

November 2, 2014

In honor of foremothers and forefathers—ancestral blessings,

We begin November each year remembering the lives and legacies of those who have gone before us. Whether our familial predecessors were people of faith or not, as Catholics we recognize and celebrate the Gospel's proclamation that life is not limited to the physical plane, that it is ongoing, everlasting. Belief in the Communion of Saints flows naturally into an embrace of All Souls who have passed through this dimension of time and space we call Earth. We pause here, near the end of the Church's liturgical year, to remember those who have left their mark on our world and on our lives. We honor them. We pray to them and/or for them. We bless and forgive them their shortcomings, ask their forgiveness, express gratitude for their lives, their insights and wisdom. We have been challenged as well as nurtured by those who have traveled this path before us. In some mysterious way, the Church tells us, they continue to accompany us still.

The mystics of yesterday and today teach, then remind us, that the density of our ordinary senses shrouds perception of the extraordinary reality in which we live. In the halls of science an array of researchers, most notably the physicists, are beginning to tell us the same thing today. We are living in an environment of great Mystery, a Mystery so vast and unimaginable that most of us fixate on the day-to-day "normal" touchstones of sensory data in order to feel safe, solid and secure. That's probably why so many of us are content to ride the edges of spiritual awareness rather than venture into the deeper waters of spiritually transformative experience.

"Ordinary" life, like ordinary time is a construct we use all too often to avoid the great unknown in which we live. We take comfort in routines (though they often bore us) because we intuitively know that the world we see, hear and touch every moment of every day is an infinitesimal portion of what's really REAL. The world beyond our senses is far larger and more complex than anything our physical senses can perceive. This fact can render us anxious and insecure unless we are able to allow our non-ordinary senses to touch the subtle fabric of transcendent reality. Though our culture discourages those innate senses from ever being acknowledged, let alone developed, all of us have the necessary spiritual equipment for perceiving the non-physical realm. Faith is a vehicle many use to approach that dimension. Religion offers tools.

The ancestors have left the imprint of their insights and experiences in writings, music and a variety of art forms throughout the centuries and in each generation. We remember them this weekend. Their faithfulness and courage, suffering and resilience, triumph and humility are gifts we receive with gratitude. There is purpose and meaning in this journey of life, they tell us, and there is so much more than meets the eye. The souls of our loved ones fill the timeless, spaceless void around us without our conscious awareness. The Communion of Saints is a way of conceptualizing the great mystery of life everlasting our Gospels teach. This is the legacy of the ancients, and it is ours to receive.

**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, **November 8**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Potluck follows. Please bring your favorite entrees, vegetable dishes, salads 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, **November 9**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup>**, at **4:00pm**. A potluck follows Mass. Please bring your favorite dish to share at the potluck afterwards: entrees, veggies, salads, 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 **November 2 and 23** 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:**

#### **Fall Events:**

- ❖ **Fr. Tony Flannery, Central Lutheran Church, 1820 N.E. 21<sup>st</sup>, Portland, Nov. 18, 7:00pm,**

The Catholic Tipping Point presents an 18-city U.S. Tour by Fr. Tony Flannery, Founder of the Association of Catholic Priests in Ireland, titled "People of Conscience: Reforming the Church Today." In 2012 the Vatican demanded that Fr. Flannery sign an oath agreeing to Church teachings on contraception, homosexuality and women's ordination. He refused, and the Assoc. of Catholic Priests stood with him. This event is hosted by Call to Action, Northwest. For further information please contact Nancy at 503-757-6229.

- ❖ **Parish Council Meeting, January 18, 2015, Ike Box Coffee Shop, 299 Cottage St. NE, Salem, 2-4pm**

Please notice the next meeting of the Parish Council will take place early in the new year. If you have ideas or suggestions, or would like to be more involved in planning or implementing Sophia Christi activities, please consider coming to Salem in January. We carpool from Battle Ground, Portland and Eugene, and you are always welcome to ride along!

### **Pastoral Update:**

#### **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council – Notes and Reflection**

The Parish Council met for its required Annual Meeting this afternoon in Salem. There were 11 people at the table: Helen and Mary from Battle Ground, Judith and Carol from Eugene, Toni, Mitch, Bob, Joy W., Leanne, Jim and Joy L. from Portland. By unanimous vote Judith and Carol were re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer respectively, and Mitch was installed as President.

In addition to electing officers we also approved the 2015 budget after a lively discussion about expected donations and expenses in the year ahead. A suggestion was made that we develop an outreach plan to achieve greater visibility in the communities we serve. We also decided to move forward in creating a list of agencies and organizations devoted to issues of social justice that we, as a faith community, wish to support with a percentage of our monthly contributions.

Looking toward the spiritual needs of Sophia Christi, the Council agreed to find a venue and set a date for another community-wide retreat to be held sometime this spring. Ideally the retreat will occur during Lent but that will depend on site and facilitator availability. If you have other ideas for the Council to consider, please send them to Mitch or one of the other Council members before the January meeting. Contact information for everyone on the Council (and for all who regularly attend Sophia Christi events) can be found in the Member Portal of the website.

### **A Message from the Parish Council will usually be found here!**

Most months a member of the Parish Council writes a short piece for this newsletter. Since no one was scheduled for November I began wondering whether other community members might be interested, or willing, to write a paragraph or two introducing themselves. So I am inviting you to give this some thought. What does Sophia Christi mean to you? What keeps you involved? And if you aren't involved but read the newsletter every month, what motivates you to maintain your connection to the community through this online channel? If you have something to share please send it to me. In this way all of us will be enriched by your unique viewpoint and experience.

### **Website**

Please remember the "member portal" provides access to contact information for members of Sophia Christi as well as for everyone on the Council. If you have lost your password I will be happy to provide it. The web address is [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, 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.**

Last Saturday I had the privilege of celebrating the passage of my dear friend Paul into the Communion of Saints. Several of us from Sophia Christi were there to celebrate his life and to remember, with Mary and his children and grandchildren, the rich legacy of his compassion, companionship and wisdom. Paul would never see himself as a saint,

but in my book that's what he is. In the late 90's when I was moving out of my rental in Eugene with vague plans to pursue a graduate degree in theology or spirituality he and Mary were there by my side helping to empty and clean the house I'd been living in for the last 7 years. When I doubted the wisdom of moving to Oakland without a clear sense of where I was going or what I would be doing Paul encouraged me to take the leap and to trust Spirit's guidance as he and Mary had done so many times in their own lives. His steady faith and reassurance helped calm the nervousness I felt as I prepared to leave everyone and everything I had built during my years in Eugene and put my life completely in the hands of God.

Paul was always a staunch supporter of my ministry and of Sophia Christi. When I invited him and Mary to play an important role at my ordination they didn't hesitate to say yes. When the community in Eugene began to form in the chapel donated by First Christian Church they were there. Paul loved to be helpful whether it was placing chairs where they needed to be or showing up for a meeting with an administrative council as it deliberated on whether to allow our community to continue using its sanctuary. Paul was always a voice for inclusion and welcome, a witness to social and ecclesial justice and a man of deep integrity.

Not long before we moved into our current location at First Congregational Paul was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Throughout his illness Paul remained the perfect gentleman—kind, considerate, humble and unassuming. I like to think we now have an advocate among the community of saints, an ally of the first order, continuing to care, to encourage and inspire our faith in the unseen realm of spirit he now fully inhabits. May we all come to know peace in the ongoing companionship of those who, throughout time, have lived lives of transparent faith in the great Mystery we call God.

Yours in gratitude,

Toni