

**THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



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# **BULLETIN**

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**THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



**THE COMPASSION FOR THE EARTH**  
**June 2023**

**Bulletin Cover - Photo by Greg Rosenki - Unsplash.com**

The earth is the only planet that can support life. From Sr. Wendy’s article, “At this time in history, we have difficult choices to make. Those choices will determine whether we leave our children, grandchildren and their children a planet that is livable.”

**Community Communication Contacts:**

**Prayer Requests and News Notes for the monthly Bulletin** - email Br. Ephrem, etcocles148@gmail.com or see green sheets for his mailing address.

**Changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses** - email Sr. Shirley Evangeline at sr.shirleyevangelinepace@gmail.com or Sr. Christine at casturges@gmail.com or see green sheets for mailing addresses.

**Urgent Community Prayer Requests for email distribution** – email or call Sr. Kathleen Rachel (srkathleenrachel@gmail.com) or Sr. Wendy Samuel (srwendysamuel@gmail.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 – This project has been discontinued until the situation in Haiti is resolved.**

**Problems Receiving your Bulletin** - If you are not receiving the monthly Bulletin (by regular mail or by email), please email or call **Sr. Shirley Evangeline, 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  
June 2023**

Below is a list of the monthly Regional Gatherings and Corporate Communions. 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.

**Regional Zoom Gatherings**

**June 24, 2023**

Eastern Regional USA & Southern Regional USA      Br. David, WBHS, brdavidwbhs1@gmail.com      12:30 PM ET

Central Regional USA      Sr. Catherine Marie, WSHS, sr.catherine.marie@gmail.com      2:00 PM CT

Western Regional USA      Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS, wguyton17@gmail.com      10:00 AM AZ Time  
(Which is 10AM PT, 11AM MT, Noon CT, 1PM ET)

**In-person Corporate Communions**

Pleasant Hill, Tennessee      Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS      TBD

**REGIONAL GATHERING/CORPORATE COMMUNION DATES**

**June 24 • July 22 • August 26 • September 23 • October 28 • November 18 • December 16**

**WORKER SISTERS/WORKER BROTHERS CHAPTER**  
***Online Meeting***  
***June 14, 2023 @ 1:00pm ET***

**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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**HAITI**

To our Community that were unable to attend our Annual Retreat in person, the following is the report that I presented.

Let us pray and give thanks for our beloved Br. Frantz Benedict and pray that he will be released and free soon and that he is healthy and well, so that we may continue to have water tablets shipped to Haiti to supply clean water to our beloved Brothers, Sisters and children of Haiti.

We give thanks to our Community whole-heartedly for their continued support of our Haiti Mission and keeping the people of Haiti in our thoughts and prayers. We also have individuals from our churches in the USA and in Canada who donate funds and appreciate their dedication to our cause. We know that our loving God is with us, helping us on this Mission.

We had a display of our Haiti Mission for everyone to view and see all the pictures of our cause. For those who wish to donate to help with water tablets, your gifts will be very much appreciated. As soon as it is possible, we will continue to ship water tablets, but we don't know when at this point.

This season of 2022-2023 we have shipped 70,000 water tablets at 167mgs of 20 liters each. This equals 1,400,000 liters of clean water. Global Hydration has shipped 5 cases over this period at a total cost of \$2,324.52 CAD converted to \$2,600 US\$. Global Hydration is reporting the cost of tablets in CAD, Canadian funds, so I do a conversion for USA funds. Because of the situation in Haiti, we have shipped much less than usual this season.

The total history is approximately 2,115,730 water tablets shipped, which equals approximately 42,314,600 liters of clean water delivered to Haiti.

Blessings to All our Community and stay healthy,

*Sr. Alexandra Francis*




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**FROM YOUR DIRECTORS**


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**2023 RETREAT RELECTIONS**

This year's Retreat was done in person and via Zoom. Our world has changed and with God's help we were able to adapt and use the tools that are the new way of communicating in a world gone crazy! Thanks be to God for a warm welcome by the Mercy Center, Chapter and all of you who participated in creating, presenting, and being present, either in person or via Zoom. It took a village, or in our case a Community, the Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit, to make it all happen and the following is the result of everyone's faith and putting their faith to action. Take a look and see all the Lord provided through the Holy Spirit!

During our Retreat, your Retreat Reflections were read each morning by the Co-Directors and your prayers requests were read and prayed for by all Chapter members each morning. After Retreat, the Reflections were taken home by your Directors and a summary of what you have written is what follows. We also made notes of your suggestions for the coming year's Retreat and Chapter will give prayerful consideration to your ideas. We are deeply grateful for your time, insight and thoughts as you filled out the Reflection papers and appreciate your honest and loving feedback so that we can make changes we find necessary. Thank you one and all!!

Reflections are shared anonymously from your insights and thoughts.

**RETREAT REFLECTION – 2023 Theme – COMPASSION**
**THURSDAY**
**Right now, I feel:**

- Tired but a good tired; tired and drained
- Relaxed, glad I was able to come a day early
- At peace with all my sisters and brothers
- Rested (about time!)
- At peace. Very tired
- Tired, but happy to be here, been a long day
- Excited and joyful to see us all together
- Exhausted – Joyful – Nurtured
- I feel great
- Relieved – the Zoom technology mostly worked!
- Nervous, excited, grateful, honored
- Calm and present
- Excited; the love is palpable

**The event of the day that was special was:**

- Meeting everyone again, being greeted with hugs! Settling into a routine that was familiar.
- The energy and freedom with our Chapter that spilled over to the Retreat
- A general feeling of working together
- I felt a real sense of gratitude from everyone who came that we could get together again
- Taize
- Walking the labyrinth alone before anyone arrived;
- Being with Community members with meals and worship
- Father Beachy's cross being presented to Sr. Brenda Faith was very emotional.
- Arriving and being warmly welcomed,
- The Memorial/Names and photos; So many Saints who have formed our Community
- Just being with my WSHS & WBHS Family
- Seeing everyone & meeting new people.
- When we sang the Lord's prayer it sounded as if the angels were singing surrounding us.
- Seeing Sr. LaVerne and greeting members new and old; the acknowledgements
- Healing prayer
- Time with Chapter members
- After 6 weeks of travel to arrive here at this place of peace
- Coming inside and seeing all the wonderful, familiar faces
- Seeing people I have not seen in three years
- Seeing all the love when Sisters greeted each other
- Being together; grateful to be able to get to bed early

**Taizé – Any comments? During Taizé I felt:**

- Love, love, love the Taizé music and the candles
- As always one of my favorite times (microphone not always up to task)
- Peaceful; the quiet!
- I felt the Holy Spirit, I LOVED IT!
- Relaxed – at Peace, HOME!
- At peace with our loving God
- How isolation in covid was lingering but I hadn't realized it until now
- Grateful for time to slow down and be present with Community
- That this time is time to put away everything and just be with the Lord. I felt God telling me this and standing close to me
- Bathed in love; so peaceful
- Always very special
- The silence – darkness (good type), the music
- Like I was back in church camp.
- The Spirit moving among us.
- An appreciation of those that paved the path for those of us today of WSHS/WBHS
- Connected

**My thoughts during this silence drift to:**

- Appreciation
- A ramping down allowing the peace to soak in
- Listening to Br. Peter's beautiful voice
- Thankful for being here – looking forward to the sessions and getting to visit with the newcomers and reconnect with others
- My first encounters with the Holy Spirit as a teenager.
- Smiles – being with larger Community
- To be kind to myself and others
- Brian who died 12/23/22 and how he was finally free and at peace.
- Looking forward to more time with my WSHS/WBHS family tomorrow
- How the next few days are a moment of time when everything outside stops and we are enveloped in God's presence and each other. A moment of peace.
- The people who are not here anymore
- How blessed I am to be in this Community of love and compassion.
- My son Christopher and how he is
- The delights of the upcoming day
- Family, loved ones here that need prayer
- I used to fight it (the silence, how many times I was caught breaking it). Now I look forward to it and embrace it
- Those I love
- Tomorrow's services and music. Silence, Listening, Best
- The vibration of sound/music. The beauty
- Love of this Community
- Where is the Lord leading me?

**FRIDAY****This morning I feel:**

- Nervous
- Fairly energized
- Excited, anticipating what and where the Holy Spirit will lead me today
- Rested
- Wide awake
- Still sleepy
- Enlightened by the beauty of our Community
- Happy, still tired but glad to be here
- Really good again
- FABULOUS – I saw 2 deer outside my window this am!
- Despite my allergies, I feel at peace and blessed after yesterday's Admitting service.
- Wondering if I'm here on a Vision Quest.
- At peace, excited, welcomed
- Rested and ready

**What blessed me during the time for Morning Worship together?:**

- The music. I am deeply moved and blessed with music
- The feeling of community
- 1. Sr. LaVerne's love; 2. Community patience & compassion about tech glitches.
- The Sisters and Brothers praying together
- Happy to read the Gospel. Never take "together" for granted
- Singing
- Laughter as Sr. Barbara Rebecca began "Love is patient ..." reading after waiting due to technology glitch.
- I love the New Zealand Prayer Book translations!
- Being together with these very, very special people
- Nice to see the New Zealand and children version used
- I was distracted because of technical issues
- Good singing some familiar songs
- Just being together with all my friends, companions and sisters
- Being in Community and worshipping
- Healing, silence
- Hearing excited different voices I had missed.
- Music and Community

**Comments about Session 1 – "An Experience of Prayer & Worship" – Sr. Patsy Anne:**

- Brought back memories
- Excellent presentation; good sharing
- Just right amount of time for them to listen/not too much
- I think for each of these sessions, it blessed me to hear the words of the Community Rule; to hear what Sr. Angela had written.
- The meaning resonates with my heart each time I read it.
- I schedule time for prayer and praise by setting alarms on my phone.
- Difference between "schedule" and "structure"
- Prayer wall; arrow prayers
- Thoughts of Sr. Katherine Anna – her comments on prayer
- Prayer time and silence.
- Walking as I pray through my neighborhood, while listening to music in my house.
- Interesting, informative, varieties of prayer & personality
- Patience and success with technology.
- A lot of sharing and reflecting
- "Walking around in the heart of God" and "Dear God .... Dear Child: I know. I love you. God". Both so meaningful!
- Good to listen to these words spoken rather than reading them myself (both sessions)
- It was good to hear about other men's time of prayer and worship
- Beautiful presentation. The sharing from our small groups was deep and meaningful.
- Prayer and worship are basic to our lives in Christ
- Looking back and changing was fascinating as I realized healing from Vic's passing was

slow but the Holy Spirit gently led me on as I began making sure I prayed frequently throughout the day, not only for my healing, but for others

- I enjoyed all the sessions and they made me want to read our Rule again and do so slowly taking time to really think about it
- It was good to tap our resources in-house and go back to the basics. I have notes for my growth all over the place.
- Thoughtful
- A call for more discipline in prayer time.
- I want to seek alternative methods of prayer. The “App” that was mentioned (for our phones).

### **Comments about Session II – “An Experience of Becoming” – Sr. Wendy Samuel:**

- Moving presentation; good sharing
- Only concern was Zoom listeners who couldn’t see questions
- Others seem to notice my growth spiritually before I do.
- Long productive conversation on concept of “conversation”
- Interesting and informative
- Our group spent most of our time talking about spiritual growth and how the Community has helped us find balance.
- Noticed reminder that conversion is an ongoing process and the reminder Sr. Wendy included about also learning from our weaknesses.
- It was so good to share with my group and to hear so many similar experiences. I wonder – will we be able to see printouts of the presentations?
- Beautiful presentation. The sharing from our small groups was deep and meaningful.
- Sometimes it takes a while to learn about “becoming” and how most people do not understand it
- As I look back, I realize my becoming a Worker and now a Novice has broadened my prayer life and my time of prayer. It also encouraged me to share with Annie and encouraging her to become friend.
- Good discussion and bonding time.
- The Just “Be”! (I woke early Sat. morning) hearing these words! Marilyn Propp gave good advice yesterday, remember to just “be”.
- Zoom is a lot of work – but it is rewarding – thanks
- Listening to others thoughts on becoming really helped my personal journey

### **Comments about Session III – “An Experience of Discovery” – Sr. Nancy Clare:**

- Excellent examples and enjoyed the diversity of comments
- I would not be where I am today had the Holy Spirit ever stopped calling my name and urging me on.
- Grace, ministry, unity, “full stature of Christ”
- Wouldn’t have Fruit of the Spirit without the Holy Spirit
- Interesting, informative
- Our group spent time with Spiritual Formation Training – what it meant to “go

- deeper” and our group was not sure about “going deeper”.
- Very rich hearing all the words individuals “noticed” in Lectio Divina time – for myself, I noticed Grace
- Again, sharing our stories was so important.
- Living a life with Community is a journey of discovery about who we are and who He is
- Again, my last three years I feel like the Holy Spirit has been beside me in little things and the big things, especially when under stress. Not only has He put Vic beside me at the altar, but encourages me to reach out to other at church.
- Interesting way to break it out but due to the amount to cover we couldn’t all do each section. Still – hearing what others said I felt – Yeah – you’re right!
- Lectio Divina is always a good idea.
- I enjoyed this exercise! I want to try this thought process when I return home.
- Meaningful journeys; the sharing was amazing

#### **In the small group sharing times:**

- Shared my person opinions
- I was encouraged by the openness of all I shared personally of my experiences; trust level was high
- I was thankful for the group we had
- Each group shared – good discussions
- I really listened to everyone, shared opinions
- Participated, took notes
- I was touched by so many spiritual stories.
- I felt the spirit of members wanting to be known.
- Nice pace, everyone shared pain, joy and questions.
- I learned from hearing the other members’ answers
- I was so happy with all the time we had for sharing at the microphone and just being together
- I took notes so I could present our group’s discussions. I heard soul sharing and ideas to think about.
- I like sharing with other men
- It was interesting to hear our different feelings and thoughts, those that differ and the ones that were the same
- We had wonderful, insightful and blessed discussions
- I felt everyone was engaged and contributed.
- Shared more than I thought I would; came out of my comfort zone with sharing
- I got to know the other guys this retreat.
- Tried to listen more than talk.

#### **If you had any free time, how was it spent?:**

- I visited with a couple of people. Took a nap.
- The sun was out and took a brief walk

- Walking the labyrinth, visited with the Sisters, enjoyed sharing meaningful conversations with others.
- Taking my daily walk and going through the Labyrinth; wrote at-homer cards
- Some set up in chapel, a brisk walk outside and visiting with some people.
- A lot of time outside listening to the birds; walked to grotto and around the nature reserve.

**Two things I liked about the Friday Evening Service were:**

- Excited about the new people to begin their own journey
- The love energy was moving
- All worked so smoothly
- Seeing 2 friends admitted, Melanie becoming a Worker
- Sr. Kathleen installed as American Director
- The tradition continues and I am very grateful
- The dove and the Eucharist
- Receiving new people, being in the presence of Christ!
- Joy in people's faces
- The service of Admission, the music and Holy Eucharist.
- Beauty & joy, roles of all lifted high as marvelous gift.
- The laying on of hands – was very meaningful.
- Being Deacon for the service.
- Just being in the worship space together once again. Sr. Nancy Teresa's homily – hearing the Isaiah reading.
- Finally, getting Holy Eucharist after 5 weeks – watching Melanie being Admitted – so moving
- We could hear everyone
- Always love communion, especially with the Community
- I always love the flying dove – Sr. Catherine Marie does an awesome job. The joy on Pat and Annie's faces as they became part of our Community
- Bringing on new people – remember when I joined. Saying the responses – we will go on!!
- Feeling God's presence
- The dignity of Sr. Wendy Samuel and Sr. Nancy's Teresa's sermon.
- Admission Service – what a welcome! Oh wow! Service went very smoothly.

**What I liked most about today was:**

- Just being with Community
- The hugs/the experience of gratitude at how smoothly everything seemed to go
- Seeing the newbies welcomed into the fold and receiving a message from the Holy Spirit while walking the Labyrinth.
- Being in Community especially sharing with some I hadn't seen in many years and meeting our wonderful new people (Thank you for a very special prayer partner!)
- So many things, but mostly being with all our Sisters & Brothers and showing our

- devoted love for each other.
- Getting to know you!
- The laying on of hands
- How amazing it is getting to know our 34 + members of the Community and enjoying visiting with everyone.
- The amazing sharing I was privileged to read in Erin's emailed reflection.
- Just being with everyone after so long; being loved
- The joy I saw in the people being with people I have not seen in three years.
- We prayed the Community Prayers and seeing the folks on Zoom.
- The whole day was good. I like the small groups.
- The interaction throughout the day with those I had not seen for so long.
- Time to connect with members of our Community – young and old; fellowship
- What day & evening. So many emotions! The small groups are great – team activities. Morning worship – starts the day right – the food is so good (They made me a gluten-free sandwich!) Friday's ceremony (a practice I really became overcome with love for WSHS/WBHS) This is an honor. I want to say I really appreciated that the brothers were involved and part of the ceremony as well! Everyone seemed to be “part of” the events.
- Singing; feeling connected again

**SATURDAY (Please fill out all questions):**

**During the shared worship time for Morning Prayer I**

- Simple and beautiful; sang and worshipped; good way to start
- I enjoyed our sharing on all of the sessions.
- Was really touched by the song “Surely the Presence of the Lord”
- I listened and prayed
- Was more relaxed with our technology and thoroughly enjoyed it.
- Enjoyed the music
- So familiar, so loved
- Playing the guitar.
- The music and energy “you’ll need to stand for this one”

**Comments on Session IV – “An Experience of Belonging and Relating” – Sr. Shirley Evangeline**

- Well done
- Excellent delivery of this portion of the rule – very fruitful discussions
- Would like what Sr. Shirley said that was not in the handout shared electronically with the participants or put in the Bulletin.
- It is important and always remember you are part of His body.
- Excellent. Appreciated the paraphrasing
- Belonging to our Community is the biggest joy of my life I will always treasure.
- Interesting, informative
- Quite a few think the same but others have a different idea. Both session led to lively

- discussions and sharing.
- We talked about special friendships and how we each were drawn into the Community – Ministry of presence.
  - It was good to hear and discuss these aspects of our Community life.
  - Felt right to talk of belonging in Community
  - It was interesting on how others were drawn into the Community. I also feel that this year's theme was perfect after 3 years of Zoom. We had an opportunity to examine and strengthen our belonging and relating to other sisters after this time
  - So good to have things brought forward again in reference to our Rule and all it offers
  - Learned a lot about communication; good conversation; great discussion and sharing
  - My favorite session! The “why” to our commitments and belonging.

### **Comments on Session V – “An Experience of Commitment” – Sr. Catherine Marie**

- Meaningful delivery of Rule – great discussion
- High trust level of sharing
- Growing enthusiasm for WSHS
- Very affirming – valuable on many levels
- I am totally committed to our Community. Volunteering is a gift I cherish. I am also committed to my church.
- Interesting, in formative
- Nice to look out from podium and see all the faces of those present.
- A lot of discussion re the yellow letters and how important they are. “Whoever is faithful in little is faithful in much.”
- My life has been enriched by the strengthening of my faith. The support during the loss of my husband was the greatest gift.
- Community building
- This session our group was the most talkative. Bringing us back to the basics – The Rule of Life.
- Going deeper
- I can do nothing without God as my helper. Learning to listen is key

### **The gathering for my Regional Meeting was:**

- Needed but many issues are not that easy to find solutions for
- Plus and minus for Zoom – some don't like it – others couldn't meet without it
- Good time of sharing and showing concern for absent or distanced members of Community.
- Wonderful, we all connected and shared stories and how our Zoom meetings are going.
- We didn't have too many in our group. Changing of Clusters around could be difficult but communication is key.
- Good sharing and feedback about Community life at Retreat and when we are apart.
- All about the clusters and how everything is being re-formed. How the community is growing and changing.

- Was great fun and informative
- Small but worthwhile
- Find a bit confusing where to go at first
- Fantastic! We seem to be able to share our ups, downs, and faith freely
- Large. Good to see all in person. Wish had more time to spend with each person (general comment)
- Great – know I'm connected
- Productive
- So encouraging and affirming! There were so many of us.

**How did you spend your free time? Describe:**

- Outside in courtyard – reading a book, listening to birdsong – lovely
- Went for a walk
- Having really good conversations
- Slept
- Would you believe labyrinth again? Different experience every time, then talking to people
- Taking my daily walks through nature and through the labyrinth.
- Walked the grounds
- No free time – working with Sr. Brenda for tonight's service.
- Sleeping and writing to at homers. I also spoke to others.
- Long walk by myself and then I noticed Erin in the hall. I asked if she wanted to go out. We went around the stations of the cross and then to the swing – she enjoyed going out.
- Resting, organizing and getting ready to head home early tomorrow
- Walked and talked with our new Friend who wants to be an applicant.
- Reading writing, resting
- Praying and resting, reflecting on what was shared

**My response to the Healing Service was:**

- Moving, meaningful
- It was peaceful and went well
- I really got a lot out of, it was very moving
- Feeling peaceful. Br. Peter is an excellent musician.
- Service/Eucharist – joy
- Healing Station/prayer – gratitude
- Joy comes in the morning. Burdens put down, connection with loved ones (shocker, hearing LOL from Healing Station)
- Thankful for God's presence; praising God together
- It was very powerful – especially the small prayer groups
- Lovely, deeply personal
- Very moving
- AWESOME!

- It was as healing as always! The dove, the music, the blessing and all my Sisters!  
It always brings memories of past retreats.
- Wonderful – relaxing – centering – healing
- It was powerful!
- I hope the folks at the prayer stations got some answers.
- The true authentic love that comes from the Community, Rev. Sr. Brenda, thank you to all that served; prayer teams.
- Very connecting, emotionally moving

**How were you renewed or refreshed by the Holy Spirit this weekend?:**

- Felt the Holy Spirit the entire weekend
- Yes – all weekend – energized, led, buoyed up by the sharing and reconnecting
- “My cup runneth over”
- Being in community – old & new
- For the first time in 3 years we were able to gather together and the Holy Spirit got us together.
- Little surprises of joy
- Drawn ever closer to the Lord, to this Community, to love. I feel so grateful.
- I was renewed and refreshed
- Just being with everyone, my walks, the Chaplain receiving Father Beachy’s cross.
- Many thoughts, ideas came through that will help us carry out our goals. His peace and inspiration seemed to be with us throughout.
- I am excited about where we are and our direction forward.
- Reaffirming my place with the community, new friendships – who is who, getting to know others.
- ALL WEEKEND – renewed and refreshed
- Being exposed to this Community gave me renewed prayer energy

**The thing I liked best about this Retreat was:**

- The enthusiasm and love demonstrated by EVERYONE
- Meeting so many like-minded people
- Being present
- That we were finally able to get together after so long and have the joy of showing our love to each other
- Everything prepared so I received, flexible not rigid. Seeing smiles, hearing laughter. I felt relaxed order
- Being together
- From start to finish, a great and perfect retreat – all our work and the Holy Spirit was covering all of us in gentle, calm protection.
- That we were getting to know who we are again. This flowed through the entire weekend!!
- Meeting Melanie, whom I mentored and seeing old friends again.
- Being with the other members of WSHS/WBHS
- Got to talk to more people seemed less stressed.

- Seeing old friends and meeting new ones
- Being with everyone as we reviewed our commitments to WSHS.
- Seeing everyone, being together, the love shared, the hugs; fellowship
- Atmosphere – people teaching. I just liked it.
- The sense of belonging, like coming home.
- The pace; easier; gentler; deeper
- Being welcomed and included by everyone

**The music was:**

- Amazing as always – Br. Peter always fits in the theme with the songs chosen
- I was delighted to see members really engaged with the rule
- The Holy Spirit worked through all.
- Peter is amazing. He always has the most beautiful music for us.
- Great, very generous
- Very beautiful and peaceful
- What a great job Br. Peter and Sr. Catherine have done.
- Great as always
- Excellent! I could listen to Br. Peter's voice all day. So energizing, so appropriate.
- So necessary to my soul
- Beautiful and moving. Didn't know every song but still able to enjoy it

**General Comments:**

- Everything went really well
- I can't wait for next year!
- I thank God for His love and compassion and helping us travel safely.
- I have grown spiritually I feel God's presence. Anxiety is much better.
- I felt it was a fantastic Retreat, filled with listening and sharing, love and respect.
- This was a wonderful Retreat. I feel refreshed and renewed.
- This is the best Retreat I've been to. With no difficult relatives to go home to – with dementia, no emotional illness, I'm "lighter". I feel accepted and loved.
- God carried us.
- Looking forward to doing Retreat again. Great that it was all about us!
- I came here tired and somewhat depleted of energy – I am leaving still very tired but with the joy that is the gift of this Community.
- Relaxed Retreat – not rushed – Hopefully more will be able to travel
- An excellent first-time Retreat; so grateful that the Rule of Life and the Basics were reviewed
- Holy Spirit does great work
- Thank you for all the efforts to make this an enjoyable experience. I hope to come again



Retreat 2023 Group Photo



## SPIRITUAL SHARING

Through our church, we have all learned to look at people in a way that is compassionate and understanding, regardless of their circumstances. We especially help those in need with our loving hearts. We have several homeless people that we minister to by having food for them available and we also minister to their homeless pets with dog food and cat food. It is our gift of love that we share with our loving God.

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... reading my daily Scriptures ... I couldn't help being moved by a passage from Colossians (3:12-17.) I was reminded of our time together on Retreat. It was like we were living the New Testament experience.

“Put on, then, garments that suit God’s chosen and beloved people: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. Be tolerant with one another and forgiving, if any of you has cause for complaint: you must forgive as the Lord forgave you. Finally to bind everything together and complete the whole, there must be love. Let Christ’s peace be arbiter in your decisions, the peace to which you were called as members of a single body. Always be thankful. Let the gospel of Christ dwell among you in all its richness; teach and instruct one another with all the wisdom it gives you. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing from the heart in gratitude to God. Let every word and action, everything you do, be in the name of the Lord Jesus, and give thanks through him to God the Father.”

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Yesterday, ten members of our church had a wonderful hike in nature. Three or four of our party knew quite a lot about the flora and fauna. One was a geologist who told us about the various deposits of

rock that we were climbing over. The weather was magnificent. Usually I am accustomed to spending the greater part of my time indoors, but it was so much fun to get together with friends and enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

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Time together is a gift that cannot be replaced. The warmth shared is absolutely priceless, to be (at Retreat) with you all.

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Sometimes it is difficult to think that the smallest thing we might do makes a difference and is a part of the "big picture", validating whatever we do with compassion, kindness, meekness, humility. These are all truly a part of the "big picture." Compassion and love require intention, planning and discipline.

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Growing forgiveness and compassion for those who harm us can take a lifetime.

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Struggling with diagnosis of mental illness, I knew we all had a place at the King's table forever, in spite of any flaw.

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There have been times when I have not experienced compassion, when I was travelling to another hospital in another city for my radiation treatment, it seemed that most of our friends and acquaintances were too busy to call me or visit. Some of our closest friends did show support but others did not. I did receive compassion from the Community as I went through all my health problems and I am greatly appreciative of all that support.

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How about a ministry-to-nature story? A couple of weeks ago a new person baked the communion bread for church and didn't believe the recipe would be enough, so we had a huge loaf for about 25 people. Too much for us to consume, and of course you can't treat extra consecrated bread like just any old bread, so what to do? I took it (with the priest's blessing) to a park and fed it to the birds, a flock of very happy and very holy pigeons! Kind of made me think of the crowds that pressed around Jesus.

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I recently stepped on someone's toes. Can't really explain why I did, but it certainly was an uncomfortable moment. We promised in our Baptismal Vows to "respect the dignity of every human being." Well, I guess I flunked that one. But now I carry that phrase with me constantly. Am I being respectful? It is easy to do that remotely, of course. I always respect everyone regardless of race, creed, ethnicity, etc. But how hard it is, at times, to give dignity to those we encounter daily or weekly. That is where the rubber hits the road. I hope I am now on that road. I sent the other person an apology note.

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Modern day gleanings are when Neighborhood/Community Gardens are "gleaned" to help everybody in need.

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I like to pray with pictures and writing things down helps me to think.



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

### Compassion for the Earth

By

Sr. Wendy Martha, WSHS



*Sr. Wendy Martha lives in Tucson, Arizona. She was admitted as a Lay Worker in 1977. She is Chapter Emeritus. (Worship team lead....?)*

Why is it our responsibility to take care of the earth?

Our Earth provides us with everything we want, but also everything we need to survive! Earth provides the food we need for fuel, water we need for hydration, the air and the oxygen we breathe, raw materials, literally everything we need comes from this one planet.

“Earth is the only planet in our galaxy that can support life. Scientists estimate that the Earth is home to about 300,000 plant species, over 600,000 species of fungi, and about ten million animal species.

The ground you walk on is recycled. It starts off as sizzling-hot magma deep within the planet’s core. This is pushed up to the surface, where it cools and becomes hard rock. Winds erode the rock, shaving off tiny fragments that get buried back into the earth, where they’re reheated into magma. Then the cycle starts again.

Earth spins around a tilted axis, or an imaginary line that runs through the planet from the South Pole to the North Pole. If the planet were angled any differently, or if Earth were even just a little closer to or farther from the sun, temperatures would shift drastically. And that would make life here impossible.

About 95 percent of the Earth’s oceans (which make up more than 70 percent of the planet) remain unexplored. Scientists estimate almost a million undiscovered species could live in these unseen seas. Some lands, like parts of the rain forests in New Guinea, are also uncharted. This means that many things on Earth have yet to be discovered.

This beautiful, bounteous, life-giving planet we call Earth has given birth to each one of us, and each one of us carries the Earth within every cell of our body.” *(From National Geographic)*

Mother Earth is sacred. The Earth is our mother, nourishing and protecting us in every moment; giving us air to breathe, fresh water to drink, food to eat and healing herbs to cure us when we are sick. Every breath we inhale contains our planet's nitrogen, oxygen, water vapor and trace elements. When we breathe with mindfulness, we can experience our interbeing with the Earth's delicate atmosphere, with all the plants, and even with the sun, whose light makes possible the miracle of photosynthesis. With every breath we can experience communion. With every breath we can savor the wonders of life.

We need to change our way of thinking and seeing things. We need to realize that the Earth is not just our environment. The Earth is not something outside of us. Breathe with mindfulness and contemplating your body, realize that you are the Earth. Realize that your consciousness is also the consciousness of the Earth. Look around you, what you see is not your environment, it is you.

Whatever nationality or culture we belong to, we can all see that the Earth is not an inert matter. She is a great being, who has, herself, given birth to many great beings: sons and daughters of God and humankind. The Earth is a loving mother, nurturing and protecting all people and species without discrimination.

When you realize the Earth is so much more than simply your environment, you'll be moved to protect her in the same way as you would yourself. This is the kind of awareness, the kind of awakening that we need, and the future of the planet depends on whether we're able to cultivate this insight or not. The Earth and all species on Earth are in real danger. Yet if we can develop a deep relationship with the Earth, we'll have enough love, strength and awakening in order to change our way of life.

We can all experience a feeling of deep admiration and love when we see the great harmony, elegance and beauty of the Earth. A simple branch of cherry blossom, the shell of a snail or the wing of a bat, all bear witness to the Earth's masterful creativity. Every advance in our scientific understanding deepens our admiration and love for this wondrous planet. When we can truly see and understand the Earth, love is born in our hearts. We feel connected. That is the meaning of love: to be at one.

Only when we've truly fallen back in love with the Earth will our actions spring from reverence and the insight of our interconnectedness. Yet many of us have become alienated from the Earth. We are lost, isolated and lonely. We work too hard, our lives are too busy, and we are restless and distracted, losing ourselves in consumption. But the Earth is always there for us, offering us everything we need for our nourishment and healing: the miraculous grain of corn, the refreshing stream, the fragrant forest, the majestic snow-capped mountain peak, and the joyful birdsong at dawn.

At this time in history, we have difficult choices to make. Those choices will determine whether we leave our children, grandchildren and their children a planet that is livable.

In Genesis God created the earth and said, "It is good." We have turned that "good" into a quagmire of issues that affect our very existence. I believe God is calling us to live in compassion, balance and harmony with Mother Earth.

**Questions for Reflection:**

1. God is calling us to live in balance and harmony with the Earth. What can you do?
2. How does your perception change when you begin to experience the Earth as sacred?
3. What do you think of when you hear the expression “Mother Earth?”