

September 2, 2013

Greetings this Labor Day weekend,

In the last two weeks I've been surprised to hear several people tell me how ready they are for summer to end. In years past I have heard just the opposite from so many and therefore this new phenomenon has captured my attention. The explanations given have all run in the same vein: people simply want permission to stop "doing" for awhile. One young person said, "I've been going all summer-going out with friends, going to parties and weddings, going camping on weekends, visiting family out-of-town, doing house projects. I'm so glad summer is almost over-I'll be able to stop!"

Whatever the season it is easy to get caught up in outward-focused activity. The pace of life is often hurried. Demands on time and attention proliferate as technology speeds the flow of information as well as the expectation of continuous availability and immediate response. The need to "keep up" in order to participate in the social and political dynamic of the culture creates a subtle but very real pressure on everyone. It isn't that these outward activities are not enjoyable. In fact they are often interesting, pleasurable and even entertaining. The question, though, is: are we simply moving along a conveyor belt through life, interacting with and being interacted with-briefly-only to move to the next "station" of fleeting interaction before moving on? Or are we taking time to stop, step back, reflect, pray, perhaps dive into the deeper layers of our own experiences where the Spirit moves, where Wisdom lives, where God guides and speaks in whispers?

The coming of fall and winter offers a seasonal reminder that activity and productivity, though good and proper in their own time, must be balanced by inactivity, introspection, rest and quiet. "Renounce all your possessions," Jesus tells us in next week's Gospel. Let go the need to acquire more and more information, connections, experiences, pleasure, and influence as well as material, social and intellectual "possessions." Give yourself permission to step back and observe where and how you are using your time. Stop "doing" and be in that still interior place with God for awhile. Labor Day is a time to rest from activity and begin shifting gears toward a quieter phase of living. It is an invitation to synchronize our rhythms with those of nature and allow a natural turning toward the interior to grow in strength and inspire our lives.

Our readings for September Liturgies: September 8 & 14 - Wis 9:13-18; Ps 90:3-6,12-17; Phil 9-10, 12-17; Lk 14:25-33.

Mass Schedule This Month

Our Mass in Eugene will be Sunday, September 8, at First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd, at 4:00pm. Plan to stay for the potluck after Mass. Bring an entrée, salad, veggie dish or dessert. If you are interested in being part of the choir as a musician or singer, please come at 3:00 for rehearsal.

Our Mass in Portland will be Saturday, September 14, at Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way at 5:00pm. Stay for the potluck after Mass and bring an entrée, salad, veggie dish or dessert. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

Please note: there will be No Mass in Battle Ground in September. The next Mass in Battle Ground will be October 27.

Pastoral Update

August has been an especially productive month in a very busy summer for Sophia Christi. Our outreach efforts added approximately 30 people to our mailing list and brought three new people through our doors. Below you will find updates on our August activities as well as announcements about upcoming events this fall.

Website

The test site is up! and we are now in the process of working out details on each page. This will take a bit of time in order to have all copy ready and all pieces working harmoniously. We are expecting to launch the site in October. In the meantime you can still access our current site at www.sophiachristi.org <<http://www.sophiachristi.org/>>

Report--Eugene Pride

This was our first year at Eugene Pride, and many people stopped by the booth for lollipops and conversation. Three of those we talked with on Saturday came to Mass the following day and were excited to be there. This is an event that holds great promise for our continuing ministry of affirmation and welcome of the LGBT community.

Report--Eugene Celebration

The Eugene Celebration was August 24 & 25. Several people staffed the booth over those two days, and several sent comments about their experiences. Rather than summarize their observations in a single paragraph, I've briefly edited and will now pass along their personal reflections:

I had a great conversation with a woman who was married to an ex catholic. She loved the idea of a woman priest and thought she would come to Mass and then get her husband to attend the next Mass. She very enthusiastically took the info we had including a CD.

--Rhoda Kirwin

While I was at the booth on Saturday we had several people say Sophia Christi was something they had been looking for, including a young male couple from Portland, one Catholic (and very

interested) and the other Unitarian (interested to hear that our community has at least one Unitarian member). So you may see them in Portland. I hope so. Very sweet young men. And I'll bet we see several Eugeneans down here too - there were a number who made sure they took something with the time & place of our Masses on it. There were lots of people interested in knowing about our community, and also a whole range of questions. We gave out lots of bookmarks, brochures & lollipops, quite a few CD's, and several copies of the article on the Catholic case for marriage equality. It was a good day. -Dorothy Attneave

There was lots of interest in Sophia, and quite a number of people who already knew about our community but wanted to talk/read more. Almost everyone I talked to wanted to talk about Pope Francis. The case for marriage equality paper was a particularly brilliant idea b/c Oregon United For Marriage was EVERYWHERE on the causeway -- at their own booth, at the DPLC, at the ACLU -- they've done a phenomenal job of coordinating their efforts, and the article helped connect us to that effort too, without, I think, putting off people who aren't so interested in the issue. A number of people were interested in the validity of Toni's ordination and I spent a fair amount of time explaining the validity of the apostolic succession for ordaining women. Quite a few of them knew about the Danube ordinations, which was pretty cool.

-Jennifer Rondeau

I enjoyed my time at the booth last Sunday. Had a few good conversations and may have piqued some interest. -Terri Brown

My sister learned to speak up to people who hesitated in front of our booth looking interested, but not knowing what they were looking at. She'd say "We're a Catholic community with a woman priest!" That was all they needed to hear. They'd either nod and move on, or smile/gasp/exclaim, and want to talk more. I felt lots of friendly support, and lots of surprise...sputter..."how can that BE!?" Like Jennifer, I explained several times about the original ordinations. Many were interested and took bookmarks and flyers (sometimes for a friend or relative they just knew were going to be thrilled). -Judith Manning

Upcoming Events

Call to Action Northwest Oregon will be sponsoring Dr. Aimee Upjohn Light, Assistant professor of Theology at Duquesne University on October 12, from noon to 3:00pm at Central Lutheran Church, 1820 NE 21st. The title of her talk is: A Catholic Call for a More Inclusive Church: A Feminist Perspective. She will give a short history of Catholic liberation theologies, arguing for a relational vision of the world's connection to God.

Helen Umphrey of Sophia Christi will be ordained to the priesthood on October 19 at our Portland home-Northminster Presbyterian Church. Watch for more details in the October newsletter but mark

your calendars now for this special event in the life of our community.

The Parish Council will meet Sunday, October 20 from 2-4pm at Almost Home restaurant just off I-5 in Salem. All members of Sophia Christi are invited to attend these meetings. If you are interested in attending please let me know. I am also happy to arrange for carpooling. We meet in Salem because it is an equal distance from both Eugene and Portland.

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.

We have much to look forward to in the months ahead, and much to be grateful for in the summer months we leave behind. I am grateful and reflective as our community steps firmly into this potent seventh year of life. I see signs of growth as individuals take responsibility for outreach efforts, for needs of the community and for extending our mission of acceptance and inclusive welcome into the wider public sphere. As we continue on this journey there will be many more opportunities to share what we have to offer, to initiate new ministries and to deepen our commitment to the Gospel under the direction and guidance of Holy Wisdom. I am delighted to be traveling this road with all of you and thankful for your creativity, generosity and dedication to Sophia Christi.

Labor day blessings to all of you,

Toni