

THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



BULLETIN



THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
February 2022

Bulletin Cover - Tongues of Fire - Photo by Nathan Lindahl on Upsplash.com

Our topic this month has been an important part of our journey over our 50 years. Father Harry’s dream at his confirmation inspired the photo chosen to depict tongues of fire. I see a dove in this photo, do you?

Community Communication Contacts:

Prayer Requests and News Notes for the monthly Bulletin - email Br. Ephrem, aperydesign@gmail.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

THE WORKER SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	
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CALENDAR

**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS
REGIONAL GATHERINGS
February 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>February 26th</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 AZ time

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

REGIONAL GATHERING/CORPORATE COMMUNION DATES

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 28-30, 2022
Our Journey: Looking Back, At the Present and to the Future. Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit
ONLINE VIA ZOOM

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

RETREAT 2022 UPDATE

Dear WSHS/WBHS Community,

Our WSHS/WBHS Chapter met Saturday January 15th via Zoom to discuss several issues, one of which was our upcoming 50th Anniversary Retreat scheduled for April 28 - May 1, 2022 at Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

After lengthy and prayerful discussion Chapter approved we should do a Zoom Retreat. We were all so hopeful that we could be in person but the Pandemic is very much active and several members raised the question of being able to travel back and forth due to possible shutdowns. In viewing the entire Community scope, it was felt that the Zoom Retreat is both the healthiest and safest for our Community, and again, the Chapter approved that.

We will still have our Anniversary Retreat and delighted that our presenters Shirin McArthur, Carl McColman and Chapter Emeritus will be with us to talk about our Past, Present and Future. Fortunately, we are on the schedule at Mercy Center for next year and the dates are April 27-30, 2023.

We will be sending out a special 50th Anniversary Retreat Brochure with the Presentations and Services for each day during this time. We are delighted we have the Zoom available to us and have this wonderful opportunity to “be together” for this special Celebration. There is certainly disappointment for all, but we are so blessed to have this new technology and able to keep everyone safe and sound.

Blessings and love to all, Sr. LaVerne Peter, Sr. Christine and Sr. Wendy Samuel

NEWS FROM SR. TERESAH and OUR COMPANION COMMUNITY IN ZIMBABWE

Dear Sr. LaVerne Peter,

Thank you very much for the birthday wishes on Epiphany Day. I thank the Lord for the protection granted to me and my community. Many people have died of Covid 19 but we were spared. Some of our community members were infected, but by the grace of God, they recovered. It's worth it to give praise and glory to our loving God, faring Father of all mercies.

May you please pass on our love and greetings to all the Worker Sisters and Brothers, Friends and Companions of the Holy Spirit.

We continue to ask for the more blessings as we journey along 2022.

Lots of love,
Sr. Teresah, HSM



SPIRITUAL SHARING

Praise, Glory and Thanksgiving to God for all his great blessings, I have so much to be thankful for, including our Community. Without the Community and our monthly meetings, I would feel lost in my spiritual life since we can't attend Church due to Covid and the current renovations.

The monthly corporate communions ala Zoom are a great blessing. The Worker Sister Community is full of imperfect folks who are supportive and caring. Always good to spend time with them. Absolutely some of my favorite people, present company included.

Praying alone is often difficult at Church as people are always busy talking and moving around before the service and it just makes it hard to concentrate on prayers. Alone in my office or driving to and from work are different as I have time to talk and pray with God. Praying in a group is also difficult at times especially if one person is leading the prayers, it is so easy to get distracted.

The memorial service on Thursday evening at Retreat is much more meaningful, as we have the Community together in thoughts and prayers. It is wonderful that we end Retreat on such a high note.

We "older folk" remember when entering a church before services meant a quiet time to pray and get prepared for corporate worship. It seems that we can no longer count on that. But, fellowship is important too. I guess I'd rather have the pews [*somewhat*] filled with folks chatting before the service than fewer people there.

I also like the memorial service early in the Retreat. For one thing, several folks usually have to leave early Sunday to catch their transportation, so they would miss the service on Sunday morning. It does remind us of that vast army of saints marching down through the ages, as CS Lewis once wrote.

"The Merton Prayer" from Thoughts in Solitude Copyright © 1956, 1958 by The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani. Used by permission of Farrar Straus Giroux.

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.
 But I believe that the desire to please you
 does in fact please you.
 And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
 I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
 And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
 though I may know nothing about it.
 Therefore will I trust you always though
 I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
 I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
 and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.



FORMATION AND TRAINING

Reflections on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit by *The Rev. Canon Harry Firth, Companion, WSHS*



I felt deeply honored when Sister LaVerne Peter asked me to write this essay in preparation for our Community's Fiftieth Anniversary celebration, having myself participated in the very first public service with Sister Angela at Saint Mary's Kansas City, and later having the good sense to say yes when she invited me to consider becoming a Companion.

My first experience of the Seven Gifts was as a teenager preparing for Holy Confirmation in the late 1940s. Being faithful in church life had become critically important for so many Christian families during the war years, so in due course my brother and I enrolled in Saturday morning confirmation classes.

One night as the confirmation ceremony approached, I had this vivid dream! We were all standing with the Bishop as the 1928 Prayer Book directed, seemingly in church, and yet it felt somehow like Jerusalem in Acts, chapter 2.

The Bishop was praying for us, thanking God for regeneration by Water and the Holy Spirit. He asked the Holy Comforter to strengthen us with Seven Spiritual Gifts: *wisdom, understanding, counsel, ghostly strength, knowledge, true godliness, and the spirit of holy fear.*

Just as he was about to do the Laying-on-of-hands, we were suddenly in the Jerusalem crowd with loud, rushing wind, tongues like fire, and strange, spirit-filled voices!

At that moment I remember praying, “Oh, dear Lord, please give me a tongue of fire! I promise always to be thankful and never prideful in case not everybody gets one.”

Well, the actual confirmation service was calm by comparison (no tongues of fire.) But for me both the dream and the reality were a memorable introduction to the Holy Spirit’s Gifts! Because the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are meaningful to Worker Sisters and Worker Brothers today just as they have been in every Community influenced by Saint Benedict for centuries, let us remind ourselves what the ancient terminology should mean today. Also, why only seven? And, where did our time-honored Seven Gifts formula come from?

We can thank the brilliant 13th century scholar and theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas for latching on to the idea of Seven as a good, round, memorable and teachable number, often found in scriptural symbolism, suggestive of philosophical completeness. After all, didn’t the concept of *Seven Cardinal Virtues* seem *natural and proper* ideals for encouraging faithful people to strive toward? And was not the list of *Seven Deadly Sins* sufficient for warning and protecting everyone seriously committed in their earthly pilgrimage toward heaven?

Aquinas was impressed with the spiritual gifts in the “Immanuel Prophecy” (*Isaiah 11:2*) which seems to describe characteristics to be embodied in an ideal, future Davidic kingship. True, the Hebrew text lists only six gifts, but the Greek version of the Old Testament known as The Septuagint added “piety,” thus providing a satisfying, symbolically complete number of Seven Gifts.

The early church liked the Greek version of the Immanuel Prophecy because it seemed an appropriate reference to the gifts given to Jesus by his Father, the spiritual power and strength necessary for him (and indeed for all human kind) to accomplish his (our) mission in life. And that is why Aquinas’s concept of Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit became a theological touchstone not only for the Sacrament of Confirmation but for the equipping of dedicated servants in all sorts of religious communities including ours.

We have answered the question about the number of gifts as well as that of scriptural origin. So now let’s explore what the ancient terms should signify today.

WISDOM: the ability to exercise good judgment; distinguish between right and wrong; seek truth and uphold justice; and balance personal good with the common good. Wisdom is in touch with reality, demonstrates common sense, and hopefully, increases and mellows as we advance in age and experience. Note: in Old Testament imagery Wisdom is sometimes personified as “Sofia”, the mythical mother of faith, hope, and love (cf First Corinthians 13). Saint Paul, on the other hand, identifies Jesus as the more perfect personification of Wisdom.

UNDERSTANDING: the gift of intelligence and enlightenment; the ability to think clearly, perceive, comprehend, and interpret information with insight and discernment.

COUNSEL (*Good Advice*): the ability to teach, guide, direct, warn, admonish, recommend, encourage. Note: anyone who offers advice to others needs this gift!

FORTITUDE: unwavering commitment as manifested through patience (long-suffering), stamina, resiliency.

KNOWLEDGE: the ability to study and learn; to gather and retain facts and information to be used wisely and constructively.

FEAR OF THE LORD: (not servility or cringing, as to a harsh or cruel master!); rather, awe, reverence, and respect for a loving God. This gift encourages personal modesty, acknowledges our dependency on God, and helps us offer praise, worship, and adoration.

PIETY: personal holiness fosters devotion, prayer, goodness, decency, innocence, self-control, avoidance of sin, obedience to God's will.

I hope these reflections will prove useful to refresh our understandings now, and as we look forward to the Community's Fiftieth Anniversary celebration. The Gifts of the Spirit are all active, meant to grow more robust as we exercise them (remember what our coaches used to tell us in gym class?)

Beyond the scope of this essay, let me acknowledge that obviously God is generous, providing many more than seven gifts, many of them tailored to various occasions, individual needs, and challenges to be met and survived. So here are a few references my essay didn't cover, but which might be useful in your further reflections: Romans 11:29 and 12:06; First Corinthians 2:12 and 2:14; chapters 12-14 introducing the higher gift of love; Ephesians 4:08 and :11; Hebrews 2:04, 8:03-:04, 9:09, and 11:04.

Questions for Reflection

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

1. How fortunate and blessed we are to have Fr. Harry Firth to write this article for us as he was at the very first public service with our Founder Sr. Angela at St. Mary's, in Kansas City, Missouri and then joined us as a Companion to journey through these many years. This has indeed been a Gift of the Holy Spirit – join with us in offering prayers of thanksgiving.
2. It was interesting to read about how the time-honored Seven Gifts came from. Take time and perhaps read more about St. Thomas Aquinas and this teachable symbolism. Maybe share your thoughts.
3. Fr. Harry lists the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit in his essay – take time to read each one quietly and envision how that Gift can come more into your life. These Gifts also help us in looking at Discernment. Can you personally relate to some areas in your life?
4. Yes, we are now coming to the Celebration of our 50th Anniversary and Fr. Harry tells us that “the Gifts of the Spirit “are all active meant to grow more robust as we exercise them” and he quotes what our coaches tell us in gym class to exercise and continue that growth.

5. May we all continue our blessed journey as we look into the next 50 years with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to be deeply rooted in each day and step, we take on the road together. Offer prayers of Thanksgiving for the Gifts that shower us each and every day.

Sr. LaVerne Peter, WSHS