

November 4, 2018

Dear Friends,

I've been thinking about this twice a year time change we all go through, and that magic hour of night when everyone moves, as if in a choreographed dance, from one time zone to another. At 2:00am all of us Pacific Timers experienced a sudden shift to what only moments before had been current Alaskan time. It may seem strange to think of it this way, but our bodies register the jolt of rhythms even when our minds believe one hour shouldn't make a difference. In a similar way all of us are being affected by the drama playing out along the U.S. border as thousands of tired, poor refugees are fleeing in a caravan of determined hearts reaching toward health and safety for themselves and their families. If we slow down enough we can feel the terror and need that launched them from their homes, their relatives and everything they knew in order to walk for hours, days and weeks in scorching sun toward unfamiliar and even hostile territories. All of this in search of survival, of a place to live and sleep in peace. They are members of our family. They are our neighbors. The church in El Paso knows what the rest of us need to see, to feel in our bones—we are all the same people. There is only one God, as Moses tells us. So there can only be one “people”—all “chosen”, all beloved. All of us—nationwide, worldwide—are one family. We are each other's neighbors. “You must love your neighbor as yourself,” Jesus repeats over and over through the centuries. “Let these words which I command you today be written on your heart.” (Dt 6:6) The God of Jewish Jesus, comes through to us loud and clear. What, then, is our response as followers of Jesus, Moses, and the many prophets of our combined traditions who continue to demand we take care of our widows (our vulnerable women and elders), our orphans (children who cling to life in war-torn, drug-torn lands) as well as “foreigners” (people unlike ourselves in culture, in features and in language). We are exhorted to care for these, “the least”, and to beware those who parade their power and wealth, consuming the best of everything, while manipulating the circumstances and life-options of the poor. Which way are we heading as the U.S. Church? Who are we following? Who do we allow to lead us? Are our leaders following Jesus' Gospel mandate to love our neighbors to the south and across the seas? Are we stretching out our arms to welcome and embrace the hungry, grieving mothers who search for their lost children amid the debacle of U.S. policy in Central America and the resulting immigration nightmare? Can we acknowledge the trauma we ourselves experience when our Jewish siblings are killed by hatred in Pittsburgh, and when that same hatred aims its arsenals toward sisters and brothers who simply look and speak differently than we do? Are we searching for ways to be one people reaching a hand to our beaten and scared family members, looking for ways to comfort, house, heal so all can return good for good, kindness for kindness, giftedness for gift? The soul of humanity rises to face the false legacy of “otherness” in and through those of us alive at this time in history. It is a global test of our ability to acknowledge that humanity as a whole rises or falls depending on our collective ability to admit that we are not only neighbors, we are family. Can we come together and refuse to be torn apart? Jesus tells us we must embrace the “least” among us, all who have been shunted to the margins. Our energies must move toward mercy, toward welcome and healing. Hatred, oppression, vilification, war—all these responses run counter to the Gospel. If we are God's people our path is clear.

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, **November 10**, 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, **November 11**, 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:

Our 'Annual Meeting'—November 17—and Call for New Council Members

This is a reminder of our Annual Meeting scheduled for the weekend after next. The Council meets four times a year in Salem, roughly once a quarter. Salem was chosen as the midway point between Portland and Eugene to ease travel for everyone. An additional meeting via conference call can be scheduled in early summer if needed. If you have thought about getting involved in the Council, please prayerfully consider this invitation and come to the annual meeting if you can. If unable to come, please give your thoughts to Council members before the November weekend Masses. Portland Council members: Kathy, Mike, Joy and Jim. Eugene Council members: Judith, Carol, Bruce, Dianne and Jessica.

Annual Retreat 2019 – Save the Date of March 16

Ash Wednesday is March 6 next year and we will begin the Lenten season with our annual Retreat on Saturday, March 16. Sr. Carmel has again accepted our invitation to be the facilitator. If you are interested in helping to plan the retreat please let Toni or one of the Council members know so your name can be added to the planning team list. More details about location and costs will be provided as they are finalized, but please mark your calendar now so you are free to participate in March.

Pastoral Update:

Sophia Christi Budget – Pledges

The Council will finalize next year's budget at our upcoming annual meeting on Nov. 17. Pledge cards will be available at Masses next weekend and we will also be accepting pledges via email for those unable to be present at liturgies. Each fall we ask you to begin, upgrade or renew your monthly pledge to Sophia Christi so that we can more accurately create the budget. Our base-line operating expenses of \$1500.00 per month

include rent on church facilities in Portland and Eugene, website fees (domain names, server, updating and maintenance), printing, pastor stipend, advertising and outreach, office and liturgical supplies, insurance and state (non-profit) fees.

I extend a **special invitation** to those of you receiving this newsletter who are unable to participate in our monthly liturgies, annual retreat and social events. If you have visited the website, believe in the mission of Sophia Christi, and/or simply want to support what we are doing, please consider making a one-time, monthly or yearly contribution. By clicking the "Donate" button on our website homepage you will find our mailing address (5658 N. Denver, Portland, OR 97217) as well as a portal for PayPal. Thank you for being part of our extended community. We see you, appreciate you, and hold you in our prayers.

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.

Next weekend will be our last Ordinary Time Sunday of this year as Advent, and the new church calendar, begins December 2nd. Between now and the next newsletter our nation will have the results of this year's 'mid-term test' which will continue or reset our choices and direction for the near future. Just two weeks later we will observe a nationwide Thanksgiving holiday. As we digest the results of our national election and adjust to any changes we face on the state and local levels let's remember our neighbors here and across the land who are as anxious about their future and the future of their families as we might be, even though they may see the world through an entirely different, and difficult, set of lenses than we ourselves do. The Thanksgiving table draws us together as a symbol of care, warmth and unity. The common table stretches across the nation and across the globe. All must be welcomed, for all of the family must eat. The harvest has arrived, both the harvest of misdeeds and the harvest of earth's bounty. Can we first recognize the harm we have done and are doing to damage our relationships with family members whom Jesus calls "our neighbors"? Can we pause to search our own hearts for sprouts of resentment, anger or hatred and ask God to help remove these in the weeks and months ahead? Then, with humility, we will be better able to give thanks for the many ways God speaks to us, encourages us and feeds us through the hands and hearts of those who sit with us at this nation-wide, world-wide common table. Siblings will never agree on everything. Each member of the family will see things through a unique set of hurts and triumphs, misunderstandings and insights, cultural filters and personal myopics. We all have much to learn from our neighbors who are also our teachers. We all have much to offer that is hidden, precious, uplifting and often unseen, even by ourselves. An intensive time of transformation is upon us. Let's start where we are this holiday season, working together to care for the fruits of our

lands, linking minds and hearts in the grand challenge of becoming the family we truly are. We are at that crucial turning point in our planetary life as a species. Asked to tend this garden we call home, and to respect the life and critical needs of all our relations, we turn toward one another and approach our common table. May we come with open hearts and pray that we, God's beloved family, will find our way.

May each of us have a deeply blessed Thanksgiving,

Toni