

June 7, 2020

Dear Community,

I have been watching the news this past week, which isn't typical of me. I am watching the Body of Christ convulsing in pain and anguish over the systemic injustices we have allowed to dominate our lives for centuries. Whether we count ourselves among the privileged, or the relatively silent "afloat middle" or the marginalized or discarded, we are represented in the writhing mass of bodies and voices streaming through the cameras and news channels across the land. Not everyone is marching. Some sit behind desks, talking, interviewing, giving their opinions. Some fight for recognition, for freedom from oppression. Some analyze the views and reactions of protestors. Some scream their hope for change in violent ways. Some create chaos for its own sake; some take advantage of chaos for their personal ends. Some march in solidarity with those who have been beaten, and whose sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, husbands or wives have been killed by those sworn to protect them. Some cry at graves we know well, others at scenes of heartless deaths we have forgotten. The photos and news clips reach us from small towns in rural America as well as from locations around the world. It is estimated that over 700 cities in our nation have seen an outpouring of grief and frustration over the last 12 days, a reality unparalleled in our lifetime. These massive protests occur within a continuing global pandemic that shows no sign of releasing its grip on the world or its claim on what controlling interests deem to call "social order." The systems in place that have supported and even authorized actions such as the cold-blooded murder of George Floyd for over 400 years discredit our nation and brings us, literally, to our knees. That so many of us seem to have the willingness and courage to look our country's foundational discriminatory policies in the eye and begin to see the connection between the nation's intrinsic racism and the economic, racial, educational and health inequalities of African Americans, in particular, is an amazing thing to witness. As I've watched the massive protests take on a life of their own over the last 12 days, I have been heartened by the numbers and the diversity of the crowds. That so many are calling out the centuries of systemic injustice giving rise to so much anger, frustration and violence has given me hope even amid the tragic images of destruction.

We are in a time of tremendous change. The pandemic and raised voices of dissent are indicators of a change far deeper than I think many of us can imagine. To think this is simply a passing phenomenon, that we will go back to "normal" sometime in the next few years, is not a hopeful thought for those left out of "the system." I heard one young man say: "it's a horrible feeling to know people don't even want you to be on the planet!" Knowing you are unwanted, expendable, and without value is antithetical to who we are as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God. So as I watch the events surrounding these protests unfold I see many parts of the Body of Christ coming together with purpose, bringing their pain and grief, united in hope and determination that this time deep change will come. This time, threatened from within by an unseen marauder and from without by systemic injustice, this Body merges as One in pockets around the world to rescue the soul of humanity from systems of domination so that the Body of Christ can truly be free.

**Readings for Liturgies** can be found on the USCCB website at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/>.

### **Online Mass Schedule Continues This Month**

**Mass via Zoom** will be Saturday, **June 13**, at **5:00pm**. It is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, formerly known as the Feast of Corpus Christi. We will continue celebrating Masses online every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday-of-the-month until meeting in person no longer threatens the lives and health of our communal family.

### **Pastoral Update:**

If you have regularly participated in Sophia Christi liturgies either in Eugene or Portland during the past year you will automatically receive a Zoom invitation this month. It will be sent to you Friday, June 12, for our June 13th celebration. If you have not been involved in these community gatherings, but would like to participate in the online Mass, let Toni know by responding to this email no later than Wednesday, June 10, and a Zoom invitation will be sent to you Friday as well.

### **Communications Survey Results**

*We'd like to thank the 37 of you who participated in our recent Sophia Christi communications survey. The responses were almost evenly divided between the Eugene and Portland groups. We sought to gather information to help us assess the usage of and interest levels in our monthly newsletter, webpage, Facebook site and Zoom meeting opportunities, and it's clear that our community wishes to remain as closely connected as possible. Over the next several weeks we will develop a plan based on the responses and suggestions you provided that will allow us to better use the various communication tools at our disposal. More to come in July!*  
*Rachel and Josie—Sophia Christi Communications Team*

### **Care Team Forming**

*If you are interested in being a part of the Care Team or you have a need that the Care Team might respond to, please let Rachel Wheeler or Pastor Toni know. Rachel can be reached at [rastonwinchel@hotmail.com](mailto:rastonwinchel@hotmail.com) --Rachel Wheeler*

### **Members Corner – Sharing Reflections?**

The Spirit speaks through all of us and your experiences, questions and insights are important. If Sophia nudges you to reach out to the wider community, please send a few sentences or a paragraph or two to Toni at this email address for inclusion in our next newsletter.

### **Website**

Outreach has always been part of the mission of Sophia Christi. We are grateful for the website monitoring and management skills showing their faces at this much-needed time. If you are interested in being involved in this project please contact Toni. Also remember that the newsletter and current homily are generally posted on the website each month, as are all upcoming events. Our web address is [www.sophiachristi.org](http://www.sophiachristi.org)

**A continuing pastoral invitation**—In the normal course of life I have the opportunity to meet with you personally when a pastoral issue arises, or you want/need spiritual support. But we are somewhere outside the range of 'normal' now. Please let me know if I can assist you in this strange time we are living through. I am still available by phone (503-286-3584) and you can still reach me through this email address. Feel free to use either one.

The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, formerly known as Corpus Christi, is traditionally focused on the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. As a kid I remember processions led by our pastor who carried the consecrated host in a monstrance, held high for all to see. We circled the playground of the parish school before returning to the Church to celebrate Benediction, which involved singing, incense and being blessed by that monstrance held high by the priest. I thought the incense was great. These processions are still held in many places. They proclaim a belief that Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine consecrated at Mass. But after the Second Vatican Council, the Church began taking to heart Paul's words in several of his letters as he talks about the gathered community as the Body of Christ. It began to embrace the ancient belief that Christ is really and truly present in us, in the assembled community, in the People of God which includes everyone and leaves no one out. And if you think about it, if we really believe Christ is present in the Eucharist, when we eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine Christ becomes part of every cell in our body. Christ comes alive in us. The community re-members it is the Body of Christ in the world.

In his letter to the Romans Paul says (12:4-5): "For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another."

He says this again a little differently to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12:26-27): "If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it."

And in Ephesians (4:25) "So speak the truth, for we are members of one another."

All of humanity is one body, and Christ is the Body of the Cosmos, to borrow insights from people like Richard Rohr, Sr. Ilia Delio and Teilhard de Chardin among others. Together with all of Creation, on this tiny planet in a miniscule solar system on the edge of the small Milky Way galaxy, we comprise one single Body. I think of this when I see the masses of people marching in Portland, D.C., Seattle, San Francisco, Houston, Chicago, Boston, Frankfurt, Paris, Melbourne, Sidney, Hong Kong. The Body of Christ is crying out for an end to oppression in all its forms. We have different gifts. We have different voices and different functions in this huge transformation of the social order we are undertaking together. No one is left out. We are members of one another, suffering, crying and dying as one. We are one Body in Christ.

Blessings and peace to all of you,

Toni