

January 7, 2018

A blessed Epiphany to all of you,

The sun broke through the clouds as I sat at my desk writing yesterday. This twelfth day of Christmas is far different from the eve of Christmas itself when successive episodes of freezing rain paralyzed the city of Portland. Churches across the metro area were forced to cancel services and people were cautioned to stay off the roads due to the extremely treacherous conditions. After watching weather alerts all day, and listening to meteorologists tracking the storm, it became clear by 3pm that any attempt to drive on city streets as well as the interstate would be foolhardy. With great sadness then I made the necessary phone calls to cancel Mass on Christmas Eve. On the other end of the line were people getting ready for our once-a-year celebration. There was no snow, no ice, no freezing rain in Eugene. People were shocked to hear how different things were to the north! It reminded me again how much our expectations and perspectives are conditioned by where we are located. Geography as an influencer of outlook and perception is easier to see than is a cultural and/or religious mindset. Even the fact of such a huge discrepancy of experience based on weather was disturbing. I realized I felt the need to explain, to somehow prove what I was saying about the roads was true, because it was so opposite the experience others were having to the south of Portland's bio-region. We see the world through radically different lenses based on where we are located physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually yet somehow we expect others to see what we see, feel what we feel and interpret events in the same way we do. We even recognize the absurdity of this expectation when thinking of it this way, yet the expectation persists and influences our judgments and criticisms, our trust and distrust of each other.

All the characters in today's Gospel see the world through their own lenses and operate according to their own specific interests, desires and perspectives. Were it not for a dream, the magi would have taken their news of finding Jesus back to Herod. They had followed this extraordinary star for days...weeks...years? and naturally anticipated the King would be open to the astonishing wonder of their discovery! That he, too, would be humbled and overjoyed! Not so! For him this outcome was a threat to his position and power. God's self-revelation in history inevitably threatens the status quo.

Epiphanies bring change, often or usually *radical* change. We find ourselves these days in the throes of radical change and none of us sees things exactly (or sometimes even remotely) the same. It's hard to be patient with each other, to recognize there are 7 billion different lenses operating in the world and that all of them are somehow uniquely designed by the Creator, Sustainer and Lover of this upside down and sideways world. A chant I remember from a multitude of women's circles comes back to me: "the Goddess is alive and magic is afoot." The Divine Light is with us at the very heart of darkness and chaos, creating "magical" disruptive change. We are called to watch the night sky, to stay alert for signs of unusual appearances, and to humbly follow the star of hope to its destination. Walking with faith alongside our companions, traversing the mysteries of deserts, enduring the cold with an eye on the star. Faithful. Open. Trusting the inner guidance while honoring the outer manifestation of Mystery, of Presence. We are pilgrims on a journey, on the move, following a star, whether others can see it and welcome it, or not.

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, **January 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, **January 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:

Annual Retreat 2018 – February 17

After researching all available options for retreat venues that could offer affordable and appropriate overnight accommodations for Sophia Christi members, the Council realized none of the choices were acceptable this year. The decision to eliminate the overnight option gave us much more latitude and we quickly found a wonderful site equally accessible to both Eugene and Portland folks, the Marian Estates in Sublimity, OR. It was founded by the Servite Sisters, though no longer owned by them, and is now a graduated retirement community resting on 38 acres. Cost is \$50 for the retreat, which includes lunch catered by Trexlar Farm of Stayton. The lunch menu is designed to accommodate food sensitivities, with vegetarian and gluten free options provided as well. Parking is not a problem. Walking the grounds is very easy; the terrain is flat. There is a pond with ducks and places to sit. A little chapel is in the same building. The environment is safe and quiet. Please see the Registration Form attached to this email and plan on joining your community for this annual retreat as we enter the season of Lent.

Next Council Meeting – Saturday, January 20

Our next Council meeting will be Saturday, January 20, at Ike Box Café in Salem from 11:00 to 1:00. If you are unable to attend but have questions or ideas to offer, please give your thoughts to Council members at the January weekend Masses on the 13th and 14th, or email them to Toni or one of the members before the meeting. For carpool information contact Toni in Portland or Judith in Eugene. Portland Council members: Kathy, Mike, Joy and Jim. Eugene Council members: Judith, Carol, Jessica, Bruce and Dianne.

Pastoral Update:

Extending our Care for the Poor

Please look over the list of needed items and bring them with you to Mass this month. We will collect your donations and deliver them to the Catholic Worker House in Eugene and Rose Haven in Portland. The needs are even greater with the cold, rainy weather.

Rose Haven—Accepting the Following Items

Rose Haven is currently accepting: rain jackets; umbrellas; gloves and hand/foot warmers; bras and bra extenders; underwear/panties (new only); socks; belts (large sizes needed most); practical walking shoes (all may be gently used); jewelry; deodorant; shampoo & conditioner (travel size ideal); hand sanitizer; razors; pocket tissues; soap & body wash; toothbrushes & toothpaste; combs/brushes; first aid supplies; makeup; incontinence pads; backpacks (gently used ok); handled shopping bags; rolling suitcases and carts (gently used ok); reading glasses; sewing kits; blankets, towels, sheets & pillowcases. For a list of acceptable items you can always go to <http://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-items/>

Eugene Catholic Worker--Requests

The list of needed items includes: warm clothes and socks (including mismatched socks), travel size hand sanitizer, soaps, shampoos and grooming items. Articles always welcome as well are backpacks, blankets and sheets. If you have any questions please speak with Kathy Pekarsky, Rhoda Kirwin or Dianne Turner.

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.

We are into the New Year and it's easy to forget we conclude the Christmas season today, on the Feast of the Epiphany. Many houses are still decorated with lights and, I must admit, so is my living room. I am reluctant to take them down and, if history is a reliable indicator, they will probably remain in place and lit until the late afternoons lighten up sometime in March. Here in the 'dead' of winter the soft glow of these tiny bulbs remind me to appreciate the dark time of the year. They delight me each morning as dawn silently approaches and every evening as dusk descends too soon. I return to the unobtrusive simplicity of colored lights dancing across the mantle and dining room archway. They lift my heart and call me home to simple things. There is reason for joy in the darkness. When sunlight streaks across this room those tiny lights lose their character. They are obscured by the overwhelming brightness of that greater light. And so, this is their day. This is their time to glow and shine in the uniqueness of who they are—a precious gift of the indwelling spirit calling me to the interior spaces where God

resides. They remind me of the dancing God who beckons from the depths of my own soul saying: "Come, daughter. Follow me into the depths of your spirit and rest with me awhile." How comforting those words, and how perfect for this time of year. They are echoed in next week's Gospel. "What are you looking for?" Jesus asks the disciples of John who are following him down the road. "Where are you staying?" they ask him. "Come and see," he says, and so they went to see where he was staying and they remained with him that day. It isn't lost on me that "it was about four in the afternoon."

Blessings and peace in 2018,

Toni