

November 4, 2012

Fall blessings to all of you,

As we come to the end of our liturgical year and head toward Advent, I'd like to reflect a bit on our journey through the Gospel of Mark. This gospel is not only the shortest but is generally thought to be the earliest. It is also considered one of the sources used by the authors of both Matthew and Luke. These later writers incorporated Mark into their writings almost totally, which is why all three manifest a similar point of view and a similar structure—thus the term “synoptic”. The author of Mark is the only one who explicitly uses the word “gospel”, and does so in the very first sentence of the text: “The beginning of the good news (gospel) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (Mk 1:1) Renowned biblical scholar, Raymond Brown, provided interesting food for thought in his “Introduction to the New Testament”. “By the time Mark wrote,” he says, “Jesus had been preached as the Christ for several decades. To appreciate what this earliest preserved written portrayal contributed to our Christian heritage, one might reflect on what we would know about Jesus if we had just the letters of Paul. We would have a magnificent theology about what God has done in Christ, but Jesus would be left almost without a face. Mark gets the honor of having painted that ‘face’ and made it part of the enduring gospel.”

The face of Jesus in Mark is that of “Messiah” (one anointed and sent by God to establish God’s reign; “Son of God” (one who has a special relationship with God, though not implying ‘divine nature’); and “Son of Man” (most important of the three to Mark, according to Marcan scholar, John Donahue, S.J., in his Harper-Collins Commentary article, and is derived from Dan. 7:13-27, where it refers to the honor and power granted to one who has suffered persecution and is now associated with the ‘Holy ones of the Most High”). Jesus is teacher and healer. He calms storms, feeds the hungry, forgives sin, challenges the arrogance of power, experiences misunderstanding, rejection and betrayal, humbly accepts failure and suffering, walks toward death with both trepidation and courage. He knows our journey—the human experience—and though his culture and frame of reference are different from ours, we can see our own lives mirrored in his. In this Gospel he is revealed as most human, as one just like us.

As we move toward the “Jerusalem” of our lives and all the hopes and feared outcomes of this age, we can return to Scripture, to the very human Jesus portrayed in Mark’s gospel, and take courage knowing that someone walked before us into the pit of darkness and was transformed into Light. Jesus is our template for the human journey. He illuminates the world we live in, takes our hand and shows us a path through the shadows. At the end of Mark’s Gospel, as he is dying, a very human Jesus cries out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Even when our faith is shaken, even when we feel alone and utterly abandoned by God as Jesus did, we can return to Mark and know that what we are feeling was felt by the one we follow all the way to Calvary. It may not be enough to bring us comfort, but maybe it will help give us the heart of faith to carry on.

Our readings for November Liturgies: November 10 & 11 1 Kings 17:10-16; Heb 9:24-28; Mk 12:38-44. November 18 – Dan 12:1-3; Heb 10:11-14,18; Mk 13:24-32.

### Mass Schedule This Month

Our Mass in **Portland** will be Saturday, **November 10**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Potluck meal follows. Please bring your favorite entrees, vegetable dishes, salads and desserts. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

Our Mass in **Eugene** will be **November 11**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup>**, at **4:00pm**. Please bring your favorite dish to share at the potluck afterwards: entrees, veggies, salads, and desserts. Please come at 3:00 for rehearsal if you are interested in being part of the choir as a musician or singer.

On Sunday, **November 18**, at **3:00pm** we will celebrate Mass in **Battleground**. **Please note the time change from 10:30am to 3:00pm and from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month!!** The address is 26605 NE 96th Ct., Battle Ground, WA. For further information or directions call Helen at 360-687-7475 or email her at [umphrey@ipns.com](mailto:umphrey@ipns.com). Mass in December will be the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month—Dec. 30.

### Sophia Christi Annual Meeting and Retreat—December 1

Please mark your calendars for our first Annual Community-wide meeting, December 1st, from 10:00am to 5pm, at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Portland. This is also the First Sunday of Advent and we will celebrate Liturgy beginning at 4:00. Carmel will facilitate our collective focus, as she has in the past, and help us move to the next phase of the Appreciative Inquiry Process. This “meeting” will be set within the deeper context of personal and communal spirituality that has been so enriching and meaningful to participants of previous gatherings. At this five-year mark of our history, when we are beginning to have the financial resources to implement some of our hopes and dreams, we have an opportunity to fine-tune our mission and become even more intentional about outreach and congregational ministry.

Not only is your voice and vision important, your presence will provide a unique avenue for Spirit’s work in fashioning the inclusive mission of Sophia Christi. Your heart and mind are needed in this process. I am hopeful that a majority of you will commit to participating and mark the date on your calendar today.

The decision to meet in Portland came after much discussion and several attempts to locate adequate meeting space south of Portland or in Salem. The retreat location we have often used in the past to accommodate our full membership wasn’t available at a time that worked for us this year. We will create a carpool list in Eugene at Masses next weekend and I am urging all of you to come.

## Pastoral Update

If you haven't filled out a **registration/ministry form** please remember to do so when you come to Mass this weekend. You may also receive and return this form, as well as pledge cards, via email. Let me know if you prefer this method and I'll be happy to send one or both to you. Both are also available at all Masses.

## Website Update—[www.sophiachristi.org](http://www.sophiachristi.org)

I'd like to draw your attention once again to our website and ask you to check it out! If you have photos from Sophia Christi events you are willing to share, please send them to Bill Urban [realdealurban@gmail.com](mailto:realdealurban@gmail.com) and John Coutu [jcoutu1969@gmail.com](mailto:jcoutu1969@gmail.com) for possible inclusion on the site. If you have ideas, questions or suggestions feel free to email Bill and John so that our webpages become more useful to the population we are hoping to serve and attempting to reach. If you are part of the Eugene community, please consider bringing a camera to events and liturgies so our activities become more fully represented on the website. Also, if you are interested in becoming more involved in developing the site or in creating a social media presence for Sophia Christi, please contact Bill and John at the email addresses above.

**A pastoral reminder**--if you or someone you know has a pastoral need that isn't being met, please don't hesitate to give me a call. You have my email address in this mailing, and my office phone number is 503-286-3584. Feel free to use either one. You can contact me anytime for conversation, home visitation, sacraments of reconciliation or anointing, home Masses, weddings, funerals, memorial services or other pastoral care needs.

## Food for the St. Andrew Episcopal Food Pantry

This month we received the following message from Kathleen Green, Director of the St. Andrew Food Bank:

*We received a wonderful donation of 75 pounds of very thoughtful food and hygiene items from you this past Friday. It was a very busy, busy day. We had a giant group of folks who needed help with food, soap, shampoo, razors, diapers and girl stuff. Thanks to you we could give out items other than food.*

*Because we had so many clients we are now low on shampoo, diapers and toilet paper. We are also low on hearty soups. And we can't seem to keep up with rice!*

*I hope you all have heard about the peanut butter re-calls. Sunland makes peanut butter, but also supplies many of the peanuts to everyone including Trader Joe's. I did call Hershey who makes peanut butter cups and we are safe. Hershey said they don't use the peanuts from Sunland! You can [google.com](http://google.com) peanut recall for updates. Some items have been recalled back to 2010. Thank you again. God bless your work. Your kindness is so appreciated.—Kathleen*

Please remember to bring food and personal hygiene donations for the Food Pantry when you come to Mass next weekend. **Look for the basket at the entrance to the sanctuary when you come for Liturgy on Saturday or Sunday, and please be as generous as possible.**

As we approach the season of gratitude and Thanks-giving, it may be the smallest of things that quietly find their way into our awareness providing a measure of support and hope. It might be a phone call from a friend letting us know they are thinking of us. It might be as simple as 30 minutes of blue sky between rain showers or receiving a genuinely funny cartoon via email or even a momentary awareness that lights go on when the switch is flipped and the furnace kicks in when temperatures drop below the thermostat setting. We are so blessed in so many ways that we often take for granted the small luxuries that provide comfort and give life texture, some measure of ease and meaning. And though we live in an age of heightened anxiety, when the pace of life is moving faster than our brains can process and information overwhelms our capacity to absorb and integrate sound bites and pixels, we have each other. We each mirror the progressive vision, holding space for new paradigms to coalesce and begin influencing the collective mind and heart of humanity. This is a great work and a holy contribution to planetary consciousness. This is Christ-consciousness at work in and through the vehicle of Sophia Christi. May we stand together in service of our Creator and the planet—and let God take it from there.

Keep faith alive in your heart, and may you find moments of peace and gratitude this season,

Toni