

October 2, 2016

Dear friends,

It seems only yesterday the sun was high in the sky, days were long and I needed fans to cool the house down at night to prepare for the next day's heat. Yesterday, for the first time, I bumped the thermostat up to warm the house. There's something disconcerting about the pace of seasonal changes now. I might chalk it up to age if it weren't for the number of 20 and 30-somethings I hear complaining about how fast the months, seasons and even years are speeding by. All this has me thinking. Maybe there is a celestial explanation of some kind that some physicist somewhere could bring to the table, but my guess is that modern life with its instantaneous access and increasing demand for performance speed is taking all of us on a soul-distracting roller coaster ride. What are we doing scurrying from one activity to another? Where are we going in such a rush? This past week I was visiting a 90-year-old relative who is fully engaged with life, attends ballet and theatre performances almost weekly, and is active in her religious community. She retired from her work only two years ago and places great value on being busy. I admire her tremendously and am deeply grateful she is so involved and interested in all that life has to offer. I wonder, though, about the value of 'busyness' that frames and fuels my daily interactions. I wonder whether I am sometimes staying busy to distract myself from being wholly present in the moment, hoping to protect myself from unpleasant thoughts or feelings, avoiding any hint of life's finish line? Does slowing down and choosing stillness feel like a precursor of death? Autumn carries that sense of endings, the aroma of decay and images of shedding the brightness, color and vibrancy of life in its fullness. Autumn reminds all of us that endings are important and real, but the deceptively insidious denial of death in this culture often prevents us from seeing the richness and beauty in letting go, in emptiness itself, in silence and in extended periods of rest. Autumn reminds us that life has more to offer than speed and the thrill of gathering novel experiences. It tells us to gently apply the brakes and slow down enough to savor the colors and scents of rain-soaked earth and falling leaves. It invites our spirits to remember who we are—God-imbued beings engaged in earthly experiences for the sake of growing our God-likeness, our ability to love and serve others without limits or conditions. Our intrepid teacher, autumn, helps us begin our descent into winter's cavernous depths so that we might refresh and realign our souls with God's merciful and mysterious design.

**Lectors: Sunday Mass Readings:** If you are interested in accessing the readings for our weekend Masses they can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/> which is the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website. We use the Sunday readings for both Saturday and Sunday Masses. Though the Church designates the New American Bible (NAB) translation to be used at liturgies, Sophia Christi uses the translation created by Priests For Equality because of its commitment to inclusive language. Lectors will find some differences between the two but are still encouraged to prepare using the USCCB site since variations are somewhat minimal.

### **Mass Schedule This Month**

**Mass in Portland** will be Saturday, **October 8**, 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, **October 9, 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, October 22**

The next Council meeting will be at Ike Box Café in Salem from 10:00am to noon on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. 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)

#### **Save the Date: 2017 Lenten Retreat—March 17 & 18**

If you haven't already done so, please mark your calendar for next year's Lenten Retreat at the Oregon 4H Center just outside Salem. The large dining hall, more intimate 'chapel' space, and lovely walking trails met our needs so well this past spring that we voted to return again next year. More information will be provided as we get closer, but save the date now to take advantage of our annual Sophia Christi retreat.

### **Pastoral Update:**

#### **Where We Are With Pledges**

At this point in our pledge drive twelve households in Portland and thirteen in Eugene have submitted pledge cards. So far \$1,220.00 has been pledged toward our base-line operating expenses of \$1500.00 per month. It would be so helpful if we could close this gap before the Council meets in December to set the 2017 budget. Sophia Christi's monthly expenses include rent on church facilities in Portland and Eugene, website fees (domain names, server, updating and maintenance), printing, pastor stipend, advertising and outreach, office and liturgical supplies, insurance and state (non-profit) fees. We would like to reach a point where we exceed those expenses so we can donate our excess to ministry partners Rose Haven in Portland and Catholic Worker House in Eugene at the end of the year.

If you are receiving this newsletter but find it difficult or impossible to participate in our monthly liturgies, please consider supporting Sophia Christi's ministry and mission with a monthly pledge or a one-time or yearly contribution. Simply click on this link <http://www.sophiachristi.org/donate/> to find our mailing address (5658 N. Denver, Portland, OR 97217) and/or the portal for PayPal. We appreciate you as part of our extended community and continue to hold you in prayer.

### **Ministry Partners:**

#### **Rose Haven—Update**

There are a variety of needs and many ways for both women and men to become involved as a volunteer. You can offer your skills in art, writing, organizing, sorting, fundraising, computing, and medical consulting, or help create a class for the new wellness and empowerment program. Check out those many opportunities by going to <http://rosehaven.org/helping/volunteer/>

Rose Haven also depends on donations from the community in serving the very practical needs of the women and children who come through their doors. The website carries an extensive list of items needed. You can access the complete list by going to

<http://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-items/> or simply respond to the following:

***“We are desperately in need of a new panties and socks (all sizes) as well as travel sized shampoo and conditioner! Please help us spread the word!”***

*“We always need backpacks for our women, so used bags will be gratefully accepted and used for women in need. Additionally, we ALWAYS need new underwear and socks, bras, blankets, sleeping bags, travel sized shampoo/conditioner/hand sanitizer and handled bags (paper sacks from the grocery store are great). Rose Haven guests currently need clothes that can be layered and waterproof items.”*

### **Eugene Catholic Worker—Update**

*The Eugene Catholic Worker group is completing their move to the newly refurbished house on West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Poverello House is now closed. The new house will provide shelter for about 24 individuals, both men and women. As the new house becomes settled, the schedule of activities for food preparation will resume to accommodate the needs of individuals through the winter months. There is no need currently, for food donations. Men’s and women’s toiletry items, socks, hats, gloves, coats, sweatshirts and sweaters are always accepted.*

*In addition to trying to manage the basic housing operations, Br. Charlie is overwhelmed with people in need of specialized care. For example, there is a woman needing medical attention because of her late stage cancer. She has a case worker, it seems, but Charlie cannot constantly be coordinating to make sure she is in contact to get her bandages changed, and drainage tubes cared for. Her mental capacity is such that she cannot manage those kinds of affairs....even to let the case worker know where she is. Compound that type of situation by 23 or 24 and, well, you get a sense of the overwhelm. I keep praying for more assistance for them. I really kind of melt when I encounter the individuals there, and on the streets. They are so vulnerable, and in most cases, so thankful for what little they get. It would be difficult not to love them.*

*If you have items to donate or wish to volunteer in some capacity, contact Anna at 541-683-1936, or by email [lankutisa@gmail.com](mailto:lankutisa@gmail.com). --Anna Lankutis*

### **Eugene Contemplative Prayer Group**

*The Contemplative Prayer Group, made up of members of Sophia Christi-Eugene, is continuing to read "The Naked Now" by Richard Rohr. In Chapter 16 Rohr explains the connections of great love and great suffering. Love and suffering are the "the two universal and prime paths of transformation that have been available to every human being since God created Adam and Eve," he says. "Only great love and great suffering are strong enough to break down our usual ego defenses, crush our dual thinking, and open us up to the mysterious chemistry that can transmute us from a fear-based life into a love-based life." Suffering, simply put, is "whenever one is not in control." It can lead us to surrender to God if we allow ourselves to be led.*

*This chapter gave us much to think and talk about. It's not a subject most of us had previously considered. It certainly gave me a new perspective on suffering. The implications of this chapter will be in the forefront of my mind and soul for, I suspect, the rest of my life. I hope that now I will not run from suffering, but accept it and allow it to lead me to the very heart of God.*

*If anyone is interested in this Wed. night group, please talk to Diane, Judith, Anna or Kathy.  
–Kathy Pekarsky*

### **Preparing for our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

*We are collecting ideas from all of you for our Tenth Anniversary celebration next summer. Please share those thoughts with Toni, Mitch, Judith, Carol, Kathy, Dianne, Bruce, Joy or Jim or write your idea on a slip of paper and place it in the box marked "Sophia Christi 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" which you will find at the back of the Church. And if you are interested in helping plan the celebration, please let one of the Council members*

know so you can be included in the process! For those who enjoy planning and organizing events this will be a lovely opportunity to share your skills and help create a joyous and memorable celebration.

### **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.

In my travels this past week I was stuck by the words of a flight attendant as our plane prepared for landing. After completing the scripted closing statements expected of one in her position she paused momentarily then said "be kind to each other out there." In that brief statement I heard a plea for recognition that we are all in this world together and we need each other desperately. As I peered down the aisle at the backs of my traveling companions I was suddenly aware of how much like children we really are—vulnerable even in our adult suits—all in need of the care and kindness of each other. It seemed particularly poignant following the first pre-election debate that seemed to further divide the nation and electrify hostilities within the electorate. I experienced this flying home as I observed the defensive postures of those displaying their alliances and the apparent discomfort of those forced into standing or sitting next to them. There were no conversations generated by hats and emblems, only a seemingly uncomfortable silence. Be kind to each other out there—a simple plea for healing the scandalously induced antagonisms and self-serving ends of political ambition. In the rushed pace of this election cycle we are swimming in so many distractions it is as though we have been thrust into a virtual house of mirrors. How do we find ground as individuals let alone as a nation? It is a question many are beginning to ponder in advance of the political collision ahead. Our readings next weekend focus on healing and gratitude. The lepers in both the Book of Kings and Luke's Gospel are at the mercy of God's healing grace. They are powerless to heal themselves yet are intensely desirous of healing. God responds through Elisha, then through Jesus. We all need healing. Our nation and our world need healing. We need to forego the purposely-created distractions and focus attention on bridging divisions and being kind to one another. This is our ground, the conviction that we are all children of the same God—flawed and wounded and prideful, angry and scared and suffering from traumas and diseases of mind, heart and body that often can't be named. This is us. We need healing. We plead for it. And as we do, we pray for a healing of our own hearts so that we might see as God sees, and begin to love those we fear and learn to 'be kind to each other out there.'

Blessings of fall,  
Toni