award banquet was “amazing.”

Employee of the year was Cindy Turner from A.C. Houghton; Educator of the Year was Betsy Shane; Student of the Year, Caren Cardenas; Business of the Year, Irrigon Java Junkies; and the scholarship winners were Caren Cardenas and Klarisza Gomez. Volunteer of the Year was Ina Ambercrombie, and Outstanding Citizen was Lenn Greer.

She also reminded council members that they all needed to be careful where, when and how they comment on social media.

“It’s best to refrain from commenting. Obviously, word’s going to get mixed around, twisted,” she said. “It’s just not a good idea. You have to remember that we represent the city, so we need to be very careful.”

Palmquist added that a reason for concern was that individuals connected with the city had made social media posts that gave the possible implication that the city’s water was bad to drink, or even shower in.

“That is not correct. We have very clean water,” said Palmquist. “The water in the city of Irrigon is clean, it is good.”

He said the city’s nitrate level is 1.75 parts per million, which is naturally occurring. It’s also well below the seven parts per million Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) limit.

Palmquist added that it wasn’t a good idea to point fingers at the Port of Morrow for nitrates in private wells around Irrigon, as the Port’s irrigation water doesn’t flow toward Irrigon. He said that problems could be coming from sandpoint wells, or from past or present irrigation locally.

“Nobody has yet to test that from the irrigation district,” he said.

He also said he wanted to be clear that, while the city’s water report shows a minimal amount of fluoride, 0.16, it was naturally occurring. He said the city does not put fluoride in the water; the only thing added to the water is the minimal amount of chlorination required by law.

“Everything is natural, reoccurring, and we have very beautiful, clean water,” said Palmquist. “Even the state thinks we have model water.”

Councilor Bishop noted that she may have been guilty of posting on social media.

“I have an opinion based on what I’ve seen the water do,” she said. “If I put it somewhere public, I’m sorry.”

“I understand that you guys are concerned that I’m a council member,” she added, “but I fully believe that the Port of Morrow and other stuff around here is affecting our water.”

On another positive note, Palmquist said the schools were tested and there was no lead anywhere in Irrigon’s schools.

The next regular meeting of the Irrigon City Council will be May 16 at 6 p.m.

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