

May 2, 2021

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

Dear Community,

In an April 3<sup>rd</sup> article for the New York Times titled “We Have All Hit a Wall,” Sarah Lyall quoted writer Susan Orlean who said, “I feel like I’m in quicksand. I’m just so exhausted all the time. I’m doing so much less than I normally do—not traveling, not entertaining—but I’m accomplishing way less. It’s like a whole new math.” Lyall says, “Call it a late-pandemic crisis of productivity, of will, of enthusiasm, of purpose...it has left many of us feeling like burned-out husks, dimwitted approximations of our once-productive selves. What time is it? What day is it? What did we do in October?” As a writer she says: “Sometimes, when I try to write a simple email, I feel I’m just pushing disjointed words around, like peas on a plate, hoping they will eventually coalesce into sentences.” I stopped right there. Yes, this is the feeling and the experience I haven’t been able to name, and it is set within a strange sense of time that has overshadowed these last fourteen months and counting. My former time-sense has been annihilated. I marvel at the passage of weeks, not just days. Every weekend I experience this weird time warp and have said many times “wasn’t it just Friday?” or “wasn’t it just Sunday?” Natasha Rajah, professor of psychiatry at McGill University who specializes in memory and the brain says the “endless monotony laced with acute anxiety [of the pandemic] has contributed to a sense that time is moving differently, as if this past year was a long, hazy, exhausting experience lasting forever and no time at all.” It all has to do with how we form memories. The unmitigated monotony and stress of 2020-21 have dulled our ability to form meaningful new memories while also limiting our capacity to pay attention, she says. The result is “a reduced ability to hold things in [our] minds, manipulate thoughts and plan for the future.” Both ‘time’ and ‘space’ have been altered in significant ways over the last year as we’ve entered the throes of a sea change on so many levels at once. Our minds simply can’t process the complexities of all we are going through. There is the biological component obviously as a virus threatens our bodies. There is a psychological/emotional component as we endure burn-out, anxiety, depression and something called ‘languishing.’ There is the political and sociological dimension we faced January 6<sup>th</sup> in this country that continues to disrupt and challenge our thinking about race, ‘christian’ nationalism, immigration, voting rights and climate change. There is also a mental component that shares space with all the others since attitudes of mind and the ‘beliefs’ we hold influence behavior and impact our emotions in so many ways. Then, of course, there is a spiritual dimension. This one receives very little attention even though it is the underlying cause, I believe, for a global reset of priorities and policies that could lead to a deep, systemic change. Where are we after a year of traumatic disruption of space and time? I know my equilibrium is off. I know we are going through something BIG that is shifting human perception and consciousness at every level. I believe it will open us in new ways as it calls into question our many over-developed, exclusive and prejudicial systems of operation. It makes sense we have all hit a wall and are ‘languishing’ in the liminal space of betwixt and between—like

Saul who is not yet 'Paul' in today's reading from Acts; like Peter who can't get his Jewish mind around opening the door to Gentiles. But Holy Wisdom seems to be shifting the human paradigm as we sit in the darkness of unknowing. We are doing our best to endure the deepening of soul Spirit performs in the darkness, while our minds are weary and our hearts suffer 'absence.' But it's hard, sometimes excruciating. There is no 'new normal' yet. But for those who can glimpse Sophia at play in the confounding details of this year there is not only hope, there is faith. We continue on in this second, odd Easter season. And as I relish the blooming rhody, the flowering dogwood and leafing walnut outside my window I'm learning from Nature once again to hold onto faith.

**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, **May 8**, at **5:00pm**. Our Masses are 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 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 8th. Invitations will be sent Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. 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, May 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Join Us for Our May 22<sup>nd</sup> Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together**

*Happy May, everyone! Our 10th Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together for 2021 is Saturday, May 22nd, from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. These relaxed and informal virtual gatherings have helped to foster a strong sense of community between the Eugene and Portland groups. All are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Toni will send out the Zoom invitation a couple of days before the gathering. For more information contact Josie with any questions at [Josephine.miranda64@gmail.com](mailto:Josephine.miranda64@gmail.com). --Josie Miranda, Sophia Christi Communications Team*

### **Staying Connected – Zoom Gatherings and Facebook Options**

In addition to our monthly Masses and social gatherings over Zoom, we also have the Sophia Christi Facebook page. You can join the page (instructions below) and check for postings about online courses or other offerings. FB also provides the option of hosting a private group discussion in one of its meet-up rooms. If anyone would like more information about this resource, or if you are interested in facilitating a discussion with other Sophia Christi members please contact [lankutisa@gmail.com](mailto:lankutisa@gmail.com), or Rachel Wheeler [rastonwinchel@hotmail.com](mailto:rastonwinchel@hotmail.com).

### **Sophia Christi Facebook Page and "Group" Page for SC Members**

*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@yahoos.com](mailto:gloverconnection@yahoos.com) or Pastor Toni.

### 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 June 4<sup>th</sup> for the June 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](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 Acts of the Apostles carries us through the Easter season. In today's reading Saul arrives back in Jerusalem sometime after his dramatic experience on the road to Damascus. No one trusts him, of course. Until his blinding conversion just a few weeks before he was completely focused on persecuting those very disciples and they see him as a threat to their lives and their community. But now here he is, back again! And he's wanting to join them? Without an ally he doesn't have a chance. Fortunately Barnabas knows the story and steps forward to assure them Saul has changed. They begin listening to what he has to say. He walks freely through the city and openly expresses himself in the name of Christ. But once he ventures outside that circle of support and starts debating the Greek-speaking Jews things become dicey. The group is culturally and linguistically different from the Aramaic/Hebrew-speaking Jews Barnabas introduced him to, and Acts says simply: "they responded by trying to kill him." It's an all-too-familiar response targeting prophets of every age! Luckily the community who had accepted

Saul rushed to his aid and sprinted him off to safety in Tarsus. But the next verse is curious: “And the church was at peace.” After saving Saul from the angry Palestinians the community simply resumed the work of “building itself up,” its members “filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit” and devoting themselves to God. Sounds so simple the way Luke (author of Acts) writes it! But we who witness the throes of violent “debates”—about ethnic and racial differences, about “beliefs,” about authority and power struggles—we know the outcome isn’t that straightforward or simple. First-century Jerusalem was enduring cataclysmic change just as we are. Their world was crumbling in ways they, too, could not fathom. But there were pockets of unity and belonging alongside the disruptive resistance to change. Paul would have been safe had he not attempted to persuade the Palestinian Jews to open their minds to a new message, a new way of living and seeing the world. But he was prompted to reach across the divide of belief and champion the cause of inclusion by insisting that everyone is an intrinsic part of the Body of Christ. We haven’t moved very far in the last two millennium. A majority of humans still distrust people who look, speak and think differently. We still tend to fear what we don’t understand and some among us take fear to a violent extreme. We can’t imagine where the next several years will take us or what changes the world (and we as individuals) will be forced to make. But we will adapt. Life will adapt. And the work of “building up the community” will continue. It may help us to remember we are one tiny segment in the grand arc of history, one tiny cell in the overarching Body of Christ. Our confusion, our brain fog, our stress and acute anxiety in this historic moment of Covid-19, is real and significant. The world’s drama surrounds us as it did, microcosmically, the early church. But “the church was at peace.” Anchored in Spirit’s consoling presence, viscerally experienced at times but most importantly remembered. The community “was at peace.” Maybe we need reminding that God-is-with-us in all we are going through. Maybe Easter is that reminder. New life always emerges from the tomb. Trees will leaf out and tulips will bloom each spring.

Continued Easter blessings,

Toni