

THE WORKER SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



BULLETIN



THE WORKER BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



THE FRUIT OF PEACE
April 2024

Bulletin Cover - Photo by Sr. Deborah (Retreat 2016)

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)

One tool we can use in our quest to obtain Peace is to empty our mind as we walk the Labyrinth. Many of us look forward to walking this Labyrinth at The Mercy Center in St. Louis each year.

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**Community Communication Contacts:**

**Prayer Requests and News Notes for the monthly Bulletin** - email Ginny Berkey, Novice, WSHS, mollysnonna@gmail.com or see green sheets for her mailing address.

**Changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses** - email Sr. Shirley Evangeline at sr.shirleyevangelinpeace@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)**

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| <b>THE WORKER SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT</b>                                                                                                       |                                    |
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| Sr. Shirley Evangeline, WSHS                                                                                                                                    | Proof Reader                       |
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| Sr. Wendy Samuel, WSHS                                                                                                                                          | Co-Director                        |
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**CALENDAR**

**CORPORATE COMMUNIONS  
REGIONAL GATHERINGS  
April 2024**

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.

**Regional Zoom Gatherings**

**April 27, 2024**

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 11AM MST, Noon CST, 1PM EST)

**In-person Corporate Communion**

Pleasant Hill, Tennessee      Sr. Janeen Julian, WSHS      TBD

**REGIONAL GATHERING/CORPORATE COMMUNION DATES**

**April 27 • May 18\* • June 22 • July 27**

**August 24 • September 28 • October 26 • November 16\* • December 14\***

*\* Date changed to 3rd Saturday due to the holiday*

**ANNUAL RETREAT**  
**April 25th - 28th, 2024**

**Call to Prayer.** Please remember our Community in prayer twice a day 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM in your time zone and pray for World Peace at Noon.



**8:00 AM - Prayer for our Community**  
**12:00 Noon - Prayer for World Peace**  
**5:00 PM - Prayer for our Community**



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**FROM YOUR DIRECTORS**

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**UPDATE ON HAITI**

Haiti is once again facing a state of chaos fueled by ongoing gang wars, which have increased since the 2021 assassination of the country's president. Gang leaders have grown increasingly violent and empowered, taking advantage of power vacuums in the Caribbean nation to grow in strength. As gangs continue to rampage across Haiti, the country's embattled Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, remains blocked out of the country due to the closing of the airport.

Gangs in Haiti continue to carry out attacks, this time storming two of the country's biggest prisons and freeing more than 4,000 inmates. It triggers police to urgently appeal for help as they say security forces are overwhelmed. We worry and wonder if our beloved Br. Franz Benedict was among those freed.

This chaos has resulted in the interruption of our donations of water tablets being held in hopes that the monies raised will be of great value when stability and security has finally been restored. Hopefully at that time, we can resume badly needed distribution of the tablets, and if funds allow, assist in food and medical provisions.

Haiti, at this time, remains paralyzed as gangs have continued their rampage. The country has extended its nighttime curfew and state of emergency measures.

Haiti needs our prayers for stabilization of government control, reinstatement of police security, safety for everyone involved, and food and medical supplies for those in need. Please pray for Haiti and the safety and health of our very own Br. Franz Benedict.

**2024 WSHS/WBHS RETREAT – April 25-28**

If you plan to attend Retreat 2024 in person, and have not sent in your registration and accommodation request, please contact Sr. Kathleen Rachel immediately. If your Accommodations form and payment are received after March 24<sup>th</sup>, we cannot guarantee a room will be available for you.

If you plan to attend via Zoom, please contact Sr. Kathleen Rachel so we know that you are planning to attend.

We also ask you to bring your personal water bottle. In consideration of our environment, there will be no bottled water available at the Center.

**SURVEY RESULTS**

Thank you to all who completed the survey. To date we have received over 50% of all survey recipients. Your input is very valuable and will assist us in knowing our best way to communicate with each other. It will also indicate where we need to proceed with computer technology to help meet the future needs of the Community.



## COMPANIONS AND FRIENDS CORNER

Let us Companions and Friends pray daily for our Community.

**Holy Spirit, may your Breath be breathed into every member of The Worker Sisters of the Holy Spirit and The Worker Brothers of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

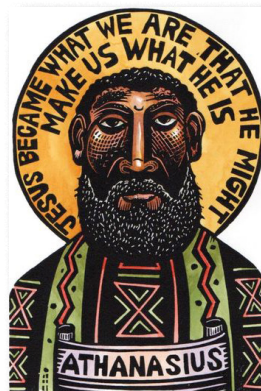
JESUS IS RISEN AS HE SAID. Blessed Easter to each of you.

As I was browsing recently for St. Benedict, one search led to another and then I ran across St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, NE on Facebook of all places. You may remember I grew up in Nebraska. It's a small, mostly rural, state so, of course, I remembered hearing about the monks at Schuyler even though it was several hundred miles away from my farm home.

On Facebook, there were these two images. The first image has some of the traditional images associated with St. Benedict (the raven, the ladder). But what I was attracted to were the words, "Listen and attend with the ear of your heart." LISTEN is the very first word of Benedict's rule, in the prologue. LISTEN. An intriguing way to begin a Rule. I was wondering after a Lenten experience of 2024, what it is that I need to "listen" to? What does "listen" say to me in prayer or meditation time?



In addition, I found this icon of St. Athanasius with the saying, "Jesus became what we are that he might make us what he is."



Putting these two together I pose these quotes for us to ponder during the Easter season.

- 1) “Listen and attend with the ear of your heart.”
- 2) “Jesus became what we are that he might make us what he is.”

Personally, I have been listening and have heard the call to forgive. I have a neighbor I’m struggling to forgive. When I was on our association’s board, he made our life miserable with his demands for outlandish repairs to his unit, never considering other residents and a limited amount of money to go around. Now that I’m off the board, he has tried several times to wave, to say hello across the court, to make us into “normal” neighbors. I’ve been running away every time that happens. The call is pretty clear when I *LISTEN* to Jesus who forgave his executioners in the midst of execution and who told me to forgive “70 times 7” — meaning over and over, never stopping. I’ve taken one step towards listening: To change my path and deliberately walk past his condo on my way back from the mailboxes, just in case I can run into him. I haven’t figured out what to say to him, but that’s part of the next steps.

Please consider the two questions posed. Won’t you drop me a line or email a short message about your Easter journey or responses to the two quotes and we can print them next year for Easter.

Contact: Marya Pohlmeier, Companion   maryalovestravel@gmail.com  
1677 Mount Vernon Drive, St. Charles, MO 63303



## SPIRITUAL SHARING

The topic for February was the “fruit of Love” and although love has many meanings and the word is used often, the actual “fruit” is the result of our actions in life. We help out in the world where we try to make a difference and help people in real need. It could be just visiting and talking with people or perhaps taking someone to appointments or helping seniors in need.

\*\*\*\*\*

I’m still going on today because of the love that I received from everybody and from our LORD!!!

\*\*\*\*\*

“The questions for January are difficult. For me the Holy Spirit is God at work in me, guiding and directing my life.

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The Veterans’ Administration has excellent reading materials about heart medications, diet, and exercise for heart patients to read. I have taken a pause in my lecturing/liturgist duties at our church. I find that I get out of breath very easily and I don’t want to worry about shortness of breath when I am trying to proclaim scripture passages.

\*\*\*\*\*

I wanted to be an architect but due to lack of talent or gifts, that didn’t work. It still makes me look at a physical layout and think how I would have done it. To turn a classroom into a chapel, I think it’s like

turning any room into sacred space. A focal point is needed with a cross, maybe kneeler and a beautiful stained-glass picture hanging behind the cross so when kneeling you can focus there. If large enough I would have an altar with the cross and candles on it (LED candles to be used by children and real fire when used by adults). Opposite the altar I would have a circle of chairs for meetings, and they would be comfortable. It would be open and not cluttered so all could feel the sacred space.

\*\*\*\*\*

Being excluded can be difficult whether it be simple exclusion or by choice. Our hearts and souls want and need to be shown that others care for us and that we are loved unconditionally. God is always here to keep us safe and wanted. He will always be by your side with His loving arms.

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The Fruit of Love is almost the center for all other fruits. And these three remain, Faith, Hope, and Love. But the greatest of these is LOVE. *1 Cor 13:13*

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In regards to the fruits of the Spirit, I think trying to use all of the fruits is necessary as we try to follow the path of Jesus. We reach out to others whenever the opportunity arises to utilize the fruits in our lives.

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I like your comment about Love. It's what we leave in our wake, how our friends, family, etc. are touched by what we do. And we hope to leave a positive vibe.

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I am going through a constant conversion as I follow Christ. I often fall down and fail, but keep trying.



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

### **Finding Peace: Between Sitting There and Doing Something** By Lenore Baeli Wang



*(Lenore lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was admitted as a Worker in May 2016.)*

It is human nature to want peace. Secularly, peace has as many names as it has attempted means of attainment. We tell one another to chill, believe we need to get away, watch television or read a good book to distract mind and heart from too many thoughts (worry), or worse, mindlessly scroll on our many devices. Nothing is wrong with breaking from frantic routine, but many of these supposedly rest providing activities leave us restless rather than in the peaceful state we seek.

Other reaches for peace seem more meaningful, but much like narcotics, require frequent renewability that can lead to panic when we can't get to them. In my pre-Christian days, after a frustrated attempt to communicate with a loved one, I would escape to a quiet room to empty my mind in meditation. If thwarted, my frustration would grow into anger, another of the many opposites of peace. Or if I could empty my mind in meditation, it would soon fill again with anxious, negative thoughts requiring emptying again. This did not feel like peace to me! More accurately, it was the frantic pursuit of an unattainable peace.

Yet even as Christians, we get caught up in being late for Bible study, trying to fit another prayer meeting or worship group into our packed fellowship schedules. In situations like these, we can build a bridge to the peace of our Christian faith from the partially true Zen aphorism, "Don't just do something, sit there!" The Christian way of sitting there involves more than an empty head or entire inactivity.

Actually, telling ourselves to not do something (again, like worry) is such a daunting goal that overwhelms and prevents its accomplishment. Many years as a therapist have shown me that fulfilling the directive to avoid something, such as worry, is impossible for the long-term. Greater wisdom and efficacy can be found in the practice of replacement, in psychology known as the Habit Replacement Loop.

Simply put, you can't do a don't. So while Philippians 4:6-7 opens with a don't in some translations, replacement is more the point of the passage, an intro to what you, with God's help, can do. Here's how the Berean Standard Bible puts it:

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving [blessing-counting], present your requests to God."

Petition is sometimes interpreted as pleading, which is a verb active enough to express multitudes of pent-up anxiety, the opposite of peace. Being thankful and counting our blessings is another effective replacement for anxiety. The point being that it's less possible to enact a don't than to enact an attractive and effective replacement for the thing to be avoided!

Of course, many times you don't have to plead with your Father, who would much rather you relish warm bread than break your teeth on a stone (Matt. 7:9). We can simply ask for good things to receive them. For instance, when we come to Christ in faith, God's image and character flows more freely through us in the fruits of the Spirit, one of which is peace (Gal. 5:22-23). Thus, we can claim what we are promised, too! (*See note 1 for a helpful distinction between fruits and gifts.*) While peace may not exactly be a gift, it is certainly freely manifested in us through our faith, whether or not you prefer to define faith as an action. (Galatians 5 distinguishes between fruits of the Spirit and works of the law.)

If chronology means anything in Galatian's list of fruits, it makes sense that patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control flow from peace. Who hasn't experienced the welling up of generosity in the wake of having experienced generosity by another? In contemporary jargon, this gets expressed through a drive-through coffee line as "pay it forward." Our God-glorifying deeds toward others are not possible without the foundation of peace that empowers us to interact with others patiently, kindly, gently, and with the self-control human interactions require.

Anyone who has acted in peace and love toward others does not need to be told that more peace and love wells up in their hearts and joy to boot! But what else can we “do” to experience the peace beyond understanding? First and foremost, stay in God’s word as much as possible. Even the portions that do not refer directly to peace, provide knowledge that, if kept in our hearts and minds, will inevitably produce peace. Knowing that He meets all our needs (Phil. 4:19), that if we seek Him we will find Him (Deut. 4:29, and elsewhere), and that as we are God’s handiwork, we can embrace self-acceptance (Eph. 2:10), are but a fraction of all the ways His rich word can bring us peace.

And we can remain in peace if we keep our minds on Him and trust Him (Is. 26:3). Not just any peace, but “perfect peace.” Note also that keeping our mind on, and trusting, are not acts of heavy lifting.

This idea of perfect peace is actually contained in the Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*. *Shalom* connotes completeness, wholeness, as in a wall with no gaps or cracks; restoration, reconciliation, making amends, and working together. Considering these, it makes sense that Christ is called the Prince of Peace. He restores our relationship with God, and he will restore the earth from its brokenness when he returns. Until He does, we are commissioned to be His blessed peacemakers, to comfort and repair brokenness where we find it. As we do this, we are also fortifying His kingdom on earth.

We spread and build up His kingdom not only by sharing His gospel of peace, but by countering the powers of darkness that currently attack our world. Our faith in His ability to vanquish the power of sin that wars within us reflects another meaning of *shalom*, the absence of war. His future reign will abolish any future such battles, as described by the powerful poetry of *Shalom*’s Hebrew letters in their march from left to right wherever they are penned.

The letters and their pictographic meanings are:

Shin – teeth (destruction)

Lamed – shepherd’s staff (authority)

Vav – nail or hook (connection)

Mem – flood waters/waters of life (chaos, confusion/cleansing, healing)

One Hebraic study (*see note 2*) describes the letters that form *shalom* as a prophetic prayer for the potent and perfect peace of Christ: “Destroy the authority of chaos.” When Christ replaces the emptiness and chaos in our hearts with His peaceful presence, the destructive disconnect between ourselves and God, and thus ourselves and others, with His cleansing and restorative powers, reconciling us to God through His healing authority over our lives, then we can say as our Jewish brothers and sisters do every sabbath, Shabbat shalom!

May we each and all find the deep restorative rest intended in the sabbath every day of our lives, as we, every morning and evening, claim the *shalom* fruit of the Spirit, gifted to us along with all the other luscious Spirit fruits when we first believe, and increasingly as we daily seek and walk with Him. Peace is rest (shabbat), yet how much more it accomplishes as the fruit of rest. Shabbat shalom! Every day of our lives.

## Notes

1. “Fruit vs. the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: What’s the Difference?” Jeran Ferguson, The Biblical Foundation online.
2. “Shalom in Ancient Hebrew,” C.J. Lovik, YouTube.

## 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. What does “Peace that passes all understanding” mean to you in the context of living in the troubled world that we inhabit today? Where and how do you, as a Christian, find Christ’s peace in the midst of what appears to be chaos?

Remember a time when you either found or suddenly experienced this Peace that passes all understanding? Can you share what this was like for you?

2. Lenore shares how difficult it is to “do a don’t”. She introduces the phrase “*habit replacement loop*” meaning to replace a life-draining thought or emotion with something else that is more life-giving.

She suggests the scripture from Philippians 4:6-7 “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving [blessing-counting], present your requests to God.*”

Is there a particular scripture that helps you find God’s peace ?

3. Lenore shares “*Anyone who has acted in peace and love toward others does not need to be told that more peace and love wells up in their hearts and joy to boot!*”

Can you remember and reflect on a time when you experienced this truth?

4. Our author also shares this: “*If chronology means anything in Galatian’s list of fruits, it makes sense that patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control flow from peace.*”

Does this ring true for you and why?

5. Give yourself a moment to reflect on the title “Prince of Peace” as someone who expresses the concept of Shalom. Someone who repairs, restores and renews.

How easy is it for you to place yourself in that loving presence for repair, renewal and restoration?



## FORMATION AND TRAINING

### An Experience of Commitment

Embracing discipline through participation in a Covenant Community,  
bound together under a life commitment to a common Rule.

Sr. Catherine Marie 's reflections from her Retreat sharing "An Experience of Commitment"

*At Retreat I began my sharing with the role of our common Rule of Life. It is appropriate that it comes first in this Section 5: An Experience of Commitment. What is important is: The Rule is a support. The Rule is what regulates and guides our growth, in the same way that a trellis supports the upward growth of a flowering vine.*

*As we grow around the Rule, we find we are called to do so with gentleness and compassion for ourselves and others. It is not meant to be a burden, or a checklist by which to measure growth. Following the Rule guides our growth in relationship with God and each other.*

*As I read over the section of our Rule of Life about our experience of commitment, I noticed how St. Benedict draws attention to the role of obedience and humility. As we learn to "Listen" (the first word in St. Benedict's Rule) and to hear and to follow what our loving God desires for us, it becomes more natural to humbly respond, and follow Jesus. It becomes more natural to ask for help and rely on the strength of the Holy Spirit.*

*In community we more fully experience commitment to God and each other because we share the journey. As we "walk alongside" each other the qualities of compassion and humility are strengthened. We grow deeper in our listening, following, and returning again and again to commitment to relationship with Jesus Christ and each other.*

#### The Rule of Life

*Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. (Luke 16:10)*

Our Rule of Life is a means to nurture our relationship with God. The faithful living of the Rule enhances our spiritual growth and development just as food strengthens our physical bodies. It can be helpful to read through the Rule periodically, perhaps twice in a year. The following phrases describe our Rule:

- Designed for simplicity, not to add to the complexity of our lives
- Realistic (doable)
- A discipline means to set us free to grow and to become more available and accessible to God
- Offers support and structure

- To be embraced and lived into (COMPASSION)
- Not an end in itself

### **Covenant**

*I will take you as my people, and I will be your God (Exodus 6:7)*

Covenant is made possible because God calls us to be God's people.

Covenant is the central core of our Judeo-Christian tradition. It is expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who delivers us from our bondage to sin and death.

And so in the formation of Our Community we are bound to each other in covenant with God and with each other.

### **Commitment**

*Whoever obeys God's word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. (1John 2:5a)*

The Worker Sisters and Brothers of the holy Spirit ask for a life commitment. We believe this provides stability in our relationship with God and the community and allows us the freedom to grow. This commitment is reaffirmed yearly at our Anniversary Celebration in December. At that time we again affirm: "I commit myself for life to a covenant relationship with God through the Worker Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Spirit. I hold as essential our Rule, Mission and Community Life, our fourfold commitment. I therefore dedicate myself to Jesus Christ, to the Fruit of the Spirit, to Mission and Ministry.

### **Stability**

*I have learned to be content with whatever I have. (Phil 4:11b)*

- drawing on strength and stability from the Holy Spirit in order to persevere in our commitment to Jesus Christ, the Rule and our Community
- learning the art of compromise, for the common good
- staying faithful to God and God's Word on the journey, whatever comes

**Obedience and Humility:** walking alongside each other

*Whoever listens to you, listens to me. (Luke 10:16)*

The Rule of St. Benedict begins with the word, "Listen"

Obedience is about following through on what we hear are God's desires for us (the root word even translates "to hear")

Benedict believed that humility is the key to obedience. *"The first step of humility is unhesitating obedience which comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all" (RB 5:1)*

When Christ comes first, we humbly respond as children of God and listen for God's direction in our life and that of our Community.

Walking alongside each other with compassion and humility strengthens our ability to practice obedience, listening, hearing and then letting the Holy Spirit empower us to act. Thus, “The Way” of following Jesus is not an overwhelming burden.- “his burden is light” and “the Light of the world”.

### **Finances**

**Those who are generous are blessed. (Prov 22:9)**

Having enough finances to support our community is important, but nurturing all in community wherever they find themselves, this is more important. If we put first things first, the shepherding of people, the rest should take care of itself.

The example of the early saints as described in the Book of Acts relates:

*All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. (Acts 4:32-34a)*

### **The End and the Beginning.**

*Adapted from Brakkenstein Community of Blessed Sacrament Fathers (Found on page 22 of Our Rule)*

This Rule is not meant to be a burden for you.

Nor does it pretend to be complete.

It should help you discover and experience how great is the freedom to which you are called, and how great the responsibility which you may take upon yourself.

Be so faithful to this Rule today that you can be faithful again tomorrow.

Set out on the road together with your sisters and brothers,

together with the numberless people of God,

all pilgrims traveling to the Father's house.

Go on your way singing, a song of hope on your lips and your heart burning within you.

Now we have the alleluias of the journey,

soon there will be the alleluias of consummation, of the great Sabbath with God.

Now you are being sown in the darkness of the earth;

when that day comes, you will bloom in the light and warmth of God's eternity.

Set out on the road, sisters and brothers, and peace be with you forever.

*This excerpt of An Experience of Commitment was taken from our Community Rule. Those of you who have the big white Rule may read it in its entirety; those of you who do not have the hardcopy Rule may find it on our Web site if you wish to dig deeper.*

### **For Your Reflection**

1. How has answering God's call to share in the community life of WSHS/WBHS enriched your ability to listen, hear, go forth and bear Fruit?

2. In the poem “The End and the Beginning” a line says that the Rule “should help you discover and experience how great is the freedom to which you are called”. Share about the freedom of life in Christ that we share in WSHS/WBHS.
  
3. In what part of our commitment to God and each other do you most often find yourself asking “God be my Helper?”