

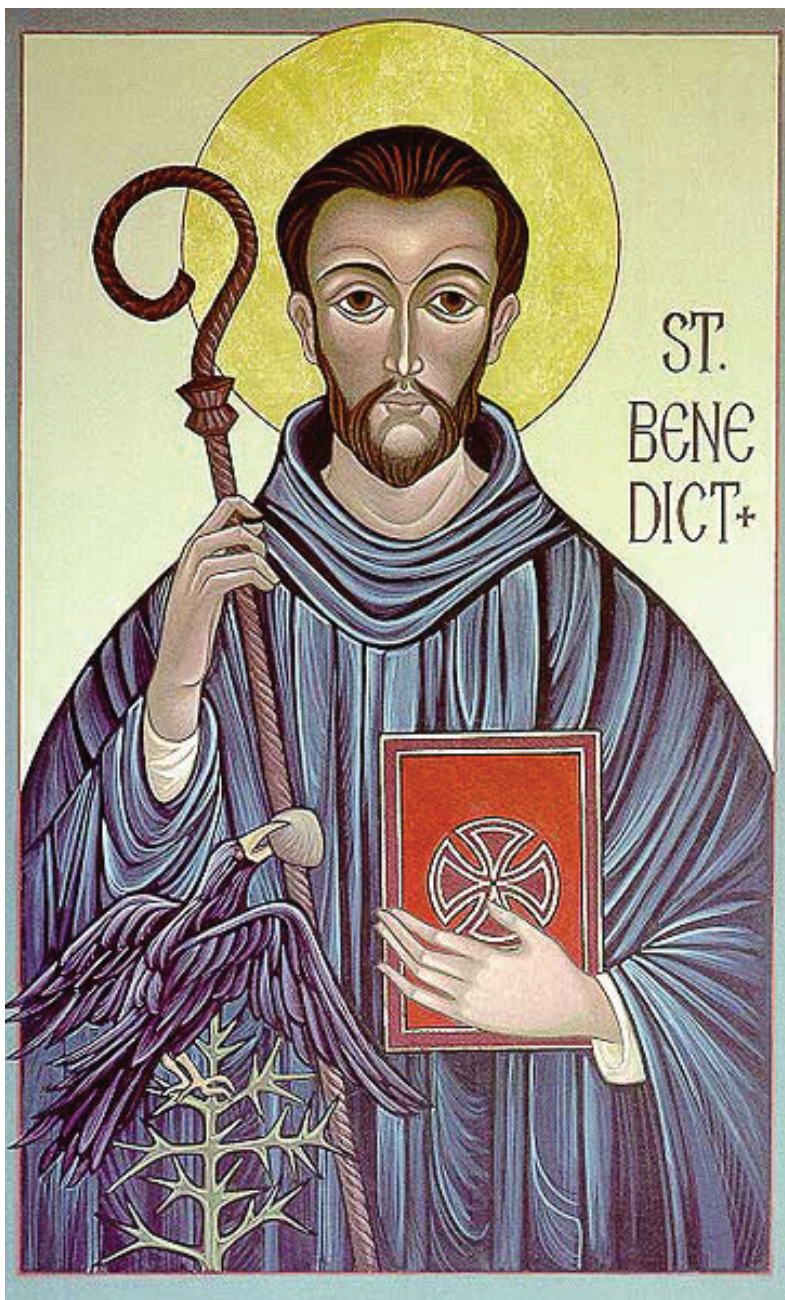
THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



# BULLETIN



THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



**OUR 45 YEAR JOURNEY  
WITH ST. BENEDICT  
January 2018**

**Bulletin Cover: 'St. Benedict', an Icon from a collection at Conception Abbey, Missouri used with permission.**

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**Financial Contributions –**

Members residing in the U.S., make checks payable to WSHS/WBHS and mail to:

Sr. Nancy Teresa, WSHS, Treasurer, United States, 12900 Glenwood Street, Apt. 108, Overland Park, KS 66209

If you pay any bills through your bank, you can easily send your contributions to WSHS the same way. Use the address above to send your check. You can make a one-time payment or a recurring payment. If you have questions, your bank will be happy to help you. And - you don't need any postage!

Members residing in Canada, make cheques payable to WSHS/WBHS and mail to Br. David, WBHS, Treasurer, Canada, 2170 Preston Road, Cavan Monaghan, Ontario, K9J 0G5 Canada

**Contributions to Haiti Clean Water Project –**

Check contributions to the Haiti Clean Water Project may be mailed to Sr. Alexandra Francis, WSHS, 7711 E Waverly Street, Tucson, AZ 85715. Please make your check payable to Alexandra Zarris. Put "WSHS Haiti Clean Water" in the memo line.

**Problems Receiving your Bulletin** - If you are not receiving the monthly Bulletin (by regular mail or by email), please email or call Sr. Christine, *not Trina*. Thank you.

**If a friend expresses interest in WSHS/WBHS, remember to direct them to our website, [www.workersisters.org](http://www.workersisters.org), [www.workerbrothers.org](http://www.workerbrothers.org)**

**THE WORKER SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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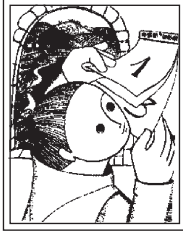
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## CORPORATE COMMUNIONS JANUARY 2018

### CORPORATE COMMUNIONS

Corporate Communion and meetings are held monthly where members are within physical proximity of each other. Currently these gatherings are taking place in the following locations. For more information, please contact the Community member listed below.

Ontario, Canada  
Michigan USA  
Kansas City, MO USA  
Southern MO USA  
Pleasant Hill, TN USA  
Arizona USA

Br. David, WBHS  
Sr. Julie Margaret, WSHS  
Sr. Dorothy Cecilia, WSHS  
James Easter, WBHS  
Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS  
Sr. Carol Matthew, WSHS

### CORPORATE COMMUNIONS FOR 2018

January 27 • February 24 • March 24 • April 21 • May 5 • June 23 • July 28 • August 25  
September 22 • October 27 • November 17 • December 8

***Retreat 2018 – May 3-6, 2018  
Celebrating Our 45th Anniversary -  
Our Journey Walking with St. Benedict  
Mercy Center, St. Louis, Missouri***

**Call to Prayer.** Please remember our Community in prayer twice a day 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM in your time zone and pray for World Peace at Noon.



**8:00 AM - Prayer for our Community  
12:00 Noon - Prayer for World Peace  
5:00 PM - Prayer for our Community**



## HAITI

Let us continue to pray for our Haitian loved ones that they are safe and kept in God's loving prayers.

I have good news; **three** cases of water tablets were shipped out, after all, in the month of November to Haiti. Of course, remember that these cases are the 67 mg tablets, which is a lower amount that we usually ship out. So, at least, so far, Global Hydration is able to send out tablets on a monthly basis with available funds to do so. Our Community's and individual support from others, helps keep clean water available for our Haitian Sisters and Brothers.

I so appreciate everyone's gift of giving to our Haiti Mission to try and help continued clean water in order to accomplish our Mission of the prevention of cholera and other diseases to these wonderful people.

As always, we thank Sr. Betty-Lou for her diligent work of processing and sending the water tablets in a timely manor.

May we all have a blessed and happy new year!

In His Name,  
Sr. Alexandra Francis



## FROM YOUR DIRECTORS

A bright New Year and we pray it is one full of joy, happiness and health for all of you!!

### BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS for Our 45 Year Journey with St. Benedict

We often ask for book recommendations as we begin a Theme for the year and we suggest you read one or two of the following as we begin this special Journey.

- **The Rule of St. Benedict** — Translated by Anthony Meisel and M. L. del Maestro
- **The Rule of Benedict: Christian Monastic Wisdom for Daily Living** — Jane Tomaine
- **St. Benedict's Tool Box** — Jane Tomaine
- **Christian Mystics** — Carl McColman
- **Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today** —  
Joan Chittister, O.S.B.

- **The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century** — Joan Chittister, O.S.B.
- **Humility Rules: St. Benedict's Twelve Step Guide To Genuine Self-Esteem** — J. Augustine Wetta, O.S.B.
- **Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit** — Thomas Keating
- **Spirit Fruit** — John M. Drescher
- **Freedom of Simplicity** — Richard Foster

### EXPLORING THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

While we are embracing the Rule of St. Benedict we will also be asked to explore and participate in acts of the Fruit of the Spirit. This, along with our study of the Rule, takes us back to our roots.

*THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT*  
*LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, GENTLENESS*  
*GOODNESS, FAITH, MEAKNESS, TEMPERANCE*  
*(Galatians 5:22)*

Each month we will be asked to focus on a certain Fruit of the Spirit. There are nine listed in the Scripture but we also have added one discipline to that list: Simplicity; to which we are also called.

Please read this section of your Monthly Bulletin and reflect on the words that are part of the foundation of our *Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit*.

— Sr. LaVerne Peter, WSHS

### RETREAT BROCHURE 2018

Retreat Brochures will be mailed to you shortly. Please read the Brochure carefully and make your plans to join other Sisters, Brothers, Workers and Companions at Retreat. As you know, Friends are welcome as well.

**The registration form is the last page of the Retreat Brochure. Please note the registration deadlines!**

### COMMUNITY RULE REMINDER

The Prologue of **The Rule of the Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit** states:

We, the Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit, hold as essential to our Rule, Mission, and Life together a fourfold commitment:

**To Jesus Christ** – Abide in me and I in you. (John 15:4)

**To the Fruit of the Spirit** – As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. (John 15:4)

**To Mission** – You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit. (John 15:16)

**To Ministry** – You who believe in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will you do... (John 14:12)

The **monthly letter** encourages us to reflect on how our fourfold commitment is influencing our daily life. It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on the theme questions included in the Bulletin. This year, may we each make time to explore this challenge to think and pray about our spiritual journey, and then share some of our reflections in our monthly letters.



## SPIRITUAL SHARING

If we follow Jesus' teachings then we will have faith and trust that can move mountains. We will be pure in heart and our lives will be totally committed to God, in all areas of life. We will be working to help others always.

\*\*\*\*\*

I recall the psalm that says if I go to the ends of the earth, God is there. If I hide myself at the bottom of the sea, God is there. If I go down to the world of the dead, God is there. God resides in us and around us at all times. I try to be more aware of God's presence and work to grow in his strength and love.

\*\*\*\*\*

Peace to me is bringing people together in harmony and friendship. It becomes a complete opening of oneself to others and a giving of all we are to those around us. That can be a difficult task but one that we strive for in our Community. At Retreat we share ourselves with our fellow Community members and open up partially to others. Finding peace is very difficult and for me I find peace in our Community, as well as in my music. We have so many wonderful songs and I can get lost in the Lord when playing and singing.

\*\*\*\*\*

I just cannot envision the thought of actually seeing God. Moses couldn't look at God and had to hide in a slit in the cliff as God passed. God's glory shines so bright, we just could not look. In the Beatitudes Jesus says "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". Jesus is pure in heart and so he could see God and yet Jesus is God. This is so difficult to think about. I believe that Jesus was saying that if we truly have faith and trust in God and follow him completely then we will be pure in heart and will see God everywhere in the world and in the world to come.

\*\*\*\*\*

It occurred to me that God's way of handling anger and frustration is different from what humans are prone to do. No matter what mistakes we make, God forgives. We are told to forgive "seventy times seven" times. Forgiveness is not just an attempt to heal a relationship which is having a rough spot. Forgiveness is also to release the "forgiver" from the burden of anger and resentment. There are a lot of folks in this country who could use a release from that burden.

\*\*\*\*\*

What Bible story or scripture breathes life into the concept of freedom for me? Three stories leap into my mind in rapid succession. First, I'd have to say the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed. Second, is the woman taken in adultery whom Jesus forgave with the admonition to

sin no more. And equally special is the Samaritan woman at the well. These are three different kinds of freedom — from physical affliction, from legal retribution, and from social ostracism — all freely given through grace.

\*\*\*\*\*

Near the end of November, I was at my front door, looking out. I hesitated before going out. After a long while, I decided to go out. When I was on the front porch, a man was coming down the street carrying a package. It was for me. He said, “You don’t recognize me, do you?” I said, “No.” It was my former neighbor from next door. He usually didn’t speak when he was living there. He was irresponsible. He, now, is working with UPS. He was smiling and acting as if he was glad to see me. God knew that I needed to see this. If I had left a few minutes earlier or later, I would have missed this! We have to remember that God is watching all of the time!

\*\*\*\*\*

I do not know the hymn “They cast their nets in Galilee” and it does not appear in the hymn book. However, in reading it online it tells us about the fishermen doing their own work and living quietly and then they are called by Jesus. Their life was not easy and they became the object of hate and rejection. I have a very difficult time trying to put myself in the place of St. Stephen, especially with the current happenings in the churches. Spiritually I am totally in the Lord’s hands and I just trust Him to guide me down this new road and into new ministries. I am thankful for our opportunity to serve.

\*\*\*\*\*

Being “Poor in Spirit” always made me think of being poor, not having enough to exist on. My eyes were opened to thinking about those who feel so lost and hopeless because they do not have God in their lives. I am more aware of the very special gift I have and that I don’t have to be alone.

\*\*\*\*\*

For my own survival it is necessary for me to forgive, not carry grudges, and remove negative thoughts from my mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

Peace means showing your love and understanding to your neighbors, your Community and everyone around you. I see that there are people who are less fortunate than I am and try my best to give them love and support and show them mercy.

\*\*\*\*\*

I had an experience when I was quite young which I have never forgotten. One morning I was having an early breakfast with my Dad. I complained about the food. My Father, who rarely showed any anger, said that I should be grateful for family and enough food to eat, that many people in the world have no breakfast. I have never forgotten this. I have learned not to waste food. I have learned to give help to others. I thank God for all He has done for us, and I thank my Father for taking the time to teach me gratefulness.

\*\*\*\*\*

Last evening on the way home from dinner and a night at the theatre, something we rarely do, I had the most profoundly moving experience that will stay with me forever. For a split second as the cab stopped for the light, in the middle of several lanes of traffic, a desperately thin face appeared at the window, scraper in hand, tears in her reddened eyes and confusion on her face, saying “I am so hungry”. Next thing I knew the light had turned green, the cab jumped forward and we were gone. It took a minute to even process the enormity of what I had seen and I wondered whose daughter she was (as she clearly was not old enough to be someone’s Mother) and what had brought her to that specific corner. As I wondered who she was the name “Angel” came to me and I knew she would be

with me forever. No longer a faceless person but one who would forever be there to announce to me the desperation, poverty and hopelessness that habits those spaces so nearby, and yet if we blink they are gone. We are forever changed because they were there if only for a second.



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

### “OUR JOURNEY WALKING WITH BENEDICT” SR. LAVERNE PETER, WSHS



We welcome this New Year and our Theme for 2018 “Celebrating our 45th Anniversary – Walking with Benedict”. This will be a year of Celebration and also a year in which we can learn, embrace, and live more deeply into the *Rule of St. Benedict*.

While we have studied the *Rule of Benedict* over the years, and many of you have taken time to learn more about it, I feel we also need to get better acquainted with Benedict, to know about the one who walked the earth just as we do and understand why he designed the *Rule*. It is also a time to reflect on our joys and struggles with the *Rule* through the years. How is this journey going?

Often, we place our various Saints in a special place, on a pedestal so to speak, and forget they were human just as we are and walked each day like we do. Did they too have joy, struggles and frustrations like us? I feel, as we commit this year to this Celebration and Journey, our Community will grow spiritually and we will embrace anew the wonderful gift which has been given to us by the “listening with the ear of her heart” by our Founder Sr. Angela, WSHS. She put God first and the fruit of that relationship is now growing and blossoming 45 years later.

### THE LIFE OF BENEDICT

Benedict was born to a noble Italian family in the year 480 – his father was wealthy, influential, and was able to send him to Rome where he studied Roman and Greek classics. While he trained to go into politics, he realized he disliked the city and the people after only a short stay there. He became discouraged and felt the world was going downhill from wars and disease as well as from politics and scandals in the Church.

With the world, as well as his personal life, in turmoil he felt the words of Christ coming to him deeply which said “If you would be perfect, go and sell what you possess and follow me” Matthew 19:21. He took those words literally and spent the next three years only praying. He became a hermit for that time and went to live in an isolated cave in Sublaco fifty miles from Rome. As he continued this

practice, people started coming to him for advice, seeking how to deal with their lives. Shortly, there were people from all areas coming to him. He was not totally alone on this new path as there were also a number of men living in the same area – all were solitary, and they were dubbed by folks as “lonely men”. In today’s English they would be called “monks”. Each one had their own way of doing things and that was often confusing. As the “monks” began to talk to each other, they thought it best to visit Benedict asking him “Teach us to be monks”. They gathered together to form a Community and he soon became their Abbot.

After much thought and prayer, Benedict began to write a handbook – with sections on when to pray, how many times a day to pray, what to do with one’s clothing and addressing daily life and living. While the Monks lived with the handbook, some of them became unhappy with his guidance and one of the Monks put poison in his goblet in order to be rid of him. When, he reached to drink from it, the goblet fell from his hands and broke into pieces. This was a miracle sent by God to them.

The handbook was very useful in the early days and continued to be, so that in several hundred years all monasteries in Europe adopted it. We know it as the *Rule of St. Benedict* and it continues to be used by monasteries throughout the world.

Around 525 A.D., Benedict moved south to a mountain crest in Monte Cassino, where he destroyed a pagan temple and established Christianity. He founded the monastery that was to be the birthplace of Western monasticism, where he wrote “The Rule of Saint Benedict” which emphasized prayer, study, common sense and community life.

St. Scholastica was St. Benedict’s twin sister and she dedicated her life to God, settled in Cassino where she founded a monastery for nuns. Sr. Scholastica died shortly before her brother, Benedict, and after her death, he had her buried in a tomb in his monastery; the very same tomb where he would be laid shortly thereafter in the year 547 when he died of a fever.

## CHAPTER SEVEN IN THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT

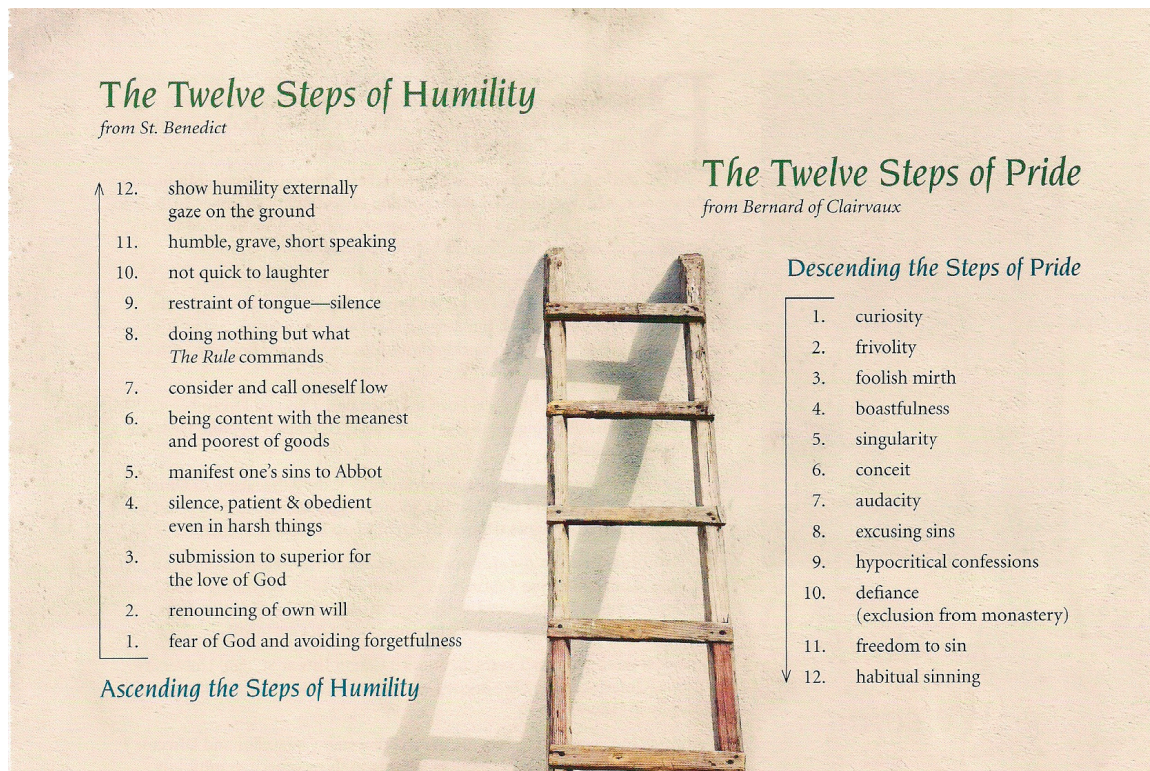
As we look at the Rule of St. Benedict we will notice that Chapter 7 is the longest chapter in the *Rule*. One may wonder why, but Chapter 7 is the culmination of the *Rule’s* Spiritual Foundations.

In writing the *Rule*, St. Benedict looked at everyone with their strengths and weaknesses. Reflecting on that he wrote:

*“...if we wish to reach the highest peak of humility ...we must, by our good deeds, set up a ladder like Jacob’s, upon which he saw angels climbing up and down. Without doubt, we should understand that climbing as showing us that we go up by humbling ourselves and down by praising ourselves. The ladder represents our life in the temporal world; the Lord has erected it for those of us possessing humility. We may think of the sides of the ladder as our body and soul, the rungs as the steps of humility and discipline we must climb....”* The *Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 7*

It is interesting that Benedict refers to a ladder and one good question would be, why would he use such a thing? Of course, one can use a ladder to go up and to go down; but one wonders why. Well, Benedict was well versed in Scripture and as he read about Jacob’s ladder he saw “it was set on the earth

with its top reaching to heaven, and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it". It is interesting that this ladder has twelve steps – perhaps reminding someone who has been part of a 12 Step Program. Benedict was more than ahead of his time!



In the 12 Step Programs one looks to a Higher Power and looks at taking the focus off of oneself and instead devoting oneself, body and soul, to a higher purpose. To fully discover God's power in our lives, we need to climb the Ladder of Humility, as Benedict calls it, in Chapter 7.

As we embrace this we need to explore the steps on the ladder and each *Bulletin* will be written by members of the Community that includes quotes from Benedict's *Rule*. It is important that you do not look at this as a graded monthly assignment but rather as an opportunity to learn how to lean more on God as you examine each rung and get to know yourself better.

As we look at this coming year that will be full of growth and renewal, let us not forget to celebrate. We celebrate a Vision given to us forty-five years ago; a vision that has become a reality – and we are now part of it.

Let us rejoice and celebrate our Founder, St. Angela, who said yes to this call, those who have gone before us, and those who are walking this Journey each day as we pray the Psalm of the Community:

Walk slowly by my side, keeping your arms tightly around me.  
God, lead me through turbulent waters.  
Be my guide, and always watch over me.  
Through my faith in you, I will have love and peace.

God, you say to me, "I forgive you and will not bring your sin to mind again."  
God, help me to forgive myself.  
God, help me to forgive others.  
God, give me the desire to not bring these sins to mind again.

I feel like my body is in under-drive.  
My throat is sore — it feels like I've been chewing glass.  
I'm going to miss my nap.  
But I'm hanging in there.  
We're all together and it's okay.  
Thanks be to God.

Life is a celebration.  
We feel delicious freedom to laugh, to cry,  
to share our pain, our fears and joys.  
To be ourselves -  
Thanks be to God.

Help me, God, through my pain and sadness.  
May the warmth and light of your love be always within me.  
In the darkest hour of my despair  
Wrap your comforting arms around me,  
That I may be centered with you in your most perfect Love.

God, you have shown me how to trust I you.  
You have guided me by your hand through the darkness of my soul.  
You have led me to freedom and have shown me your light.  
I'm too blessed; what is going to happen?  
Protect your children for their innocence is so precious.

Praise God my heart and soul.  
Embrace me with your love.  
Quell this rage that burns within.  
Release my savage sin that I may grow to live in love  
And show your peace within.  
God, in you alone will I place my trust!

God, I want to be open to do what you want.  
Give me the ability to discern your will and the courage to do it.  
My joy and my pain are yours. I trust you to walk with me across the waters.

O God, sometimes I cannot accept.  
Sometimes I hurt and am angered.  
But come and see what God can do  
Changing anger into peace.

The Almighty God is always with us; always our refuge.  
God, let me live to show your love perpetually as you are Eternal.

I have been lifted up to new heights; re-clothed in the garments of God.  
I was dead, but you have raised me up and renewed me;  
Even me, God, even me.  
I was in pain; I was hurt, I was angry. Were you with me?  
I couldn't see you, but you were there. You are with us in all things.  
You see me in my nakedness and don't laugh  
I have no shame before you.

Even though men and women fail me, God, I trust in you.  
You are my strength, my guide, my all.  
You have led me from the pit.  
You have reached out to me in my fear.

Your silence and your presence carry us to the new day.  
We share the pain, the sting, the laughter, the shared loss.  
My feet are washed by my tears and the tears of my Sisters and Brothers.  
Healing has begun.

*Written by our WSHS/WBHS Community, Retreat 1984*

Life is a Celebration. We feel delicious freedom to laugh, to cry, to share our pain, our fears and our joys, to be ourselves - Thanks be to God!

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. How are you currently doing with our Community Rule?
2. How are you reflecting the Fruit of the Spirit in your daily life?
3. Many have been part of a Twelve Step program. Have you made good progress with it or not. Can you see it as the Ladder Benedict proposes for the Rule, as he does?
4. It is interesting to know that St. Benedict lived over 1,500 years ago and yet his words today still seem most appropriate.
5. If you do not Journal – this may be a good time to begin that practice as you go up and down the steps of the Ladder, reflecting on what happens as we continue to know both God and ourselves in a deeper way.