

September 2, 2018

Dear Friends,

First ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick surrendered his red hat after charges were made public that he had sexually abused children as well as priests and seminarians over whom he had near-absolute authority. Next came the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report relating in horrific detail the sexual abuse of over 1,000 children by more than 300 priests across 6 Pennsylvania Dioceses. And then, as Pope Francis was completing his visit to Ireland and the World Meeting of Families last week, the former U.S. Nuncio, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, released an eleven-page letter through two conservative news outlets here in the States accusing Francis of knowing about McCarrick's abusive history but doing nothing. The letter is full of inaccuracies and unsubstantiated allegations. It ends with a call for Francis to resign. "The gloves are clearly off, the internecine fighting has gone public and the enemies of Francis are, without conscience or nuance, seizing this moment of turmoil as an opportunity to undermine his papacy," says the National Catholic Reporter in an editorial published August 30. In a later paragraph the editors state that "Revelations of abuse and cover-up accumulated almost monthly during [John Paul's] long pontificate, and he provided the model for the hierarchy's approach to the growing scandal....While decrying abuse, he did nothing to require accountability from his bishops, most of whom he appointed. He refused to listen to the few who dared warn him." Yet John Paul is not called out in Vigano's letter. Inside and outside the Vatican staunch followers of John Paul's dogmatism and his loyal episcopal appointees move to undermine Francis' attempts to reform the Curia and restore the Church's primary call to serve the weak and the poor. We-Who-Are-the-Church can't simply watch as if 'from the wings.' Traditionalists, conservatives, liberals and progressives all, we are angry, horrified and rightfully disgusted by the bishops, priests and religious who have betrayed the Gospel, manipulated and exploited the vulnerable, and squandered moral authority playing games of deception. But 'they' are not the church. The institution is not the church. The church is all of us, and we are at a tipping point in history. We see the dynamic of lies parading as truth in government, in marketing, in corporate maneuvers across the globe as well in churches, most spectacularly our own. It is nothing new, but it is relentless, increasingly insistent, undermining common wisdom and our ability to love and trust one another. More than ever we need each other, need reminders that we aren't alone. We need support in our efforts to remain hopeful, kind, willing to listen, ready to understand, caring enough to change our attitude and behavior when we see we've made mistakes. We need the bedrock of faith in ourselves as a people to sustain us, people able to be accountable and to expect accountability from those we invest with authority. In this hour of supreme betrayal by those who commandeered our trust cheap apologies from institutional representatives will not do. The people of God deserve more. As we grow in our ability to see clearly and resist the lies power-brokers tell, we gather strength so that we may, together, stand firm in the face of corruption, ignorance and injustice. This is why we gather as Church, to grow into the Body of Christ, that we may bring Light into those dark corners of our world.

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, **September 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, **September 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:

Next Council Meeting – Saturday, September 15

Our next Council meeting will be Saturday, September 15, 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 September 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:

Summer Picnic – Rest, Completion and Invitation

The day was very lovely for 20 plus people who attended our annual Sophia Christi picnic. There was a soft warm breeze and the temperature was perfect. We sat outside under the ancient oaks and shared stories. Some walked the path thru our forest. There was an abundance of good food brought by everyone who came. I owe a debt of gratitude to my family who, over the last 5 years, helped with everything from set up, to cooking, to clean up. But things change over time and it is no longer possible for them to be so involved. After much discussion we have decided this will be our last time hosting the summer picnic. I will miss having my church family come to our home, and hope someone can offer a new setting for our summer picnic next year. With gratitude and blessings, Carol

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.

“Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees,” says Isaiah in our first reading next weekend. “Say to all faint hearts, ‘Courage! Do not be afraid! Look, Your God is coming; God is coming to save you.’ Then the eyes of those who are blind will be opened, the ears of those who are deaf will be cleared.” When we are in the midst of chaos, as we are on so many fronts today, it is difficult to have courage and sometimes even more difficult to believe that God is in the mess with us and will save us in the end. Of course, that ‘end’ may lie somewhere well beyond our lifetimes! In any case we can, if we choose, take the long view our Scriptures inspire. We can accept the invitation to faith, which is not ‘belief’ but the embrace of larger principles at root in the universe. Mystery Itself forever points us toward those principles while saying, as did Julian of Norwich, that “All shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.” In today’s chaotic world I yearn for the eyes of the blind throughout the land to be opened so all of us can separate fact from fiction. I yearn for the ears of the deaf to be cleared in government and church circles so that the voices of the battered, the scorned, the thrown-away adults and children, and the drowned and dismissed voices of women, will not only be heard but hold sway in the halls of justice and be given a place of honor in the mainstream of all cultures. When I think this way I know I’m picturing ‘them!’ I want their eyes to be opened and their ears to be cleared! Yet the Gospel finger returns me to myself over and over again. What am I blind to? What am I refusing to hear to the point that I’m actually deaf? It doesn’t take long to recognize my own faint heart. The call to courage is not easy to follow when so much of what I hold dear in this world is under attack or being arrogantly allowed to fall apart. I have faith there is a higher purpose operating in the universe, as well as in the heart of life itself and in the soul of a seemingly destructive humanity. I believe God is embedded in Creation and is at work in this global enterprise we call ‘life on earth.’ This gives me hope and allows for some measure of courage. For those who believe that material reality is the only reality I’m sure this position looks very foolish. They might say ‘get what you can while you can because there is no ‘afterlife.’ They might say ‘exploit whatever you want whenever you want. What does it matter when you’re dead and gone?’ Viewing the world through this lens leads us toward a suicidal abyss. We know this one. The ultimate consequence of unfettered exploitation for personal, corporate, governmental or ecclesial gain is extinction. Faith matters. Hands weary. Trembling knees. Despair nips at our heels on a regular basis these days. Faith in a reality beyond what we can touch, control, or understand *matters*! We are called to courage. With eyes and ears open, let’s face into what we fear together. God’s Grand Scheme is trustworthy. It is Mystery Incarnate.

Peace and blessings to all of you,

Toni