

July 7, 2019

Dear Friends,

With cloudy skies and cool morning temperatures it doesn't exactly feel like summer yet. Not that I'm complaining! Unlike most people I know I'm not a huge fan of summer and I always dread the heat waves and oddly increasing (for Oregon!) humidity. I expected both in Kansas but learned early, with great relief, that the Pacific Northwest had milder weather patterns. There was rain, of course, but rarely thunderstorms (which I missed!) That understanding was tested a week ago, however, when we had an amazing storm in Portland, with lightning, thunder and lashing winds that lasted fifteen whole minutes or more! Such a treat for this Midwesterner! Then this past Monday evening I watched as the sky darkened in that ominous way I remember well as a child. The wind came up suddenly and rain fell in sheets while hail bounced off the roof, sidewalk and street. "Feels like tornado weather," I thought to myself, "but this is Oregon!" I relaxed, but still watched the sky. The next morning when I went to the office someone who had been listening to the 6:00am news met me at the door saying she heard that a small tornado had touched ground the night before just a few blocks from where I live! It was a 'baby' tornado by anyone's standards, an 'EF-0' to be exact. It uprooted a few trees and downed several power lines while remaining on the ground for about a mile. I was aware of feeling strangely joyful that my storm 'instinct' was still in good working order since I haven't lived in Kansas for decades. Now though, several days later, I find myself thinking about those two storms and the disruption in 'normal' climate patterns we are experiencing on a global scale. An increasing unpredictability in the natural world mirrors the upheavals in social networks and political alliances. We could possibly draw a correlation between what we humans are doing to our planet and how our own destructiveness is ricocheting through culture and society. At a gut level I think most of us feel some anxiety as we witness both interior and exterior chaos quickly becoming the norm. But let's take a small leap here. I'm no scientist or mathematician, but I'm fascinated by something I learned about chaos theory. Chaos theory is a mathematical concept, and it can be used to explain complex systems like weather, politics, astronomy and economics. Though systems such as these appear to operate in a random fashion chaos theory demonstrates there is actually an underlying order that is difficult to see. Underlying order. Difficult to see. Does this sound like Spirit to you? It does to me! It not only gives me hope, it allows me to trust the God of the Cosmos who moves within the 'lowly' minds and hearts of people, amplifying small changes the powers-that-be overlook or can't see. Dramatic world-changing dynamics are afoot within the chaos of our times. Like Jesus we are asked to trust the Spirit, the Holy and formidable Winds of Change.

Mass Schedule This Month

Mass in Portland will be Saturday, **July 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, **July 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:

Next Council Meeting – Saturday, September 21

Our next Council meeting will take place via teleconference from 11am to 1pm on September 21. At the April 27th meeting the Council voted to use teleconferencing for all but the fourth quarter Annual Meeting to save on travel time for everyone. Because of a limited agenda and challenging summer schedules we decided to take a vote via email on the June business items (below) and forego the actual June meeting. If you have questions or ideas to offer the Council, or would like to be part of the process as a Council participant, please speak to one of the Council members at Masses next weekend or email them to Toni or one of the following: Portland Council members: Kathy, Mike, Joy and Jim. Eugene Council members: Judith, Carol, Jessica, Bruce and Dianne.

Pastoral Update:

Council Meeting Update

The Parish Council was unable to get together for our scheduled meeting in June. Summer! Everyone had events and plans and we had to just put it off. There were two business issues we needed to deal with, though, so we did that via email. Council members voted on two motions: 1) whether to plan a summer picnic this year; and 2) how to implement our annual pledge drive. The Council voted unanimously to skip the summer picnic this year and to add this item to the 2020 agenda. Finding a new location and handling the logistics were simply beyond the Council's capacity this summer. As for the pledge drive, we unanimously agreed that one member in Portland and one in Eugene will take responsibility for explaining our budget cycle and handing out pledge cards in September and October. We vote on next year's budget at our November 16th Annual Meeting, and we use those pledge cards to create the budget. –Judith Manning, Council Secretary

Contemplative Prayer Group – Eugene

The Eugene Contemplative Prayer Group, now meeting for over 3 years, is planning on reading Richard Rohr's latest book "The Universal Christ." I took the liberty of reading ahead while on vacation and the ideas brought forth are changing the way I see everything. Here are 3 passages found in the first half of the book that really stuck out for me:

- *If something comes towards you with grace and can pass through you toward others with grace, you can trust it's the voice of God.*
- *Hang around people you love, people that inspire you.*
- *Love is the energy that sustains the universe, moving us toward a future of resurrection. It works whether we are paying attention or not.*

I look forward to the discussion this book will stir among the group, who happen to be people I love and who inspire me. --Bruce Turner, Council President

Member's Corner--Anna, Eugene

I have been a member of the Sophia Christi Community for about five years. I came to the community in search of a more "genuine" spiritual practice, than what I previously had been involved with when I first came to Oregon. I find that the Mass with Sophia Christi is grace filled and I truly feel the presence of Christ there. I am a cradle Catholic, and was fortunate to have a solid foundation in post Vatican II "new thought, and practice" in the Church, when I was in middle school and high school. In my home parish at the time a more progressive climate continued into the early 2000's. It seems the Holy Spirit had chosen Central Montana to be a place to administer some of her deep and mystical teachings. However, the climate in the church changed, and so did I. When I got to Oregon, I was adrift of a solid spiritual practice although I have always had a deep connection to mysticism and a passion for studying and integrating the mysteries presented through the practices of contemplation and spiritual works. I have found that Sophia Christi provides all that I consider important for developing an increasingly deeper spiritual life. Because of the leadership and guidance of Pastor Toni, I believe I have the opportunity to embrace and explore the deeper mysteries of my faith, and live an increasingly genuine life in Christ. I am part of the contemplative prayer group, a lector, Eucharistic minister, and have been recently active as an altar server. I really love serving the Sophia Christi community through these activities. I am constantly grateful for the gifts and the blessings I have been given through participation in our community! --Anna Lankutis

A Sophia Christi 'Children's Missal' Under Construction

Two Eugene members, Dianne Turner and Anna Lankutis, have been hard at work this month creating a special missal for the children of our community. We now have several children with varying degrees of experience at Mass, some of whom haven't been baptized and others that are preparing for first communion. We hope this new resource will help parents explain what is happening during Mass and will encourage the children to actively participate in the liturgy. If all goes well the Children's Missal will be ready in Eugene by next weekend, and in Portland at the August Mass.

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.

Changes that begin infinitesimally small can produce enormous effects after a time. This is sometimes called "the butterfly effect." Shifting dynamics can undermine and disrupt systems that have maintained a particular status quo for decades, even centuries. And that particular status quo might be (and often has been) detrimental, even destructive, of the environment, the planet as a whole, and every species on earth. We are a planetary people and we do have some major crises to face as well as hard decisions to

make. There are practical questions demanding level-headed discussions in an attempt to find solutions that will work to save environments, societies, cultures, diversity itself and every conceivable species. I support all those who are working at this practical, physical level. At the same time I am watching for subtle movements of Spirit, working within us and within our world. And I see them every day. More and more of us are becoming sensitized to the horror at our southern border. More and more of us are feeling overwhelmed by the homeless persons on our streets, living in tents on our sidewalks, creating camps in our public parks. As a society we seem paralyzed to act in any coherent and coordinated way, but in our cities and our neighborhoods many of us are learning how to be neighbors to those huddled near our doors. It is a slow process, but our awareness is growing as our hearts are bombarded with the pain of sisters and brothers we cannot help but see as we stumble along with each other in the darkness we didn't realize was closing around us—until now. No social issue is simple, and the world-wide political catastrophe of refugees fleeing violence, poverty, oppression, food and water shortages, and the destruction of home and livelihood is beyond anything we have had to deal with globally until now. We are connected as never before, and so we see with new eyes. It is a hard but necessary seeing. How else will we begin to notice our neighbor who is lying by the side of the road, beaten, stripped, and half-dead after falling prey to robbers? How else can we be moved to compassion if we can't see or won't hear the cries of the children held apart from their parents, all of whom are hungry, sick and terrified? We must see our neighbors. They are there, walking with their shopping carts down our street. Who is the neighbor to these travelers, Jesus asks the lawyer. "The one who showed compassion," the lawyer answered. "Then," says Jesus, "go and do the same."

Blessings of summer to all of you,

Toni