

June 5, 2011

Pentecost greetings to all of you,

It's hard to believe summer officially begins in just a little over two weeks. This has been another long winter-like Spring, and I'm guessing most of us are ready for warmth, and sun, vacations, relaxation and all those enjoyable and delicious activities of summer. This time of year is often seen as a time for rest and renewal, yet Pentecost reminds us that the fire of Spirit we carry within us is a gift meant to be shared as leaven, whatever the season, as a means of breaking down barriers and creating connections that inspire hope and transformation.

What does this mean for us in Sophia Christi? What is the specific gift and invitation of the Holy Spirit within our community? And, more particularly, as a member of Sophia Christi, what is the specific gift Spirit has entrusted to you? What are you being invited to share in building up the family of God in this place and time? Pentecost is that space set apart in the Church calendar which asks us to reflect on those promptings of Spirit and to identify, then offer, the gifts we've received for the edification, inspiration and renewal of the larger community of God's people. So I ask you to reflect and to pray about these things, then come next weekend as we open our hearts and the heart of our community once again to receive the outpouring of Spirit and to celebrate the grace, the challenge, the commitment and unbridled joy of Pentecost, 2011.

Mass Schedule This Month

Our Mass in **Portland** will be Saturday, **June 11**, at University Park United Methodist Church, 4775 N. Lombard at **5:00pm**. If you are interested in being a lector, choir member or Eucharistic Minister at this Mass, please contact Marlise at 360-686-3342. Plan to stay for our potluck dinner after Mass. Please bring vegetable dishes, casseroles, desserts and celebratory Pentecost fare.

Our Mass in **Eugene** will be Sunday, **June 12**, at First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd, at **4:00pm**. If you would like to be a lector, Eucharistic minister or would enjoy singing in the choir or playing a musical instrument at this Mass, please contact Kathy or Carol. Our Pentecost potluck meal can include your favorite summer holiday dishes to celebrate the season.

Our annual Mary Magdalene Mass at Marlise's studio in **Battleground** will be **July 17 at 3:00pm** with Labyrinth walk at 1:00pm. Directions will be provided in our July newsletter.

Community Leadership Update

The Leadership Team met together last month to continue its work toward securing tax-exempt status for Sophia Christi as a 501c3. We celebrated our success in registering

with the State of Oregon as a non-profit religious organization and completed work on our By-laws with the guidance and assistance (I'm convinced) of Holy Wisdom. There is much left to be done as we create a narrative description of who we are for the IRS and come up with a preliminary budget that takes into account the needs of both the Eugene and Portland hubs of our larger community. We hope to be finished with this process by the end of the year. If you have expertise in this area or would like to contribute some of your talent to the leadership of Sophia Christi, please let me know. The Eugene portion of the community is well-represented on the Leadership Team but **we could use another member from Portland**. Please prayerfully consider becoming more involved in developing the structure and vision of our faith community.

Pastoral Update

As we move forward on the leadership tasks outlined above, I find myself looking back on the **dreams and needs** many of you articulated so well at our Community Meetings in 2009. Many of those dreams are based on parish models where long-time, committed members, well-established parish programs and salaried priests/parish administrators have kept things moving week-to-week and month-to-month year after year for decades. We have been in the process of creating a new community and a new model, which is always a challenge, with only each other and the Spirit for encouragement of our efforts, and no financial base of support for visions and desires that require additional time, energy and space to succeed. Given that reality, we have accomplished amazing things these last 4 years! And every month new people find their way to our door, hungry for hope and for spiritual nourishment—and most leave with tears of gratitude, having been well-fed, promising to return.

I'm aware, however, that some of the spiritual needs mentioned in those earlier discussions haven't yet been addressed. There were several requests for more than one Mass each month, for example, and we are on our way to having that option as a full community in Portland by the end of the summer. Prior to that, I invite anyone willing to host a **home Mass** to contact me. We can celebrate Liturgy in a more intimate setting, and you can invite other Sophia Christi members as well as friends and family to join you. This could compliment our larger Liturgies and feed the community in a different way, and you can be as involved (or not) in choosing readings and music for the occasion. Email me if you have an interest in pursuing this option.

Additionally, we will be offering a **Spiritually-focused retreat** sometime this Fall. Once the location has been determined and dates nailed down (hopefully by next month) I will let you know and you can reserve space on your calendar for the event.

Some of you requested that we offer groups focused on faith-sharing, study, prayer or spiritual direction. Next weekend you will find sign-up sheets at our Masses for those interested in one or more of these groups. Depending on interest, we would like to begin offering **group spiritual direction** and possibly one other weekly group experience this summer. Please look for the sign-up sheets at the back of the church. If you aren't able to come to the Pentecost Liturgy and you are interested in one of these offerings, just let

me know and I will add your name to the list. If there are other spiritual needs not addressed here that you would like me to be aware of, please don't hesitate to contact me at any time. You have my email address in this mailing, and my phone number is 503-286-3584.

Food for the Poor

We received the following message from Kathleen Green, Director of the St. Andrew Food Pantry, in response to our May contribution to the Pantry:

Again, you have outdone yourselves and overwhelmed us with your donations! We are truly blessed to know The Reverend Toni, and to receive your food collections from Portland and Eugene.

The shampoos, razors, laundry soap, diapers, toilet paper, deodorants are like icing on a cake. So very needed. And the can openers are asked for daily. The food was wonderful. The salt, pepper, soups, mixes, pasta, tuna, packages of milk and mashed taters, rice, cereal were so carefully chosen. Thank you so very much.

In June 2011, this food pantry has been open for 9 years!! Many of our fellow non-profits have had to close. We do believe in the power of prayer. And we do pray for the funds and donations to keep our pantry open. In the last 9 years we have fed almost 64,000 people. You have helped so much.

His love and blessings to each of you. Kathleen

Please remember to bring non-perishable food and personal hygiene items once again when you come to Mass this month. Look for the basket next to the entrance of the sanctuary when you come for Liturgy on Saturday or Sunday, and please continue to be as generous as possible.

Portland PRIDE

Portland's Gay Pride Festival is coming up on June 18 and 19, with the parade scheduled to begin at 11:30 on the 19th. Sophia Christi will be marching with the Catholic Coalition of the Community of Welcoming Congregations and I invite all of you to participate. Well over half of those stopping by the CWC booth at Pride are Catholics according to Tara Wilkins, executive director of CWC. Given the painful anti-gay stance of our Church, the Catholic presence at Pride is especially important. Next year, I hope, we can have a banner of our own in the parade, and maybe even a booth at the festival!

There are many things happening, as you can see, and still more in process. Please join me in praying for our community, that we may be inspired, formed, guided and protected by the Holy Spirit during this, Her season. Through its very existence Sophia Christi provides a beacon of hope for many who feel abandoned by a punitive, dismissive and autocratic mentality within the institutional church. There are few oases

of healing and encouragement for those who have left or are leaving in despair. A strong Sophia Christi community provides a harbor for these weary souls who deserve pastoral care, sacramental nourishment and a place of welcome. This is a large part of our mission. May the Spirit be with us and bless our small efforts to be that place of welcome around the Table Jesus sets for the spiritually hungry of our world.

Blessings and Christ's peace,

Toni