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## Lookin' for love

Sometimes I wonder what drives people. I know there are a lot of little reasons we do things. We all have opinions, passions and emotions that make our decisions for us. But I get the feeling there's one common denominator between us all, and that one thing is behind much of what we do.

Did you know if an infant isn't touched or given enough attention, they can physically "fail to thrive" and have a higher chance of illness and death? They also develop abnormal hormone levels that regulate their social behaviors. Looks like we were made with a pretty powerful need to be loved. I think that's the motivator.

So how much love is enough? What does it take to fill that void in our lives that keeps us searching for significance? The search is powerful. And it can lead us to some pretty damaging places, doing things just to be accepted and compromising our common sense. I believe it explains why we find ourselves scratching our heads as we watch the decisions some folks make. Really? *That* was a good choice? But when you're looking for love... squeezing to fit in might seem worth it...even when it's stupid.

Our human companions are not always great at filling the love void. Our actions don't always speak the needed love language. You can tell someone you love them, then call them

names and throw things at them 10 minutes later... sorta negates the whole idea.

The kind of love we need has to translate to something more than a fleeting emotion or physical attraction. We need to know that we have value, not just for what we do or contribute, but for *who* we are. We want to be important. That's what value is. But even when we're blessed with someone who brings us coffee (or chocolate), it just seems like the search still continues. It keeps us longing for more and we aren't even sure what "more" looks like.... More of what?

Maybe it's because most love we receive from each other is conditional. But here's the good news. God loves us...no matter what. The hot mess we've become doesn't deter His love. The mountains of "issues" we have don't deter Him. And the sins we've piled up don't stop Him. In fact, the kind of love He has for us is the kind we were made for. We can try everything under the sun to satisfy that longing we have and come up empty.

Jesus said there's no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. He did exactly that. He died in our place and took the punishment we deserve. *That* is perfect love. It's the only kind that fits.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Susie Crosby  
Prineville, OR

## Over the Tee Cup

It was sunny and hot on Tuesday, Aug. 15—possibly too hot for all but the six players who turned out for the ladies play day at Willow Creek Country Club.

Low gross of the field went to Virginia Grant. Low net went to Pat Dougherty, and Karen Thompson had

least putts of the field.

For flight A, Virginia Grant had the long drive.

For flight C, Kris Lindner had low gross, Karen Smith-Griffith low net and long drive, and Lorrene Montgomery had least putts.

## Spiritually Speaking

Father Thankachan Joseph  
St. Mary's Catholic Church Wasco



## Cling to Jesus in faith like the Canaanite woman

This week for our meditation and reflections we have the beautiful Gospel Narration of the Canaanite woman and her faith expression. Often, when we make choices among things, events, places and even persons, we tend to exclude other things, events, places and even persons. Sometimes we blame ourselves as well as others for making a wrong choice, on the basis of our prejudices. The scripture readings for this week challenge us to break down our prejudices and exclude no one. The Canaanite woman in the Gospel teaches us that our Christian vocation is to reconcile all people to God. The message of this single woman to every one of us today is: 'Be not afraid.' Be not afraid to challenge prejudice.

The first reading from Prophet Isaiah (56:1, 6-7) describes the Israelites, after their return from exile in Babylon, who find their homeland occupied by foreigners whom the people of Israel deeply ostracized. Isaiah proclaims that the foreigners who joined themselves to the Lord had to be accepted. We are told that no one can be saved by one's own power. Only God can save us. Salvation is open to all. Anyone who is really determined to be saved will be saved. And no one can claim the right to be saved. We are saved only through God's mercy and love.

The Gospel of Matthew (15:21-28) narrates the religious exclusion prevalent among the Jews even in the time of Jesus. The Canaanite woman in today's Gospel is not Jew; she is a Gentile. The woman symbolizes all who are regarded as unclean by Jesus's own people. This woman comes to Jesus with a request on behalf of her sick daughter: "Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil." The mission of Jesus had been limited to a short period of time and confined to the Jews. We note that restriction first in the observation that He answers her not a word, and then in His statement that He was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The silence of Jesus suggests a refusal to minister to this woman's needs. This is how His disciples interpret it and plead with Jesus to get rid of her. Jesus explains His exclusive mission to the woman. She is outside the territory of His pastoral concern.

The Canaanite woman teaches us that to reconcile all humankind to God takes courage. Given her position as a stranger and as a woman, it took phenomenal courage on her part to decide to take on the all-Jewish and all-male company of Jesus and His disciples. She was so small that, even though she addresses Jesus by His proper Messianic titles – "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David" (v.22) – Jesus still ignores her: "He did not answer her at all" (v.23a). Most people at this point would give up and accept defeat. But not this Canaanite woman. Rather she intensifies her efforts and embarks on a one-woman demonstration to the point that the disciples had to ask Jesus to do something about it: "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us" (v.23b).

But the woman has no intention of getting into a theological argument. All she knows is that her daughter is ill and needs Jesus. She goes after what she wants with perseverance. She stops Jesus in His tracks by kneeling at His feet. "Lord," she says, "help me!" Jesus responds with apparent harsh words: "It is not right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Jesus's apparent harshness was meant to test her faith. The woman is not diverted by this offensive rebuff. She hangs onto the reason she is there. She tells Jesus that even the dogs can eat scraps that fall from the master's table. In her response, she has outwitted Him and Jesus has the grace to give in. "Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted." Her courage and her refusal to take no for an answer finally pays off. Jesus says, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish" (v.28)," and the woman gets what she wanted. Her daughter is healed.

Similarly, like the Canaanite woman, if we cling to the person called Jesus, surely He will have pity on us and grant our hearts' desires.

Last week was the last for swimming lessons at the Heppner swimming pool, and lessons at the Ione pool ended the week before. At both pools, the lessons were free this year! Both pools will continue to be open for the public until Aug. 26 in Heppner and Aug. 27 in Ione. Maybe readers who do not Facebook are not aware that entrance to the Heppner pool on Mondays is also free, and in Ione, a "ladies swim" is offered every weekday morning from 7:30 to 8:30! Great facilities both! The Ione pool also continues to be available for two more weeks after closing to the public so that Ione school students can have sessions of PE instructions.

Moan, groan.... Time for daily doubles! The good news for these athletes is that the work they do now will pay dividends when sports seasons arrive, right?

Last Sunday, Mary Ann Elguezabal welcomed cousins Randy and Virginia (Dority) Keller from Fruita, CO. Virginia's father was MaryAnn's father's "baby brother" (Virginia and her sister Beth married Keller brothers). This is the first visit to Heppner for the Kellers, who plan to stay until today and have said that they "appreciate the small town connectedness." Some of their time will be spent meeting a few more of Mary Ann's family for the first time, including year-old Emily. (MaryAnn has explained that there are more than 140 ways of spelling the old Gaelic/Irish surname of Dority, Dougherty, Doherty, Daugherty, etc....)

Authentic Mexican tacos, tostados, beans and rice were the fare at St. Patrick's fundraising dinner on Sunday. Over 100 dinners were served, so the storage units for Fr. Condon's play costumes will soon become a reality.

This season's last Music-in-the-Park in Heppner featured Cory Peterson, a "home grown" young man who now calls his farm near Pendleton "home." Without a break, Cory sang and impressed the audience of about 30 with his nimble playing of his guitar for the full two-hour program, of which about 80 percent featured his own compositions. Cory said he does have a day job, working on the farm that he shares with his wife and daughter, but continues to enjoy writing and these opportunities to entertain.

So, the local interested in the number of bridges in Heppner was apparently wrong with the number 10. Not clear now: 12 or 14? (Important information!)

Readers are encouraged to look around for what has brought smiles to their faces and send them along to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or to call 541-223-1490 with their tidbits. Small moments oftentimes are sources of good news.

Hope good news comes to everyone reading this column!

## Morrow County Republicans announce August meeting

The Morrow County Republicans will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 24, at the Bartholomew Building in Heppner. Precinct Committee Persons (PCPs) and anyone interested in the county Republican Party are encouraged to come and join the discussions.

MCRP will be making plans for participation and representation at the Oregon Republican Platform meeting in Pendleton Oct. 19-21. Other agenda items include PCP appointments and 2024 budget construction for events during the

2024 election year.

PCP positions are open for Lexington, Boardman and Irrigon. Individuals interested in one of these positions are encouraged to attend this meeting to learn about the positions. PCP appointments can be made during MCRP meetings.

The Republican Party is open to individuals interested in conservative ideals and values. The Republican Party platform can be found at <https://oregon.gop/>. For more information on the Morrow County Republican Party, contact [mocoreps@gmail.com](mailto:mocoreps@gmail.com).

## Mini bakers make big impact for Shriners



L-R: Jaxson Nelson, Donna Smith (a.k.a. Grandma Donna) and Olivia Kennedy with one of the cashier's checks from the bake sales they did for Shriners Hospitals for Children. Smith has been teaching the two to bake since beginning to babysit them. Olivia and Jaxson, now known as Heppner's Mini Bakers, have done most of the baking and work, aside from handling the oven. They raised \$531.10, which was sent with East team member Ty Boor to the East/West Shrine game to be given to the hospital. They plan to have more bake sales. -Contributed photo

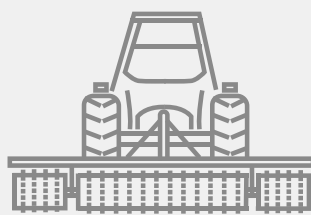
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