

March 25, 2018

Dear Friends,

In the February newsletter, as we teetered on the threshold of Lent, I played with the delightful incongruence this year of Ash Wednesday falling on Valentine's Day and Easter landing on April Fools. So here we are, entering Holy Week, processing with palms toward a fool's Easter. We remember palms scattered before Jesus as he rides into Jerusalem on a small donkey to celebrate Passover with his friends. It is a joyous procession. People line the street throwing branches and their own cloaks on the ground before him shouting 'Hosanna', meaning 'God saves'. They see him as a prophet, a healer from the north country, riding through the gates of the city and heading toward the Temple as King Solomon did long ago. He will rescue them from Rome's oppression, end corruption, relieve their poverty, and triumphally restore their sovereignty as a people. God will save them through this man who enters the city like those kings of the past. Yet just a few days later when the Roman authorities come for him they will turn, demanding his execution, and the events of his torturous humiliation, agony and death will unfold. This is the story of Jesus' last days, Jesus the Fool. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength." (1 Cor 1:25)

In the ancient Tarot deck the Fool is number '0,' signifying unlimited potential, beginning in nothingness and reaching into infinity. Well-known astrologer and tarot reader Michele Knight says this about the Fool: "Don't be deceived by the name. The Fool is already enlightened...and understands the workings of the entire cosmos. The Fool embodies the hardest spiritual truth to grasp, moving forward in absolute trust, knowing that everything will work out for the highest good, knowing that all experiences, whether amazing highs or heartbreaking lows, have their own end and make way for something else afterwards....The Fool teaches us to trust...shows us we need to trust the bigger picture.... All magnificent journeys begin with a leap into the unknown."

This is the week Jesus steps off the cliff into the unknown. He may have had a sense of what was coming and, if we accept the high Christology of John's Gospel, he may have even known much of it. But human Jesus could not have known the layers of suffering he would endure once the crowds turned on him, his friends betrayed and abandoned him, and the soldiers took him into custody. Trusting his inner knowing, trusting God's 'bigger picture,' he faced the circumstances of his own day. Putting his life on the line he has become the face of God suffering and dying under oppressive systems of every form then miraculously rising again bearing an amazing new light, revealing a way forward, reviving hope.

From a state of euphoria amid palms and Hosannas we are plunged into the tragic events of Jesus' passion and death on the cross today as we step over the threshold into Holy Week. Then, on Holy Thursday, we rejoice in a celebration of Eucharist singing the Gloria again for the first time since Ash Wednesday, only to experience the centrality of the cross, Jesus' agony, on Good Friday. Holy Saturday follows with a triumphant celebration of the Resurrection. Joy/hope become grief/despair become joy again, then anguish, then joy/hope in the end. Holy Week is a roller coaster. It is a ride we all take in our own way in our own lives, all of us Fools stepping off cliffs into the unknown. This week reminds us to trust God's bigger picture. It rides on hope and leads toward joy.

**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

**Easter Mass in Eugene** will be **Sunday, April 1, at First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup>**, 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.

**Mass in Eugene** will be **Sunday, April 8, at First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup>**, 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.

**Mass in Portland** will be **Saturday, April 14, 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.

### Upcoming Events:

#### Easter Mass and Potluck – Eugene, April 1

In addition to our regular schedule in April, we will also celebrate Easter in Eugene at our normal time of 4:00pm.

#### Next Council Meeting – Saturday, April 21

Our next Council meeting will be Saturday, April 21, 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 April weekend Masses 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:

#### Meet Our Newest Council Member

*Thank you for the welcome to the Council. I'm Jessica Katon and I've been attending Sophia Christi in Eugene since 2013 with my mom and step-dad, Dianne and Bruce Turner. Though I was baptized Catholic as a child, I didn't grow up with any specific religion. My mother was Catholic in her formative years, though she didn't participate again until my late teens and my*

*dad is Jewish. As a child my only experience attending church was with my grandmother during visits and my family celebrated both Catholic and Jewish holidays. I don't consider myself religious, more so spiritual. I was initially intrigued with the progressive and open nature of Sophia Christi when my mom invited me to join her at Mass some 5 years ago. I am so grateful and thankful that I chose to attend and haven't looked back since. The sense of peace and spiritual enlightenment I get at every Mass never ceases to amaze me. Toni's homilies are beautiful, awe-inspiring and I appreciate that they reflect the current state of affairs. She is never afraid to talk about real and current issues and for that I keep coming back. The connections I have made over the years with my fellow community members makes me feel so welcome. I am pleased to be part of the Council and lend my voice to the overall community. -- Jessica*

### **Seeking new Ministry Partners in 2018**

If you are currently volunteering with a non-profit organization serving the poor, homeless, marginalized or immigrant populations in Portland or Eugene, and you would like the organization to be considered as a potential Sophia Christi ministry partner, please let Toni or one of the Council members know your interest. We hope to begin new partnerships this year in both of our locations and continue addressing the needs of our underserved neighbors. In the meantime, **PLEASE NOTICE: we are no longer collecting items for either Rose Haven in Portland or the Catholic Worker in Eugene.** Due to a variety of changes within these organizations we no longer have volunteers at either location.

### **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.

With today's celebration of Palm/Passion Sunday Holy Week has begun. Lent ends Holy Thursday evening as we enter the three-day liturgy called *Triduum* (meaning three days). It is actually ONE continuous liturgy spanning a 72-hour period, and it is the climax of our church year. These are the High Holy Days of the Christian calendar. In recent years a number of small communities have begun gathering in a retreat-style format to experience the contiguous nature of this culminating Liturgy. Since most of us remain rooted in our normal daily lives, however, celebrating Triduum means moving back and forth between religious rituals and our regular daily routines from Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday. Triduum as a singular event, a single Liturgy, often makes little sense to us. There are just too many interruptions and distractions we encounter from one day to the next, and the complexity of the varying pieces of the three-day ritual can be confusing. For those of you who have participated, or will be participating in Triduum celebrations this week, notice there is no closure to the celebrations on Thursday and Friday evenings. The rituals end in silence, emphasizing

the fact that they flow seamlessly from one to another until, at the end of the Easter Vigil, you hear those familiar words—“this Mass is ended...go in peace.” You won’t hear these words Thursday and Friday.

The newsletter this month straddles Holy Week and the Easter season. All of the liturgies in our April Mass schedule are Easter liturgies, but I can’t ignore the week just ahead, this ending week of March, which is so central to who we are as Christians and to what we hold as truth. That truth, as I see it, is that we live in a mysterious reality far beyond our meager ability to understand, a Mystery we call “God.” Mystics from all traditions tell us this Holy Mystery (“the Divine,” “the Creator,” “the Cosmos,” “Universal Being,” “Nameless One,” “Great Spirit”) is the “Wholeness of All That Is” and it holds the blueprint for our highest good, nurturing it ceaselessly in all places at all times. We are the Fools of the Tarot deck, moving through the many challenges of our personal and collective lives on a spiritual journey that will inevitably lead us home. Our ideals, our dreams and hopes light our way. We have been given a role model who was able to love his accusers, forgive his executioners, show compassion to his betrayers, and teach the lessons of serving, suffering and companioning without judgment so profoundly that we have his example to guide our lives and choices to this day, 2,000 years later. And, in each generation, we have mystics (and sometimes our own experiences) confirming his ongoing presence among us to calm our anxieties and give us hope. The message of Holy Week is the template of life with its glories and its threatening shadows. The message of Easter is the eternal design of life arising from every death, a reminder to stay the course and keep hope alive

May the blessings of Holy Week lead you into a joyous celebration of Easter,

Toni