

June 1, 2019

Pre-summer greetings,

Summer is nearly here—already! It occurred to me this morning that I should probably take the Christmas cards off the front door soon. Sitting on the front porch, having just passed through that door, I remember being a kid in Kansas, lying in the grass under an apple tree watching leaves and sunlight playing in a light breeze. Time moved slowly then. It stretched before me in a luxurious expanse of freedom that seemed never-ending once the school year ended. Days floated from dawn to dusk through a river of creative possibilities. They endured childhood challenges while providing ample space for play, chores, gazing at clouds, watching for cardinals, listening to mocking birds and the occasional DC-3 droning overhead, catching and releasing fireflies at night. As I prepare for summer now I feel I'm on a speeding train. If I don't schedule periods of rest into the months ahead entire weeks will simply bleed into one another and drop me, head spinning, into the whirlwind of fall. Knowing this, I've been making a point of simply sitting on the front porch as the weather has warmed and the rains diminished. I soak in the beauty and relative quiet of a green-dappled neighborhood afternoon. I remember the sweetness of a childhood summer day and recapture that feeling for a long moment. There was nothing demanding attention then, and hours of warmth and sunlight stretched into days of random play, garden tending, neighborhood games and childhood dreams. Time itself is different now. 'Full speed ahead' has become our cultural mantra, and 'speed' leaves very little room for noticing where we are on this moving train at any given moment. Tied to our phones and computers for both work and, increasingly, even our friendships and family connections, we are constantly tethered to the demands and dramatic fluctuations of the outside world. There is a quality of 'hyper-alertness' to our days that is so normalized by the culture that we rarely notice the benchmarks of low-grade anxiety this creates, let alone that this continual focus on what is happening in the outer world is eating our time and consuming both our minds and our hearts. We are creatures of earth and nature is our home as well as our teacher, our soul's companion, the Holy Spirit's visual projection and Voice, Wisdom's stage and Her finest theatrical production. What is happening in our inner world is largely lost to the reflexive muscles we need to navigate the flotsam and jetsam quickly approaching from all quarters. The primitive brain screams "danger" and cries "stay alert and be ready to bolt"! The soul says "relax...quiet down...watch the leaves moving in the breeze." Nudging us in the direction of soul, Jesus reminds us of the birds and lilies (Lk 12:22-27). He refers us back to nature, our most important teacher, and the need to curb our anxiety by learning to observe, relax and calm the voices pushing us to comply with the artificial demands of a world on speed. Summer is an acceptable time to enter more fully into the natural world and let its pace inform our own, let its allure draw us deeper into the heart of God which is its center. Whether camping, fishing, hiking, gardening or simply porch-sitting, I pray to become even more infused with Spirit by carving out time to rest with nature's quietly amazing gifts, and find balance with the world's demands.

Mass Schedule This Month

Mass in Portland will be Saturday, **June 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, **June 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, June 22

Our next Council meeting will take place via teleconference from 11am to 1pm on June 22. Last summer the Council decided to hold its third quarterly meeting remotely and evaluate the results. It worked so well that the experiment was not only extended to this year, but a decision was made at the April 27 meeting to use teleconferencing for all but the fourth quarter Annual Meeting. The Council voted to set up a Zoom teleconferencing account and use this for the upcoming June meeting. If successful as a meeting environment it will relieve the need to drive to and from Salem, address the uncertainty surrounding meeting space options and allow more community participation as time goes on. Watch for more details in the June newsletter. And, as always, if you have questions or ideas to offer, please give your thoughts to one of the Council members at Masses next weekend or email them to Toni or one of the members prior to June 22nd. Portland Council members: Kathy, Mike, Joy and Jim. Eugene Council members: Judith, Carol, Jessica, Bruce and Dianne.

Pastoral Update:

Contemplative Prayer Group – Eugene

The Eugene Contemplative Prayer group continues to read and discuss the daily meditations written by Richard Rohr. This past month we found ourselves immersed in this lectio divina practice that Richard suggested. We chose to focus on and read the newly created "Our Father" (written by Dianne Dugaw) that we have been singing at Mass. Each of us found our own focus, and the sharing of what arose from those moments of silence was quite beautiful and heartfelt. I have included the practice below if you want to try it. The group has room for 1 or 2 more people to join. Please contact Dianne or Judith for more information. –Dianne Turner, Council Member

Practice: Sacred Reading (from Richard Rohr)

The practice of lectio divina is a contemplative way to read short passages of sacred text and discover meanings running deeper than the literal layer.

- *With the first reading of the text, listen with your heart's ear for a phrase or word that stands out for you.*
- *During the second reading, reflect on what touches you, perhaps speaking that response aloud or writing in a journal.*
- *After reading the passage a third time, respond with a prayer or expression of what you have experienced and ask yourself what this passage calls you to.*
- *Finally, after a fourth reading, rest in silence.*

Member's Corner--Susannah, Eugene

I had met Rev Toni at St. Jude Catholic Church about 20 years ago. I hadn't seen her since, until Paul & Mary Michaud told me she'd be in Eugene, as a Woman Priest, to say Mass at First

Christian Church. I attended and met like-minded Catholics. We were fed up with the patriarchy and narrow-minded precepts coming from Rome and many of the Bishops. I attended Mass each time Toni came to Eugene. The Sophia Christi Community was formed, and I joined the Choir. To me, singing at Mass is how I worship God, and feel a part of the community. I look forward to Toni's homilies. They are more enlightening, comforting, and inspiring than any I've heard. When I fell in love again, after my husband of 40 years died from complications of Alzheimer's, I could think of no one else, but Toni, to marry us. I had met Lee in a singing group, the Memory Tones, and wanted a musical wedding. Toni was agreeable and supportive of my idea. She gave meaningful suggestions for readings and agreed to the music I selected, including "Abba Dabba Honeymoon" for our exit song. She helped me tie-up loose ends, and made our wedding a joyful event. The community of Sophia Christi gives me the freedom to live the Faith I believe in. –Susannah Lustica-Hall

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.

Easter season comes to an end with the arrival of Pentecost next Sunday. There is a customary Christian mindset that looks to the past through the lens of Scripture and sees tongues of fire descending on a circle of disciples as a final chapter of revelation. Jesus had told the disciples not to leave the city and promised to send the Spirit who would reveal all things to them. Once he ascended to "the right hand of the Father" he fulfilled that promise as they gathered once more in a single room. They "heard a noise that filled the entire house" and "something that seemed like tongues of fire separated and came to rest on the head of each one." Make note: all of them, women included. As we listen to these words again next Sunday we may be numbed by the familiar story into viewing the Spirit's fiery arrival as past history. What is important about this Feast, however, is that it renews our awareness of the ongoing presence and activity of Spirit in every culture, in every age and in all circumstances. Revelation never ceases. At this very moment the Holy Spirit is breathing life itself through your body, and the body of every living creature, into the world as we know it. The Spirit is sprouting buds on my geranium, raising its voice through the crow sitting on the oak branch and scampering up the telephone pole in the agile body of a squirrel. Miriam Therese Winters' song, "Spirit of God" begins: "Spirit of God in the clear running water, blowing to greatness the trees on the hill. Spirit of God in the finger of morning, fill the earth, bring it to birth and blow where you will. Blow, blow, blow 'til I be but breath of the Spirit blowing in me." This is the Spirit we open our minds and hearts to receive in an intentional and communal way each Pentecost. I say "intentional and communal" because the Spirit is present everywhere and always. It was present as life-force in nature, in creatures large and small, and in human beings before Jesus ever walked on earth. But by 'sending' the

Advocate to his disciples Jesus personalized the Spirit. He identified Spirit as companion and guide, as revealer of truth, as promoter and supporter of justice, as One who draws the community together and speaks Wisdom through open hearts. This is the same Spirit we open our eyes and ears to discern as we sit on our porches making way for more to be revealed, for inspiration to dawn, for renewal of heart and mind to take place. It is the same Spirit we seek as we go about our days, filtering what comes into our field of vision with an eye toward recognizing Wisdom's face in the mix. Pentecost provides a yearly opportunity to renew our recognition and openness to Spirit's movement in ourselves and in the world. We say 'yes' once again to being the disciples of beauty and truth Christ has called us to be

Pentecost blessings to all,

Toni