

March 7, 2021

Join the Members Facebook page. See below for instructions about how to participate.

Lenten greetings,

This Lent I've been reading the short selections compiled by Celeste Yacoboni in her book, "How Do You Pray?" One of the contributors is Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. In his section he writes: "People say to me sometimes, 'How come my prayer isn't being answered? and I tell them, 'You hang up the phone too soon'." He goes on to say: "It's necessary to sit for a while and get the action directive, the marching orders for the day." I sit with that thought awhile. At first it makes me chuckle, then I react to 'marching orders,' and finally I begin to reflect more deeply on the inner workings of prayer. We are nearly half-way through Lent...a good time to reflect on the journey thus far...and on prayer, long considered the foundation of a spiritual life. Most of us, I'm guessing, have been taught to think of prayer in narrowly defined terms, either as prayers learned by heart (such as the Lord's Prayer) or as a petition for help from God, either for ourselves, others or the world. These, and prayers of praise and thanksgiving, are the most familiar forms of prayer. Less familiar to most people is contemplative prayer or centering prayer, which are part of the western tradition of meditation. But there are other forms of prayer to consider. Do you know that simply breathing is considered prayer in the Hasidic (Jewish) tradition? The Hebrew word for God—YHWH—is never spoken. The letters are aspirated consonants, breathing sounds in the Hebrew alphabet. We 'speak' the name of God every day of our lives, simply by breathing. Giving attention to the breath is giving attention to God, and this is prayer. Another approach to prayer is suggested by Brother David Steindl-rast. He says whatever gives your heart and mind a lift if done open-heartedly—letting it "do something to you" rather than trying to "grasp something with it"—is prayer. "Whatever lifts up your heart, focus on that," he says. Allow your heart to quiet, to rise, to sing. Matthew Fox expands this concept a bit when he says: "If prayer is a radical (meaning "root" or "deep") response to life, then I am praying when I write a book, do research, lecture, walk silently by water, dance, undergo awe and amazement or grief and suffering, or [engage] angry powers that be by protesting. Prayer is what we do out of our depths, out of our roots. It is whatever we do to return to those depths," he tells us. We can return to those depths in so many ways—by being present to the moment, heartfully attending to daily activities rather than mindlessly rushing through them, by loving and serving others, recognizing they are not separate but part of us, part of God, their needs our needs, their lives precious and intertwined with our own. All of this is prayer. This deep seeing, this witnessing of God's presence in the Temple that is our world and in all who inhabit it with us--this is the spiritual challenge and lesson of our time. Prayer returns us to that truth. Next week John's Gospel will remind us that "people who live by the truth come out into the light so it may be clearly seen that what they do is done in God." We reach that radical truth and re-embed ourselves in God through prayer.

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, **March 13**, at **5:00pm**. Our Masses are online every 2nd 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 or have recently requested a Zoom invitation to our online Masses, you will automatically receive a Zoom invitation this month for our liturgy on the 13th. Invitations will be sent Friday, March 12th. If you have not been involved in the past but would like to participate in the online liturgies, let Toni know by responding to this email no later than Wednesday, March 10th.

Next Council Meeting – Saturday, March 20

The Zoom meeting platform has been such a gift in the last year! We've found it to be a highly efficient way to conduct the business of Sophia Christi, and it is environmentally friendly and time-conserving. Commuting is no longer an issue for anyone. As we prepare for the meeting on March 20th, 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 or email one of the Council members. Portland members: Kathleen Glover, Mike Newton, Rachel Wheeler; Eugene members: Carol Zolkoske, Jessica Katon, Josie Miranda, Anna Lankutis. You may also contact Toni.

Join us for our March 27 Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together

Our next Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together is Saturday, March 27, from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. These informal virtual gatherings have provided members from both the Eugene and Portland communities with a wonderful opportunity to connect with one another during this time of physical separation. All are welcome! Toni will send out the Zoom invitation a couple days before the meeting. Contact Josie with any questions at Josephine.miranda64@gmail.com. We hope to see you on the 27th! -Josie Miranda, Sophia Christi Communications Team

Staying Connected – Zoom Gatherings and Facebook Options

I joined the Sophia Christi Council this year and appreciate that during these times it is a way that I am able to stay connected to and serve our community. I also am grateful that the Holy Spirit has inspired our community to find avenues of opportunity for us to gather together until we are safely post pandemic. Zoom is available for Mass celebrations and our monthly social gatherings, and now we have our Facebook page which also provides us a venue for posting items about online courses or other offerings for adding richness to our spiritual lives. There is also a room set up on the Facebook page that some of us are using for a Lenten bible study discussion based on a series that is being offered through the Future Church organization. You are invited to join us Wednesdays at 5:30 PM. A Facebook room option on the Sophia Christi page is also available should any community member desire to facilitate a meet-up group for other faith-related topics. If you would like more information, contact me lankutisa@gmail.com, or Rachel Wheeler rastonwinchel@hotmail.com. May this Lenten season be especially deep and rich for you all! –Anna Lankutis, Council Member

Sophia Christi Facebook Page and “Group” Page for SC Members

See Lenten Offerings available on our Facebook Page!

The SC members are connecting with each other and posting resources on the “Group” page. To join the conversation:

First, if you are already a Facebook user consider visiting the Sophia Christi Catholic Community Facebook page (at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/Sophia-Christi-Catholic-Community-223153761191386>) and “liking” it by clicking the blue button labeled “Like.” This will allow you to receive news and announcements from Sophia Christi on your own Facebook feed.

Second, consider joining the “Group” page (at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/806948603569813>) by clicking the blue button labeled “Ask to Join.” This is a private page, so will consist only of SC members who want to share information and conversation about our own lives and concerns.

Care Team

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 contact Kathleen Glover gloverconnection@yahoo.com or Pastor Toni.

Council Member Reflection

For part of my Lenten practice this year, I discovered that the Spirit was leading me, through an overarching practice of discernment, to pay close attention to the power of my words. In a spiritual reflection I was presented with the challenge to be very aware of the power of words. I am not an eloquent speaker or writer, so I am trying to rise to the challenge! Words have the power to offer hope, joy and healing, or have the power to tear down and destroy. Even words of inner dialogue. During these times when so many are experiencing great personal, emotional challenges, and even joy and success, I want to be very aware that my words are congruent with my heart and what Spirit may be needing me to convey. Words that speak directly to an individual heart in whatever way that heart may need. Maybe no words. My prayer is that I may tend to my words as a well-tended garden that reflects beauty, grace, peace and comfort, and the essence of the Divine. —Anna Lankutis

Member’s Corner – Sharing Reflections

This space in the newsletter is available for sharing our stories, insights and experiences. Consider sending a short paragraph of your own for inclusion in next month’s edition. Deadline is March 28 for the April newsletter.

Website

Outreach has always been part of the mission of Sophia Christi and our website is an important aspect of that mission. The web address is 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.

“We are God’s work of art,” Paul tells the Ephesians, “created in Christ to do the good things God created us to do from the beginning.” How do we begin to see each other

and our lives through that lens when so little in our social circumstances mirror Paul's words? The economic system that both drives and restrains human energy around the world values our humanity under the classification 'consumer.' Paul boldly states that we have a higher calling, that we are here to do good things. What might those good things be? Financially and emotionally supporting those who are actively engaged in environmental efforts and justice/equity issues is one of those 'good things.' Feeding, clothing, housing, and caring for the health and well-being of those living in tents and under tarps along our streets is another. There is no lack of issues and a tremendous need for resources and volunteers on every front. Whatever grabs your heart is an action directive from Spirit saying: "go there!" I recently learned that The American Pet Products Association in December projected that we in this country were on track to spend \$99 billion, in 2020 alone, on all things related to our pets. God's 'works of art' are struggling to survive in poorer conditions than the majority of dogs, cats and hamsters in America. Each story of misery seems to call into question Paul's declaration that we are "works of art." Yet I know in my bones he speaks truth. This Lent I pray as I pass the cleverly constructed dwellings along the roadside. I pray rather than judge the refuse surrounding these encampments, knowing my sisters and brothers are managing their circumstances as best they can. I use this season to listen deeply for my "marching orders" and respond to Spirit's action directive to "go there!" It is Lent, a time to nourish our souls with living water for the artful journey ahead.

May Sophia hold you close this Lent,

Toni