

**THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



# **BULLETIN**



**THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



**THE BLESSING OF EVERYTHING**  
**August 2020**

**Bulletin Cover - "Beehives" Photo by Marilyn Propp**

**Skellig Michael and the Beehive Huts. ...** It is an impressive site that features **beehive** monastic **cells**. The **beehive huts** were home to the Augustinian Order of monks who lived between to the 6th to 13th centuries. Photo was taken by Marilyn on her visit in 2013. Thank you for sharing your photo's with us Marilyn.

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**Community Communication Contacts:**

**Prayer Requests and News Notes for the monthly Bulletin** - email Br. Ephrem, [andrews8484@hotmail.com](mailto:andrews8484@hotmail.com) or see green sheets for his mailing address.

**Changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses** - email Sr. Christine [casturges@gmail.com](mailto:casturges@gmail.com) or Sr. Wendy Samuel [virtue54@outlook.com](mailto:virtue54@outlook.com) or see green sheets for mailing addresses.

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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!

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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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**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>	
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**CALENDAR**
**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS  
AUGUST 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**

**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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**Sharing from Sr. LaVerne Peter, WSHS**

My beloved WSHS/WBHS Community,

In my Retirement Community, we have a religious group, to which I belong, that meets here once a month and over the past four years I have lived here I have been asked to speak to them. In my talk several weeks ago, I spoke about where we are and how life has changed for us over these past couple of months. Some have asked that I share this talk with the Community. I hope it may address some of your feelings, concerns and issues that have come into light as we are walking this journey together.

*My talk to Cornerstone June 23rd.*

*“All is well, all is well with my soul”*

It was interesting when my friend Helen called me several weeks ago about speaking to you today and I thought to myself “Speak on what?”.

We were in the middle of our lock down here at Park Springs and all I could think about was the opening of the book *“A Tale of Two Cities”* which says “It was the best of times and the worst of times.” Many of us can relate to our lock down situation and could certainly feel it felt like the worst of times and hard to find “the best of times.” Yet, there were good times when we look back.

For me, it was a journey of discovery as I learned about things I knew nothing about, and I found I grew in many areas before we were caught with the virus and life made major changes in our lives.

The Religious Community, I am part of, was scheduled to be in St. Louis in late April for a week long Retreat. Folks come from all over the United States, Canada, Haiti – a joyful time; but the virus changed it all.

Now, what do we do? Well, first, we had to cancel Retreat which was a major disappointment. More than 60 people were coming and it was all out the window until our intended speaker mentioned to me the word “Zoom” and I went off into another world. I learned Zoom and it was amazing. We were able to do the entire Retreat from our homes, even as far away as Australia! It went well and was something I would never have expected to happen. But it did, even the virus could not stop the Holy Spirit!

Now, today, we are a bit away from our lock down situation. I have taken some time to reflect upon how much daily life has changed for us in such a short period of time. While it has been a difficult adjustment, I think there is a lot we have learned from this time.

I guess, I never really thought of the doors of my Church being locked and there would be no Service. My friends would not be sitting near me in the pew or having a good time at the coffee hour. That could never happen, but, yet, it did.

Families could not come to visit, our familiar eating spots would be closed and some of us at one point, had to be isolated from others in our own buildings. Things we would never imagine and yet, it became the reality of our lives for several months.

I grew up, part of my life, in Washington, DC and I decided to visit the National Cathedral there for my first Sunday away from my Church which was like all others. Not open. I found I could “visit” the Cathedral on my computer with the Service available.

I felt comfortable at the Cathedral, which I attended often, living in Washington, but it was a shock to me, when the Service opened, the building was vacant except for people who were to serve, two Priests, two Deacons, the Organist, and three choir members.. The rest of the building was empty.

As the Service, began, I felt a little more comfortable with the Cathedral but again, it felt very strange. Where was everybody?

We now progressed through the service, the sermon, and it was now time for the Eucharist. I recited the Liturgy, and then the Priest put the Chalice and Paten on the Altar and said “The Gifts of God for the People of God”. I sat and waited and the video camera focused on the Chalice and Bread Plate alone as there was no one there.

I must admit, I broke down. Here was Our Lord’s Supper and I could not reach out and touch it. Frankly, I don’t think I have ever cried so hard. For that moment, it seemed like everything within me was broken.

Somehow, however, through it all in a bit, I began to calm down and realized that nothing will ever separate us from the Love of God. No doors that are locked, no empty chairs, no vacant rooms. God was there surrounding us in those bleak bare moments where we felt stripped to the bone. No, God was there and His Peace was flowing like a river to each of us where ever we were.

It was in those bare moments that I took some time to reflect upon what we were going through. Yes, it is hard to be enclosed and often alone, but while it is difficult and painful, there can be joy. I began to realize we need to look and search for it.

With the touch of the word “search” I began to look around and then looked out at my office window where I was sitting. I took time and really “saw” the most magnificent trees bending two and fro, they had been there all the time but I really didn’t see them just part of the scene but yet, along with the trees I saw the huge blossoms on the Magnolia Trees. How beautiful, the beauty of nature right out my window. God’s creation in full joy and I gained the strength to begin to smile and to give thanks for the beauty that was right before me.

Here at Park Springs, where I live, I have new neighbors who live very close by, a wonderful Cardinal family. They awake me almost every morning with their songs of joy as the sun begins to cover over the horizon. What a gift! What joy as I listen to their voices.

Despite the bleakness, God's beauty was shining through everywhere I looked. Brush away the tears LaVerne. God has not left us as orphans but rather surrounded us with His love and the beauty He has created for us.

Yes, we may have some dark and hard days ahead yet to live through, but God will not leave us. He tells us that in the Gospel of John, "I will never leave or forsake you!"

As we look at our faith, I would like to share the words of Br. David of SSJE where he says, "Faith that is needed, is not a faith that exists only in our mind, but a faith that has taken hold of the heart . . . the unshakeable conviction that God is, and that God loves and that God can and will deliver us and see through any trouble".

No, God is with us on this journey, every step, every inch, every minute, right beside us and we can sing "All is well, all is well, with my soul".

"The fullness of joy, is to behold God in All" – Evelyn Underhill - Amen



## SPIRITUAL SHARING

Still feeling a fair amount of acedia here. I start each day with a list of things to accomplish and then fritter away the hours and end the day feeling that I haven't done anything worthwhile. Then one day recently it occurred to me that spending an hour carefully composing an answer to an email from a distressed friend might be a better use of my time than the items on my list. At least, I hope so.

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I have known Marilyn since before we were in WSHS when we both attended All Saints in KC MO where Father Harry Firth presided. She was full of joy and new freedom. I saw her as a most creative artist and almost child-like in her natural enjoyment of new life, especially natural life. I think her article reveals she has always been an artist in spirit. She gives us some very good insights into the creative life and in seeing God in all of it, as well as in ourselves.

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He (Jesus) is everywhere . . . beneath, above, in quiet times, in danger, in hearts.

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God has been with me forever even when he knit me in my mother's womb. You see Mom "died" when my older brother was born, and she wasn't able to have more kids. Then came the Korean war and New Orleans when Dad came back. Right after she found out that she was pregnant, Dad was diagnosed with Hepatitis and the doctors wanted to abort me if Mom also was positive. She wasn't positive, so here I am. God was with me all the way. His Spirit continues to move though out my life.

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My Easter Alleluias absolutely become stronger. We build our strength on the bravery that Jesus instilled in all of us. Because of Jesus, we are children of God who stand up for each other, pray for each other with full compassion and love. ALLELUIAH!!!!

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Thank you for encouragement this month. Gentle reminders were needed, especially the reminder to “translate our known vulnerability and imperfections as a call to humility.” What a beautiful way of looking at our failures and smallness.

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The importance of the Eucharist and how we ache to be once again at the rail with our community is something, I think, many of us are experiencing. We miss that sense of unity with our communities. Zoom meetings seem to help in giving us a feeling of togetherness. What a blessing that the technology progressed just in time for all of us to be able to join as a community through the air waves. We can find blessings in every situation if we are open to our Lord’s hand in all our lives.

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What an affirmation, knowing that we are not alone in this pandemic and our cries are always heard. The living word in the scripture changes everything, even though outside circumstances may remain challenging. It seems to re-orient our whole understanding of who we truly are in Christ, and that does indeed, change everything going forward.

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I had not thought of Jesus as a “Warrior King” before. We normally concentrate on Jesus being strong in His teaching and faith, but usually “meek and mild” otherwise. When I began to think that He might have been “a warrior King” my thoughts turned to Matthew 21:18-20 when Jesus destroyed the fig tree that did not produce figs. Then I noticed Matthew 21:12-13 where Jesus drove out those who bought and sold in the temple. These two examples do not portray Jesus as “meek and mild”. He seemed to be more like a “warrior King”. Thinking of Sr Bette Patrick; she was the one who brought me to WSHS. She was “strong” and “opinionated” and she loved Jesus and people. Perhaps she was like the Celtic Christians.

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I found Br. Nicholas’s article a “balm” to the soul. I think all of us feel sometimes as if we surely must be outside of God’s mercy “at least this time or for this reason.” Our head faith may assure us that we can never be outside of God’s mercy but sometimes our own warped sense of sin and failures keep out the light and warmth of acceptance and love that we so need. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit breaks through the wall we have put up, maybe through scripture or some loving soul, or through an article such as Brother Nicholas’s wrote, and once again light, blessing, joy and a sense of gratitude streams through.



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

## Everything is Blessing

By

Sr. Arlie Mirren



Everything is Blessing! What a wonderful claim to be able to make about my life. I'm not sure though, I can really say that with complete conviction all the time. Let's look at some aspects of Celtic Spirituality, the particular way of relating to God the Celts used, which can help strengthen our faith and adjust our vision to see blessing surrounding us. In other words, don't grumble but give thanks.

To the Celts, God was immanent. Evidence of this awareness is the Prayer on St Patrick's breast plate, known as 'The Deer's Cry'. I imagine you are familiar with it but I will quote it here so you can think about it again.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
 Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
 Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
 Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
 Christ in me, Christ when I arise,  
 Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
 Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
 Christ in every eye that sees me,  
 Christ in every ear that hears me.  
 Christ with me.

It shows such humility and acceptance of our vulnerability and our need for protection. What a tremendous blessing to know we are surrounded and filled by God's love.

This hymn backs up Esther de Waal's claim that the beginnings of Celtic spirituality were 'in the natural, not the rational and that God was immediately accessible'. It seems the words of the prayer rose from experience of the natural. Knowing this easily accessible God blesses with comfort and is an avenue to develop trust.

Here is a charming verse which illustrates a reliance on God in and for the everyday. There are many, many verses and longer poems in the same vein.

Bless, O God, my little cow  
 Bless, O God, my desire  
 Bless thou my partnership  
 and the handling of my hand.  
*(Dedicated to God's Purposes blog)*

I find the last line so humble and pertinent to the current need to clean our hands constantly to prevent the spread of COVID 19.

The concept of the Trinity was 'deeply ingrained in the heart and soul of Celtic Christians; that mystery of one God in three persons.' (*Lynne Baab quoted in Internet blog.*) I am delighted to know this because I sometimes like to think of myself sitting in the centre of the Trinity. Carl Mc Colman spoke to us about the Celtic knot and I have a picture of one that has three points. I imagine this represents the Trinity. It expresses the idea so well with its three points representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and strong centre, capable of keeping us strong in faith also. Remember the words of the first line of St. Patrick's hymn? 'I bind unto myself today, the strong name of the Trinity'. These are very strong and wise words and words of protection. I think this is a fine way to start any day. To come to grips fully with the idea of the Trinity is amazing. I wonder if the Celts had a way of simply trusting what St. Patrick said and then left deeper understanding to God to reveal over time.

I worked for some years as parish secretary to several priests and we often invited a priest from outside the parish, to preach on Trinity Sunday. It looked like a sign of respect to invite a visitor to our church and it was. However, one of my priests admitted he felt he couldn't face writing yet another sermon on the difficult and abstract idea of the Trinity! Cheers to the Celts for giving us the blessing of resting in the Trinity. The following verses are quoted by Lynne Baab in an Internet blog I read. The first one Baab claims was used by St. Patrick to introduce the Trinity to the Celts.

Three leaves of the shamrock  
 Yet no more than one shamrock to wear.

The next verse is an example of acceptance of the concept.

Three persons in God;  
 To one God alone we make prayer. (*Reflections*)

Celtic spirituality rests in the familiar and local rather than in the abstract. The familiar things we may easily overlook in our busyness were exactly what the Celts focused on. In Ireland, St. Patrick rejected the ancient polytheism but the Irish folk were able to translate old practices of concern for particulars of life into Christianity. The Celts had a deep reverence for the earth and found local areas to use for their worship or to honour God by claiming it had special religious significance. Sr. Nancy Clare reminded me that prayers were sung, crooned, spoken out loud in the morning and throughout the day to give thanks for the local and familiar. The Celts understood that nothing was outside the sphere of God's all-encompassing love. Zephaniah claims God joys over us with singing, so the Celts reciprocated. (*Zephaniah 3:16*) Here is a verse that illustrates the use of familiar things and concepts. This time it is of the heavens and the weather, as well as of strength, depth and stability.

I arise today  
through the strength of heaven:  
Light of Sun, Radiance of moon,  
Splendour of fire,  
Speed of lightning, Swiftmess of wind,  
Depth of sea,  
Stability of earth,  
Firmness of rock. (*John O'Donohue*)

There are many other poems and prayers that speak of plants, birds, houses, fields, rain, people, ideas etc. As I indicated earlier, nothing is left out.

Referring to the use of crooning and chanting, I think of a lyrical rhythm that carries prayer along easily. Having a tune and a rhythm gives a structure that helps us remember the words and their meaning. It can help keep us focused. The oral tradition used similar singing and chanting to recount the words of epic historical poetry. While I may not always remember Bible verses very well, if I can belt out a hymn, remembering the words comes fairly readily; and many people just enjoy singing. A blessing indeed to enjoy this form of prayer and bring more of the body to prayer. It can be understood as an endless conversation with our Creator and Protector, a love song and certainly a deep blessing.

During our Zoom Retreat, Carl Mc Colman told us about St Brigid. (I have a particular affinity with Brigid, as one of my granddaughters is called Bridie. And what a go-getter she is). Carl told us St. Brigid was actually consecrated a bishop. Goodness, how amazing and open minded and accepting. In other places and at other times (and in our time) most women have had little hope of being in a position of leadership. And it is still a hard struggle in many areas and within belief systems, even in modern life for some women, who are forced to live under ancient rules and prejudices. Even if the rules are not particularly onerous, we girls still need to be responsible for our own choices, free from any prejudice. Hooray for the Celts and their open-hearted love and acceptance of women. A remarkable and true blessing.

Perhaps the most moving blessing for me is the capacity to be grateful for everything. St. Paul says to give thanks for everything (*1 Thessalonians 5:18*). Easy to say, a struggle to do at times. The literature from Celtic life has numerous blessing prayers and sayings. I think this indicates an acceptance of the way things are in everyday life and a graciousness to turn from one's own troubles to show great hospitality by blessing others.

Ancestry.com tells me I am 69% Scottish and Irish! There were all sorts of sayings from both Scotland and Ireland bandied back and forth as I was growing up. One I particularly remember is 'lang may your lum reek', meaning long may your chimney smoke. A beautiful sentiment of blessing for the well-being of a person or family for ever. And here is a slightly longer verse with the same thoughts.

May you have  
Walls for the wind  
and a roof for the rain,  
and drinks beside the fire

Laughter to cheer you  
and all that your heart may desire.

The following is a small but marvellous poem showing the blessing of hospitality and acceptance. The book of Hebrews encourages us to, 'be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares'. (*Hebrews 13:2*) And there is the amazing story of the folk walking to Emmaus, who entertained Christ unawares. (*Luke 24: 13-35*)

### **A Familiar Stranger**

I saw a stranger today.  
I put food for him in the eating place  
And drink for him in the drinking place.  
In the Holy name of the Trinity  
He blessed myself and my family.  
And the lark said in her warble  
Often, often, often  
Goes Christ in the stranger's guise  
O, oft, oft and oft  
Goes Christ in the stranger's guise. (*Celtic Blessings and Prayers*)

A precious blessing indeed.

We have noted St. Patrick's supposed use of the shamrock to teach the concept of the Trinity. We have thought about how to 'commune' with God in various ways which include singing, recognition of local areas as holy, acceptance as holy of everyday activities, no matter how small. All of these show a knowledge of God's constant presence in life and a response to it. Best of all, we see that the Celts understood that they were surrounded by blessings and responded to that by blessing other people in myriad poems and prayers. I hope the humility and vulnerability found in this form of spirituality calls you to seek a deeper trust in God, so that you may claim, 'Everything is Blessing'.

As my blessing to you all, I leave you with a section of a beautiful Blessing Prayer, that has been used by John Rutter in his composition,

### **'A Gaelic Blessing'**

Deep peace of the running wave to you  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you  
Deep peace of Christ, of Christ the light of the world to you  
Deep peace of Christ to you.

### Questions for Reflection

1. Sr. Arlie Mirren starts her article this month with the words “Everything is Blessing”. Wonderful words, but do we look at things that way?
2. She goes on to say that “to the Celts God is Immanent”. She quotes the “Deer’s Cry” which shows such humility and acceptance of our vulnerability and our need for protection. Take time to reflect upon this and perhaps write a prayer.
3. When we look at the Trinity, which Sr. Arlie quotes a Priest as saying that is a “difficult and abstract idea”, we discover that the Celts had a way of simply trusting what St. Patrick said and left the deeper understanding to God to reveal over time. She quotes the verse of accepting the concept “Three persons in God . . . To one God alone we make prayer”. Reflect upon the simplicity of this versus in the abstract.
4. She also brings up singing and chanting. Having a tune and rhythm gives us the words and the structure that helps us to remember the words. How about taking time to “belt out a hymn” as a deep love song to our Creator and Protector which is certainly a deep blessing.
5. Sr. Arlie shares with us that “Celtic life has numerous blessings and prayers which reflect the acceptance of how things are in everyday life and a willingness to turn from one’s own troubles to show great hospitality to others”. Does that challenge you?
6. The blessing of hospitality and acceptance which she gives us in the “A Familiar Stranger”. . . take time to read and pray about this. St. Paul also encourages us to “entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”. Again, go back to the words “Everything is Blessing” and keep those in your hearts.