

May 5, 2014

Happy Easter everyone!

In these early weeks of Easter our Gospel readings have focused on Jesus' appearance to the disciples after his resurrection. These accounts, along with the earliest writings we have from the first century of Christianity—those of Paul—anchor our faith in the risen Christ and in God's continuing presence in and among us. They call us to remember who we are in the depths of our being—expressions of God's life and mercy as was Jesus, with the same mission of service and devotion as his to a world in need.

We are individually and collectively walking the road to Emmaus. We need each other's companionship and encouragement when the world's darkness overwhelms us and our sense of hope is destroyed. It is easy to forget God is with us on the road, easy not to see the face of God in those walking beside us. The ordinariness of actual physical presence seems, itself, to obscure the light and blessing of God shining through others as we walk the path of life. Sometimes it is the simplest gesture—the "breaking of bread"—that opens the door of consciousness to the presence of God's infinite care and action in our lives.

As I was walking through the neighborhood a few days ago I came to a relatively busy but unregulated intersection. As I approached the curb I noticed an oncoming car slowing down, then coming to a full stop as the driver waited for me to cross the road. Even though I know there is a traffic law about this, every time it happens I experience the gesture as a supreme act of kindness. I feel the presence of God in the driver who patiently waits, putting her or his life on hold for a few seconds, just to take care of me!

"Breaking bread" gestures are like that. They herald a Divine energy flowing through the universe—then personalized in one fleeting moment of connection—that reveals the heart of love, the ongoing attention and consideration of God.

Readings for Liturgies can be found on the USCCB website at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/>.

Mass Schedule This Month

Mass in **Portland** will be Saturday, **May 10**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Potluck follows. We will celebrate with entrées, salads, veggies and desserts. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

Mass in **Eugene** will be Sunday, **May 11**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd**, at **4:00pm**. A potluck will continue our Easter celebration with entrées, 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.

Mass in **Battle Ground** will be Sunday **May 4 and May 25** at **10:30am**. Bring non-perishable food and hygiene items for St. Vincent de Paul as well as healthy food to share after Mass.

Upcoming Events:

Portland Pride – June 14 and 15

The Portland Pride Festival will be held June 14 & 15. The Sophia Christi booth has already been secured, but we will need volunteers to staff the booth on Saturday as well as Sunday. We are hoping to have a vehicle in the Parade this year to accommodate those unable to walk the entire route Sunday morning. [If you are willing to staff the booth, or would like to plan on decorating and/or riding in the vehicle, please contact Joy L. at Mass on Saturday. Your help is needed!](#) You can also call or email her. She is in the process of organizing all aspects of our involvement in the Festival.

Mark Your Calendars!

❖ **Parish Council Meeting – July 20, 2-4pm, Location in Salem TBA**

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

❖ **Eugene Pride Festival – August 9, 12 noon to 7pm**

We had a good number of visitors at our booth last year and look forward to greeting even more people this year. We will need staffing throughout the day, so please consider being involved in this outreach.

❖ **Eugene Celebration – August 22-24**

This is another great outreach venue for us! Several people have joined the community after finding our booth and talking with us there. Please consider being part of the Sophia Christi outreach team at this event.

❖ **Community Picnic – September 6, 1-4pm, at Carol's in Stayton, OR**

Our third annual community picnic will take place at the beginning of September. Plan to join in on the fun again this year by putting this on your calendar NOW!

Pastoral Update:

Parish Council Meeting – Update

The Parish Council met in Portland yesterday, May 4. In addition to reviewing the budget and handling general Council business we also covered several big topics:

- 1) We shared reflections on the Lenten community retreat as a way of gleaning lessons to inform future retreat planning. It was agreed that the retreat was a wonderful success!
- 2) We reviewed the compiled results from our community survey noting trends and movements within the community. We learned the number one priority in all three locations of our extended Sophia Christi community is “outreach to the disenfranchised.” A small committee was formed to begin addressing this priority with the intention of enlisting others interested in finding new ways to reach out to those living in the spiritual margins of the Church. [If you are interested in giving some time and focus to this issue please let one of the Council members know next weekend or reply to this email and let me know!](#) Insights from our survey may provide a roadmap for how to move forward and grow as a community, though further conversation is needed to determine and begin to implement action steps. [Come to the next Council meeting if you would like to be part of this discussion or let one of us know your ideas and interest.](#)
- 3) The Council continued an ongoing conversation about the potential for our community to donate a portion of our contributions to local non-profit

organizations that serve the poor. It seems that more conversation with and feedback from community members is needed before moving forward. Our hope is to facilitate conversations on this very topic during a potluck after Masses in the coming months.

The next Parish Council meeting is set for Sunday, July 20th from 2 - 4 pm at a location in Salem, Oregon yet to be determined. Looking ahead, the meeting following that will take place before the Community Picnic at Carol's on Sept. 6 from 11am to 1pm. All are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings!

--Danielle, Parish Council President

Website

Our website is reaching people who might not otherwise be able to find Sophia Christi. In the last six weeks I have answered four email requests for further information, and three people have visited our community as a result of conversations I've had with them either online or by phone. It is exciting to see our online outreach is having some early success!

Additionally, work on the "member portal" continues as we await permission from current members to post basic contact information in the directory. Once these permissions are secured we will provide a password to members who regularly attend Sophia Christi events. We are also developing a Facebook page in order to facilitate the sharing of information within our extended community. As these projects are finalized you will receive further instructions about how to use these new tools to connect with others in the community.

Please keep in mind that the current homily, announcements, reflections and updates are posted on our website each and every month. I encourage you to check it out and send your own comments to the 'News and Events' page for posting. Please bookmark this page www.sophiachristi.org for easy access.

Easter in Eugene

Sophia Christi celebrated Easter Mass in Eugene with a wonderful congregation of members, friends and newcomers. We had 45 people present and the room was full of warm and enthusiastic energy. A delicious potluck followed the service. For the second year in a row rainbow colored Jello eggs punctuated the buffet (-is this a trend)? It was wonderful to hear all the conversations that accompanied the meal – from a story of personal conversion, to the connections between the theology of Easter and the story of Passover. Our celebration of Easter is becoming a much-loved tradition within the Eugene segment of our extended community.

–Patti P.

Holy Week in Battle Ground

Members of Sophia Christi's House Church in Battle Ground were happy to have an "Agape" meal on Holy Thursday evening with Eucharist. "Agape" was an unfamiliar concept for many, but the promise of food, friendship and Eucharist brought interest from ten persons. It was just the right number to gather around the table. We began with an explanation of the "love feast" before filling our plates from a buffet of vegetable dishes and salads that completed a delicious brisket dinner. We sang, prayed, laughed, broke bread and shared wine in Eucharist at the table.

On Good Friday a small group gathered to walk our outdoor stations of the cross.

There was an afternoon and an evening choice, but both times gave us wonderful weather in God's cathedral of the out-of-doors.

Easter Sunday found thirty people gathered on the deck as we sang, blessed our Easter candle, blessed water and sprinkled each other, sang the Gloria, then processed into the house for the remainder of the Mass. There were many "goodies" enjoyed afterward, with good conversation. It was a memorable Holy Week for all.

--Helen U.

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.**

As we approach "Good Shepherd Sunday" next weekend, we are encouraged to receive the resurrection stories of Easter as evidence of Jesus' ongoing care and concern for us, his current "flock." He is the one whose voice we hear; he is the one we follow. But we are not just sheep any longer, we are also disciples who followed Jesus to Calvary, disciples who heard him call our names at the mouth of the empty tomb, disciples who walked beside him on the road to Emmaus and recognized him in the breaking of the bread. We are the ones he commissioned to carry on his work, to be his hands and feet in the world, to be his heart, to take on the mantle of "shepherd" and bring God's light, God's tenderness and motherly attention to those who have forgotten (or have never known) God's presence in their lives. Easter people--this is our calling. We walk forward following the path of Easter's holy Light.

May the Easter season fill you with joy,

Toni