

February 5, 2017

Dear friends,

The beginning of the year seems far in the distance now, farther than a mere four weeks normally seems. A month that began with significant amounts of snow and ice on roadways and sidewalks of our region ended with a mountain of political snow and sludge threatening to bury our national heart in a crater of callous, self-serving distortion. Having to cancel Masses this month due to extraordinary weather conditions left the community without the support and companionship many of us needed as we faced into the headwinds of an inauguration we could barely fathom, let alone claim. I missed you this month, missed our conversations and our communal prayer for guidance, for courage and a sense of direction in the approaching storm.

Like many of you, perhaps, I entered the New Year in a low-grade state of anxiety. Each morning I awoke with an aching heart even before coming to full consciousness as one does in the throes of deep, inescapable grief. And as the days wore on that anxiety grew with each new announcement of potential appointees to high levels of power. Then the snows arrived, blanketing Eugene first and creating icy conditions up and down I-5 and throughout Portland. Eugeneans couldn't move, nor could I. Mass had to be cancelled. No sooner had the ice melted on Portland streets than the collision of freakish weather patterns dumped a foot of snow in the heart of the city bringing the metro area to a standstill. Mass was cancelled again, this time in Portland. The snow and ice created extremely harsh conditions for people on the streets, for the poor, for children who depended on school lunches for basic nutritional needs, for those depending on public transportation to get to jobs, doctors, hospitals. For many others it was a 'vacation', a time to play, to snowshoe or ski around the city, to sit back with a good book and wait for snow to melt, ice to thaw, power to be restored, and the routine of daily life to return to normal. It's that same kind of divide we face on a social and political level in the months ahead. Where do we begin?

Sandwiching that dark day of 20 January 2017 was the National celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the 19th and the Women's March on Washington on the 21st. Dr. King's legacy renewed our faith in the power of determined, non-violent solidarity to effect change. It fueled our passion for "the dream" of equality and justice, and readied us to walk the walk of faithful courage as did Martin and Ghandi in the last century, and Jesus—who inspired them both—long, long before either took their first breath. Joining an estimated 500,000 women, men and children in D.C., and another million to two million across the country and around the world, we marched on the 21<sup>st</sup> behind icons of nonviolent mastery, arm in arm, ready to face our fears and the yawning darkness ahead. We stood strong as the winds of change swept the nation, and we stand here still. Millions of peaceful people have gathered on all seven continents, led by women around the world, to begin a global movement of social and political justice that not only proclaims but LIVES solidarity with the earth and oppressed people everywhere. We are part of this movement and are made for these times. The Body of Christ is on its feet, carrying the crosses of injustice from ages past. The Beatitudes will guide us on this treacherous but necessary journey. The Spirit of Christ is our Light.

**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, **February 11**, 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, **February 12**, 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:**

#### **Next Council Meeting—February 18**

Our next Council meeting will be Saturday, February 18, at Ike Box Café in Salem from 11:00 to 1:00. Please consider coming to the meeting or give your thoughts to Council members before the February weekend Masses on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. For carpool information contact Toni in Portland or Judith in Eugene. Portland Council members: Kathy Glover, Joy and Jim Learned, Annie Hayes. Eugene Council members: Judith Manning, Carol Zolkoske, Bruce and Dianne Turner.

#### **Spring Lenten Retreat—March 17 & 18**

Everyone should have received an email last month with details about our forthcoming retreat that will again be held at the 4H Center outside Salem, Oregon. The email with attached registration forms provided information about food, lodging, location, facilitator and costs. The retreat begins at **7:30pm Friday, March 17**, with dinner at 6:00pm for those able to come. **The retreat will resume at 9:00am Saturday, March 18, and will conclude with Mass that afternoon from 3:30-4:30pm.** For those unable to be present Friday evening, or who do not wish to stay over Friday night, a Saturday-only option is available. Those spending the night will need to bring their own bedding, such as a sleeping bag or sheets and blankets. **Registration forms** will be available at Masses this month and we will begin collecting registrations with accompanying checks in boxes provided at the back of the church.

Our facilitator this year is Evelyn Wemhoff. She is a former Benedictine Sister, one of the founders as well as the Program Coordinator of Woman Spirit Center in Bellevue, WA. The Center closed last July after serving the Northwest for sixteen years. Evelyn is a spiritual director, mental health counselor, and group facilitator. She has extensive experience leading retreats and we are grateful to have her with us this year. I hope many of you will be able to participate in this year's annual Lenten retreat as we face our Christian challenges together and support one another on the journey.

### **Pastoral Update:**

## Introducing our new Parish Council President—Bruce Turner:

*Hi, my name is Bruce Turner and I threw my name in the hat at the December board meeting for consideration as president and was voted in. Having been a board member since last spring, I was aware that our past president needed to move on. It just seemed like the right thing for me to do. I have been attending the Eugene Masses pretty regularly since 2010 with my wife Dianne and enjoy both the spiritual direction from Toni as well as the fellowship with everyone that attends. I had not been a regular at any church for some time, and these Masses fill a void in my life. I look forward to seeing all of you at the spring retreat. —Bruce Turner*

## Ministry Partners:

### Rose Haven—Update

We presented Rose Haven with a \$100 contribution from Sophia Christi at the end of the year following the Council's vote at its annual meeting in December. Our intention is to help support their critical work with homeless women and children through a small percentage of our contributions at the end of each calendar year. The Rose Haven website carries an extensive list of items needed by the women and children they serve. For a complete list simply go to <http://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-items/>

***Rose Haven desperately needs new panties and socks (all sizes) as well as travel sized shampoo and conditioner!*** They also need backpacks, and paper grocery sacks. Women and children need waterproof items and clothing that can be layered.

### Eugene Catholic Worker—Update

At year's end we presented the Catholic Worker House with a \$100 contribution from Sophia Christi following the Council's decision to provide some small measure of financial support for Brother Charlie's ongoing work of feeding and housing the homeless in Eugene.

*The Catholic Worker House continues to need donations of men and women's toiletry items; socks, hats, gloves, coats and blankets. The Catholic Worker House continues to offer daily hospitality to those on the streets. Individuals are invited in for a shower, rest and a hot meal, and are referred to social services for assistance as needed. If you are interested in volunteering with any of the activities at the Catholic Worker House, contact Anna Lankutis. 541-683-1936 or at [lankutisa@gmail.com](mailto:lankutisa@gmail.com) --Anna*

## 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 our second reading next weekend Paul says this: "There is a certain wisdom we express among the spiritually mature. It is not a wisdom of this age, however, nor of the rulers of this age, who are headed for destruction. No, what we utter is God's wisdom: a mysterious, hidden wisdom. God planned it before all ages for our glory." We can trust, in other words, that we are essential participants in a great cosmic story that includes

Mother Earth, our home, and all her many creatures and resources. We not only have a part to play but, according to Paul, God's plan was designed from the very beginning with us in mind. It was designed for the transformation of earth into the 'kingdom of God,' and for transformation of humanity into a fully Christ-ed Human/Divine Being. That transformation requires a sense of oneness so complete that pain anywhere is experienced locally everywhere and translates into merciful actions that address and expunge all varieties of disease within the body politic. The Beatitudes give us a spiritual blueprint for how this works, but if we aren't ready or able to see and experience the pain of our sisters and brothers then those precepts are just a blueprint easily pushed aside when personal sacrifices they require fly in the face of individual or corporate goals, needs and desires.

The recently installed administration in our country helps us see where we are as a people in relation to the Beatitudes and the Gospel, as well as in relation to spiritual values held by all major world religions. These ideals are spelled out in our Constitution and emblazoned on the nation's symbol of welcome and freedom—Lady Liberty. We clearly have a lot of ground to cover as Christians and as Americans to live those values we proclaim. If the peace-filled yet cold and rain-soaked Women's March in Portland taught me anything it is that we need each other right now. We need to know we are not alone, that we are part of a justice-focused movement larger than ourselves. This will help us remain empowered and maintain momentum on the dark, winding road ahead. We need each other to bolster our stamina on the exhausting march to overturn oppression. We need each other to quell our fears and curb the temptation to give up, go into denial or turn back. We need each other's ideas and we need skills in implementation and follow-through. But perhaps most of all we need faith that the Spirit of Wisdom is with us on this journey, guiding us through the mysterious and terrifying darkness, holding true to the larger plan, calling and inspiring prophets, teachers and healers along the byways and at every crossroad. As followers of Jesus we are asked to be ready for that call, for the still small voice that says, "Come, I need you over here. Can you do this small/large task for Me?" Responding, we might echo the hymn dear to many of us: "Here I am, Lord...do you mean me? I will go if you lead, and I promise to hold your people, your creatures and this dear earth in my heart every step of the way."

May Sophia's wisdom and Christ's guidance be with us all,  
Toni