

THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



BULLETIN



THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



HYMNS/P SALMS AS PRAYERS  
May

**Bulletin Cover - Photo by Sr. Deborah, WSHS**

Psalm 91 gives me great comfort and peace and I pray/sing this Psalm when I find myself less confident or lacking trust on my daily journey.

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**Community Communication Contacts:**

**Prayer Requests and News Notes for the monthly Bulletin** - email Br. Ephrem, [apergydesign@gmail.com](mailto:apergydesign@gmail.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.

**Urgent Community Prayer Requests for email distribution** – email or call Sr. LaVerne Peter: [Callaghan@aol.com](mailto:Callaghan@aol.com), Sr. Christine: [casturges@gmail.com](mailto:casturges@gmail.com) or Sr. Wendy Samuel: [virtue54@outlook.com](mailto: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](http://www.workersisters.org), [www.workerbrothers.org](http://www.workerbrothers.org)**

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|---|------------------------------------|
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**CALENDAR**

**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS  
MAY 2021**

**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS**

Below is a list of the Regional Gatherings and groups who meet online monthly using Zoom. All meetings are open to all members (Sisters, Brothers, Workers, Companions, Friends and Applicants). As usual, the standard meeting format is to discuss the current Bulletin Formation article, along with participants sharing and praying together. If you are interested in attending a meeting, please contact the Zoom Host and she/he will add you to the group's email list.

|                          | <u>Zoom Host</u>           | <u>Date/Time of Meeting</u> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Eastern Regional USA     | Br. David, WBHS            | May 22 – 2:00 PM ET         |
| Central Regional USA     | Sr. Nancy Teresa, WSHS     | May 22 – 2:00 PM CT         |
| Southern Regional USA    | Sr. Kathleen Rachel, WSHS  | May 22 – 3:30 PM ET         |
| Western Regional USA     | Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS     | May 22 – 10:00 AM MT        |
| Carthage, Missouri       | Sr. Barbara Veronica, WSHS | TBD                         |
| Pleasant Hill, Tennessee | Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS    | TBD                         |
| Illinois USA             | Sr. Diane Richard, WSHS    | TBD                         |

**COPORATE COMMUNIONS FOR 2021**

**June 26 • July 24 • August 27 • September 24**

**October 22 • November 20 • December 11**

**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**



## FROM YOUR DIRECTORS

### EXPANSION OF WSHS EMAIL PRAYER REQUESTS

In our journey together with our Lord, it has long been our practice to email prayer requests to the Community only for ourselves and our immediate families. To quote someone famous: “the times, they are a-changing”! After much discussion regarding prayer and the world as we know it today, Sr. LaVerne and the Co-Directors feel that we also must change to include those who are closest to us and not just those we are tied to by blood, but rather those we are close to by blood, sweat and tears!

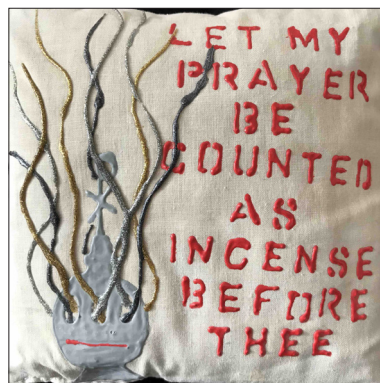
Going forward, prayer requests will be accepted and emailed to the community for those whom you feel would benefit from the power of prayer, specifically, our WSHS community to whom the promise of commitment to specific prayer as requested would commence on behalf of the individual making the request for those closest to their area of concern. Jesus has said (Matthew 18: 20 NIV), “for where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name, there am I” and again John reminds and further encourages us when he states “if we ask anything according to His will, He will hear us” (1 John 5:14). This promise is included in all four gospels and we stress John states “**according to His will**”.

This year has been an exceptionally hard one and the stress and anxiety is global! This expansion of prayer requests emphasizes that our origin is in the teaching of St. Benedict who believed his ministry to be out in the world. As such, we feel we can do no less than reach out to others as well as ourselves through our prayer commitments. As we move forward in our ever-evolving world, may we ourselves evolve in our prayer life always trusting in the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us according to His will.

*Faithfully, Sr. LaVerne Peter, Sr. Christine and Sr. Wendy Samuel*

### WHO CREATED THIS PILLOW?

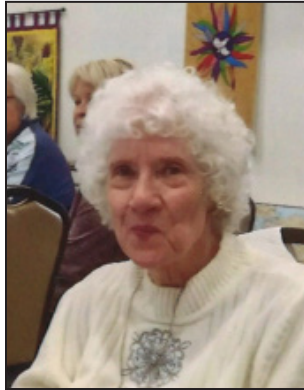
Sr. Paula Adelaide wrote: “When I became a Worker back in 1994, someone gave me a lovely pillow filled with incense. (Picture below.) Does anyone know who might have created this lovely, meaningful keepsake? I would very much like to add this person to my prayers.”





## COMMUNION OF SAINTS

### Fleur Clark, Friend, WSHS



Fleur Delice Girdley was born September 10, 1936 in Etowah, Arkansas. She passed away on December 30, 2020. After graduation from a business high school, Fleur went to work for Ford Motors in Dearborn, Michigan. She worked for the engineering department at Ford for over twenty years until her retirement.

Fleur loved her church, community, and family. Anyone who knew her knows she would put others first. She was always happy in serving others. Fleur loved her church, Grace Episcopal in Carthage, Missouri.

She volunteered in the church service every week. Fleur was introduced to WSHS by Sr. Barbara Veronica and was admitted as a Friend in June 2017. Fleur cherished her relationship with Worker Sisters of the Holy Spirit even though it came late in her life. Corporate Communion was especially important to her. Our group from Carthage, Missouri traveled to Kansas City and joined them for corporate communion and a meal. She talked about those times over and over again. Fleur was well loved in our local community. She is sorely missed by everyone.



## SPIRITUAL SHARING

I am a person who prays silently, as in a closet, so the phrase “Be still and Know that I am God” means so much to me.

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I find that at my age, the stuff of past hurts and pains are easy to forgive and forget in order to let God’s love shine through.

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I have been thinking about silence and think perhaps the least said the better. I attended a zoom retreat from the Sophia Center during lent on Lectio Divina and learned the difference between cataphatic and apathetic prayer. The first is encountering God through the world and the senses-nature, art, music liturgy etc. while the other is the path of moving beyond the senses and finding God in the stillness. Like most people I would imagine the first path is the easiest for me but I have always felt called to the second and have pursued it by practicing Centering prayer for a number of years. I have concluded that it is natural for us to move between the two. Any experience of God in nature leads to a sense of awe

that is apathetic. And any attempt at the negative way leads us to a new and fresh way of appreciating the world through our senses.

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I have gone from not knowing what I was going to do this Lent to having a blessed variety of things to contemplate. In addition to being able to receive Ashes by sprinkling on my head (ancient tradition) to Wednesday evening Zoom Stations of the Cross, followed by Christian Formation by Ian Boxall, Associate Professor of New Testament at Catholic University and an author. He has been lecturing on Zoom using Christian Art from around the world on the whole Passion of Christ. On Thursday evenings, I have been watching the SSJE series on Prayer on Facebook.

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I came across a quote in a book titled, "Finding Our Way Home: A Spiritual Journey into Earth Community" by Rev. Myke Johnson. He wrote: "*Perhaps stopping is a way to pray.*" This quote seems simple enough at a first glance, but it stopped me in my tracks. To me, this quote felt like a whisper of the Spirit. It reminded me that I don't have to keep striving, naming, and struggling to define my beliefs. I can simply exist and rest in my relationship with the Divine. In fact, perhaps that silent pause is the deepest and most honest prayer I offer right now.

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I am afloat in an ocean of uncertainty. I don't know where I fit in. I don't know where my spiritual pilgrimage will end. Most days, I don't even know fully what I believe. But for a while I am going to stop striving and slow down. For now, I am going to pick flowers for God and lay them in my prayer corner. I'm going to celebrate the changes in the seasons by going on picnics with my family and doing nature hikes. I'm not going to bother labeling my religion or adding any extra stress in my life. I'm just going to exist. "*Perhaps stopping is a way to pray.*"

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We often wonder if there are any miracles that happen in our present time, yet if we could just open our hearts and minds to looking for them in everything we see and experience, then we would be blessed with the joy of God's generous love through creation. My daughter is a doctor ( OBGYN) who prays before every procedure, asking Our Lord Christ to be with her. Often, she will even text me asking for prayer support when facing complicated procedures. Easter this year blessed my daughter with a very huge Miracle. Here is her text to me written at 10:30 at night:

"This has been a stressful Easter. I just finished a Stat (Emergency) C Section on a patient whose baby was only 35 weeks in the womb. The baby was breech (which could cut off the oxygen as it tries to go through the birth canal). Sad news was that it died and was being pronounced dead BUT Jesus came in and 13 minutes after they coded it (Pronounced it dead) a HEARTBEAT happened. The baby boy is being life flighted to Children's Mercy now, but he is ALIVE. Please pray for him. God BLESSED US with a miracle."

This was such a gift to every one who was working to save this little guy including the parents. Jesus, proving that He has conquered death and THEN blessed this child with the gift of life, WHAT A POWERFUL EASTER. A later report said that our miracle boy was doing fine and was breathing on his own. We now pray that this little guy will be totally healthy.

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I enjoyed the article on silence by Sr. Arlie and I have been reading about silence as well as centering prayer. I am reading a book titled "A Way through the Wilderness" by Jamie Buckingham. He talks about his trips through the Sinai where the desert is absolutely silent but you encounter God in the

silence. I do find that silence and stillness enhance the ability to pray and commune with God. Sr. Arlie also talks about letting go of past hurts and pains as well as “stuff”. I need to clean out a lot of things that have been around for years and I have just been reluctant to get rid of them. I also have past hurts and pains that I still carry with me although God is gradually drawing all of it away from me.

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Lectio Divina is very meaningful for me. I participate in two different Episcopal Bible study groups, both of which follow a modified version of Lectio. These weekly gatherings have become an essential part of my life.

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My prayer for our community is that each member feels the near presence of the Holy Spirit in these troubled times and be filled with inner peace.



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

### Hymns and Psalms as Prayer

By

Sr. Anna Joshua, WSHS



I have always enjoyed singing hymns - I grew up in a musical family and each of my brothers and my mom and I would all take a different part during congregational singing. My dad (the only non-singer) would just look down the pew in disbelief as we carried all four parts loudly and unabashedly! Then I married an organist and became intimately familiar with hymns, learning more about their tunes, histories, and syllabic construction, than I thought possible. We had our kids singing some of the hymn tunes with the choir before they were enrolled in school. We sing hymns as table graces - in parts, in rounds - and everyone calls out their favorite. Singing has always been a very real part of my being as a human on this planet.

In the music world, we have an ongoing debate about what is more important - the music or the words. Should the music serve the words and their meaning, offering support of the pace and flow of the poetry, or is the musical line what drives the choice of words and rhyme? When you consider how a hymn might rhyme words like “fly” with “away,” this is a classic case of the music having more importance than the words - the words being forced into the meter of the hymn. Then again, sometimes there is a natural pause in the words in one place, but the pause is in the music in another place. Check out Hymn 376 - *Joyful, Joyful* - it uses Beethoven’s original rhythm in the last line, but this is very awkward for singing. How many of us have arrived here wondering what the organist will do? Here again, we see the conflict of words vs. music. And in this case, a second version of the music was created to help facilitate the natural pause in the poetry, forsaking the authentic rhythm of the music.

As a professional musician myself, I tend to lean toward the music camp, though I can be found arguing for the words side. If you have ever experienced a performance of a hymn where the organist is paying attention to the words and does what we call “text painting,” the experience is other-worldly. This is the perfect melding of words and music, and the organist uses the music to support the words, often changing the harmonies so that the music paints the same picture as the words.

[To illustrate this point, try singing the words of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* to the music of *Happy Birthday*. How does the change of tune change the song for you - or does it?]

This is where hymns become prayer for me. That perfect intersection of words and music - where the music fully enhances the poetry and the experience lifts us for a moment closer to God.

A great example of this is Hymn 458 - *My Song is Love Unknown*. I usually am a puddle by the time we finish this hymn, and it always happens on verse three. For me the power of this hymn is the way the music absolutely fits the words. John Ireland, the composer of the tune uses a text from around 200 years earlier, and somehow the two (text and tune) are a perfect fit. Typically, this hymn is chosen during Lent, and I’m already in a rather introspective state, but verse three will always wreck me, and my husband knows it. “*Sometimes they strew his way, and his strong praises sing, resounding all the day hosannas to their King. Then ‘Crucify!’ is all their breath, and for his death they thirst and cry.*” The pivot from Hosanna to Crucify is abrupt enough to take one’s breath away, but often, my husband, on the word “Crucify!” makes a sudden shift to a minor key and the effect is so powerful. The whole tune is supposed to be major, and here we are singing about giving praise to Jesus on Palm Sunday, then suddenly, the music turns maniacal, dark, scary at the exact moment we cry “crucify!” My knees give out, and I am reminded of my mortality - the smallness of my being - my tiny place in this holy mystery.

But I remember distinctly the moment hymn-singing really got real for me. I have always enjoyed singing in our church choir. Music is praise for me. When the pandemic hit and we were forced to do church from home, we had just left our church of 9 years to move to a smaller one and I was grieving the loss of the incredible choir and music program. We ran the online church service for the new church from our studio piano for several months, when my husband decided to venture out to the church to record some hymns on the organ. He came home with the recordings and asked the kids and me to sing the hymns to the audio track. It was the first time we had sung together with the organ and it reminded me how much the simple act of singing in community feeds my soul. Hearing the four voices and the organ recording was enough to bring me back to that sacred space after several months, to feel that connection again.

Episcopal hymnody is full of beautiful poetry, to be sure, but let’s consider the psalms as prayer for a minute. Many hymns are set using adaptations of Psalms, as are many instrumental pieces. We have “*A Mighty Fortress*” (Hymn 687/688) on Psalm 46 and “*O praise ye, the Lord*” (Hymn 432) on the iconic Psalm 150. There are at least 29 hymns written using direct Psalm references, and a host of others inspired by Psalms. Probably the one that occurs the most in my prayers is “*Out of the Depths Have I Called to You, O Lord*” (ironically #666 in the Hymnal 1982). Martin Luther wrote a chilling tune (different to the one in our hymnal) to the German text, “*Aus tiefer Not schreie ich zu dir,*” on which J. S. Bach composed an organ fugue. It is this tune that comes to mind first when I really need God. When I feel like I can’t seem to handle whatever is going on around me, this is my salve. There’s something

about the words that resonates with me. *“Out of the depths I call, to God I send my cry; Lord, hear my supplicating voice and graciously reply.”* There’s no action needed on my part. I am simply calling out to God, knowing that he does hear me. I take comfort in knowing this - that even at my lowest, I need do no more than call out and I can feel his presence. I love the humanity of the Psalms. The psalmist is not afraid to lay it all out before God - there’s no pretense - no hiding. Here I am, Lord - just like this.

One of the wonderful things about using psalms and hymns as prayer is that the music tends to meet us where we are. Sometimes a hymn will hit me in a certain way, at other times, it hits me differently. Either way, for me, letting the music wash over me as I sing or simply listen is always an uplifting experience, as I pray it is for you.

### Questions for Reflection

*Please remember it is not necessary to answer all the questions  
Choose one or two that speak to you and perhaps you would like to share*

1. Have you thought of Hymns and Psalms as Prayer? Perhaps share when you have felt that way.
2. Sr. Anna Joshua speaks about “words” and “music” which of those may seem more important to you if it does and why?
3. Did you experience her suggestion to try singing Twinkle Twinkle to the tune of Happy Birthday? How did that seem to you and how did it go when you tried it?
4. Do you know the Hymn 458 – *My Song is Love Unknown* – Sr. Anna Joshua speaks of the power of this Hymn to her – do you have a hymn that brings those emotions to you and if you do – would you please share what it is and what you feel?
5. She mentions how the simple act of singing with her husband and children during the pandemic fed her soul to bring her back to the sacred space we have all missed so very much. Have you been able to do that – even if you were alone and joining in a tape you might have had?
6. Sr. Anna Joshua says “that using Psalms and Hymns as prayer is that the music tends to meet us where we are” – have you felt that and when?
7. She mentions letting the “music wash over her” – that is feeling it in each breath, each word, experiencing it as total prayer – can you relate to that and how it has felt as part of the prayer you are offering to God.