

October 6, 2013

Autumn blessings to each and all,

I took some vacation time mid-September-left town while summer sun still drenched my tiny garden-and returned in a rainstorm that downed power lines in the neighborhood and throughout Portland. Areas I visited less than a week ago are reporting nearly two feet of snow today, though skies were clear and temperatures close to perfect just days before now. I'm reminded how quickly everything can change-from weather to circumstances to life itself. Yet I continue making plans based on a routine assumption that "the norm" will hold steady, that conditions will remain relatively the same. I do account for the possibility that things might shift as my plan unfolds, but even those variations are normalized and included in the overall scheme. In other words, it's all under control-in my own mind, at least-and the expectation is that life will move along in a pretty orderly fashion with minor challenges along the way until well until minor inconveniences become major roadblocks and something BIG has to change.

The readings for next weekend draw us into the major life hurdles of several people-eleven lepers in the first and third readings, and a grimly imprisoned Paul in the second. All the lepers experience abrupt changes in their life circumstances when they are suddenly healed and released from their disease, yet only two recognize God's hand in their healing and set aside time to express gratitude. This sudden turn of events wasn't in any of their plans, yet only two are humble enough, flexible and appreciate enough, to reverse directions and go back to the person and place of healing. Only two make time to take in what has happened and celebrate gratitude.

Then there is Paul, sitting in a cold Roman prison where he will remain captive for the rest of his life. He writes to Timothy encouraging him to continue the work but also asking him to come, asking for help. He recognizes his own success in preaching the Gospel has led him to this dank Roman incarceration for a second time. While he accepts this reality he also accepts his very human need for a coat to keep him warm and a friend to accompany him in what he recognizes to be his last days. His life circumstances are dire but he takes comfort in knowing he has been faithful in his love of Jesus and Jesus' Gospel. He continues to serve as he can, even from prison.

Whether changes in our lives are thrilling or frightening, all deviations from the norm test our flexibility and our character. Fall is a wonderful time to look into the eyes of change. All around us nature is letting go to both the subtle and spectacular transformations autumn and winter will bring. The challenge is to embrace rather than resist the changes that will move us toward the slow but inevitable returning Light.

Our readings for October Liturgies: October 12 & 13 - 2 Kings 5:14-17; Ps 98:1-4; 2 Tim 2:8-13; Lk 17:11-19. October 27 - Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18; Ps 24:2-3, 17-19, 23; 2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18; Lk 18:9-14

Mass Schedule This Month

Our Mass in Portland will be Saturday, October 12, 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.

Our Mass in Eugene will be Sunday, October 13, 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 Battle Ground will be Sunday, October 27, at 10:30am. 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>> .

Upcoming Events:

Ordination of Helen Umphrey

Our community will celebrate Helen's ordination to the priesthood on October 19 at Northminster Presbyterian Church. The ceremony will begin at 11:00am with reception following downstairs in the parish hall. Bishop Olivia Doko from Pismo Beach, California will preside. All are welcome.

Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council will meet Sunday, October 20 from 2-4pm at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St., just off I-5 in Salem. All members of Sophia Christi are welcome to attend. Salem was chosen as a meeting place because it is approximately the same distance from Eugene and Portland. It encourages all of us to look beyond the boundaries of our individual locations and embrace the symbolism of inclusivity at the extended level of mission and ministry. If you are interested in carpooling please let me know.

Dr. Aimee Upjohn Light-CTA Northwest Event

Call to Action Northwest Oregon is sponsoring a talk by Dr. Aimee Upjohn Light Saturday, October 12, from noon to 3:00pm at Central Lutheran Church, 1820 NE 21st. She will be speaking from a feminist perspective on the call for a more inclusive Catholic church. She is an acclaimed author and speaker who excited those who heard her at last year's National Call to Action Conference. For more information and to register call Nancy at 503-757-6229 or email her at ndbdpdx@comcast.net <<mailto:ndbdpdx@comcast.net>> . Cost is \$20 for pre-registration or \$25 at the door.

Pastoral Update:

Website

The new website is nearing completion. We are expecting to launch the site sometime later this month. In the meantime you can still access our current site at www.sophiachristi.org

<http://www.sophiachristi.org/>

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.

Changes are afoot in the church as Pope Francis continues to put forward new ways of thinking that harken back 50 years to the Second Vatican Council. So far his actions and his words point toward a humbler, more inclusive and compassionate embrace of the entire People of God. Many are waiting for concrete structural modifications in church governance. Others wait for theological, philosophical and political shifts that will encourage a rather calcified institution to welcome back the many voices systematically ignored and repudiated during the last two pontificates. Women are waiting for him to recognize that all of us together are CHURCH, that discussing "women" as a separate category only further divides the people of God into distinct and unequal camps providing fuel and motive for advancing discriminatory practices. Change of heart, change of mind, change of traditional and cultural mindsets require a willingness to let go of preconceived, even ancient, cultural norms dictating gender expectations and social behaviors. Perhaps we, as a global people, are ready for such change and Francis represents the symbolic watershed moment moving us forward into a new dawn of equality and inclusivity on every front. We can hold on to hope and pray that this is so.

May you embrace this time of change with hope, knowing God is present in the details,

Toni