

November 6, 2011

On this beautiful Fall day following the Sophia Christi retreat, I find myself reflecting on the many blessings of our communal life. The wisdom beneath the surface of ordinary human experience was wonderfully apparent as I listened to the stories and vulnerabilities of those gathered yesterday. Life can be confusing, sometimes harsh and sometimes exciting, but with all our personal differences our need for love, acceptance, purpose and meaning remains the same. This is why Scripture has been able to speak to every generation across time. Cultures change. Language and our understanding of the world changes, but human nature with its drives, needs and challenges seems not to have changed at all throughout history. As Paul says in next Sunday's reading, "We belong neither to darkness nor to night, but remain children of light." That light is the presence of God and the light of wisdom within each of us. Perhaps you would like to reflect on these things as you prepare for our Liturgies next weekend. The readings of the day will be Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1Thessalonians 5:1-6 and Matthew 25:14-30.

### **Mass Schedule This Month**

Our Mass in **Portland** will be Saturday, **November 12**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Our new church home is warm and welcoming and there is a parking lot behind the church. The ramp down to the kitchen (as well as the ramp up to the Sanctuary) is located at the east end of the parking lot. Parking is also available on N. Atlantic (west side of the church) and you may enter through the front doors or the back door facing the parking lot on the west end of the building. Vegetable dishes, salads and desserts will be most welcome at our dinner following Mass.

Our Mass in **Eugene** will be Sunday, **November 13**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup>**, at **4:00pm**. Bring your entrees, vegetable dishes, salads and desserts for the potluck following our Liturgy. If you would like to be involved as a lector, Eucharistic minister or musician at this Mass, please contact Kathy or Carol. And if you would like to participate as a singer or musician, please come at 3:00 and join in on the rehearsal.

On Sunday, **November 20**, at **10:30am** I will be celebrating Mass in **Battleground**. The address is 26605 NE 96th Ct. For further information or directions call Helen at 360-687-7475 or email her at [umphrey@ipns.com](mailto:umphrey@ipns.com).

### **Annual Christmas Holiday Recital at Northminster**

Members of Sophia Christi are especially invited to attend the annual Christmas Recital at Northminster Presbyterian Church on December 4th at 3:00pm. The event has a "Lessons and Carols" feel, says Pastor Bill Van Nostran, and will feature their 2nd Sundays soloist, Ms. Dorothy Butler, for some traditional hymns. They are also recruiting other individuals and groups to "round out" the performances, so if you are interested in participating, please either let me know or call Pastor Bill at 503-289-0318. This is an opportunity for our two communities to come together for the Holidays.

### **Musicians and Singers**

Current singers and musicians in both the Eugene and Portland communities would like to invite those who play musical instruments and who enjoy singing to **join the choir!** We practice during the hour before Mass, beginning at 3:00 in Eugene and 4:00 in Portland. If the Liturgy or the music is more complex, as it might be during Easter, for example, we sometimes meet a little earlier, or (rarely) at another time during the week. If you like to sing and/or play an instrument, please talk to me or one of the choir members after Mass next weekend. We would love to have you!

## Pastoral Update

As most of you know the U.S. Bishops, following a mandate from the Vatican, have directed all churches in the U.S. to adopt the New Roman Missal beginning the first Sunday of Advent this year, which is November 27. The new texts include significant changes to the language used at Mass in English-speaking countries around the world. Though the Vatican claims the reason behind these changes is to more accurately translate the “original” Latin (which, in itself, is a questionable end-goal), the reality is that this translation also ends all movement toward inclusive language in Liturgy and turns the Church backward toward an increasingly out-dated theology.

There is a Latin maxim that goes like this: “**Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi**”. Loosely translated, the phrase means that what we pray (“the way we worship”) is what we believe. So when the language of Liturgy changes, what we believe is inevitably affected. This is why we say “Our Father/Our Mother” when praying the Lord’s Prayer at Sophia Christi, for example, as well as why the Vatican insisted that the word “men” be re-inserted in the Nicene Creed so that parishioners would pray “for us **men** and for our salvation” instead of “for **us** and for our salvation”. Maintaining male-dominant language supports a gender exclusive theology, while using inclusive language allows for the subtle shift to a gender-inclusive theology the Vatican stringently opposes. The language of Liturgy matters far more than we might think. It affects the way we see ourselves, each other and the world. It has long determined our exclusively male image of God and been used as a rationale and means for keeping women outside the ranks of governance and leadership across the globe.

At Sophia Christi we are committed to inclusive language and progressive theology. As a result, **we will continue using the Vatican II Liturgy**, continue adapting the prayer of the Church to the needs of our community, and remain faithful Catholics under the broad umbrella of what it means to belong to the universal church. We, as a people, are on the cusp of vast changes in our theological framework I believe, and going backward in liturgical prayer and practice is not an answer to the quest for equality and for new understandings of what it means to be human, to be Christians, in this post-modern age.

**On a separate pastoral front**--if you have pastoral needs that aren’t being met, or know of other concerns requiring attention, please let me know. You have my email address in this mailing, and my phone number is 503-286-3584. Don’t hesitate to use either one. I welcome you to contact me anytime for conversation, home visitation, sacraments of reconciliation or anointing, home Masses or other pastoral care needs.

## Pre-Advent Retreat

Thirteen members of the Portland and Eugene communities gathered yesterday for our pre-Advent retreat. The focus was on our personal Wisdom journeys, with lots of time for individual reflection, small and large group sharing and both personal and communal prayer. Lunch was a lovely combination of soup, salad, fruit and dessert provided by Carol, our intrepid leader of hospitality in Eugene. Many thanks to Carmel and Carol for all the preparations that led to an uplifting and nurturing retreat for Sophia Christi and for everyone able to carve out time to participate.

### **Food for the St. Andrew Episcopal Food Pantry**

Thank you to everyone for continuing to bring food and personal hygiene items for the St. Andrew Episcopal Food Pantry each month. In October we brought in 100 pounds of food and essential personal hygiene products. **Please look for the basket at the entrance of the sanctuary when you come for Liturgy on Saturday or Sunday, and please continue to be as generous as possible.**

As we quickly approach the end of the liturgical year, our thoughts naturally begin moving toward the holidays since Advent always begins right around Thanksgiving. In the fast-paced culture in which we live, one week, one month, one holiday, swiftly edges out the next in department stores and in our own event calendars and personal schedules. It's easy to get overwhelmed by all the preparations and activities sandwiched between Halloween and New Year's, and completely forget that the "Church year" is ending. Life is impermanent, the Church reminds us, and finding closure at the end of this cycle is a necessary part of preparing for the Birth and new life promised in the one to come. So I invite you in these next two weeks to spend some time reflecting on your spiritual journey, spiritual challenges, regrets and successes since Advent of last year. What longings went unfulfilled? What have been your losses? What might these next two weeks invite you to grieve? And when Advent begins on the 27<sup>th</sup>, reflect on what the season of "waiting" means for you this year? How can you best prepare for giving birth to the Christ-child within your own being in those four lovely weeks before that precious Child comes to term in you Christmas day?

May Sophia guide and accompany you as you face these endings and help you prepare for the Christ-filled wonder of the year ahead.

Blessings to all of you,

Toni