

**THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



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# **BULLETIN**

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**THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



**HEROIC CHRIST**  
**June 2020**

**Bulletin Cover - Sister Bette Patrick, WSHS Communion of Saints, January 7, 2014**

My name was taken on April 25, 1986. My name represents St. Patrick. My heritage is Irish on my mother's side, and Dad always said my mother's "Irish" certainly came out in me. Celtic spirituality appeals to my heart and has called me to greater appreciation of God's hand in all creation. St. Patrick is a role model for all of strength and courage. "Albeit he was a bit ferocious" (*From Sr. Bette Patrick's description of why she chose Patrick for her WSHS sister name*)

**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. Wendy Samuel virtue54@outlook.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. Wendy Samuel: virtue54@outlook.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.

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**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)**

**To access the contents of the Member pages, go to [workersisters.org](http://workersisters.org); click on More. Then click on Member Pages. The email address is: [WSHS.WBHS@gmail.com](mailto:WSHS.WBHS@gmail.com) ~ The password is: Angela45**

<b>THE WORKER SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT</b>	
Web Addresses: <a href="http://workersisters.org">workersisters.org</a> <a href="http://workerbrothers.org">workerbrothers.org</a>	
Trina Avedisian, Friend, WSHS	Layout & Design WSHS/WBHS Bulletin
Sr. Sharron Magdalene, WSHS	Proof Reader
Contributing Staff	
Br. Ephrem, WBHS	News Notes and Prayer List
Shirley Pace, WSHS	Calendar
Sr. Christine, WSHS	Co-Director
Sr. Wendy Samuel, WSHS	Co-Director
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**CALENDAR**
**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS  
JUNE 2020**
**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  
Sr. Barbara Veronica, WBHS  
Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS  
Ginny Berkey, WSHS  
Sr. Diane Richard, WSHS

**COPORATE COMMUNIONS FOR 2020**

June 27

July 25 • August 22 • September 26 •  
October 24 • November 21 • December 12

**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



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**FROM YOUR DIRECTORS**

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**RETREAT THANK YOU!**

Thanks to everyone who participated in our first ever online Retreat. It was wonderful to see you even if we could not visit face to face. A special thanks to Carl McColman for his presentation on Celtic Christian Spirituality.

**UPDATE ON QUILTING MINISTRY TO HAITI**

Dear Fellow Quilters,

Sometimes ministry comes to an end and for now it is time for the quilting ministry to be still. For all who have been quilting, please know your efforts have been most appreciated. If you have any squares left from last Retreat, send them to me. Any completed quilts may be donated to a local charity.

In the light of recent events regarding the pandemic, I imagine that homelessness will increase and the quilts will be needed locally. If you don't know where to donate, look up your local quilting guild. They usually have charities they are supporting. Most will take the tops and get them quilted. If not just send anything you have to me and I will get it taken care of appropriately.

Thank you again for your ministry. *Sr Lucia*

**INVESTITURE OF NEW BROTHER – BR. GEORGE**

We are delighted to announce that on May 8, 2020 our Canadian members held a Zoom meeting and invested **Stan Hampton** as Br. George. Stan told us that he chose the name George because it is his middle name and when he attended Cursillo, he led the table of St. George. Congratulations!

**NEW COMPANION ADMITTED**

**Sari Jn-Francois** was admitted as a WSHS Companion at the Zoom gathering on May 8. Sr. Carol Matthew, who brought WSHS to Canada, led the service.

**REMINDER: 2020 GREEN SHEETS AVAILABLE ON WSHS WEBSITE**

The 2020 updated Green Sheets are now posted on a password-protected page on the WSHS website. This allows you to access the information when needed and saves the Community the expense of mailing everyone a hardcopy. It will also allow us to update the online Green Sheets promptly when changes are communicated to the Co-Directors.

To access the Green Sheets, click on this link, **[workersisters.org](http://workersisters.org)**

Click on **MORE**; then on **MEMBER PAGES**

To sign in, type in the following email address: **WSHS.WBHS@gmail.com**

Type in the **PASSWORD: Angela45**

Click on **SIGN IN**

If you or a Community member you know does not have access to the Internet and you want a hard-copy of the 2020 Green Sheets, please contact Sr. Christine or Sr. Wendy Samuel. Thank you!



## SPIRITUAL SHARING

The April bulletin gave many ways that we can hold each other up: telephone, email, letter, and prayer. Prayer is a special way to do this. Those whom we see as we walk by them using “social distancing” or someone else who needs help or even a kind word.

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About a month ago I started to not go to a store to shop, not even for food. My husband’s health is very fragile, and if he caught the virus it probably would be fatal. If I went into a store to shop, I could bring home the virus unwittingly. For a while, things did not go well. Delivery was being organized by the grocery stores and it did not work well. I believe it is now improving, but I was beginning to worry. During this period friends offered to pick up for us things we needed. A granddaughter and her husband brought us groceries (bought online). Friends called to see how we’re faring. I now realize there are so many services online right now. Praise God! We are not alone. I pray we are all blessed at this time with not only an internet service, but also in feeling the presence of God.

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St. Paul’s “turn-around” often comes to mind, but I think about those of us who have made mistakes and do not want to admit it. It is a painful experience to have to admit that we are wrong and then to have to find a way to undo the damage.

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By realizing that God is everywhere and in everything, we would not destroy nature and other things. We would find ways of treating other people better.

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Someone gave me a Shamrock a long time ago when I was working as a Navy civilian. I never put it out, but it is in a safe place with some of my other gifts. It has a blessing on it, but it seemed secular. I want to take another look at it. My “hope chest” is still in storage. I will try to get it the next time I go there.

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I cannot get to any special places, with my life disrupted (not because of the Virus). I must establish new places for meditation and for a feeling of the “mystery of eternity.” I used to like to sit in the zoo.

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During this time of COVID-19, many are being asked to do great things and they are saying yes, every day. This is a visible example of what strength and courage can do. I believe God has enabled each of us to do these great things. As someone at a distance from the moment by moment awful impacts of

the virus, I am daily in a turmoil about it and yet, not sure what to do. This is when I realize prayer is where I should go — prayer for goodness, patience, and joy. Yet sometime prayer eludes me, and I get caught up in the stewing, pacing, mindless internet searching and constant news coverage. I try to go back and remember God is asking all of us to do great things now and I know what my great thing is; to remain faithful to daily prayer and study.

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I cannot say enough positive about the Litany for Personal Use in the *Fruit of the Spirit* booklet. Reading this on a regular basis is always spiritually rewarding and sobering. It speaks to me in so many ways in a “real” language that meets me right where I am. I am very appreciative of this gift from our Community.

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I am glad I have a little extra time to respond to Stan Hampton’s responses to the eight tenets in the red *Personal Rule for Sisters and Brothers*, what with there being no Retreat this year. I find that I need to reread each of the tenets before I can respond appropriately. It is fun to delve more deeply into the Rule with Stan, as he pursues becoming a Worker Brother.

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I have enjoyed studying Celtic Spirituality this year - the rhythm of the prayers for everything. They just blend together! I started a Celtic Prayer book for Lent and enjoyed it so much that I have continued. I wake in the morning and look to God’s creation and rejoice. Tonight, I looked out and saw a fabulous Venus. Such joy and such peace. God is everywhere and in everything.

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Several in our family have had the virus and we are getting through the storm. Husband has done all the grocery shopping and medication runs to the Doctor’s office. It has been a big strain, but we are managing. God has made us stronger through this time and closer which we are all thankful for.

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During this stay-at-home time, I am finding that Bible study is much richer now. For one thing, we have twice as many people online (including one in another city) than we had when we meet at the church building. This leads to more varied insights and deeper conversations. I am seeing things in Scripture that I had never noticed before.

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I miss the visits with my spiritual advisor, of course. I do have more time for spiritual reading. The books are not necessarily religious books, but I find there can be spiritual meaning in the secular novels, biographies, and other nonfiction as well.

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Today’s Retreat Zoom session with Carl on the Celtic Spirituality really got me thinking about a lot of things. Carl was talking about Anamchara, and I realized that I have been looking for someone like this in my life for a long time. In thinking about friends, I could not come up with a friend who I feel hears me on a spiritual level. I am so grateful to be on this Celtic journey with this Community. I can feel little pieces of my spirit, that might have been dormant, coming to life. This Community greeted each other with open Zoom arms and smiles, and I am so grateful to be part of such a caring, nonjudgmental, loving group.

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I think I have a healthy combination of faith and doubt. Both lead me to accept that I will never have all the answers. Instead of always looking for a “why” or trying to control every aspect of life, I can simply trust God to handle the details. I can enjoy God’s love and the beauty of life. Some would say

that doubt is the opposite of faith. Yet, I am not convinced that is so. In fact, I think that doubt is as much of a spiritual gift as faith. It was in doubting my own abilities to cope that I was led into deeper intimacy with God as a teen. It was in doubting that I had all the right answers that led me to learn about other religions and to gain a respect for their perspective. It was in doubting that God would abandon our family for leaving one denomination that led us to a new spiritual home where our faith could thrive. Repeatedly, throughout the years, doubt has pushed me forward in my faith, taught me to appreciate others, and forced me to rest in God's unfailing love.

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I really enjoyed reading this month's Bulletin. This is the 5th week that my family has been stuck inside. For the first 4 weeks I was handling it well. This week, however, I feel as though I have hit a brick wall. My motivation is lacking, and I feel very lonely and depressed. Reading the Bulletin gave me a sense of community and helped get my mind off these four walls and onto the beauty of Ireland. The quote that Sr. Kathleen Columb gave about "visiting certain places because they bring us face to face with the mystery of eternity," really stuck out to me. As I mentioned last month when I visited Glendalough there was something otherworldly about it. If you looked hard enough, you could almost see the monks walking through the forest with their prayer ropes. Yet, I am realizing that one does not have to go as far as Ireland to find a place where the mystery of eternity is present. My home parish is a place where I come face to face with the mystery of eternity on a weekly basis. I am realizing just how much I miss that opportunity now that it has been taken from me. There is nothing magical about my parish. The prayers I say at home while sitting on the couch hold just as much power as they do sitting in a pew there. Yet at the same time that beautiful building, those precious people, and those Sacraments really pull me out of myself. They force me to pay attention to God. That is why I miss them so desperately. I can guarantee that the first Sunday we are reunited will be full of happy tears.

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I go back and forth with God during this pandemic - I know He is there and I know He is sovereign, I just hope humanity can handle this. It feels so desolate in some ways and yet people step forward to be helpful and encouraging all over the place, and that's wonderful to see. I suppose the whole thing feels confusing and stressful and terrifying at the same time. However, we are managing, and the extra time with family is certainly a gift. That's the silver lining as I see the earth open up and purple flowers of all varieties take over my garden, I am heartened that this will not last forever.

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I do my Bible readings every morning and try to spend time in prayer. I have a great deal to be thankful for and I pray that God will continue to walk with me as we head off in new directions, as I am sure things will not go back to what they were previously. Church will have to change and also gatherings such as Retreat. We can only trust in God to lead us through all these things. Praise God as we trust in his Leadership and I know things will be better and greater than they were before. I pray for the Community that we may continue to walk with God through this difficult time.

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For all the horrors of this pandemic and the need to cancel our Retreat, meetings and other outings, I can't help but hope that out of this chaotic mess will come more appreciation for our world, for nature, for one another and for our idea that government can really be a force for good in the lives of people in need. At least I hope this is the outcome.

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I believe I do see in small ways, people reaching out and offering support, humor, suggestions, the truth in one way or another and these for me are hopeful signs that God is alive and well and that hu-

man beings do have the capacity, not only to hoard toilet paper, but also to share what they have with others. When we are able to see beyond the usual confusion of hurry and rush and anxiety and fears and prejudices, we enter those “thin places”.

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Even if we are not able to stand in Wales, we can in our own neighborhoods enter these places where we see beyond the immediate challenge to the small gesture or word that makes life living with other human beings very sweet and special. These are thin places.

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I believe we have an opportunity at this time to slow down willingly and to allow the creative juices to flow a bit. This is less likely to happen in our usual busyness but if we can slow down and begin to really listen and reflect, begin to really look intently or gaze meditatively, we may find an eternal truth in the midst of our ordinary lives.



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

### HEROIC CHRIST BY BR. PETER NICHOLAS



It is said that “there are no atheists in foxholes.” When faced with death, we often turn to God, to make sure that our souls will wend heaven-ward if we die.

What if, instead of seeking safety and comfort in our foxholes, we felt that God was empowering us to rise up and wage the battle valiantly?

That is what medieval Celtic Christians thought about Jesus.

To many of them, He was not a lamb led silently to the slaughter, but a warrior king mounting and embracing the cross. It appears that those 6th and 7th century Celts were not as bound by the details of the scripture as we might be, but were more interested in the big picture of what God was really doing. After all, on Easter, we sing of

Christ’s victory over the grave, not his passive acceptance of a heinous death.

One of the concepts we inherited from the medieval ones is “The Harrowing of Hell”. Synonyms of “to harrow” include “to plunder”, “to pillage”, or (agriculturally speaking) “to cultivate by breaking up and smoothing the soil.” In our Creed, we say “He descended to the dead”. The medieval Celts believed that meant he “plundered” hell to release the saintly souls who died before His incarnation.

If Jesus went into Hell to beat up on Satan, how much more can He conquer our own demons? With such a warrior as our champion, should we constantly feel weighed down by our own consciousness of personal sin? I believe that it does no good to say that Christ has triumphed over sin and death, and then to hold onto our feelings of guilt. Either Christ conquered sin, or He didn't. Maybe . . . just maybe, He conquered my sin also, took it away and claimed victory!

C.S. Lewis's collected letters include one written in April 1960 to a Mrs. Sutherland. "I believe in something like this," Lewis explains to her. "We understand that Jesus did go to hell to preach to those who came before the cross. We understand that he saved some of them and brought them to heaven with him.

"The medieval authors," says Lewis, "delighted to picture what they called 'the harrowing of hell', Christ descending and knocking on those eternal doors and bringing out those who He chose. That would explain how what Christ did, can save those who lived long before the Incarnation." Some of my additional research uncovered these thoughts about the Heroic Christ:

In "The Dream of the Rood," an Anglo-Saxon poem written in the early Middle Ages, Christ's death and burial is described in a manner which is startlingly different from the original biblical accounts. The poet calls Jesus "the young hero" and "the warrior." In other translations, Christ is called the "heroic, fair, young knight," and "mankind's brave King." In order to emphasize the momentous triumph of the crucifixion, Christ is depicted as an aggressive warrior who boldly confronts and defeats sin. This depiction is consistent with the honor and courage so highly valued in the early medieval culture.<sup>1</sup>

The image of Christ in the Middle Ages emphasized the salvation Christ brought to mankind *by presenting him as a triumphant warrior*. ". . . the medieval church was less concerned with literal description [of the crucifixion] than with analyzing its significance as the pivotal event of Christian history. No flogged, suffering stumbling Christ drags the cross to Calvary, he is a young and confident champion striding from afar." Though Christ's crucifixion has held great significance throughout Christian history, it was the *especial* focus of medieval religion. The warlike Germanic culture of the Early Middle Ages viewed the crucifixion as a victorious battle of good over evil and perceived Jesus as a hero who delivered humankind from sin.<sup>2</sup>

Irish literature includes stories of King-Heroes, Martial-Heroes, and Heroes among the saints. Jesus is described in graphic warrior terms. The "warrior" strips himself, ascends the cross himself, and there hangs on the tree. He is depicted as having called together *a stout band of twelve renowned warriors*. When he ascended to Heaven, Christ "recounted his fair deed to God, the Father, king of kings, he was given full power in Heaven and Earth . . . [then] he sat with victorious valor on the right side of God, the Father."<sup>3</sup>

Well! Not the usual passion narrative.

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1. Jeanette C Brock *Hanover Historical Review*, Spring 1998

2. Michael Alexander, *The Earliest English Poems*. Berkeley: University of California

3. Larry Swain. Ch. 3 in *Illuminating Jesus in the Middle Ages*.

I'm reminded of our parish's interim rector, Fr. Jack Fleming, a retired priest from St. Louis. He was Irish and proud of it, and even held a special Celtic service one evening. He would often attend our weekly men's study group early Saturday mornings. When we read through the Passion narrative in Matthew's gospel, the cries of Jesus ("*My God, why have you forsaken me?*") had to be explained. My traditional interpretation focused on Jesus taking on the sins of the world, and the Father turning away so as not to behold all that sin. Fr. Jack, however, had a different take. He pointed to the Luke version of the Passion, where Jesus says, "Into your hands I commend my spirit." Just like the medieval Celts, Fr. Jack was saying that Jesus was an active – not passive – participant in the story. He *gave up his life*, it was not taken from him. A victorious warrior? Perhaps so.

I noticed this year that our parish's Lenten eucharistic prayer includes these words: "Giving himself *freely* to death on the cross he triumphed over sin, opening the way of freedom and life."

It seems that our modern sensibilities tend more toward a Puritanical view of Jesus. Austere, God-fearing, "canonically correct". Prayerful and profound. Perfect for a stained-glass window, but not always considered a living, friendly, attractive and strong human. And certainly not a conquering hero! Perhaps our Christian walk of today could use some of the romance of the medieval warrior. Less thought, more feeling; less head knowledge, more heart intuition.

Sr. Betty Patrick, now a member of our Communion of Saints, was openly Celtic - Irish. I don't think anyone could consider her to be a passive victim at any time. Strong, opinionated (heroic?), but loving and gentle when appropriate. I'd say she was a living contemporary example of the kind of heroism admired by our Celtic forebears.

I close with the Celtic words of the hymn known as *St. Patrick's Breasplate*. Jesus is certainly depicted as an active and heroic protector of those who follow Him:

Christ beneath me, Christ above me.  
 Christ in quiet, Christ in danger.  
 Christ in hearts of all who love me,  
 Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. Br. Peter raises a good question in opening his article with the saying "there are no atheists in fox-holes". A good question to think and consider. At that point, death may be facing us. Br. Peter raises two options to look at, can you place yourself in thought in both views?
2. He cites that many Celts looked to Jesus as a warrior king, mounting and embracing the Cross and we sing about His victory over the grave. With those words do your Easter Alleluias become even stronger?
3. Br. Peter speaks of "Christ descending and knocking on those eternal doors of those who He chose" lived long before the Incarnation. As part of further study in this, you may want to read "The Ballad of Judas Iscariot" from the book by Morton Kelsey.
4. In his article, Br. Peter speaks of an interim Rector, Fr. Jack Fleming, who was Irish and very proud of it. Fr. Fleming speaks of Jesus saying "Into your hands I commend my spirit" which he says that

Jesus was active not passive – where “He gave his life – it was not taken from Him”. Take time to reflect on this and then maybe write in your journal your thoughts and feelings.

5. Br. Peter speaks of our beloved Sr. Bette Patrick who is now a member of our Communion of Saints and I agree totally with him when he says that Sr. Bette was not a “passive victim at any time, and she was indeed a living example of the kind of heroism admired by our Celtic forebears”. Joining Br. Peter we are grateful for the gift of Sr. Bette Patrick being with us’
6. Take time to again read the words of St. Patrick’s Breastplate and see Jesus “as an active and heroic protector of those who follow Him”.

*Sr. LaVerne Peter, WSHS*