

**THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



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# **BULLETIN**

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**THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



**DISCERNMENT**  
**January 2022**

**Bulletin Cover - Milkweed - Stillness - By Sr. Susan Gabriel, WSHS**

Sr. Susan shared this beautiful photo of the open milkweed pod on a still day. The seeds are waiting to be carried by a gentle breeze to do the job they were intended to do. Waiting in stillness and silence until we are lifted to do the work we are meant to do can save us from ourselves and from going our own way.

**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)**

<b>THE WORKER SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT</b>	
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CALENDAR

**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS  
REGIONAL GATHERINGS**

**January 2022**

Below is a list of the monthly Regional Gatherings and Corporate Communion. Meetings are open to all members (Sisters, Brothers, Workers, Companions, Friends and Applicants). If you are interested in attending an online Regional Gathering, please contact the Zoom Host and she/he will add you to the group's email list.

<u>Regional Zoom Gatherings</u>		<u>January 22nd</u>
Eastern Regional USA	Br. David, WBHS, brdavidwbhs1@gmail.com	11:30 AM ET
Central Regional USA	Sr. Nancy Teresa, WSHS, nancybrooks40@gmail.com	2:00 PM CT
Southern Regional USA	Sr. Kathleen Rachel, WSHS, srkathleenrachel@gmail.com	3:30 PM ET
Western Regional USA	Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS, wguyton17@gmail.com	10:00 AM PT

<u>In-person Corporate Communion</u>		
Carthage, Missouri	Sr. Barbara Veronica, WSHS	10:00 AM CT
Pleasant Hill, Tennessee	Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS	TBD

REGIONAL GATHERING/CORPORATE COMMUNION DATES

January 22 • February 26 • March 26 • April 23 or 30 • May 21 • June 25 • July 23 • August 27  
September 24 • October 22 • November 19 • December 10

**50th ANNIVERSARY RETREAT**  
**April 28-May 1, 2022**  
***Our Journey: Looking Back, At the Present and to the Future. Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit***  
**Mercy Center, St. Louis, MO**

**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

Let us continue to pray for our Haitian loved ones. Please keep safe our Sisters, Brothers, children and all the villages and orphanages in Haiti.

Clean water is desperately needed and we were able to ship two cases of water tablets in early December to Sr. Betty-Lou Shirley to forward on to Haiti.

I wanted to say a special thank you to Christ The King Episcopal Church in Tucson, Arizona. They have been contributing to our cause every year for the past three years and continue to do so. Each year their contribution allows us to ship a case of tablets. Their gift is a blessing for Haiti.

Also, thank-you to our entire Community for your continued support of our Haiti Mission. With your help we are able to keep shipping water tablets to Haiti.

*Blessings,*

*Sr. Alexandra Francis*



## FROM YOUR DIRECTORS

**Sr. Beryl Joy turned 100 on November 16, 2021!**

Sister Beryl Joy sends a very big thank you to us for all of the love, cards and prayers she received from Our Community to celebrate her 100th Birthday. She was overjoyed at the number of cards and best wishes that arrived for weeks.

Her birthday was very special as this British born lady celebrated with Trifle and Tea in her favorite teacup. She was visited by her two daughters from Vancouver, Wendy and Valerie and her son Harold from Penetanguishene.

Sister Wendy Samuel and Sister Deborah celebrated Eucharist with Sister Beryl the week before her birthday. It was special for all of them, as they had been unable to attend church and Eucharist during this long pandemic.

We are so thankful to Sister Beryl Joy for her life in Our Community as a member, a Cluster Leader and prayer warrior for us. Sister Beryl made the first Memorial Book under Sr. Angela's direction and we use that same cover today. *We love you Sister Beryl Joy!*



### Guidelines for Regional Zoom Gatherings

WSHS/WBHS created monthly Regional Zoom Meetings in addition to our traditional in-person Corporate Communion. The goal of these meetings is to expand the opportunity for members to connect with other members; to build relationships with each other by sharing and worshipping together, and reflecting on the Formation article in the current monthly *Bulletin*.

- We encourage every member of WSHS/WBHS to attend a regional monthly meeting that is hosted by each of our provinces (East, West, Central and South).

*How do I know which gathering to attend?*

- The last two pages of the Green Sheets list the Provinces, the clusters in each Province and each Sister, Brother or Worker who belongs to a Cluster in each Province. Your first choice is to attend the regional gathering in your Province. If that isn't workable, choose a regional gathering in the time zone where you live. Notify the Zoom Host so they add you to their invite list.
- Companions and Friends are encouraged to attend the regional gathering in the geographical area in which they live. For example, those who live in the south would attend the Southern Regional Gathering, etc.
- Applicants are encouraged to attend the regional gathering that their mentor attends. One reason for that is to be able to connect online with the mentor as well as meet other members of the Community. I am sending this email to the Provincials and the current Zoom Hosts for our monthly WSHS/WBHS Zoom Regional Gatherings.



### SPIRITUAL SHARING

I enjoyed Sr. Catherine Marie's article on "Sacred Space" and I know that I also have my special Sacred Spaces. The mornings are my special time and I sit on the deck or in the sunroom with my coffee and do the daily readings and pray. Since I have been back working, I have had the opportunity to listen to Christian music and pray while driving to the plant.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have special places which are my prayer space. The first is in my downstairs office where I have my computer and all my books. It is quiet and I can talk to God.

\*\*\*\*\*

I walked the Labyrinth at the Mercy Center in St. Louis several times with other people, and it was comforting to have others on the path. Although alone, there is just God and me.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have been having trouble trying to write about the article on the Eucharist. To me it is a very personal service and goes deep into the Spirit. I know the preparation leading up to the celebration of the Eucharist is an important part of the service, but I find analyzing the individual sections takes away from the Eucharist itself.

\*\*\*\*\*

How good it will be when we are able to join our brothers and sisters around the Lord's table as we have always done. But I wonder being denied the chance to share the cup and the bread might cause us to hunger for it more. Absence making us grow more aware of what we have taken for granted.

\*\*\*\*\*

The timing of my daily prayer is all over the place. I try to pray first thing in the morning but that does not always happen. Morning is a time of promise and excitement of what the day will bring. If I begin with prayer, I feel ready to meet the day. Evening is a challenge but when reading the prayers of an evening prayer, I am always grateful for the time to settle down and I go to sleep much more quickly.

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I am no longer part of the Baptist or Orthodox Church. Since Spring 2019 my family has been in search of a permanent spiritual home. We have had many stops along the way and sometimes this journey gets discouraging. One of the main things that keeps me moving forward is my need for ritual. I need worship that grounds me and offers me a place to put down roots. I need a hands-on faith. I need to touch the water, to taste the wine, to smell the incense. I need to hear the hymns and see the candles.

\*\*\*\*\*

Being in Nature is the place I feel most connected to my spiritual self. Being on a quiet lake fishing, the call of a bird and the wind. Walking at night and seeing the stars I think of the vastness of the universe and how small we are in it, and yet how awesome it feels to be that small part of the whole. I know in those moments there are thousands of people throughout the world who are experiencing the same feeling of awe and peace and lifting prayers of thanks for this life we have.

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Prayer is a part of my daily life now in a way it was not before. However, it is not the "Praying Together" that Sr. Nancy Clare wrote about. It is more of a private and personal prayer. I routinely meet with an Episcopal priest who lives here and is the Chaplain for our local Hospice. She has been a friend for many years and we enjoy our time together. So far we have not specifically focused on praying together. I was intrigued by Sr. Nancy Clare's special Prayer Partner and I can imagine doing that with my friend.



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

**Community and the Call to Discernment**

By

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

Sr. LaVerne: As I began to write this article, the words from Henri Nouwen came to mind which state:

*“Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another”.*

Those words resonate in my heart as we are indeed alive, not for ourselves but for one another, and I see that so much as I look at our Community. We are indeed woven together in a wonderful tapestry that brings us all together and has over these past fifty years as we continue this journey step by step; day by day; year by year. As I write this, please join me in giving thanksgiving for the wonderful gift of this Community that we have been given.

As I wrote to our Chapter in October 2021, Sr. Christine, Sr. Wendy Samuel and I participated in a five-day podcast called “Discerning God in Community” in which we learned about Jesus’s own process of discernment, how to listen to God both individually and collectively, and how prayer can lead us to group decisions.

Our Chapter met from Thursday, October 28 to Saturday, October 30 via Zoom and we discussed Discerning God in Community. I shared the following with the group as we met over the three days.

After two years of separation, the topic of Discernment seems to be at the top of our list. We have usually been meeting in person not only for our annual Chapter meetings but also at our yearly Community Annual Retreats for the past 50 years. It has been a difficult adjustment for us not to meet together, but we have been fortunate to live in this great age of technology, where we could meet via Zoom.

We look at the last 24 months and wonder what has changed in our lives and what continues to change. Stability often seems impossible and at times, it has been hard to make individual decisions from one day to the next. It is indeed a true gift that we are “together” despite the miles and are linked together for this period of time. We believe the Holy Spirit is teaching us more about discernment so that we continue to strengthen our Community, step by step, for the next generation. We are grounded in the stability of our Mission, Vision and Rule. A few changes may come, but they will only make our Community stronger.

This year, we will celebrate our 50th Anniversary! That seems impossible to almost all of us and yet, it has been such a wonderful blessing and this Community has grown, endured, and has deep seekers coming to join us. So many gifts!

I reminded Chapter that I do not make decisions for our Community by myself, but I consult with each Chapter member, and together we decide. This is the bottom line about our decision-making; an open door for discussion; no more closed-door conversations. As many of you know, the doors to Chapter are now open and Chapter now lives among the Community which is the way it should be. I also believe that each Member Category in our Community should have a voice, so that everyone is heard.

Let's now look at this word "Discernment".

We begin with what you may laugh at and what is called "immediate discernment". For example, suppose we all were gathered at Mercy Center for our Annual Retreat and we learned, as we were meeting, that there was a fire in the building! It would be obvious what we should do and we would leave the building immediately; minimal discernment needed on this one!

When we look at other issues, however, we may have multiple choices and must discern between good and bad. We look at feelings of consolation as good and we sense desolation when the feelings are not good.

The times when some are not feeling any movement of consolation or desolation; these are times when we must either have another meeting or review the pros and cons again. It is good to do an inventory of the actions and then ask God to bring that choice to the realm of consolation or desolation so there are no doubts, often at times it may take a 3rd party to come in and we should all be open to that.

As the Chapter could not do all there is to do regarding our study on Discernment in three days, we needed to look at it again with the following suggestion. The Directors have been meeting every two weeks for several months from August on which has gone well.

It was felt the current pattern of Chapter meeting two times a year is not sufficient. Chapter needs to meet three or four times a year in order to update and draw closer. It was recommended that a Zoom Chapter meeting be held on January 15th, 2022 from 1 pm to 4 pm Eastern Time. This has been scheduled. They will continue the discussion on Discernment looking at Communal Discernment. The results will be shared with the Community.

Sr. Wendy Samuel: At Fall Chapter, we began our exploration of Discernment by acknowledging St. Ignatius of Loyola, who is recognized as a leading authority on Discernment, especially among religious communities. St. Ignatius was a young man who was known as a somewhat vain and fastidious gentleman. For those who were not born wealthy, soldiering was considered a way of life that offered a means of employment and an opportunity to receive an education. During a battle, Sr. Ignatius was badly wounded and had to spend several months recovering. During his long months of convalescing, he turned to the only literature available to him at that time, gospel stories and the written history of all the saints.

After reading this material, he turned his devotion from soldiering to seeking sainthood. St. Ignatius was so fascinated, after his conversion, to serving God that he began interviewing as many people as he could find, drawing on others' experiences. This led him to becoming a very wise Christian who

had a lot of insight into how God normally works with us and how the enemy works with us. His contribution to individual and community Discernment is recognized today throughout the world. In 2020, Mark Thibodeaux, SJ wrote "Ascending with Ignatius: A 30-Day At Home Retreat" based on the Spiritual Exercises developed by St. Ignatius. We highly recommend this book to our Community as a way to reflect on God and God's love for each of us, and to strengthen our individual understanding of discernment.

The world does not recognize the value of waiting and listening in today's society. Discernment does; waiting and listening to God are very important. Discernment's guiding principles are:

- Remember the purpose for which we have been created, to know, love and serve God. We are distinct from all others of his creation.
- Realize that God has invited us into a loving relationship with God.
- Service and outpouring of gratitude are the fruit of this life of love that we live with God.

This is what each of us have in common by becoming a part of the Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit. We want to be closer to God and Discernment is one of the most important ways we have of doing this!

Sr. Christine: How do we listen as group; discerning what God's intention is for us as a group? First of all, we have to be convinced that God's spirit can speak to us today, that God wants to direct/guide us. God wants to be present, to be active, to move among us as we make these decisions. Discernment is a deliberate invitation, inviting the Spirit into the process, to be part of our decision making. It's prayerful, it's informed, it's an intentional effort to distinguish God's voice from other voices that might influence us. You can't be part of the discerning body if you do not have a relationship with God and if you are not open to this process of praying and listening and discerning with others.

#### Guiding Principles for Godly Discernment:

1. Decide whether this process is appropriate for this group. Not all groups will be able to discern something together, in fact there are some pre-requisites and all of these should be met before we decide to do a discernment process.
2. Have a faith view of reality, to believe that God is active and at work in our lives and in the life of our Community, and that God is willing and able to speak to us in this group setting.
3. The entire process has to be bathed in prayer and each member of the Community is going to have to commit to praying about the decisions. They must uphold the decisions to be reflected on in prayer so that there is an atmosphere of prayer that pervades all of it. (Listen)
4. How important it is for people to come to decisions without pre-conceived conclusions. There is no discernment to take place if we have already decided before we come together which answer/direction is the right one. If we can't lay aside those pre-conceived prejudices at the door, there can be no discernment!
5. Here is where Ignatius is teaching about spiritual "indifference" or "freedom". Be open to options/choices like a balance equilibrium. Not preferring choice A over choice B, but trying to hold openly balanced palms before God and asking God to show us the right way.
6. We are looking for consensus, but it doesn't have to be a unanimous decision. We are looking for a decision that all of us can live with. We will not always agree and not always come to the same

conclusions. Here comes our commitment to one another and our commitment to God. Where we are willing to surrender our own preferences when God makes it clear that God wants to direct the Community in a certain way.

7. There are other values at work here as well. There is a Christian maturity involved, that there is a bigger picture as well. It isn't enough that we come to a decision. The health of the Community depends on our ability to work together and is more important than the decision to be made.
8. Be convinced, first of all, that God wants to be in this process with us and will make Himself known to us in this process. Jesus said to us "You can do nothing without me. You need to abide in me and I abide in you. A branch removed from the vine will wither and die."
9. Remember Paul's prayer to the Ephesians? The love of God will guide us. The love of one another will guide us. If love and trust hold us together, we can begin and believe in the process! The mission is greater than any one person!

May our prayers be "I am your servant, give me discernment that I may understand your statutes"  
Psalm 119:25

### **Question for Reflection**

How do you view Discernment?