

July 1, 2017

REMEMBER
10th Anniversary Celebration August 12 (Pdx) and August 13 (Eug)

Dear friends,

A young person told me recently that summer ‘officially begins’ the 4th of July. This person held to that position even after we discussed how the earth’s relationship to the sun is the actual planetary marker of change from one season to another. It wasn’t a matter of ignorance. I was talking with someone educated and knowledgeable about the orbits of earth and sun, an intelligent and spiritually aware individual. It was more a matter of U.S. culture and family tradition obscuring a celestial happening that, by itself, had such minimal significance to a modern, light-enveloped human. It reminds me of an article I read recently about how rare it is anymore for modern (especially urban) folks to ever see the Milky Way. This was the transcript of a segment of ‘All Things Considered’ on NPR (June 10, 2016). 80% of North Americans, it said, are unable to see the Milky Way. This is true as well for one third of the world’s population. An even more startling fact, perhaps, is that 99% of people living in Europe and the U.S. reside under light-polluted skies. And light pollution in Singapore is so bad that researchers found “the entire population lives under skies so bright that the eye cannot fully dark-adapt to night vision.” Is it any wonder that Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, marking a gradual decrease of sunlight for the next six months, might seem so insignificant to some? Electricity takes over when the sun is unavailable in our light-polluted world, and we lose that awe-inspiring connection to the universe beyond our twirling planet. We lose that sense of mystery, of wonder, in contemplating our larger ‘home’—the Milky Way Galaxy. We also lose ‘holy darkness’ when we umbrella the earth with artificial light. And that lost darkness prevents us from truly seeing who we are as earthlings, who we are as humans within the vast cosmic arena even our astrophysicists can’t begin to fathom. The projection of human-created light into the night skies of our planet forms a barrier between us and the unfolding Cosmos within which we have meaning by virtue of our mere existence. It serves to isolate humankind from the Universe in ways that may contribute to both human arrogance and a deep, underlying global despair. How can we open our minds and hearts to the God of the Universe when we aren’t able to SEE the night sky? When our paltry creation of ‘light’ keeps us active rather than receptive between sunset and dawn, while obstructing our communal imagination in an age of increasing intergalactic awareness and discovery? I can’t help but wonder to what extent our lack of access to the night sky has weakened or, in some cases eradicated, a sense of Divine Presence in the western world? The loss of natural darkness is the loss of one more avenue of access to Mystery, to God, to an experience of awe, reverence, and wonder. July 4th celebrations have a social meaning in our culture, directing us toward play, rest, family and community-building events all of which are important. But let’s not lose sight of an even larger reality that cradles the entire human community in this planetary journey we share with all earth’s creatures. Summer Solstice directs our attention beyond our own culture to the earth that holds, feeds and shapes us as well as to the Mystery in which this tiny speck of dust spirals in a greater galactic dance. Mystery surrounds us as we make our descent into God’s glorious night.

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, **July 8**, 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, **July 9**, 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:

Summer Picnic—Come One, Come All—July 15, 1pm to 4pm

That is the date and time for this year's Sophia Christi potluck picnic. As in years past it will be held at my house in the country close to Stayton. Our place is 64 miles one way from both Portland and Eugene. The closest towns are Stayton 5 miles and Scio 9 miles. Since these are difficult times for those of us concerned about the state of affairs in the world perhaps you need a day in the country to see another side of what the world has to offer. We have 50 acres, 25 of which is leased to a farmer for grass seed but 25 of it is what nature has intended. Except for the trail we and the deer made and the 1300 fir trees that Gary planted more than 40 years ago, everything else has been left to nature. You are invited to spend quiet time with your thoughts in this secluded place, where nothing can be heard except the singing of birds. This will also be a time to connect and visit with other people from Sophia Christi. Friends, family members and dogs are also welcome. The Council is working on plans to add music/musicians and games such as horseshoes, Badminton or croquet to our festivities. Please bring a dish to share and an outdoor chair if you can. Everything else will be provided. –Carol, Council Treasurer

10th Anniversary Celebration Preparations—August 12 and 13 Masses

It was 10 years ago this month when Toni celebrated her first Mass as a newly ordained priest. The joy many of us felt at those first Masses was nearly overwhelming. We had waited years for the opportunity to celebrate Mass with a woman priest. At first we simply referred to our gatherings as 'Toni's Mass' but after several months the whole group was asked to propose a name for our growing community. Someone suggested we call ourselves Sophia Christi Catholic Community and everyone in both Portland and Eugene agreed it was the best possible name. We were clear from the beginning that everyone was welcome.

There is much to celebrate besides the amazing 10 years of being a progressive and inclusive church. The Council gave a lot of thought to how we might best celebrate this wonderful milestone and we decided to do what Sophia Christi has been doing so well all these years—celebrate a joyful Mass with music, readings and additions that help us mark this very special occasion. Dianna is designing and making a banner that will grace the altar in both Portland and Eugene. Judith is fashioning a keepsake that will be given to everyone in attendance. And we are working on a photo display with pictures from the last 10 years.

*Over the years we have had the honor of meeting many wonderful people who have made a stop at Sophia Christi on the journey through life. **If you still live in the area it would***

be great to see you again, and if you no longer live here send us an email so we can catch up. We hope as many people as possible can attend this wonderful occasion and come to the potluck afterward to visit and share. –Carol, Council Treasurer

Next Council Meeting—September 16

Our next Council meeting will be Saturday, September 16, 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 September weekend Masses on the 9th and 10th. 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.

Pastoral Update:

Summary of June 24 Council Meeting

At our June 24 meeting, the Parish Council discussed Toni's workload for Sophia Christi (brainstorming ways to relieve her of some tasks), and our finances (we are pretty much on-track for our budget projections so far). Plans for our Tenth Anniversary Masses (August 12 in Portland and August 13 in Eugene) are being finalized, with special music, decorations, food, photos, a banner, and a keepsake giveaway for everyone in attendance. Judith and Kathleen G. will craft a welcome email to send to all new visitors who sign up on the email list. Our summer picnic is Saturday, July 15 and we are exploring elements to attract more of us and add more fun and interaction. We'll add a music jam and sing-along, as well as games like horseshoes. The Council has decided we can conduct our business with fewer meetings in Salem. We project four Salem meetings in 2018, supplemented with teleconferences as necessary. Our next meeting will be Saturday, September 16, 11:00, in Salem. Remember, you are always WELCOME to come! --Judith, Council Secretary

Ministry Partners:

Rose Haven—Update

Rose Haven is hoping to win a \$10,000 grant from Advantis Credit Union to help furnish the shower area they are installing for their guests. To win the grant they are asking everyone to go to this Advantis web address <https://www.advantiscu.org/grow-the-adva.../vote-for-grow.html> from now until July 7th and vote for Rose Haven. "Don't forget," they say. "You can vote every day!!" Here is more from the Rose Haven website: "According to a recent report from Portland State University access to showers is one of the greatest needs of the homeless living in Portland. Most resort to using public bathroom sinks. Lack of resources or opportunity to take care of basic personal hygiene creates major obstacles for the homeless, both from a psychological and practical perspective. For those struggling to find a job, secure an apartment and get back on their feet, cleanliness impacts their ability to move forward. It's transformative. In collaboration with First Immanuel Lutheran Church, where Rose Haven provides daily services, we are currently building two new private bathrooms with showers for use by our women and children." – Joy L.

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

Eugene Catholic Worker--Update

It has been one year since our joining the Catholic Worker in serving the poor and homeless in our community. For that reason, we invited Michael, who with Charley, attends to the daily running of the Catholic Worker House. Michael thanked us for our donations throughout the year of clothes, toiletries etc., and helping with sandwich making. He reinforced the fact that every contribution, no matter how big or small, is important to the work that they do. For this coming year, there are opportunities for us to help even more. They always need folks to help

*serve breakfast each morning under the Washington/Jefferson bridges, or to cook a dinner for the workers themselves. They'd also welcome a pot of soup which is also served to the homeless. For those who cannot contribute in these ways, donations are always welcome. **Especially needed are:** small bottles of hand sanitizer, socks for men (they can actually be mismatched ones) and dog/cat food. As always, jackets for men, clothing for men and women, and peanut butter and jelly! Right now women are only in need of casual summer clothes, i.e. T-Shirts and shorts. Michael expressed gratitude for our contributions this year. It is my hope that we will be able to contribute even more this coming year! –Kathy P.*

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.

When we meet next weekend we hear Jesus inviting all of us to lay down the many burdens we carry, take a step back from the busyness of everyday tasks, and allow him to refresh our spirits as we rest. In that resting space, open and receptive, he asks that we let ourselves simply listen and learn from his gentle, humble ways. It is a message so appropriate for a four-day holiday here at the beginning of summer. If nothing else, we in this culture seem to be taught almost from birth that carrying burdens and keeping up with the pace of a society on steroids is the way life is supposed to be. But that isn't God's intent. We aren't meant to be on-the-go at all times or to be constantly and forever attending to one outside demand or another. The Spirit within begs for our attention and Jesus is here to encourage our movement into a space of relaxed awareness where the pulse of life moves in rhythm with our own heartbeat. In that space God can be witnessed through the eyes of the child within us who gazes with wonder as the sun and leaves of the front yard maple play tag above our heads. It is a gentle place where simplicity and quiet joy mix to create a feast that feeds the soul. So "come away all you who labor and are burdened that I may refresh you," Jesus tells us this weekend. "Learn from me and you will find rest for your souls." May you allow yourselves the simple pleasure of rest and renewal at the dawn of this new season, and I hope to see you at our community picnic in Stayton on the 15th!

A blessed summer to all of you,
Toni