

November 1, 2015

All Saints Day Blessings to each of you,

The Synod on the Family has come to an end in Rome and most of the bishops and cardinals have returned home. Many on the progressive side of the Church aisle who follow these things were hoping for real and substantive changes in Church language and practice. We were hoping for a welcoming attitude toward the LGBT community and an understanding heart in response to the difficulties of married life, including the reality that some marriages are unhealthy, some are damaging, and not all can, or even should, last a lifetime. The stacked deck of clerical protocol ruled against a Synod in which those women and men, those families, could be represented and heard in the context of their own lived experience and thereby influence the proceedings with a voice and vote of their own. However...however...the Spirit of Sophia was afoot in the corridors of the Vatican, whispering her Wisdom as she threaded her way among the prelates. She reached into the labyrinth of Canon Law and brought forward the conceptual gem of “internal forum” for all to see and contemplate. Though most ordinary Catholics have never heard the phrase, all bishops certainly have. It is and has been a mainstay of Catholic theology through the centuries, is taught in seminaries around the world and has been routinely used in confessionals when individual experience, insight and circumstance contradict the law and practice of the Church. “Internal forum” points to the heart and soul of sincere and honest decision-making where we are alone with our unique situation before God. Those decisions are made within the inner sanctum of conscience, guided by the wisdom of the ages in addition to the wisdom of the times in which we live. It is surprising the Synod would make sudden use of the internal forum to find a point of agreement in an otherwise contentious debate, but now that the primacy of conscience has been introduced into the church’s conversation about all matters related to family life it provides an opening for more timid souls to explore boundaries previously viewed as off-limits for ordinary folks in the pews. Many of us had already come to a place in our experience as adult Catholics where we found ourselves living in and through challenges unknown and unrecognized by Church authorities. As a result, many have already learned to listen more carefully to the voice of conscience and to follow where it leads even though “the church says” those decisions and actions are out of line with its teachings. In doing so, we have been exercising the sacred “internal forum” of conscience and learning to trust that ‘still small voice within’ that directs our lives in accord with what we can discern of God’s will for us and for our families.

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

Mass Schedule This Month

Mass in Eugene will be Sunday, **November 8, at First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd, at 4:00pm.** A potluck follows our celebration. Please bring entrees, salads, veggie dishes and desserts to share. If you are interested in being part of the choir as a musician or singer, please come at 3:00 for rehearsal.

Mass in Portland will be Saturday, **November 14**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Please bring entrees, salads, veggie dishes and desserts for the potluck meal. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

Mass in Battle Ground will be Sunday **November 1 and 22**, at **10:30am**. Please bring non-perishable food items for the poor and hungry of North Clark County, as well as healthy food to share after Mass.

Upcoming Events:

Annual Meeting—December 5, 12:00 to 2:00pm, Ike Box Coffee Shop in Salem

All non-profit organizations are required to hold an official Annual Meeting each year, and Sophia Christi's by-laws state that ours will be held during the year's fourth quarter. At the upcoming Annual Meeting, December 5, we will welcome new members of the Council, elect officers, and adopt our budget for 2016. We will discuss our year-end monetary contribution to Ministry Partners Rose Haven in Portland and North Clark County Food Bank in Battle Ground. If you would like to be part of this discussion, please come to the meeting on December 5. If you can't come but would like to add your thoughts to the discussion, please contact one of the Council members before the meeting. These are: Mitch Moore, Kathy Glover, Joy or Jim Learned (Portland); Judith Manning or Carol Zolkoske (Eugene); Helen Umphrey or Mary Goody. (Battle Ground).

Sophia Christi Lenten Retreat—Proposed Dates—Feb. 19 & 20 or 26 & 27

At its meeting October 18 the Council began looking at possible dates for the Sophia Christi Lenten retreat. Since Ash Wednesday falls on February 10 next year, members felt the third or fourth weekend of the month might work well for the community at large. Mark your calendars now and try to hold these dates open as we attempt to match our schedule with that of a potential retreat leader. If you would like to be part of the retreat committee, or have ideas, requests or questions for that committee, please contact Mitch, Council President, at naloorider@gmail.com

Pastoral Update:

Report from October 18 Parish Council Meeting

The Parish Council met in Salem for our regular every-other-month meeting on October 18. We were joined by a brand new Council Member--Kathleen Glover from Portland. Welcome, Kathleen!

We reviewed the 2015 year-to-date budget and are satisfied with our financial health. A budget for 2016 will be presented for approval at our Annual Meeting in December.

How we will donate to our ministry partners was a budget issue needing resolution. After a lively discussion, we decided that Sophia Christi will donate 100% of its 2015 budget surplus to our two current Ministry Partners in Portland and Battle Ground. Once Eugene chooses a Ministry Partner next year our 2016 contribution will be split three ways.

The Council established a core committee to begin working on the Lenten retreat. Members are looking into the 4-H Camp outside of Salem as a possible venue, and also considering possible facilitators. When we determine dates and details, we will invite all community members to attend. —Judith Manning, Secretary

From the Treasurer

I am finishing up my second year as Treasurer of Sophia Christi and find the job both rewarding and fulfilling. Our records are completely transparent and open to inquiries, so please let me know if you have any questions.

With two months to go until the end of the year, our budget forecast leads me to believe that our donations are going to exceed our budget estimates. Many of you are very generous and give from your heart every month. You are truly a blessing.

Last year the Council decided we would donate our year-end surplus funds to the Ministry Partners chosen by each Sophia Christi location. Since Eugene has not yet designated a Ministry Partner, our surplus will be divided evenly between Rose Haven (Portland) and the North Clark County Food Bank (Battle Ground). Rose Haven provides food, clothing, medical care and other basics for women and children who are homeless or living at poverty level.

The amount that we can give our partners will not be known until the end of the year, but once we know we will pass that information along to you. The Council is very pleased to make these funds available. It is your wonderful generosity that makes it all possible. –Carol Z., Council Treasurer

Portland Ministry Partner—Rose Haven—Continuing Needs

We will continue collecting the following items for Rose Haven's women and children at Masses in Portland. Eugene members of Sophia Christi are invited to participate in this effort until a Ministry Partner in Eugene is chosen. Please note what is currently most needed, as needs change seasonally:

- Large/Plus Sized Clothing
- Warm blankets (fleece or wool preferred)

Hygiene Needs:

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| - Feminine hygiene – tampons & pads | - Hand sanitizer |
| - Shampoo & conditioner (travel size is ideal) | - Deodorant |
| - Soap & body wash | - Body lotion |
| - Toothbrushes & toothpaste | - Combs/brushes |
| - Pocket Tissues | - Razors |
| - First aid supplies | - Incontinence pads |

Contemplative Prayer/Study Group—Eugene

Last Wed. our Sophia Christi Contemplative Prayer Group met once again at the home of Dianne and Bruce Turner. We began by stating our intention which was from Wisdom 8:4-5, and a prayer declaring our trust that Holy Wisdom would bestow wisdom, understanding and divine grace on each of us. After 20 minutes of Contemplative Prayer, our group turned to the reading aloud of Richard Rohr's, The Naked Now.

"The mind is necessary, but it is not everything." This is the first line and the theme of Chapter 8, entitled, "Yes, But". "Yes, the mind can connect us with others, but it can also keep us apart." Yes, the mind can serve the world, but largely serves itself.", etc., etc. In closing, Rohr's points out that all great religions use prayer, meditation or contemplation as an antidote for the over control of the thinking, rational mind. The discussion that followed was an intertwining of theories, philosophies and direct experiences, highlighting the diversity of our group members. The discussion was so involved and exciting that the group ran longer than our scheduled time.

Earlier in the evening, the group briefly discussed the fact that at 13 members, we had reached our maximum capacity for space. All members agreed that the intimacy of a small

circle while praying leant itself to a more intimate and fulfilling experience. We now suggest that other member's of Sophia Christi who are interested in such a group, begin a second one. Anyone of us will be willing to assist in anyway needed! –Kathy P.

Website

Remember that the newsletter, current homily, and Council minutes are posted on the website each month, as are all upcoming Sophia Christi events along with directions to those events. Our web address is 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, reconciliation or anointing, home Masses, weddings, funerals, memorial services or other pastoral care needs.

Today is the Feast of All Saints. It seems appropriate to consider that larger "family" of ancestors-in-faith as the Synod on the Family recedes into the volumes of history. It is the human drama, in all its messiness and moments of astounding sacrifice and compassion, drawing us to remember and celebrate whatever light is left behind for the next generation to follow. In Catholicism we have canonized saints, those the Church elevates as examples of holiness, but we also speak of the 'communion of saints.' This group encompasses all those who have gone before us on the spiritual path, all of our imperfect ancestors who have lived life to the best of their ability and with as much integrity as they could muster. The line between "all Saints" and "all Souls" is understandably murky since the distinction is muddy at best and often depends on the eye of the beholder. Take, for instance, the controversy over the recent canonization of Fr. Junipero Serra! For many in the Hispanic community this was a triumph of history; for many native Americans it seemed a tragic betrayal of history. Depending on one's cultural perspective his elevation to "saint" status could well be argued. What is less arguable, theologically, is Serra's membership in the family. He is, like all of us, a member of the communion of saints. All of us are here because others have been on this road before us and have transmitted their life, their values and beliefs, their foibles, their achievements and their dreams to us. Beyond that transmission, as Catholics we also maintain a faith-inspired perception of the presence of our ancestors as we make our journey through life. Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, aunts and uncles—the communion of saints—accompany us throughout life to the degree we invite them in. They, as well as the saints of history—Catherine of Sienna, Ignatius, Mary, Joseph, Francis, Claire, etc.—are here. We are part of an extended and wildly diverse family that exceeds our limited human imagination. It is something to think about when considering the role of the family in the life of the Church.

Blessings and peace,
Toni