

November 7, 2021

Dear community,

A rumbling peal of thunder erupted during yesterday morning's downpour, just one! A message spoken in nature's vocabulary: wake up, look around, see what is there to see! Overnight all leaves on the Ginkgo trees have fallen, and most of the oaks are bare.

Across the Atlantic tens of thousands of ordinary people march through the streets of Glasgow while negotiators from over 130 nations meet to confront the increasingly dire crisis of rapid and devastating climate change. The normal seasonal cycle I observe outside my window in this Portland neighborhood draws my attention to the geopolitical maneuvering within the halls of COP26. There is a bleakness to this late autumn scene that heralds the approach of an even bleaker earth-scape if governments and industries fail to do what needs to be done NOW and instead make more promises like so many other pseudo-promises made since the first COP meeting in 1992. This year in Glasgow is the 26th such gathering—almost three decades of relative inaction by those holding the reins of power. In a front-page article this morning entitled “2 Generations, Decades Apart on Climate Fix,” a NY Times journalist writes that of the “130 presidents and prime ministers posing for a group photo [in Glasgow] fewer than 10 were women” and their median age was over 60. “Those with the power to make decisions about how much the world warms in the coming decades are mostly old and male” she writes. “Those who are angriest about the pace of climate action are mostly young and female.” Many of today's prophets demanding collective action toward climate justice are young women: Greta Thunberg of Scotland, Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan, Vanessa Nakate of Uganda, Disha Ravi of India, Xiye Bastida of the U.S., Artemisa Xakriaba of Brazil, and Autumn Peltier of Canada are just a handful of these young prophets. And there is WEDO, the Women's Global Call for Climate Justice, a global campaign launched in 2015 that organizes women and girls from every region of the world to create a mass movement for climate justice. Prophetic voices abound in this critical pivot point of history and the women, young and old spearheading these efforts are not unlike the young prophets we meet in Scripture. They are the embodied voice of Wisdom, courageously standing at the gates of our cities and before the halls of power saying emphatically that the systems that order and arrange our lives in this 21st century must change if we are to survive.

As November arrives in the northern hemisphere Christians are encouraged to remember the legacy of our ancestors in faith, our loved ones, all those who have gone before us leaving the earth itself and all human systems in our hands. We remember the dead in their simple and profound humanity, the curse of their errors and shortsightedness, as well as the abundance of blessings we've inherited out of the goodness of their hearts and the grace of their lives. This season itself portends death as nature retreats from productivity, allowing a cycle to end so something new can be born in the spring. We are invited to face endings of every kind, changes we choose and those thrust upon us, and our own eventual death. In rituals honoring All Saints and All Souls the first two days of this month, through Scriptures focused on “last days” during these final Sundays before Advent, we are asked to face into the winds of transformation and risk following the prophet's voice. Dry and crumbling shells of the past cannot sustain us any longer. These “last days” call for dramatic change.

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, **November 13**, at **5:00pm**. Our Masses are online every 2nd Saturday-of-the-month until everyone can gather safely in person.

Upcoming Events:

Zoom Invitations for November Liturgy

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, November 12. 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, November 10.

Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together in November

Join us Thanksgiving weekend for our next Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together, Saturday, November 27th from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. Its ok if you've never attended one before. All are welcome! The gatherings are small, relaxed and informal; you can either share your thoughts with folks or listen quietly and just enjoy spending an hour on a Saturday afternoon with your Sophia Christi family. Toni will send the Zoom link out the Friday before. If you have questions please contact Josie at Josephine.miranda64@gmail.com. Hope to see you on the 27th! --Josie Miranda, Sophia Christi Communications Team.

Next Council Meeting – Saturday, November 20

Our 'Annual' Council meeting will take place from 11am to 1pm on November 20. An important agenda item is the question of how Sophia Christi might participate in the two-year global process Pope Francis initiated Oct. 17 entitled "Toward a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission." (See paragraph below) Your thoughts are needed as we create a plan for making progressive and alternative Catholic voices heard. Please send your ideas to one of the Council members, or Toni, before Nov. 20. Portland Council members: Kathleen Glover, Mike Newton, and Rachel Wheeler. Eugene Council members: Jessica Katon, Josie Miranda, Anna Lukatis and Carol Zolkoske.

Pastoral Update:

Pope Francis' Global Synod on Synodality Invites Our Input

Pope Francis has begun a 2 year process to prepare for a Synod that he hopes will include the people in decision making, within a "listening" Church. During this time he would like people to gather to share experiences and suggest solutions for the many problems facing the Catholic church. The Pope has stated that he would like to hear from "all people" including those who have "walked away from the Institutional church". The people's responses will be channeled mainly through the bishops who will meet with the Pope in 2023. Many progressive Catholics are skeptical that their voices will be heard. And, many bishops in the US are not totally with the plan, probably including our own archbishop Sample. However, he has announced that the Archdiocese will participate in the Synod and has sent a letter to each parish advising them to form a Synod committee "if they wish". The Sophia Christi Community was not contacted but our parish council has been exploring our options and will keep you informed. Please contact council members with your ideas or

suggestions. For more information on the Synod, google: The Women's Ordination Conference, Catholic Church Reform International and Call to Action. –Kathleen Glover, Sophia Christi Council Member

September 18 Council Meeting Summary

The Pastoral Council met on September 18, 2021 via Zoom. Toni invited us to recognize the liminal season we entered when Covid required changes to our church life to protect the health and safety of the community. We talked about this as an ongoing reality we need to recognize and attend to. We made preparations for Toni's month off during October and discussed updating our website and Facebook pages. Looking ahead, we determined it was important to have the Zoom social gathering during October, especially since no Mass would be celebrated during the month. We decided to go ahead with the Zoom social gathering in November though its date falls on Thanksgiving weekend. Since the fourth Saturday in December is Christmas Day, and we will be celebrating Mass on Christmas Eve, we decided not to have a social gathering next month. We re-committed to being mindful of the community's needs and attentive to where Spirit leads us in the New Year. - Rachel Wheeler, Pastoral Council Secretary

Zoom Liturgy Recordings

One advantage of Online Liturgies is that we have the option of recording them. If you are interested in receiving the recording this month please let Toni know. The recording is available within a day or two following Mass. Send her an email if you are interested.

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 and check for postings about online courses and other offerings, as well as post information you would like to share. 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 Anna Lankutis lankutisa@gmail.com, or Rachel Wheeler rastonwinchel@hotmail.com.

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.

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 December 3rd for the December 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.

When we read the words of Jesus and the prophet Daniel next week it can almost seem as if they are speaking directly to us in this tumultuous third decade of the 21st Century. Daniel says: "There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence." And Jesus tells his disciples: "But in those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers in the heavens will be shaken." The words of today's climate scientists and prophets trumpet warnings that are eerily like those ancient voices. For many who interpret Scripture literally, apocalyptic literature such as that found in the Book of Daniel and in Revelations is a blueprint for the end of the world. But the word apocalypse comes from two Greek words that mean 'to uncover or reveal.' Its purpose is to uncover the mysterious trajectory of the world. It reveals the deep, inner truth that the worst of times gives birth to the best of times, that life and light emerge from death and darkness. Mary McGlone in her 2018 Commentary provided a way of seeing how we might take action in apocalyptic times such as these. "You have to be so thoroughly distraught by current events that you echo Job's gut-wrenching protest against evil and the suffering of the innocent," she said. "It is almost as if to understand the apocalyptic, you have to take your stand just a hair's breadth away from despair while remaining sensitive enough to distinguish the Spirit's whisperings midst the uproar of chaos." The young prophets of climate justice are doing exactly this in leading the way for us to follow.

We are at a crossroads and we have choices to make in how we personally handle the questions and challenges that face us. But the collective dimension of these choices is more difficult for many of us to understand, let alone engage. Pope Francis calls us to participate in a "bold cultural revolution" in "*Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home*" recognizing that many of our cultural practices and beliefs are failing us and creating a chaotic mix of inequality and injustice. This revolution he calls us to embrace requires radical inclusion and respect for all who share our home. Earth is an interconnected system of natural forces and beings not unlike the nervous system in our own bodies. If I cut a finger my entire body rallies, sending necessary resources to heal the wound. What kind of world could we create if we applied this understanding to all the wounded areas and broken populations of the planet? Anything that harms the Amazon forests, the Alaskan tundra or the rivers and oceans of this home affects every part of the ecosystem. It also affects the psychological and spiritual health of human beings worldwide in just the same way. Invisible threads connect everyone and everything we know.

"We are living in apocalyptic times," McGlone writes in her Commentary for this week. "Our moment calls us to a realistic assessment of our crises and a response that springs from the grace of believing that now is the time to lift up our heads and see that [Holy Wisdom] is at the gates. Today [She] cries out to us through the agony of creation and invites us to collaborate with [her] in the work of redemption. Our apocalyptic/revolutionary task is to join together and reveal the redemptive potential that is possible only in our unique time."
(TT: I have changed 'Son of Man' to 'Holy Wisdom' and 'him' to 'her' in this quotation)

Blessings of this season of grace and Thanksgiving,

Toni

