

November 6, 2016

Dear friends,

The leaves of the two Ginkgo trees outside my window are gloriously yellow against the backdrop of orange, red and bronze maple leaves across the street. Yesterday it seemed they had trapped the previous day's sunlight in order to radiate hope and joy on a rainy fall day. I am grateful for the golden radiance of those leaves and for the bright yellow carpet of their fallen companions lining the sidewalk. They punctuate the framed landscape of a duty-filled world as if inviting one and all to luxuriate, even for a moment, in the awesome glory of our earthly home. As I gaze into the leaf-strewn landscape I allow nature to enter my soul. When I listen to the rain and watch it pour through the barren limbs of towering oak, drenching the grasses, washing away dirt and pollen I imagine the whole world washed clean of hatred, fear and rage. I see it saturated by God's grace, impregnated with Christ's light, gestating Sophia's wisdom, and preparing to give birth to a human-Divine order of tenderness and peace.

We are in the end-days of this liturgical year. The timing coincides with a sudden plunge into earlier evening darkness (return to Standard Time) and the end of an especially dark political contest that has triggered anxiety, even paranoia, throughout our nation as well as beyond our borders. So many of us are nervous as we face into the coming week. Whatever the results of Tuesday's nail-biting drama, and its likely stressful aftermath, we have clearly seen the many fault lines within our social landscape. As painful as this is and has been, we cannot address the shadow side of our national psyche until we clearly see it. And see it we do, now more than ever. Fear is everywhere, unbridled and increasingly vicious. For many it feels like end-times. But for many others there is a ray of hope visible in the over-arching gloom. What we can see and claim can ultimately save us; it is what we deny that leads to our destruction. There is pain and grace in that final willingness to see.

Just after Thanksgiving, on Sunday the 27th, we enter Advent and the new church year begins. After mourning the dead and wrestling with the inevitable ending of our lives, the world as we know it and all that it means to us, we move into waiting. We allow ourselves to re-experience hope. There is light and promise buried within the heart of darkness and it begins to rise like magma from the earth's core, from the depths of our own instinctive knowing that death and darkness is not the end, is never the end. Birth awaits us—the birth of Light as the days begin to lengthen at Winter Solstice, the birth of the Christ child once again at Christmas. All creation has been groaning in labor pains until now, Paul tells the Romans, in one great act of giving birth (Rom 8:22). The chaos of these times remind us of his words. Let us hold one another in love as we move through these next few days. We are all part of this great upheaval ushering new life into the world. It's messy, excruciating, and frightening, but we are here to do our part. And we are not alone. As followers of Christ may we always act with kindness holding steady in hope and faith.

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, **November 12**, 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, **November 13**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd**, 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:

Next Council Meeting—Annual Meeting—December 17, 11:00-1:00, Ike Box Cafe

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 17, at Ike Box Café in Salem, we will elect officers, and adopt our budget for 2017. We will determine whether it is possible to make a year-end monetary contribution to Ministry Partners Rose Haven in Portland and the Catholic Worker house in Eugene. If you would like to be part of this discussion, please come to the meeting on December 17. 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. They are: Kathy Glover, Joy and Jim Learned (Portland); Judith Manning, Carol Zolkoske, Bruce and Dianne Turner (Eugene).

Christmas Eve--Eugene, December 24

We will celebrate our 6th Annual Christmas Eve Mass at the home of Dianne and Amanda at 9:00pm, December 24. This has become a wonderful tradition for all who have been able to participate in years past. If you are interested in more details simply respond to this emailed newsletter and Toni will get back to you. Or you can call her at 503-286-3584. All are invited and welcome.

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:

Notes from October 22 Council Meeting

Before the meeting Mitch, our council president, let us know he needed to resign due to time constraints. With sadness we accepted his resignation and discussed how to cover his several responsibilities. We will begin a process for inviting new members onto the Parish Council at Masses in November and will elect a new President at our Annual Meeting in December.

Carol, our treasurer, presented results from the Pledge Drive. We are depending on everyone to fulfill their pledges, in which case we should be able to cover expenses AND, hopefully, have a small surplus to donate to our ministry partners in Portland and Eugene. It appears our 2017 budget will be very similar to our 2016 budget. Looking forward to the Lenten Retreat March 17-19 we are continuing to ask potential facilitators whether they have availability that weekend.

For our tenth anniversary next August, we are brainstorming community bonding opportunities, as well as possible outreach opportunities. A few of the ideas floating around at this point are an outdoor Mass and gathering, speakers/presentations, incorporating our ministry partners in some way, and creation of a community directory. We will form a committee comprised of members from both Portland and Eugene, to explore and flesh out ideas.

The next meeting will be Saturday, December 17, from 11:00 to 1:00 at Ike Box Cafe in Salem. This will be our official Annual Meeting. —Judith Manning, Secretary

Soliciting Nominations for the Parish Council

Attached to this newsletter you will find a Nomination Form for representatives to the Parish Council for 2017. You may fill out and return the form via email, bring it to Mass next weekend or the weekend of Dec. 10 & 11, or send it to Sophia Christi at 5658 N. Denver, Portland 97217. The Council is eager to fill two positions for the coming year and encourages all members to consider becoming more deeply involved in this rewarding service.

Ministry Partners:

Rose Haven—Update

Rose Haven provides for the needs of nearly 3,000 women and children every year and depends on donations from the community in serving those who come through its 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. Paper sacks from the grocery store are also great. Women and children waterproof items and clothes that can be layered.

Eugene Catholic Worker—Update

The Eugene Catholic Worker group has completed the move to the new house at 633 West 8th Avenue in Eugene. They currently house 14 individuals, and are gradually settling in. The sandwich preparation continues, one day per week for the winter. Other food preparation and distribution is yet to be determined. Donations most urgently needed at the house are: twin size sheets, blankets, pillows, socks, hats, gloves, warm coats, and underwear (men’s and women’s). For more information or to volunteer, contact Anna Lankutis at 541-683-1936 or by email Lankutisa@gmail.com --Anna Lankutis

Eugene Contemplative Prayer Group

This past week at Eugene’s contemplative prayer group after our prayer time we read the 19th chapter “The Meaning of Spiritual Love” in Richard Rohr’s “The Naked Now” It starts out with a poem by St John of the Cross:

“When you regarded me, your eyes imprinted your grace in me. In this, you loved me again, And thus my eyes merited to also love what you see in me....

Let us go forth together to see ourselves in Your beauty”

This chapter had us explore the concept of “radical grace” when what we let God see and accept in us also becomes what we can see and accept in ourselves. We left the evening with the message “Simply to love is its own reward!” --Bruce & Dianne Turner

Preparing for our 10th Anniversary

We are collecting ideas from all of you for our Tenth Anniversary celebration next summer. Please share those thoughts with Toni, 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 10th Anniversary” which you will find at the back of the Church. 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

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.

Ginkgo leaves remind us there is light within each and every heart. Jesus taught us to look for that light, to recognize it and reflect it back whether or not it is received. The Spirit is alive in every light-filled effort and can ignite tiny embers into flame. The human heart longs for genuine connection and harmony because God is its home and its source. The ongoing fragmentation of social structures causes deep and relentless pain because we are One Body experiencing a kind of dismemberment as various parts of us are dismissed, ignored or heatedly maligned. Already there are numerous groups as well as local and national initiatives working to heal the traumatic wounds inflicted out of ignorance, disrespect and self-serving interests. Unifying circumstances are being and will continue to be forged in days and weeks to come through the interweaving of events and individuals open to Spirit's guidance and inspiration. God's hands and heart are at work in our world and followers of Jesus are asked to offer their own hands to assist in this work. We watch and wait for the flickering light to show itself, and use our own breath to fan each small spark. We continue listening for the voice of Wisdom as she travels the city streets and country lanes of our land, and clear our hearts and minds to receive her when she happens by. In this month that culminates with Thanks-giving, let us give thanks for community, for friends and family, and for faith in a loving God. Let us maintain a hopeful presence in the world, giving witness to that faith and, perhaps most important of all, let us be people of peace.

An early Thanksgiving blessing to all of you,
Toni