

July 7, 2013

Summer blessings,

Independence Day came and went, though fireworks still plague the night in neighborhoods throughout the Portland metro area. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) celebrated the 4th with Mass at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. to close their 2nd annual “fortnight for freedom.” This two-week period of “prayer and action” is part of an ongoing effort on the part of Bishops and evangelical groups to claim that their religious liberty is endangered by the new health care reform laws (specifically the mandate for insurance coverage of contraceptives) and the repeal of significant parts of the Defense of Marriage Act (which cleared a major barrier on the road to marriage equality for same-sex couples last month). Calling on Catholics to “speak up for conscience rights,” the bishops seem not to notice the conscience rights of single women and heterosexual couples in determining and addressing their own reproductive health needs, or the conscience rights of lesbian and gay couples who want to marry the person they love and receive equal protection for their families under the law. When I read the parable of the Good Samaritan (next weekend’s Gospel) what I hear is Jesus’ admonition to notice those who are beaten down, those thrown to the side of the road and left for dead, those whose needs have been ignored and whose deep wounds need dressing. The priest and the Levite cross to the other side of the road rather than go near the wounded traveler in Jesus’ parable. Their behavior is intentional, self-protective and in the end, cold-hearted. The Samaritan on the other hand, stops. “Which of the three was neighbor to the traveler,” Jesus asks? The lawyer answers, “the one who showed compassion.” It is the Word of God in our hearts—the voice of conscience—that leads us down the road of compassion. It is the heart that resonates to another’s need, another’s pain, and reaches out to comfort, to assist, to alleviate distress and bind the open wounds. We can’t hear that voice when fear stifles the heart’s natural tendency to “feel with” the other. We can’t hear that voice when we refuse to listen to another’s life experience and allow ourselves to recognize God’s hand in fashioning their path, or God’s love and trust in providing them the freedom to make decisions on their own. The Word of God is written on our hearts, the reading from Deuteronomy tells us. It brings to mind a statement from The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint Exupéry. “It is only with the heart one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

Our readings for July Liturgies: July 13 & 14 – Deut 30:10-14; Ps 19; Col 1:15-20; Lk 10:25-37. July 28 – Gen 18:20-32; 13:1; Ps 138:1-3, 6-8; Col 2:12-14; Lk 11:1-13.

Mass Schedule This Month

Our Mass in **Portland** will be Saturday, **July 13**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way at 5:00pm**. Potluck follows. We will celebrate with entreées, salads, veggies 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 Sunday, **July 14**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd, at 4:00pm**. A potluck will continue our celebration with entreées, salads, veggies 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, **July 28**, at **10:30am** we will celebrate Mass in **Battleground**.

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.

Community Picnic

Last year's summer picnic drew a wonderful group of about 15 Sophia Christi members from Eugene and Portland to Carol's house in Stayton. Dianne brought her guitar, Gary played his fiddle and we sang, ate, walked in the forest, laughed and talked through the afternoon. Everyone had a great time and it was decided that we'd do it again, and this time earlier in the summer. So mark your calendars for **Saturday, August 3, from 1:00 to 4:00** in the afternoon. We will meet at **Carol's, 40656 Huntley Rd., Stayton, OR**. Stayton is just east of Salem, and a beautiful Saturday drive midway between Eugene and Portland. Her phone and email (for questions and additional help with directions): 503-769-5299 and carolz@wvi.com. Directions will also be available at Masses next weekend. This will be an outdoor potluck picnic, plates and table settings provided. Bring anyone you wish to bring and be ready to enjoy a wonderful time in the country with your Sophia Christi community. We hope for a grand turnout this year!

DIRECTIONS:

From PORTLAND (Approx. 65 Miles):

Travel 46 miles south on I-5

At Exit 253 take ramp to OR 22. Turn left onto 22 Eastbound (Stayton-Detroit Lake)

Travel 12 miles east on Hwy 22. Take Exit 13 (Cascade Hwy - Stayton-Sublimity)

Turn right onto Cascade Hwy (1st Ave). Travel straight through Stayton, crossing the N. Santiam River.

Take first left after crossing river (Kingston-Jordan Dr.)

Travel 1.1 miles to railroad tracks. Take left immediately after crossing tracks (Kingston-Lyons Dr.)

Travel 2.1 miles to Huntley Rd. (Huntley Rd. goes straight, Kingston-Lyons veers to left)

Travel 1.1 miles to top of hill and turn right. Travel .25 miles down gravel driveway.

Feel free to Park and/or turn around in lawn area.

Note: If you intersect back to Kingston-Jordan Rd., you've gone too far

From Eugene (Approx. 65 Miles):

Travel Approx. 39 miles north on I-5

Take Exit 233 U.S. Hwy 20. Turn Left on U.S. HWY 20 (Lebanon-Sweet Home)

Travel 5.3 miles on Hwy 20. Turn Left on OR 226 (Crabtree-Scio)

Travel Approx 9.4 miles into Scio - continue on Hwy 226 by turning right (intersection of 1st and Main St.)

If you go over the bridge on Main St., you went too far.

Go Approx. 2.1 miles to Richardson Gap Rd., Turn Left.

Go Approx 1.1 miles (Traveling through Shimanek Covered Bridge then up steep hill). At intersection on top of hill Drive straight onto Ridge Dr. (Do not veer left onto Cole School Rd.)

Drive approx 4.4 miles to stop sign (Mt. Pleasant Church is on corner).

Continue straight onto Huntley Rd. for approx 0.7 mile to crest of small hill. Turn Left onto gravel driveway. Travel .25 miles down gravel driveway.

Feel free to Park and/or turn around in lawn area.

Note: If you travel down a steep hill through a wooded area on Huntley Rd., you went too far.

Website

Development of new content and a new look for the website continues as technical and artistic aspects of design and function are created. One of the more interesting features of our new online presence will be **stories and comments from you**, the community of Sophia Christi. This will be a place to share experiences of community prayer, to talk about what draws you, why you continue to be involved, and what it means to you to be part of an inclusive Catholic community. Please send your stories and comments to me soon so that our web designer can create the format for that page with your contribution in mind. And take a look at the website when you have a chance. If there is something you would like to see included on the new site let me know. Once the design is

completed we will be able to add content and photos but won't be able to make major changes, so now is the time to make your wishes known. Our web address is:

www.sophiachristi.org

Eugene Pride

Eugene Pride will take place **August 10** from **noon to 7:00 pm**. Sophia Christi is hoping to have a booth at this event if there are enough volunteers to cover staffing. This is a wonderful opportunity for outreach and a way to show Catholic support for people who expect only negative rhetoric from the "official" voices in our Church. This is such an important ministry, and it can't be accomplished without you. There will be a sign-up sheet available after the Eugene Mass next Sunday.

Eugene Celebration

The Eugene Celebration is August 23-25. Sophia Christi will have a booth in the Community Causeway again this year. Many people stopped last year to talk, ask questions, sign our email list and share stories of both hope and alienation. As a result of this outreach we added four new members to our group—a wonderful added bonus for our efforts! Volunteers are needed to staff the booth from **11:00am to 5:00pm on Saturday and Sunday**. There will be bookmarks and brochures to hand out, email addresses to collect and interesting people to talk with about Sophia Christi and the larger church. There will be a sign-up sheet available after Masses this month and next for staffing in 2-hour blocks. Your help is greatly needed!

6th Anniversary this August

Sophia Christi will celebrate its 6th anniversary at Masses this August! If you are interested in helping to plan the liturgy or to organize the celebration please let me know.

Upcoming Events

This is a reminder that Fr. Helmut Schüller, founder of the Austrian Priest's initiative, will be in Portland on **August 4** as part of his U.S. Tour titled "The Catholic Tipping Point. Call To Action Northwest is sponsoring the event at **Central Lutheran Church, 1820 NE 21st** in Portland from **2-4pm**. Schüller and his movement are gaining sympathetic support from clergy across Europe as well as here in the U.S. He is focusing attention on the priest shortage and subsequent closing of parishes throughout the West due, in large part, to an intransigent Vatican mindset against opening ordination to women and married men. He is also calling for a change in church rules such as the banning of divorced and remarried Catholics from receiving the Eucharist. His 15-city speaking tour of the U.S. is being sponsored by a consortium of Catholic reform groups such as Call to Action, FutureChurch, Women's Ordination Conference, Voice of the Faithful, CORPUS, Dignity USA, and National Coalition of Nuns.

Portland Gay Pride--Report

Marching in a Gay Pride parade is always a colorful experience and this year was no exception. Our Sophia Christi banner was one of many rainbow signs carried as part of the Community of Welcoming Congregations contingent led by CWC Director Tara Wilkins. I think we were sandwiched between one of many Jewish groups and the Church of the Brethren. At least those are the groups we spent most of our time near as we waited nearly two hours for our turn to join the parade route since we had been assigned a space very near the end of the line. We were entertained during that time by a neighboring float housing a well-amplified disco boom box! One of the best parts of

the parade is the cheers from the crowd! This year we got some extra call outs as we followed the four Catholic parishes that marched in defiance of the new Archbishop's admonition not to display church banners. Meanwhile at our booth in the festival grounds, staffed by hearty volunteers, we gave out two hundred tootsie roll pops, gathered more than 30 names of folks interested in our community, and passed along nearly 100 bookmarks and Sophia Christi brochures! A successful and fun two days for all, and a summer outreach goal accomplished!

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

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.**

The call to compassion is sometimes difficult to follow, as the parable of the Good Samaritan points out so clearly. There will always be competing needs, competing values and vast differences in perception between individuals and groups in such a complex society as our own. When we listen to one another with our minds alone we will always be looking for differences and similarities on which to base our judgments and evaluate the merits and deficiencies of the other's point of view. This is how the mind functions, how it works to protect us from dangers of all kinds and bestow advantages in a competitive environment. Compassion, on the other hand, is an unselfish movement of the heart. It is kind, considerate, careful, benevolent. It demonstrates care by acting with empathy in response to the needs and concerns of others. The Church we aspire to create and embody is a church of compassion where rules and laws foster a willingness to understand and a commitment to live out that understanding in actions that are inclusive of "strangers," unbiased, radically respectful and just. We are, of course, travelers on the road. There are times of selfishness and fear when we might act more like the priest and Levite in Jesus' parable than like the Good Samaritan. The role of a faith community is to call us back, over and over, to a place of deep listening where we can hear the Word of God alive in our hearts. The community is there to inspire and encourage a re-dedication to the work of compassion, and it is there to accompany us on the journey of being the best neighbor we can be to all we meet along the path.

Blessings for a bountiful summer,
Toni