

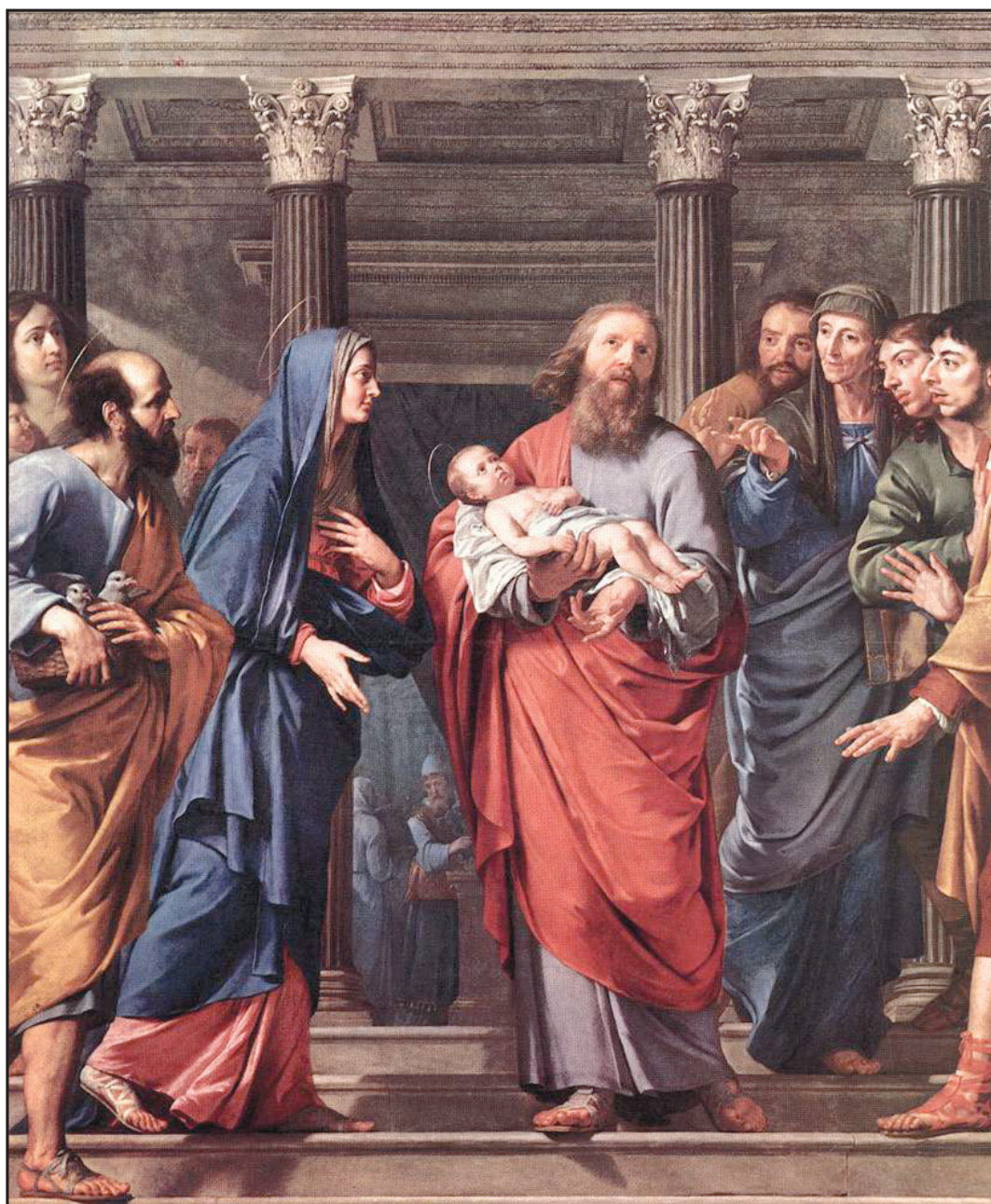
THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



BULLETIN



THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE
February 2019

Bulletin Cover:

Anna and Simeon greeting Jesus

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Community Communication Contacts:

Prayer Requests and News Notes for the monthly Bulletin - email Br. Ephrem, andrews8484@hotmail.com or see green sheets for his mailing address.

Changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses - email Sr. Christine casturges@gmail.com or Sr. Deborah strdeborah@hotmail.com or see green sheets for mailing addresses.

Urgent Community Prayer Requests for email distribution – email or call Sr. LaVerne Peter Callaghan@aol.com, Sr. Christine casturges@gmail.com or Sr. Deborah strdeborah@hotmail.com

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, www.workerbrothers.org

THE WORKER SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
Web Addresses: workersisters.org workerbrothers.org

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CORPORATE COMMUNIONS FEBRUARY 2019

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
Illinois USA

Br. David, WBHS
Sr. Julie Margaret, WSHS
Sr. Dorothy Cecilia, WSHS
James Easter, WBHS
Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS
Sr. Alexandra Francis, WSHS
Sr. Diane Richard, WSHS

CORPORATE COMMUNIONS FOR 2019

February 23 • March 23 • April 13 • May 18

June 22 • July 27 • August 24 • September 28 • October 26 • November 23 • December 14

RETREAT 2019 – April 11 - 14, 2019

The Glory of Israel: Jewish Keys to the Spirituality of Christ
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



COMMUNITY CHANGES

Please make the following alterations to your Green Sheets:

The correct zip code for Sr. Carol Matthew's mailing address is: 85755

Sr. Carol Matthew, WSHS
12181 N Bright Ridge Drive
Oro Valley, AZ 85755

The correct zip code for Sr. Joanna's mailing address is: 76009

Sr. Joanna, WSHS
101 Cimmaron Ct
Alvarado, Texas 76009-1542



FROM YOUR DIRECTORS
RETREAT REMINDERS

By now you should have received the 2019 Retreat Brochure and forms. If not, it should arrive soon! The Registration and Accommodations forms are the last two pages of the Brochure.

Remember that we invite **all members of the Community** to attend; Workers, Sisters, Brothers, Companions and Friends. Please plan now to attend. **2019 Retreat dates are April 11-14 (Thursday to Sunday).**

Send in your completed Registration form with check by or before February 20 to get the early Registration discount rate.

A completed Registration form and Accommodations form with check is due by or before March 20.

If Registration & Accommodations forms and monies are received after March 26, we cannot guarantee a room will be available for you.

If you have not received some or all of the Retreat information, please email or call Sr. Christine and she will send you the forms you need.

RETREAT SCHOLARSHIPS

There is some money available for scholarship help to attend Retreat. Send your request (include how much money you would need) to: **Sr. LaVerne Peter, E-mail – callaghan@aol.com**

ORDERS FORMS ENCLOSED for WSHS/WBHS Shirts & Sweatshirts.

PLEASE NOTE: Send your completed order form and check to **Sr. Barbara Rebecca, WSHS** by March 8th. Checks should be made out to WSHS/WBHS and marked “*Clothing.*”

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE INFORMATION NEEDED

Please e-mail or send to **Howard McClendon, Companion** the date and day of the week you will arrive and the time you will depart when you complete your accommodation and transportation information. This will facilitate our making correct arrangements for lodging and for coordinating shared transportation. Thank you.

GREEN SHEET UPDATES

Our annual update of the Green Sheets begins now. If your address, email or phone has changed, send the updated information to **Sr. Paula Adelaide, WSHS**. Our deadline for completing the update is March 8th. Changes throughout the year will continue to be printed in our *Bulletin*.

**NEWS NOTES**

Shirley Pace: My grandson, Dylan, received a nice promotion, traveled to California to gain perspective on the California branches, and will move to Springfield, Missouri Corporate offices this year.

Sr. Paula Adelaide: My Stephen Ministry class has ended and we were commissioned. We hope to be assigned our care receivers soon. I have enjoyed being a volunteer usher for arts events in Chicago. I've been to a wide variety of performances, from small storefront theaters to biggies like Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Shakespeare. At Thanksgiving I attended a multi-faith service that included representatives of more than a dozen faiths, everything from Anglican to Zoroastrian. Each person offered a prayer in his or her own faith tradition. In December I attended a production called “Christmas Mubarak.” It's a musical / theatre interplay of the Qur'anic and New Testament stories that celebrate the miraculous birth of Jesus as told by Muslims and Christians. The word “mubarak” can be translated as “welcome” or “blessings.” Very thought-provoking!

Sr. Alexandra Francis: I will be in California with my son, Jack, his wife, Minta, her mother, who I call Ya (in Thai, grandma) and my granddaughter, Sandra. I can't wait to love on her, hug her and kiss her. I love her to the moon and back. My son is absolutely crazy in love with his new daughter. Of course, her mom and grandma are also.



SPIRITUAL SHARING

I'm working my way through my Lectio Divina Bible but am still struggling with a lot of the passages — So much smiting! It bothers me a lot when God tells the Israelites to go kill 12,000 or 8,000 or 20,000 “enemies” — men, women, and children. But I'm also finding wisdom in some of the “contemplate” passages. Recently there was a passage by Eugene Peterson to the effect that one reason we (!) have trouble praying is that we are more interested in ourselves than in God. We want God to pay attention to us when we should be paying attention to God.

Genuine laughter forms a bond between and among people. When we laugh with someone, we feel closer to that person. When we laugh in Community, we feel closer to God. We've had some great Community “traditions” over the years. Remember our young adults in “Pharaoh, Pharaoh”?

Over the years we have talked about the concept of “Listening with the ears of our heart”. But the next step is actually putting this into practice - how much do I practice it?

One of the reasons I am thankful for my new priest is that he is one who really does attempt to look at you and not over your shoulder when you are talking to him. I can't tell you how few people I find are able to do this. When he does that, he conveys that he is truly listening and that the person before him is valued; that he has nothing else to do but to give you his undivided attention.

I think that by being accountable to the Community Rule I have become more aware that I need to be ready to serve whenever and wherever the opportunity presents itself. I feel that I do not do enough to support God's work in the world and I am trying to follow God's direction.

I appreciate the prayers, love, and joy of the Community. It is God's way of speaking and guiding me. The daily readings as well as the monthly letters encourage awareness of the need to continue growing in Christ and reminds me how the Community encourages me to do that.

Change can be a pain, but I also find it offers a chance for growth. Sometimes just being friendly is a way of spreading God's love.

I have always taken myself less seriously and laugh at myself very often. Otherwise, I would be miserable.

Laughter is always a good thing when it is being enjoyed by all people. I have had the situation where people were laughing at me and it is a very humbling and upsetting time. You simply don't know how to react. It also makes you more cognizant of others being laughed at.

When I read about Benedict's statements on laughter, I questioned his views and I must admit this entire “ladder” idea has been very difficult at times. How would Benedict have viewed the pictures of Jesus laughing? How would he have responded?

I agree with Sr. Wendy Martha that laughter is good for the soul as long as it is good laughter and not at the expense of someone else. At Retreat we always have lots of laughter, but it is building the body of Christ in the Community and I know it is not directed at anyone, it is a simple joyful noise unto the Lord.

I am currently reading *“Good News of Jesus”* by William Countryman and he stresses the importance of knowing that God loves each of us with a love that is generous and inclusive. It is a love that embraces each of us completely — faults and all, good points and bad points. God’s love gives us a reason for treating ourselves with loving kindness. The person that each of us is now, the person we have been and the person we will become, this is the person that God loves. We need to see ourselves differently, more honestly and better.

I am sure you have seen or heard the statement “Be patient – God isn’t finished with me yet”. God is working in us all the time to bring us to where he wants us to be and to be the person he wants us to be. God is leading us and we need to be open for his guidance and direction and not to get upset when our views of where we should be going are different from his direction. This definitely applies to me especially after my reaction to losing my Church. We are all different and in different spiritual places as we move forward with God.

I wonder if the best kind of laughter is when we laugh at ourselves. I’m also convinced that Jesus, quite the “people magnet”, must have laughed regularly. He had to have been an attractive guy, not just spouting spiritual truths from morning to night. I would have enjoyed going to a wedding party with him, I’m sure.

Self Love: hard for us Christians because we have often heard that we need to put others first and just to be humble servants. But there’s another old saying: “God does not make junk.” If He loves us that much, what kind of arrogance would it be to dislike ourselves? Well, yes, there are things about me that I wish would change, but we are God’s Beloved. That gives me a totally different perspective.

I especially enjoy sharing Retreat time where so many members, with so many personalities, come alive. It is mostly a relaxing time of sharing stories, of laughter, love, caring and sharing. It is a time for me to relax, share and appreciate.

I believe that listening with compassion is listening with the ears of your heart.

I remember Sr. Jane Barnabas, now one of our Communion of Saints. I was struck by how she was mentioned at our Chapter this fall at the Benedictine monastery. I think she used to go around from door to door at our Retreat location at the time and pray for each of the community members who were attending. Needless to say, she was a very spiritual person.

Joy in the Community is seeing everyone at Retreat and knowing that they pray for me.



FORMATION AND TRAINING

The Jewish Purification of the Baby Jesus

By Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS



We all know the wonderful story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. I'm afraid too many times we see the characters in this story as one-dimensional figures painted with halos over their heads instead of real human beings.

Jesus was born into a Jewish family. A devout family who observed the rites and rituals associated with their faith, including what was required after the birth of a new baby. Joseph, when hearing the news that Mary gave birth to a baby boy, would have likely thanked God by saying the blessing of *HaTov VeHameitiv*: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who is good and bestows good."

For this baby boy, the ceremony for brit milah (also known as a "bris") would have taken place on the eighth day of life, and include words of blessing, the circumcision itself, and the giving of a name. This would have been done in the Synagogue in the town.

When the ritual of circumcision was performed Mary remembered what the Angel Gabrielle had told her before the child was conceived in her womb. And she declared his name would be Jesus.

According to the Law of Moses, when the time came for their purification in the temple, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"). There they were to offer a sacrifice.

In Jerusalem, there was a righteous and devout man whose name was Simeon, who had been praying for many years for the consolation of Israel. Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit and it had been revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Messiah. Inspired by the Spirit that day, he came into the temple and when the parents brought in the child, Jesus, he took him up in his arms, blessed God and said:

"Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised.

For I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people.

He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, "*This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as*

a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.” Luke 2:22–35

In what has become known as the Nunc Dimittus, Simeon recognized the fulfillment of God’s promised salvation as “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for the glory to your people Israel”. He had been waiting for the comfort, salvation, and revelation promised in Isaiah and through all the Hebrew Scriptures. And now the waiting was over.

Anna then approached the Holy Family. Unlike Simeon, Anna was not just visiting the Temple for the day; she was there all the time. According to Luke, Anna “never left the Temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day”. She, too, recognized Jesus as Messiah, but she has a very different reaction: “At that moment, she came and began to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem”. She was 84 years old, according to Luke, and she does not want to die: She wants to proselytize. Like the disciples who will follow her, she is driven to bear witness to what she has seen. Mary was the first to have the good news announced to her, but Anna is the first woman to understand fully and proclaim the good news.

The mixture of Simeon and Anna reflects Luke’s penchant for male-female parallelism when he writes about the recipients of divine blessing and salvation.

I’m sure this gave Mary great pause. She remembered the Angel Gabrielle coming to her, the stigma of her pregnancy becoming knowledge in their tiny village and all that had followed. Here was yet another profound proclamation she had yet to understand.

Simeon and Anna’s hope is realized at this marvelous, pivotal moment in his life, in Luke’s Gospel, and in human history. Simply, they saw a young couple from Nazareth dedicating their baby boy at the temple and offering two birds as atonement, a detail Luke mentions probably to point out that they did not have the means to offer the customary lamb and one bird.

Shaped by Scripture, Simeon and Anna saw so much more. They were able to see the long-awaited hope being realized in this moment and the future that would be shaped by this tiny baby boy.

Jesus was the fulfillment of all that the Old Testament anticipated. Scripture was the backdrop against which God revealed the glory of Jesus’ birth, and of his life, death, and resurrection. The Lord’s Messiah had come to comfort and save his people.

This wasn’t a political movement or military revolt to overthrow Rome. Or a coming revival of strict law-keeping led by the Jewish religious leaders of the day. That wasn’t the kind of fulfillment he had been expecting.

The promise God made to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah had been fulfilled. The hope Anna would profess had been long anticipated. All they had longed for was wrapped up in the baby Simeon held in his arms.

When Mary and Joseph had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Jesus grew up in a poor and deeply devout Jewish household where he was taught all things according to the law of the Lord. The era of the law and the prophets may have been passing away, but it wasn't because Jesus opposed the law and the prophets, rather he fulfilled them.

For us today it is good to remember that this baby boy that we cherish and celebrate during this Christmas and Epiphany season was destined to change the course of humankind's history and relationship to God.

God did not send Jesus to the world because we were bad and needed to be reminded. God came as a little Jewish baby so we could begin to understand how very much God loves us; so we could begin to understand the depth of God's love for us.

Questions for Reflection

1. Sr. Wendy Martha opens her article by telling us that the people she is writing about are real human beings with emotions and feelings like us. Please try to place yourself in the person of each one re: the questions.
2. Joseph and Mary are a very devout Jewish couple and completing the Laws they were taught to obey. They are poor and the trip to Jerusalem is about 70 miles from Nazareth – this would cost not only money but Joseph not being able to work. They are now faced with the need to buy an offering for sacrifice. How would you feel to only be able to purchase two pigeons – the cheapest amount allowed by Leviticus?
3. When Joseph, Mary and Jesus met Simeon, who was a “righteous and devout man” - we don't know if he held any position – we do know he loved the Lord and knew God's Word. One who hoped for Israel's consolation and comfort? When we look at Simeon, he must have been led by the Holy Spirit to reach out and hold Jesus – what do you feel he must have felt when he held Him and looked into His eyes?
4. Anna was a Prophetess and had been a widow for many years – Scripture tells us that she lived in the Temple worshiping God with prayer and fasting. She sees Jesus brought in and gave thanks to God for Him. She proclaimed He was the Redeemer and promised Messiah.

It is interesting to note that Anna was aged in years – but did not seek “retirement”. Instead she continued the work that God had given her. She is, indeed, a bit of a hero for those of “retirement age” – question “do we ever really retire from God's Work?” Our duties might change due to our physical limitations but we are really never too old, disabled – too poor or lowly, to work for the Lord. What are your insights and feelings regarding Anna and yourself?