

November 2, 2013

Happy All Saints & All Souls Days,

Through the Sundays of November our lectionary readings focus on “end days” as the current church calendar comes to a close. The 1st Sunday of Advent—and the first day of the church year—will be December 1st. We will then shift into Cycle A of the lectionary, and begin a journey through the Gospel of Matthew.

But in November we contemplate endings. Yesterday was All Saints Day; today All Souls Day. The month is launched with that paradoxical blending of endings and beginnings—ending of ordinary physical-life experience, and the beginning of extraordinary non-physical life experience. We remember our ancestors in life and in faith, celebrate their influences, their lives and legacies, give voice to gratitude, offer prayers for them and ask their assistance in our lives.

As Christians we are blessed with a theology of resurrection. This doctrine has its roots in Judaism where belief in an afterlife and personal resurrection developed somewhere around the year 200 B.C. Two centuries later, in Jesus’ day, the idea was still being hotly debated with Pharisees on one hand accepting, and Sadducees on the other rejecting, the concept of life continuing beyond this physical-world reality.

Patricia Datchuck Sanchez, refers to PHEME PERKINS’ book *Resurrection* in her most recent article for NCR’s (National Catholic Reporter) column “The Word”. She says: “Perkins insists that resurrection is not merely an assertion in the creed, but it is the condition for the emergence of Christian speech itself. To put it another way, were it not for the Resurrection, we Christians would have nothing to say to the world.”

It is interesting to note that many of Christ’s followers today do not believe in the resurrection. In fact many don’t believe in an afterlife at all despite a tradition peopled with mystics, a history rich in mystical literature, and a theology replete with feasts of saints, prayers to saints, and prayers for loved-ones who have died. In both ritual and symbol we continue to affirm the ongoing presence of Jesus within the assembly of God’s people, holding firm to a conviction that life is eternal, never-ending. This we offer to a materialistically constricted world, where what is seen with physical eyes is often accepted as the only reality that exists.

Spiritual vision offers an alternative to that narrow perspective. It says to the world “physical reality is just one part of the whole of existence. The life of the Self is much more vast than our physical senses can perceive. Look at the cycles of nature and see them as an outer manifestation of a universal principle that applies to all life everywhere. We emerge from the soil of LIFE. We return to the SOURCE. We emerge again in a new way, tender yet vibrant. Resurrection follows death as part of the natural cycle.”

And so we remember our ancestors this month, pray for those who have died, and live with hope in the face of mortality. As we do so we remain grounded in faith that God’s “reality” extends far beyond anything our physical senses can ever grasp. In some mysterious way it includes a concept we call “resurrection”—something we will never be able to fathom—because mystery is the incomprehensible stuff of God.

Our readings for November Liturgies: November 9 & 10 – 2 Macc 7:1-2, 9-14; Ps 17:1, 5-6, 8, 15; 2 Thes2:16-3:5; Lk 20:27-38. November 24 – 2 Sam 5:1-3, 16-18; Ps 122:1-1-5; Col 1:12-20; Lk 23:35-43

Mass Schedule This Month

Mass in **Portland** will be Saturday, **November 9**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa ParksWay at 5:00pm**. Stay for the potluck after Mass and bring an entree, salad, veggie dish or dessert. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

Mass in **Eugene** will be Sunday, **November 10**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd, at 4:00pm**. Plan to stay for the potluck after Mass. Bring an entree, 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.

Mass in **Battle Ground** will be Sunday, **November 24**, at **10:30am**, Helen presiding. The address is 26605 NE 96th Ct., Battle Ground, WA. For information or directions call Helen at [360-687-7475](tel:360-687-7475) or email her at umphrey@ipns.com.

Upcoming Events:

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

The annual meeting of the Parish Council will be held **Sunday, December 14, from 2-4pm at Willamette University 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. If you would like to come please talk to me or to one of the Council members (Joy Wallace, Leanne Kerner, Danielle Bastien, Carol Zolkoske, Judith Manning) so we can work our carpooling.

Sophia Christi Members Interviewed by Jody Seay

Amanda Powell, member of Sophia Christi in Eugene, has been interviewed by Jody Seay on her television show "Back Page." The show will be on OPB-Plus, November 10, at 8:30am. (Comcast Ch. 310; Over-the-air: Portland 10.2, Eugene 28.2)

On her long-running TV show, Jody interviews authors who live in Oregon and Washington and have written books on a variety of subjects. Amanda will discuss her new book of poetry "Prowler".

Dianne Dugaw, also a member of Sophia Christi in Eugene, has been interviewed as well, and that show will appear at a later date.

Jody is both witty and introspective and is a delightful interviewer. To learn more about Jody Seay check out her website at <http://jodyseay.com/>

Pastoral Update:

A Message from your Parish Council Treasurer

Each month a member of the Parish Council will be writing a short piece for the newsletter. This month Leanne Kerner, our Treasurer, would like to say a few words. Leanne was one of the four original Council members who spent months filling out the paperwork and following up details to create our 501(c)3.

I'm Leanne Kerner, a Portland member of the original Sophia Christi leadership team from back in our community's infancy. As Treasurer, it's been my pleasure and great satisfaction to see how we've grown in numbers and financial strength over our short history.

A big thanks to all of you for your generous offerings which show how much you value Sophia Christi. I think you'll be pleased to hear shortly of new ideas being generated as a result of our increased financial viability. And you'll have a big say in whether and how we bring these ideas to fruition. Stay tuned!

Thanks, too, to those of you who've accepted the always-open invitation to attend the quarterly Parish Council meetings. Your input and feedback is invaluable, and it's wonderful to have your energy and insights at these meetings.

I'd love to meet you if that hasn't happened yet. Please come up and introduce yourself when you can. --Leanne

A Message from Helen following her Ordination to Priesthood

Our own Helen Umphrey was ordained to the priesthood October 19 at Sophia Christi in Portland. Olivia Doko, Bishop of the Western Region of RCWP (Roman Catholic Women Priests) presided at the liturgy. Several members of Helen's family were present for the occasion along with seven priests, a deacon and two candidates from California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho. The ordination ceremony was beautiful. The church was full—of life, excitement, people and joy. Helen sends the following message to the Sophia Christi community:

My heart is filled with gratitude for the recent gift received, that of priesthood. Thank you for your support and encouragement as I moved toward this sacrament, and thank you to the many ways in which you assisted as ministers and participants at my ordination. Special thanks to Bob Larroque who touched me many years ago when he said that he was retired from active ministry as a deacon until women were given an opportunity to be involved in diaconal and priestly ministry. It goes without saying that I am grateful to Toni Tortorilla for being my inspiration and model in ministry and my mentor as well. I pray that you all be blessed abundantly from a loving God. --Helen

Website

Our new website is ready to launch! It is mobile-device-friendly and supports interactive features that allow many new possibilities for the community. It will take time to learn the mechanics of this new tool, (especially for those, like me, who are such novices in the tech world) but we now have a solid foundation for the types of outreach some of us have been envisioning for years. The new site will be up and functioning within the next week or two. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to express them. We are on a learning curve and this is a work in progress. Let us know what you think. The end goal is to serve the internal needs of this community while reaching beyond our circle to those seeking an open, inclusive and welcoming church. Our web address remains the same: 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](tel: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

We received the following message this month from Kathleen Greene, Director of the Food Pantry:

Dear Sophia Christi,

Please forgive me for not writing to you and giving all of you the thanks you deserve. The government shutdown was very hard for the food pantries. Our last big donation of USDA food was going to be the last until...? But we are good now until the next political problem. We buy and receive 6,000 pounds of food each month. 4,000 plus pounds are donated from the USDA.

Thank you so much for the cash money. We had no rice. Your cash donation bought enough rice to help us all month. Dry rice and dry beans are staples for our clients.

The wonderful donations of laundry soap, toothpaste, bath soap, diapers and razors were very welcome. And think of our loved ones when you get into your warm, dry bed tonight. Thank God for our blessings. And we thank you from the very bottom of our hearts. –Kathleen Greene

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 I walked through the neighborhood this afternoon I felt like a kid as I kicked through the piles of leaves covering sidewalks and streets. The glorious colors of Fall can make me forget the endings embedded in this season. There is so much beauty. Roses and clematis are still blooming among the red, orange and yellow fallen leaves. I almost forget the year is dying. I overlook my own mortality as I put the garden to bed, rake under the apple trees, clean the gutters. But the feast days and readings of November invite me to accept and embrace endings, to learn how to bring closure to old ways, injuries, disappointments and regrets. They ask me to face into the heart of every kind of death, and death itself, with courage. They direct my attention toward the legacy of saints, loved ones, friends and colleagues. They inspire me to faith in the foundational truth of resurrection. Spring will follow winter. Life will emerge from death, every time.