

July 5, 2014

Summer blessings this 4th of July weekend,

I returned home from the office yesterday to find my copy of the National Catholic Reporter in the mailbox. On the front page is an article entitled “*Expressions of Patriotism*,” by Megan Fincher. She interviewed 13 U.S. peace and justice activists asking them two questions: What is patriotism and are you patriotic? Here is the link to that article: <http://ncronline.org/news/peace-justice/us-activists-answer-what-patriotism>. The answers they give serve as counterbalance to some of the Independence Day zeal that spikes nationalism and led me back to the founding principles and documents of our nation. Those principles raise consciousness to a higher level and extend our vision beyond national boundaries if taken seriously: freedom and justice for all, equality across the board, unalienable rights endowed by the Creator that favor life, liberty and happiness over fear and oppression.

Driving to the office Thursday, radio tuned to NPR, the BBC news happened to be on. I was surprised to hear the announcer sharing his delight in hearing the various national anthems at the World Cup. After a sentence or two he indicated there was one particular anthem he thought to be the most glorious of all, and that this just happened to be its 200th anniversary. Without further fanfare the first notes of the Star-Spangled Banner sounded across the airwaves.

I have a knee-jerk reaction to nationalism in all its guises and would normally have simply turned the radio off. For some reason, though, I listened. The familiar strains unexpectedly evoked all the idealism I’d felt as a child, its soaring melody transporting my heart to a place of hope and possibility, this time without raising the specter of betrayal, as it usually does, that leads to a place of grief and despair.

I love the ideals imbedded in the founding documents of this country. I love the lines of Emma Lazarus’ poem engraved on a plaque inside the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me.” And I long for the embodiment of these values in laws that unify us as a people, insure justice for everyone, and lead this nation to embrace the poor and suffering, the homeless “yearning to breathe free.” Yet I have witnessed, many times over, the horrific abuse of these values by both citizens and officials, often with a patriotic fervor. So what is patriotism?

My heart can’t help but embrace the dream of a “united justice-seeking people” who live the founding principles on which their entire identity is based. It’s the same hope, the same longing, that keeps me in a Church marred by devastating abuses of authority and power that have damaged the soul of innocents and ravaged the trust of people throughout the world.

But the seeds of justice are there. The seeds are there! On what sort of ground do they fall?

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, **July 12**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Potluck follows. Please bring entrees, 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 Pentecost Sunday, **July 13**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd**, at **4:00pm**. A potluck follows Mass. Please bring entrees, salads, veggies and desserts. 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 **July 6 and July 27** 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:

Summer Events: Mark Your Calendars!

- ❖ **Parish Council Meeting – July 20, 2-4pm, Ikebox Coffee Shop**
address, directions at www.sophiachristi.org

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

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

Staffing will be needed at our booth throughout the day, so please consider being involved!

- ❖ **Eugene Celebration – Has been CANCELLED for this year**

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

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! **The Parish Council** will meet beforehand from 11:00 to 1:00. Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting.

Agenda for the July 20 Parish Council Meeting:

- ❖ parish council business (Danielle's resignation, election of new members and new president, future meeting location)
- ❖ community discussion about money including pastor stipend
- ❖ community survey follow up and committees
- ❖ possible parish council retreat
- ❖ next community retreat

Pastoral Update:

A Message from Danielle, Council President:

At the upcoming Parish Council meeting I will be resigning from my role as President, as I have decided to move to the Bay Area in August. At the meeting, we will hopefully select a new Parish Council President, and I have no doubt that person will lead the Council, and by extension the community, well. It is bittersweet for me to share this news, as I am excited about what lies ahead in California, though at the same time I am sad to be saying "see you later" to the Sophia Christi community. This community has

embodied the welcoming spirit of our God for me, and I am inspired by the integrity with which the community practices its faith. While on the Parish Council, I have had the opportunity to see the inner workings of our community, and there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to help the community thrive. I have been excited about the potential I see in this community to continue to grow and find new ways to live out our mission more deeply and fully. Though the last Mass I will attend for awhile will be in August in Portland, I will continue to think of myself as being a member of Sophia Christi in spirit from afar. Thank you for letting me journey with you as part of this Sophia Christi community!

--Danielle

Portland Pride a Wonderful Success!

A huge “thank you” to Joy L. for organizing all the details of our presence at Pride this year! We had a beautiful new sign for the booth, compliments of her family’s talents and effort. This allowed us to carry our banner in the parade Sunday while continuing to have optimum visibility at the festival when parade participants began arriving at the festival grounds. Joy brought in her truck, and Sally her car, so several members unable to walk the entire route could be part of the parade. Joy and Jim loaded everything in and out of the festival grounds both Saturday and Sunday as well.

Thank you to Danielle, Ron and Mike for helping Joy and Jim staff the booth earlier Saturday, and to Jennifer and her daughter Laura from Sophia Christi in Eugene who took over later that afternoon so Portland folks could participate in our regularly scheduled Mass that day. It’s the first time the “second Saturday” has fallen on the same weekend as Portland Pride and these Eugeneans took charge of all the details involved in closing the booth that evening, and then helped Joy L. Sunday morning to get things set up and ready for Festival goers following the parade. Thank you also to Helen for staffing the booth Sunday as the Festival opened, handing out candy, conversing with fresh arrivals from the parade and welcoming them to our booth. Since the “Catholics” were near the end of the parade route our booth would have been an empty shell of a place for the first two hours of the Festival without her there!

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped in any way. After weathering 3 or 4 torrential downpours on Sunday afternoon, we finally packed up our booth and left the festival grounds around 4:00pm. There were just a few wet stragglers in the park by then, but we came home having had many wonderful conversations with people over the weekend. Next year we’ll do it again and we’ll know even better how to prepare—rain or shine!

Website

Just a reminder: there has been a slight delay in opening the “member portal” due to a combination of factors—some questions needing answers, some technical issues, some permissions outstanding—but most of the work is done. We are hoping to launch this page along with the secure community Facebook page early this summer.

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.

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, the sacrament 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 Gospel for our Masses next weekend is Jesus' parable about the farmer sowing seeds. Some seeds fall on rocky ground, some among thorns, but others land in good soil and yield an enormous crop. It is that good soil we can count on, and there is much good soil in both our Church and our nation. Those 13 activist voices give evidence to that rich earth out of which countless other harvests have and will emerge. One such harvest is the hymn "Finlandia" composed by Jean Sibelius in 1899 to which these lyrics were added in 1934. The poet, Lloyd Stone, was just 22 years old when he wrote these words during the interval between the 1st and 2nd world wars (1934). It is sometimes called "The Song of Peace" but it is also known as "This is My Song." Here, perhaps, is patriotism at its best.

This is my song, O God of all the nations, a song of peace for lands afar and mine. This is my home, the country where my heart is; here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine; but other hearts in other lands are beating with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean, and sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine; but other lands have sunlight too, and clover, and skies are everywhere as blue as mine. O hear my song, thou God of all the nations, a song of peace for their land and for mine.

May the summer be rich and nourishing for all of us,

Toni