

May 7, 2017

Dear friends,

At this midpoint of Easter season, with Pentecost on the horizon, it is fitting that the Fourth Sunday in this fifty-day celebration is designated Good Shepherd Sunday. We are far enough away from the events of Holy Week to begin forgetting what those events may have stirred in us. Lent and Easter called us to a renewal of purpose and a willingness to have Spirit's transformative presence fully active in our lives. And though we may have spoken a resounding 'yes' to this process under the influences of those exciting new-life possibilities, the mundane reality of keeping that intention focused and steady can wear us down over time. So four weeks in the Church hands us the image of a Good Shepherd. Writing this I'm reminded of something Pope Francis said in an interview with *America* magazine in 2014: "I dream of a church that is a mother and a shepherdess, church [members who are] "merciful, take responsibility for the people... accompany them...and raise up [their] neighbor." So I imagine a shepherdess who knows her sheep by name, and whom the sheep know intimately by the sound of her voice. The Gospel calls us to be this kind of church, but it's all too easy to get lost in the myriad forces demanding our energy, attention and loyalty. Finding a way through the thicket of needs and requests can be exhausting, and we can be easily misled by our own frail ego thinking it knows the way, has the 'truth' and understands—or can learn—what is a fully alive state of being. But the worldly wisdom we have gained through experience will not provide that deeper Wisdom our souls seek. Instead, the drive toward self-protection naturally leads us away from increasing our vulnerability and open-hearted service of the other, which is the very lesson and challenge of Jesus' life, Passion, and death on the cross. So here, at the halfway mark of the Easter season, the Good Shepherd appears, addressing each of us by name. She, Sophia-Christ, leads us to pasture where we take up our challenges and our personal crosses, learning to serve and be vulnerable to one another under her loving and protective gaze. Then toward evening she leads us back to the safety of the sheepfold where we can rest in safety and peace. I imagine our Shepherdess Mother telling us, "you can't lose your way because I'm here. Just listen. You will hear me. I will be your guardian and your guide."

It seems a fitting tribute to Mother's Day next week that we allow the image of the Mothering Shepherd to carry us forward on this transformative Easter journey. We are not alone and never out of her reach. Her voice resounds in the depths of our souls, guiding us home to the truth of our being, pointing the way of Wisdom, leading us to full and abundant life.

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, **May 13**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way** at **5:00pm**. Please bring an entree, salad or veggie dish 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, Mother's Day, **May 14**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23rd**, at **4:00pm**. A potluck follows our celebration. Please bring an entree, salad or veggie dish 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—June 24

Our next Council meeting will be Sunday, June 24, 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 June weekend Masses on the 10th and 11th. For carpool information contact Toni in Portland or Judith in Eugene. Portland Council members: Kathy, Joy and Jim. Eugene Council members: Judith, Carol, Bruce and Dianne.

Summer Picnic—Date changed to Saturday, July 15

Our annual Sophia Christi Picnic will again be at Carol's house near Stayton this year. The previous Council minutes, as reported in the March newsletter, gave the date as July 29, but the date has been changed to July 15. The potluck picnic begins at 1:00 and ends at 4:00, with ample time for relaxing, visiting, and walking through Gary's amazing forest.

Pastoral Update:

Summary of the April 23rd Council Meeting

We reviewed the usual Pastor's report and Treasurer's report, then moved onto the Lenten Retreat. We were happy to learn that all retreat expenses were covered by the income, even leaving a profit of over \$500. We picked possible dates for next year's retreat and decided to explore a couple of different facilitators.

We're able to advertise in Eugene's newspaper, while the newspapers in Portland are financially prohibitive. The Easter ad we placed brought us a few new people, and that led to us deciding to follow-up with new people if they leave an email address. We'll draft a short, friendly welcome message.

The annual picnic date has been changed to Saturday, July 15, at 1:00. The picnic will continue to be held at Carol's in Stayton. Plans for our Tenth Anniversary are getting finalized...ways to make it feel special and celebratory. Relationships with our two ministry partners are going well. In Eugene, the Catholic Worker House provides meals for the homeless and we make sandwiches and provide other donations. Rose Haven in Portland supports homeless women, and we provide a steady stream of donated items that they need.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, June 24, 1:00 at Ike Box, Salem. Please join us if you'd like to learn what's cooking on the "inside" of our Sophia Christi community!

--Judith

Our Prayer Minister Turned 90!

Mary is our beloved Prayer Minister, and there couldn't be a more appropriate ministry for her. She is the most prayerful, serene, lighthearted, loving person I know. She turned 90 April 19

and had several days worth of honoring, fun, flowers, treats, kisses, and cards, cards, CARDS. She is our wise and cherished elder in the Contemplative Prayer group. May we continue to be enriched by her presence and her love for years to come. –Judith

Contemplative Prayer Group

The Eugene Contemplative Prayer group has started meeting again after a Lenten break. We are currently watching a few webcasts from Trinity: Soul of Creation conference held in April in Albuquerque featuring Fr. Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault and Wm. Paul Young. These explore the Trinitarian Theology that Rohr writes about in "The Divine Dance" which is the book we have chosen to read and discuss. This is from the book's jacket: "Drawing from Scripture, theology, and the deepest insights of mystics, philosophers, and sages throughout history, Fr. Rohr presents a compelling alternative to aloof and fairytale versions of God: One God, belovedly in communion, as All-Vulnerable, All -Embracing, and All-Given to you and me. The Divine Dance makes accessible and practicable the Christian tradition's most surprising gift...God as Community...as Friendship...as Dance". We meet the second and fourth Wednesday evening of each month from 6:30 - 8:00. We practice a 20-minute contemplative prayer practice then read and discuss the book. We do have room for one or two more Sophia Christi members. If you are interested please talk with Anna or Dianne at the May Mass. –Dianne

Ministry Partners:

Rose Haven—Update

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 still need waterproof items and clothing that can be layered.

For a complete list of needed items simply go to <http://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-items/>

Eugene Catholic Worker—Donations needed!!

Sophia Christi's Catholic Worker volunteers, who make the sandwiches for the homeless, are in need of ingredients, namely, **PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY, especially JELLY!** In the winter we make 100-150 sandwiches per week. We have now increased that to 200, and in the summer it will be 300. The Catholic Worker house receives their food donations from Food for Lane County and for reasons unknown to us, FLC has not been able to supply enough lately. This will only get worse as our numbers increase. So please consider purchasing these items throughout the month. They can be brought to Mass, or directly to Catholic Worker House at 633 W. 8th St., Eugene, any day of the week. In speaking with a Catholic Worker member today, she expressed their gratitude for Sophia Christi's generous donations of toiletries and clothes throughout the year. **At this time they are in particular need of** women's summer clothing. Lightweight pants and T-Shirts are perfect. They also are in great need of sanitary napkins. If you have any questions please contact Kathy. –Kathy
If you are interested in volunteering with any of the activities at the Catholic Worker House, contact Anna. --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

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.

It's Mary's month, the month of May. When I was a child I attended our parish school for eight years. At Mass and in our classrooms we sang songs to Mary during May. Our families were encouraged to say the rosary every day in May and mine did, every night before bedtime. Near the beginning of the month an eighth grade girl was chosen to crown the Blessed Mother at an outdoor school ceremony that would also bring closure to the school year. I don't remember anything being said about Easter season once Easter itself was behind us. Devotion to Mary replaced Easter thoughts, and all of our school religious activities centered around her as the academic year came to an end. That's how I remember it looking back fifty plus years. In other words, what made a lasting impression on me was the fact that May belonged to Mary. I say all this because the institutional Church changed direction after I left parochial school. With the conclusion of Vatican II we were, as a people, returned to our Scriptural foundations. We were challenged to become actively engaged in the Liturgy and were educated in Jesus' call to discipleship. We began learning to take the Gospel to heart, to live it's mandate of service in our daily lives, and take personal responsibility for becoming, for being, another Christ in the world. Those liturgical changes returned us to our roots. They continue to help us hear more deeply and see more clearly what God is asking of us through the lens of Jesus' life, his ministry, his death and resurrection. All of this was necessary to bring us out of the moralistic, infantilizing confines of Tridentine theology and into a liberated adult willingness to take up the very real and transformative demands of the Gospel. Next weekend's readings lead us to more fully ponder the meaning of discipleship. We hear Luke describe a form of discrimination that erupted in the early church and how the community went about resolving it. And we listen to Peter telling us we are a "chosen people, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation called out of darkness into the wonderful, divine life." These words identifying who we are called to be, with the accompanying encouragement to follow Jesus who is "the way, the truth and the life" flows out of the Lenten/Easter journey. Only by letting go our egoistic standards, following the deep inner voice of the Shepherd who leads, always, through the cross, do we become a transformed people capable of consecrating the world. Jesus shows us the way. Mary/Mother/Shepherdess accompanies us and mirrors that protective, nurturing love.

May blessings of Easter season be with all of you,
Toni