

Hermiston Catholics mark Good Friday with reenactment

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

A story that has been passed down over more than two millennia continued its journey through time on Friday in Hermiston.

Hundreds of area Catholics marked one of the religion's most holy days with Way of the Cross, a reenactment of the hours leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in 33 A.D.

"This is the biggest day of our faith," said Maria Carrillo.

She said she spends Good Friday each year at Way of the Cross to remind herself of the suffering of Jesus on the cross, the "great symbol of our faith." The holy day, she said, gives her a "sense of being." Without her faith she would feel hollow.

"This keeps that alive for future generations," she said.

Jess Carrillo, who walked the stations with Maria, said the event was a good way to put day to day cares in perspective with religious beliefs.

The Bible recounts Jesus being born in a stable in Bethlehem in the Middle East 2,000 years ago, as angels testified he was the Son of God come to atone for the sins of all humankind so all could have the opportunity to live in God's presence someday. His followers detailed his teachings in the New Testament and spoke of miracles he performed.

A week before his death, which Catholics and other Christian faiths observe as the "Holy Week" leading up to Easter Sunday, he entered Jerusalem in triumph amid adoring followers. Jewish leaders who were threatened by his support successfully conspired to have him put to death by the ruling Romans, however, on a day now observed as "Good Friday."

Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church puts on Way of the Cross each year on Good Friday. The passion play starts out at the trial of Jesus on grounds of blasphemy. On Friday an actor playing Pontius Pilate, a Roman governor, asked the crowd gathered in the church's parking lot if he should release Jesus in accordance with a Passover



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Actors recreate the crucifixion of Jesus during the Way of the Cross on Friday in Butte Park in Hermiston.

tradition. Actors at the front urged him to release the murderer Barabbas instead, and Jesus was sentenced to death.

As a procession of hundreds followed the actors through Hermiston, Yazmin and Juan Marisco followed along quietly.

Yazmin said she has been an actor in the pageant before — one of the "weeping women" who mourn Jesus' impending death — and that experience helped her better understand the significance of Good Friday.

"It's all about respect," she said. "This day means a lot."

Juan also described the event as respectful.

"This is a day of respect when we remember the death of God," he said. "It is a really important day for us."

The crowd often stood silent watching the stations of the cross progress, as the actor playing Jesus stumbled multiple times with his heavy cross, saw his mother and was helped by his disciples.

"Jesus falls," Father Daniel

Maxwell narrated in English and Spanish. "All of us who walk, could fall. We also fall because of our own weaknesses, from our fragility, for not knowing how to resist. But, after a mistake, if someone lends us a hand, we can once again rise."

As the crowd made their way up the side of the Hermiston Butte, where actors would portray the actual crucifixion, Alvaro Alvarez said the short, hot hike through town and up the dusty butte helped him reflect on Jesus' suffering.

"This little walk we go through is nothing compared to what he went through," Alvarez said.

According to biblical and other historical sources, the Romans drove heavy spikes through the hands and feet of Jesus and two thieves and hung them from wooden crosses until their bodies gave out. The practice, known as crucifixion, was a Roman method of capital punishment.

On Friday the actors showed Jesus' crucifixion, his death and his burial. They did not portray the account of his resurrection on the

third day, which the church celebrated on Sunday during Easter services.

Afterward Vincent Trevino, who has coordinated the event for several years, urged the crowd to attend services at the church that evening and on Sunday. He thanked the youths that had served as actors and thanked the crowd for their example of faith for the teens and children present.

Father Maxwell said the service Friday night, called Veneration of the Cross, would allow participants to approach the cross and "use it to identify their own suffering with that of Christ."

He said that Way of the Cross keeps growing each year as more Catholics in the region travel to the event.

"They don't have something in the area like this," he said.

See additional photographs
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City approves resolution for new skate park

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The city of Hermiston is hoping to see a new skate park in town next summer.

On Monday the city council approved a resolution allowing the city to apply for grant funding for a "teen adventure park" across South First Place from the fire station and police station.

Last week the city and representatives of skate park design company California Skateparks visited Hermiston High School to show off designs that included skate elements, a pump track for bikes, shade, stadium seating, restrooms, a parkour area, swing set a climbing boulder and more.

Parks and recreation director Larry Fetter said the plan was to build the park in two phases, with all of the skate park elements in phase one and the rest of the park built the next year.

He plans to apply for a \$252,000 grant from Oregon Recreation and Park District, with a \$252,000 match from the city and complete the first phase of the park by summer 2020. A second phase could be completed the next year, funded 100 percent by a mix of state and federal grants.

Teens who saw the plans last Thursday provided mostly positive feedback. Several said they thought it seemed like it would be a fun place to hang out even for non-skaters, and might encourage more students to embrace the sport in the future.

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