

July 4, 2016

Dear friends,

Yesterday I officiated a wedding in Mt. Hood where the couple's vows were framed by a majestic view of the mountain. The weather was spectacular—sunny and warm, but not hot, with a slight breeze—and the location was picture perfect in every way. Driving up I-84 along the mighty Columbia on Friday for the rehearsal and then again on Sunday offered a feast for the eyes if traffic had been light and slower paced. Waterfalls along the old highway beckoned drivers toward the heart of the Gorge's mysteries while Rooster Rock stood as a sentinel guarding the waterway for generations now and in the future. One of the East coast wedding guests complained about the 'slow' driving speeds here in Oregon as we chatted before the ceremony and I thought about the incredible beauty I was forced to abandon on my way to and from the venue because of those 'slow' speeds of 65 to 70 mph on two 'narrow' lanes of highway in each direction! The visitor had spent a week driving through and around the state of Oregon and was rightly impressed by the stunning beauty and diversity of this gorgeous land I call home. I was aware of my unmerited pride as she spoke, as though I have anything to do with the enchanting splendor of this place other than having chosen to live here, to put down roots here, over three decades ago. Does making that choice provide reason enough for pride? I think of things like this as we celebrate the birth of our nation this weekend. Does the fact I was born in this country give me a reason to be 'proud' that I am an American? What is patriotism about, really? Maybe it has something to do with that inherent human need to belong, to belong to someone or something, to belong somewhere. I belong here because I live here. I am an Oregonian by virtue of the fact I've made Oregon my home. I am an American because I live in, am a citizen of, this country. I am an earthling because I live and move and have my being here on earth at this point in time. It's really that simple. And everyone else who lives on this planet lives somewhere, must live some 'where'. We all 'belong' because we are here. It is so simple, so basic, so absolutely real. Yet somehow that need to belong gets distorted by another basic human need, the need for safety, for security. And the truth is we feel most safe when we are personally and uniquely known, accepted, and understood. We feel safest with people who think like, look like and act like us. We feel less safe with those who are different in one or all of those ways and that leads to creating categories of 'us' and 'them'. So we establish bonds with others who are most like us, search for similarities between ourselves and those who drop into our lives, create friendship circles and identity groups on broader and smaller scales. So I'm a Portlander, a Catholic, an Oregonian, an American, and everyone else—well, they are outside my circle of belonging. Or are they? "Who is my neighbor?" the law scholar asks Jesus in next week's Gospel. Who is part of my tribe, my nation? Who 'belongs' in my circle of care? We all know Jesus' answer. Everyone 'belongs.'

**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 9**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Please bring an entree, salad, veggie dish or dessert for our potluck meal. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

**Mass in Eugene** will be Sunday, **July 10, at First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup>**, at **4:00pm**. A potluck follows our celebration. Please bring an entree, salad, veggie dish or dessert to share. If you are interested in being part of the choir as a musician or singer, please come at 3:00 for rehearsal.

### Upcoming Events:

#### Parish Council Meeting, August 7

The next Council meeting will be at Carol's from 11:00am to 1:00pm on August 7<sup>th</sup>. Our summer picnic follows immediately beginning at 1:00. All Sophia Christi members are invited to the meeting. Carpools can be arranged from both Eugene and Portland. If you are unable to come, and have questions or concerns you would like the Council to address at its next meeting, please contact Mitch, our Council president, at

[naloorider@gmail.com](mailto:naloorider@gmail.com)

#### Summer Picnic August 7—Reminder

*Sunday August 7 from 1 to 4 is the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Sophia Christi Community Potluck Picnic at my house. Everyone is welcome. Bring your family, friends and dogs. There is plenty of room for all. The picnic area is under the giant oaks and we will share the space with the swallows and other birds that are busy raising their young. For those who wish to explore the woods, there is a trail that takes you through an area where deer, turkeys, and other wild creatures make their home. If you wish to take the walk it's a good idea to wear long pants, socks and sturdy shoes. All you need bring is food for the Potluck and a chair. Everything else will be provided. This is one of the very few occasions where as a community we can visit and connect with other members. A time when we can gather with others who share our same spiritual beliefs that are unique to Sophia Christi. We are located 5 miles east of Stayton and 64 miles from Eugene and Portland and some say it's another planet. It takes a little more than an hour and the drive is very pleasant and easy. So please plan to join us. If you need directions or have questions you can email me at [carolz@wvi.com](mailto:carolz@wvi.com). –Carol*

#### Sophia Christi 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

We will celebrate our 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at August Masses this year. Please come!

### Pastoral Update:

#### Notes from June 26 Council Meeting

*We met again, gratefully, at Ike Box in Salem. Our president Mitch couldn't come, so Dianne chaired the meeting. **Pledge Drive:** We reviewed details of the pledge card distributed to members in Eugene last month and affirmed our plan to promote the drive in both Portland and Eugene for two more months. Expenses have been exceeding income by a small margin this year and our goal is to donate a portion of our income to Ministry Partners at the end of the year. **Outreach:** We plan to post a monthly ad on Craigslist for Masses in both Portland and Eugene to increase our exposure in both communities. **Eugene's Ministry Partner:** We are excited about the volunteer opportunities working with the Catholic Worker House. Our volunteer liaison is Anna, who is very involved and has brought several more of us on, making hundreds of sandwiches for the homeless. **Website:** We have completed some necessary updates to the website and will continue looking for ways to improve it. We have also renewed our 3-year discounted agreement with webhost. **Ninth Anniversary:** We'll acknowledge the ninth with announcements, and begin plans for a larger tenth anniversary celebration. We'll ask at for ideas from those attending Masses beginning next month. Everyone interested in helping to plan the celebration please contact Mitch at [naloorider@gmail.com](mailto:naloorider@gmail.com) **Lenten Retreat:** We are looking at two possible weekends in March for our annual Lenten Retreat: March 17-18 (first choice) or March 3-4 (second choice). We will check with the 4-H Camp in Salem to see which of these dates will work with their schedule and plan accordingly. –Judith, Secretary*

## Eugene Ministry Partner Update

*It has been approximately 2 months since Sophia Christi members agreed to partner with the Catholic Worker's "Poverello House", and work with it's founder, Charley Smith, OFS. Since that time, 4 of our members have gone 1-2 times a week to make sandwiches for the homeless. We can make 250+ peanut butter & jelly sandwiches in an afternoon! Then Charley takes them right out to his van and delivers them all around Eugene and Springfield. Every time, there are more people than sandwiches. There is a need for more volunteers to make sandwiches on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The kitchen at Poverello House cannot accommodate more than a few volunteers at a time. We're asking those who can make sandwiches at home to please do so. Ingredients will be provided. Charley also needs folks to help deliver sandwiches in the evening.*

*Anna, in addition to the sandwich making, cooks dinner for the residents one night a week. She also helps at the Sunday morning breakfast served every week under the Washington-Jefferson bridges. Breakfast is also served Mon.- Thursday. There are many opportunities to help with this important work.*

*All of us have enjoyed meeting and talking with the residents. These men, despite their hardships and challenges, are optimistic, personable, and extremely grateful for any kindness. I spoke individually with the residents to see if there was anything they might need or want. Art supplies were requested. Much was donated, but they could still use, specifically, decent quality paints, paintbrushes, dry pastels and paper. With that said, space is at a premium in the house, and smaller amounts of these are appreciated. Bringing art supplies, even coloring books have brought much happiness to those who are using these items again or some for the first time. If you have any questions regarding donations or volunteering, please talk to Anna, Dianne, Rhoda or Kathy. --Kathy*

**Sophia Christi members can become involved in the following ways, and as needs change this list will be updated accordingly:**

- Assist with serving the Tuesday-Saturday AM breakfast
- Make sandwiches on either Tuesday or Thursday afternoon
- Assist in delivering sandwiches Tuesday and Thursday evenings
- Cook a supper meal at the Poverello house on E. 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Make soup and bring it to serve on Sunday morning
- Donate household items: paper towels, toilet paper, toiletries and sandwich bags on an ongoing basis for both the E. 12<sup>th</sup> and W. 8<sup>th</sup> houses.
- Donate art supplies (small quantities): decent quality paints, paintbrushes, dry pastels and paper

For additional information about Eugene Catholic Worker visit the website at [eugencatholicworker.com](http://eugencatholicworker.com). You may also contact Brother Charley at the Poverello house: [charley@eugencatholicworker.com](mailto:charley@eugencatholicworker.com), or, Anna of Sophia Christi at [lankutisa@gmail.com](mailto:lankutisa@gmail.com)

## Portland Ministry Partner—Rose Haven—Items Needed

We will continue collecting the following items for Rose Haven's women and children at Masses in Portland:

- Underwear (new only)
- Socks (new only)
- Practical walking shoes
- Bras
- Rain jackets
- Umbrellas

### **Personal Care Items: New and unopened please**

- Feminine hygiene – tampons & pads
- Shampoo (travel size is ideal)
- Soap & body wash
- Hand sanitizer
- Tooth brushes
- Toothpaste

## 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](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, reconciliation or anointing, home Masses, weddings, funerals, memorial services or other pastoral care needs.

I love this place that I live and delight in its mountains, coastlines, valleys, lakes and rivers. I love the oddities of Portland culture, though I partake rarely, and I bless the relative freedom I experience as a woman living in the U.S. at this time in history. But I'm also aware that many of my neighbors in this town and country I call home are not so fortunate. Many have little real freedom because they lack the basic security that comes from having adequate housing and resources to sustain themselves and their families. Many have less freedom because of the color of their skin or their religious beliefs or their immigrant status, or their unattended health care needs or their abysmal economic conditions or their lack of a proper education or training. Their need to 'belong' in the wider culture is as real as mine yet is constrained by political and societal forces intent on maintaining an intractable boundary between insiders and outsiders, with insiders of all stripes making the rules. This is not the America I can be proud of, nor the state, nor the city I am 'honored' to inhabit. I can only experience a sense of pride if I extend a welcoming hand to those 'outsiders' who have landed in the same place I have landed or who were born in the same country in which I was born and, by virtue of mere 'presence' simply and surely already **belong**. "Who is my neighbor?" the scholar asks Jesus, testing. The one in the ditch, over there in the gutter bleeding, robbed of everything, now destitute, outside your tribe, dying, Jesus might say. And he poses his own question--who acts like a neighbor? The one who shows mercy to the stranger, answers the scholar. The one who reaches out to the proverbial outsider and insures that person's ongoing care until health is restored. Ahh, yes, Jesus then says, "go and do likewise." It is the Gospel's challenge to Christians everywhere. When fear gets the upper hand, as it often will, and we are tempted to bar the door to keep the stranger, the outsider, outside, then how do we respond to that temptation? Whether as voters or city dwellers aware of the plight of those around us, people like us who also have a legitimate claim on the land, water and air earth freely provides, how do we respond? It is a timeless question, obviously, as next week's Gospel clearly attests. But as we celebrate the birth of our country today and witness the pride-filled celebrations and patriotic fervor media presents I have to wonder--what sort of neighbor have we become as a nation? What sort of neighbor would we like to be? What does belonging mean to us today? And where is the road that leads citizens of this vast land to an experience of belonging grounded in the values we say we cherish--values of family, home, freedom, unity and opportunity for all? Can we still embrace the spirit of welcoming the stranger enshrined on one of our greatest American symbols, the Statue of Liberty? These are 4<sup>th</sup> of July questions I ponder as I reflect on the parable of the Good Samaritan. How about you? What are your thoughts and questions this Independence Day, 2016?

Blessings of peace and unity as we celebrate this national holiday,

Toni