

THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



BULLETIN



THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



THE LOVE OF LEARNING
July 2020

Bulletin Cover - "Out Our Kitchen Door" by Marilyn Propp

David and I were invited to be Resident Artists at Cill Rialaig (an Artists Residency), on the S.W. coast of County Kerry in 2013. A community of about 9 artists lived in a restored 1790's stone cottage on the edge of the cliff looking down into the water, in the Iveragh peninsula. This was the view from our kitchen door.

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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. 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.

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

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

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CALENDAR

**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS
JULY 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

CORPORATE COMMUNIONS FOR 2020

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

Fall Chapter
October 29 - November 1, 2020
Conception Abbey, Conception, 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

During these uncertain times of turmoil with the coronavirus, please let us pray for our Sisters, Brothers, children and all of the people of Haiti. They must be going through a tremendous hardship trying to keep their people healthy and free from disease.

Two cases of water tablets were shipped to Haiti. But the Haitian government refused them because of the coronavirus and they were returned to Canada. We are waiting and hoping that a humanitarian effort will take place and change the situation from uncertain to good.

Thank you all for your continued support of our Haiti Mission. Our Community has been so wonderful and dedicated in our effort to help our Haitian loved ones.

Let us pray for each other that we all stay healthy and continue social distancing. We also pray that our Community members and their families are patient during this pandemic and that things will get better soon.

Blessings and Prayers to all,

Sr. Alexandra Francis



FROM YOUR DIRECTORS

Excerpts from an e-mail we received from Sr. Teresah on May 20th from Zimbabwe – our Companion Community –

“Many thanks for the May *Bulletin*. Congratulations for the new Friend, Ken Nolen, and Companion, Sari Francois – encouraging to have new friends to journey with you.

Thank you for the work you are doing for our loved ones in Haiti. May the dear Lord continue to bless WSHS/WBHS as you save the souls of many.

We always feel very much enriched spiritually with the messages from the *Bulletin* we receive online. Thank you once more for the good work.

I am glad to let you know we have started to gather building materials to construct at our new site. I will send some pictures of what we have managed so far. This will help you to have a clear picture of where we live. We thank the Lord for the provisions.

The great challenge that remains is unavailability of job vacancies in Zimbabwe. We have our names and friars who have the qualifications in different trades but no work. This is another area we ask for your prayers.

Our love and greetings to all, *Yours in Christ, Sr. Teresah*”



NEWS NOTES

Alexandra Zarris: We all connected through Zoom and were able to have our wonderful *Retreat* for 2020. Yes, we survived!!!!

Sr. Paula Adelaide: There are a lot of things I could and probably should be doing during these stay-at-home days, but I find myself frittering away my time. Still, some of the non-essential time-fillers are fun. I decided to re-pot all my houseplants; dragged them out to the balcony and made a delightful muddy mess. Plants are much happier now, and I ended up with lots of cuttings and baby plants to give away. But I couldn't figure out how to clean up without getting mud all over the balcony beneath mine. The answer was literally heaven-sent: a drenching rainstorm two nights later. I happily waded out in the rain to rinse my tools and extra pots and to sweep away the muddy water with the rain. Next morning the balcony was like new.

Krista Baker: My son and his ex-wife are trying to work toward a mutually agreeable parenting arrangement for their son. This is very important and satisfying for me to see them work together. Our parish has decided to continue worshipping online. This is a hard decision and comes with the knowledge that the time we may return to our church building is very uncertain. We attended a Zoom meeting with our Bishop-Elect Deon Johnson as he begins to reach out to parishes all over the Diocese of Missouri. It was a good meeting via Zoom.



SPIRITUAL SHARING

When I reflect on my own solitude, I remind myself that Jesus too, had to get away alone to rest, to rebuild, to think. All this down time has allowed me to stop, reflect, and enjoy all that is around me and to be thankful.

The notion of *ruah* is significant when I think of the places I feel closest to God. As I spend time outside this spring, I feel the gentle breeze and see the wonders of spring. God feels very close and present to me. Each day the flowers and my few tomato plants seem to grow as I watch them. I feel a sense of hope for the future.

The time I am spending in prayer and study with WSHS has become an important part of my daily routine. During the day I am much more aware of God's presence. I am also much more aware of my actions and words that disappoint God. My evening prayers are full of requests for forgiveness for the opportunities I wasted when I could have acted and spoken in a more loving way. However, I am grateful for this new way of living.

These weeks at home have brought me healing. The time at home, with no commitments, has been so helpful in getting rid of my exhaustion. I was not patient with myself. I kept wondering what to do to gain a bit of stamina. I have discovered, though, I really was very tired. I realized that, although I keep saying I want to live more simply and spend less etc, I found myself each morning thinking I hadn't accomplished much yesterday. I turned back to St. Benedict for discipline and balance.

When I became devoted to Christ, I jumped from redemption to salvation. I skipped the suffering done to atone for my sins. After my own private time of suffering, I no longer feared death. Jesus has met my fears with comfort. I have found peace, even in the midst of a pandemic. When a crisis occurs, it is a time we can reflect and examine our lives for weakness. Weakness becomes visible in crisis. What we do with that is our responsibility to God.

In the past year I have been reading a lot about Christian mysticism and contemplation. These books have really helped me develop my own unique way of approaching God. When it comes to personal prayer, I find that I enjoy just being in God's presence. A silent walk around our church gardens or a late afternoon stroll through my neighborhood is rejuvenating. Or if it is late, I enjoy sitting in my icon corner with a candle lit and rose-scented incense burning. In these quiet moments I simply lift up my loved ones and my life into the love of God. I picture their faces, the events of my life, and my thankfulness and I offer it to God. It is amazing how deeply I experience God's presence in those moments. Sometimes God is so near that I feel as though I can almost reach out and touch Him.

I thought that the Virtual Retreat was very well done. Carl was excellent. I learned a lot from the sessions. It was a great idea to use Zoom.

I was brought up with parents who attended Church weekly. When I was confirmed I felt that I wanted to be a missionary. I met my husband while at university. He also was brought up in the Church and was planning to become a priest. He was an orthodox believer. One of our professors was a committed Christian so my husband and I went together to a Sunday night Bible Study in his home. It was truly inspiring. On the other hand, another professor, who taught theology, at times tried to explain Christ's miracles as natural events. As a result, I was a little double minded. After we lost our daughter several years later, I discarded any doubts about Christ. I felt assured that our daughter was in heaven with Jesus. I have not lost this faith. I do not question God's word as found in the Bible.

May has been a delicate month this year. Aside from the pandemic, the "bully" administration, the adjustments in daily routines, we provided palliative care for our 11-year-old cat LUNA. She was euthanized on May 25.

I attended our Zoom Retreat, although a few technical situations made me grateful for the recorded sessions. When Carl spoke of their 3 cats and the life shared with their feline housemates, there were

tears flowing down my cheeks. My husband and I had just learned of our very sick kitty's situation. I must say in Celtic spirit, regard every moment: the hand washing, the smiles, the placing of the pillow to render comfort, cup of tea shared late afternoon, a cool washcloth on your face and your husband's.

I am grateful for my life and for how I work hard at remembering all I need and want to do. I have given it all to the Lord.

“Conventional prayer is rarely concerned with listening.” This quote instantly took my mind back to the book “Holy Envy” by Barbara Brown Taylor. In the chapter about Judaism she makes a profound observation that really spoke to my heart. She says, “What must it be like to put hearing God ahead of being heard? Many of the prayers in my tradition are about beseeching God to hear us. So much of our worship involves listening to each other talk and then going out to proclaim the gospel to others. What do we think will happen if we stop talking?”

The Jewish emphasis on hearing and doing are both curative for me. ‘Hear, O Barbara! The Lord is your God, even when you are mute.’ The first time I read that chapter in the book I experienced a strange mixture of guilt and longing. Most of my prayer life has looked exactly like Barbara described. I have spent the majority of my life asking God to hear me, begging God to answer my prayers, seeking proof of God's existence, or just filling the silence with my own voice. Reading that book really shut me up. It was the beginning of my desire to incorporate silent contemplation into my life. My prayer life is radically changing as a result. I need to remember that silence is okay.

I enjoyed the article by Marya and I found her visualizations very special. The wind of God, I picture Jesus and the Disciples in the boat during the storm with the wind and waves tossing them about. I can imagine the fear as well as the lack of faith. I know I would want to head for shore to find shelter. Our faith quite often holds us back in many situations, whether storms, discussions, lending a helping hand. We tend to focus on our own situation rather than stepping out to help those around us. As I get older, I realize there are many opportunities for me to step out of the boat and go forward with Jesus, but I just have not had the faith.



FORMATION AND TRAINING

Celtic Spirituality The Joy of Learning

By

Marilyn Propp, WSHS



What can we learn from Celtic Spirituality? And how can we apply it to our own individual life of faith? As a visual artist, I've found that I and other artists seem to live in a world where we see "beyond the veil," into an invisible realm that is just behind the physical world. During my residency in Ireland, I found myself drawn to, and drawing, the doorways of stone ruins, as though they offered a glimpse into that other world. I lived in a 1790's stone cottage facing the ocean, in an abandoned village of about 8 houses along the coast that had been restored and turned into an artists' residency. Called Cill Rialaig, it is near Ballinskelligs, in the Iveragh peninsula in County Kerry. Walking up the path from our cottage, I saw standing stones, many stone ru-

ins, and after a climb up a very high hill to Bolus Head, a sparkling view of the Skelligs in the distance. There was Skellig Michael, home of the monastery of stone beehive huts, built between the 6th and 8th centuries. I found myself living and breathing that ancient mysterious world.

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.

When I was a child, I was always looking at the light coming through leaves, delighting in the scents and colors and patterns of the outdoors, where I spent most of my time. Everyone would say "Come on, Marilyn, stop dawdling!" But I was *looking*, taking everything in, while everyone went on ahead. I delighted in being outside by myself, exploring. One time, about age 8, I jumped down into an excavated site that would become a basement for a yet unbuilt house, behind our backyard. The striations in the vertical wall of earth fascinated me, and I dug my fingers into the slimy gray layer, pulled out the stuff, and made little bowls of it that I baked in my mother's oven. About 30 years later I learned that it was Albany clay, much cherished by potters and ceramicists.

What does this have to do with Celtic Spirituality? God was my companion as I smelled the earth, relished in the space and air and glorious outdoors. God was in every breeze, every tree. Now, in our new home in Wisconsin, I have my own gardens. I go between the gardens and the studio, awakening to God's presence in these gifts. I listen to birdsong; I follow the rhythm of patterns, the repetition of shapes; I take them in through all my senses, and in seeing, I take them in through my eyes into my whole being. I create worlds; I surround myself with them.

We can all experience images and use our imagination. Celtic prayers help us to enter into that place we all inhabit our ability to enter through that door into a larger place, a glimpse of a heavenly kingdom that is expansive. As we repeat the Nicene Creed each Sunday, we say: “Through him all things were made.” And so, through him WE are made.

During this time of the coronavirus I swing between anger and grief to bursts of joy. Tending my gardens, watching spring burst forth, tilling the earth, renews me and I go up to the studio to work. These acts of creation go hand in hand. The urge to create is in everyone. Anything we make with our hands is an extension of God’s grace. It is God’s presence within us. As Kathleen Norris says in *The Quotidian Mysteries: Laundry, Liturgy and “Women’s Work,”* “It is in the ordinary, the here-and-now, that God asks us to recognize that the creation is indeed refreshed like dew-laden grass that is ‘renewed in the morning (Ps. 90:5). A God who cares so much as to desire to be present with us in everything we do.” As we allow ourselves to awaken to and rejoice in the blossoming of spring, the greening of the plants, the visitations of birds and their songs, we allow God to enter in to our hearts and fill us with his life.

“Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain, wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain; love lives again, that with the dead has been:

Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid him, Love whom hate had slain; thinking that never he would wake again, laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:

Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain; he that for three days in the grave had lain, quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:

Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain, thy touch can call us back to life again, fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:

Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.”

Hymn 204

We live in a place of becoming, of images that unfold, appear, are created. We all have heard and read and sung St. Patrick’s Breastplate so many times: “I bind unto myself today the strong Name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, The Three in One, and One in Three. I bind onto myself today the power of God to hold and lead, His eye to watch, His might to stay, His ear to hearken to my need; the wisdom of my God to teach, His hand to guide, His shield to ward; the work of God to give me speech, His heavenly host to be my guard.”

And the lovely phrases of protection: Christ with, within, beside, beneath, above me, “to comfort and restore me,” in quiet and in danger. At each *Retreat*, when we sing “Christ in hearts of all that love me,” a sob rises up from deep within me. I still am so moved by God’s incredible love for ME, who was so lost and broken, His love that gave me new life, new friends, a new heart, this beloved Community. No wonder I am filled with joy when I feel the greening of the earth outside my window.

Questions for Reflection

1. Marilyn, shares with us some of her childhood memories of delighting in scents, colors, and looking at the light coming through leaves. As adults, we tend to forget those memories. Take a minute, pause as a child, did you ever look at clouds and imagine what forms they could take; did you ever catch lightening bugs? Let go of the “adult” in you for a bit and look back into your own imagining and relax, go back and have a bit of fun.
2. During her residency she was able to live in a stone cottage built in 1790 that faced the ocean. She found herself living and breathing in an ancient and mysterious world near beehive huts built between the 6th and 8th century. Close your eyes and try to place a bit of yourself in that time and place.
3. Marilyn says “we can all experience images and use our imagination.” She tells us that Celtic prayer helps us to enter that place we all inhabit. Our ability to enter through a larger place, a glimpse of a heavenly kingdom that is expansive as we say in the Nicene Creed each Sunday “Through him all things were made.” And so through him we are made. Take time to quietly reflect upon those words, maybe write down your feelings and thoughts.
4. Marilyn notes that during this time of the corona virus, she swings between anger and grief to bursts of joy. Working in her garden she watches spring burst forth, tilling the earth she then goes to her studio and, as she says, her work blends with the act of creation and “the urge to create is in everyone and we can make our hands be an extension of God’s grace and presence within us.” Reflect on how you are finding ways to create and be an extension of God’s grace in the world.
5. “God asks us to recognize that creation is indeed refreshed like dew-laden grass that is renewed every morning. A God who cares so much for us as to desire to be present with us in everything we do. The visitations of the birds, and their songs, we allow God to enter into our hearts and fill us with his life”. Take time to pray and reflect on what Marilyn shares with us.
6. Please take your time as you reflect on these questions, thoughts and images. Don’t rush through a special project, but rather sense and feel the words, the pictures you imagine. Take off your shoes, be a child again and then let some of our adult in a bit. Quietly read slowly the words of St. Patrick’s Breastplate and offer thanksgiving.

Sr. LaVerne Peter, WSHS