



# THE WEST VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUALITY

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Facebook: The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality

*Rooted and growing in the light of God's love.*

## WINTER - SPRING 2019 HAPPENINGS AT WVIS

### WEEKLY EVENTS AT WVIS

Monday: The Next Step – Writing for Discovery 7 pm

Wednesday: 11<sup>th</sup> Step Contemplative Prayer 7 pm

Thursdays: Contemplative Prayer 5 pm

Thursdays: Women's AA Group 5:30 pm

### MONTHLY EVENTS AT WVIS

1<sup>st</sup> Friday: Soup and Silence 12 noon

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday: Thomas Merton Society 7 pm

### INDIVIDUAL DIRECTED RETREATS

Retreats are available year-round at The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality. You are invited to grow in your personal relationship with God on a personal retreat with a Spiritual Director. WVIS offers individually directed retreats ranging from 3 to 10 days.

Silence, prayer and individual spiritual direction sessions are central components of these retreat offerings. You may schedule an individual directed retreat with your spiritual director or contact Sister Carole Riley at 412-901-4259 or by email at [wviscr@aol.com](mailto:wviscr@aol.com).

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March 9: What Am I Here For Workshop presented by Dr. Carole Riley, CDP, PhD

April 5-6: Lenten Directed Retreat

May 24 – July 14: Almost Heaven Retreats

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### *A Reflection*

*What good are dead leaves?*

By Nancy Wood

*You shall ask*

*What good are dead leaves*

*And I will tell you*

*They nourish the sore Earth.*

*You shall ask*

*What reason is there for winter*

*And I will tell you*

*To bring about new leaves.*

*You shall ask*

*Why are the leaves so green*

*And I will tell you*

*Because they are rich with life.*

*You shall ask*

*Why must summer end*

*And I will tell you*

*So that leaves can die.*

## Message from our Executive Director:

Sister Carole Riley, CDP, Ph.D.

**And now here is my secret, a very simple secret:  
It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”  
(The Little Prince)**

Spring will be arriving soon. We see the indications even amid the snow. This past year, WVIS has focused on the theme of Home. At a recent meeting we discussed the phrase, ‘Home is where the heart is’, and decided that to focus on ‘heart’ would help us continue to reflect together as a staff and to serve you. Home seemed to lead to the ‘heart’.

February is the shortest month, a month in which many of us stay home because of the weather. Looking at and loving those in the home requires the simple secret of seeing with the heart, encouraging the heart of the other, resting in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, having a heart for the poor, the lonely, the oppressed and sometimes for the heartless. We experience heartfelt feelings, heartlessness, hard-heartedness, and we notice the ‘ear’ is needed to hear the heart. Listening and SEEING expand our fullness of heart.



In the cold, dark days of February, our view is lessened, and that gives us an experience of ‘knowing’ what is in our environment, even though for the moment it is invisible. The mountaintops are invisible; sometimes the fog covers the river, but we ‘remember’. As we approach Lent, be at home in your OWN heart, remember not only your environment, but the inner, essential good hearted moments of those who have provided a home for you.

Often, I find myself thinking of the freedom of Victor Frankl, who knew freedom even within the confines of Auschwitz, the freedom to change his attitude. So too, I can change my attitude - toward my own past, some relationships, emotional pain, world events. We all have this freedom, and we can all take heart through this understanding.

Ask yourself what makes your heart sing. Spring brings the singing of birds.... I hope Spring brings you a singing heart full of joy, enthusiasm, and the ability to be at home with your own heart.

### RETREATS – PROGRAMS AT WVIS

**Would you like more information?**

**Contact:**

**The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality**

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## Message from our Board President:

**Rev. Dr. Michael A. Poke, Sr.**

WVIS Associate Spiritual Director

Pastor, Saint Paul Missionary Baptist Church

mpokesr@aol.com



“Home Is Where the Heart Is”

It has often been said that there is a correlation between home and heart. Many have gone on to say that: “Home is where the heart is” A proper engagement of such a thought for me raises two questions for reflection: first, where is my heart? Secondly, is my heart at home with our Lord?

God wants to make our heart his home, let it not be with us the same old story of an overcrowded heart with no room for God, the song writer said “Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room...” We need to ask ourselves where my heart is. Better yet, where is my treasure? Jesus said: “For where your treasure is there will your heart be also” Think about what you treasure most, is it earthly gain or heavenly investment? Where is your heart?

Time for a check-up: we need to make sure that our heart is right with God. When our heart is right with God we can truly say “Home Is Where the Heart Is”

Scripture Reflection:      Luke 2:7, Luke 9:58      Matthew 6:19-34

## Continuing Professional Development - October 18-19, 2019

Most People like to applaud themselves on not being prejudiced and rightfully so, however have you ever thought about unconscious prejudice?

Come explore the possibility as we discuss the **Topic: Inter-racial spiritual direction the unconscious assumptions of the director in companioning African Americans.**

Dr. Poke serves as the Pastor of the Saint Paul Missionary Baptist church where he has served as Pastor for the past seventeen years. Pastor Poke also serves as an adjunct professor for Palmer Theological Seminary teaching Master of Divinity, and Doctorial students in spiritual formation since 2010. His education includes Bachelor of Science from Park College in Parkville MO, Master of Divinity and Master of Arts from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City KS, and Doctor of Ministry with an emphasis on Pastor as Spiritual Director in Dayton Ohio in 2005. In 2008 Pastor Poke was certified as an Associate Spiritual Director at WVIS. Pastor Poke is married to Mary L. Murray Poke (35yrs) a loving and caring wife of great faith and they have a son Michael Jr. and a granddaughter Trinity in Kansas City Mo.

## REFLECTING ON THE REFLECTIONS

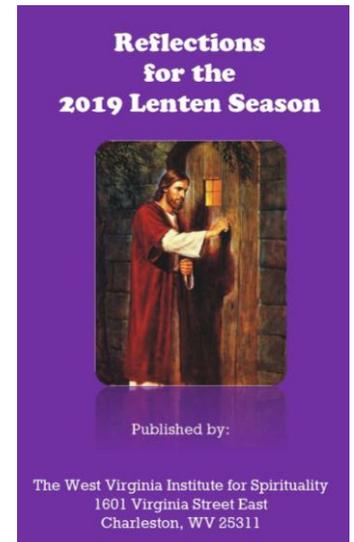
**Bob Harrison, Ph.D., WVIS Reflection Co-editor**

Advent and Lenten Reflections began as an annual, West Virginia Institute for Spirituality (WVIS) electronic and printed ministry to support, sustain and extend the WVIS Mission to provide reflection opportunities in a quiet space. What better space is there for quiet reflection than in the privacy of one's own quiet worship space? Thus, the annual WVIS Advent and Lenten Reflections were born.

Under the leadership of Sister Carole Riley, the WVIS Executive Director, and the assistance of a network of 24 Reflection Authors, the WVIS 2019 Advent Reflections were distributed electronically to PRAY-ERS on three continents and were posted electronically on two social networks - The WVIS Web Site and Facebook. In addition, the demand for purchasing printed copies increased to 140 booklets. This was a new publication record for WVIS.

With a team of 40 Reflection authors, the final preparation and publication of the WVIS 2019 Lenten Reflections has begun. The 2019 Lenten Reflections will include two forms of Reflection opportunities: Reflection Period based on 40 written reflections (Lectio Divina) and 6 based on 6 visual reflections of Christ in the Desert for 40 Days (Visio Divina).

The 2019 Lenten Reflections will be available February 14, 2019. Make plans now to include the WVIS 2019 Lenten Reflections as a part of your Lenten journey to Easter.



## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2018 ADVENT GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

**Elaine Soper, Ph.D.**

The Rural Satellite did an Advent Group Spiritual Direction program this year. It was a combination of churches from the West Virginia towns of: White Sulphur Springs, Lewisburg, and Ronceverte. We've done Advent and Lent Group Spiritual Direction programs before... several in fact. We've used daily Lectio Divina and journaling... with devotionals, small spiritual books, Scripture only, etc. And, they've been very well received.

But this year, by chance, our church received a sample of Advent booklets from AllSaintsPress.com. One seemed to stand out to us. It was: God with Us: An Advent Journey with THOMAS METON, MOTHER TERESA, AND HENRI NOUWEN. Three Spiritual Leaders of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Reflections that pertained to the scripture, pertained to advent, pertained to the theme used for the specific week of advent.

The entire group found these reflections touched their hearts over and over again... day after day. These modern spiritual leaders talked their language, drew them to the 'God with Us', left an impression like no other. We're all looking forward to using this type of reflection in future Lent and Advent Group Spiritual Direction programs.

## FLOWING SPIRIT MINISTRY GOES ON THE ROAD

Eileen Chwalibog

The RCIA Team of Sacred Heart Parish in St. Louis, Missouri invited Flowing Spirit Ministry to lead their Day of Retreat on December 1<sup>st</sup>. This request came after a team meeting in which all members voiced their need for a day of reflection. The 9 team members present were aged 40+ to a feisty, earthy 89 year old, 5 women and 4 men. The day was an amazing experience the retreatants as well as Liz (Deal) and me.

We experienced the Divine Dance of the Spirit flowing into us, between us, through us, among the retreatants, and back to us in a never ending movement of divine grace. What's more, our presentations were an integration of the last 2 years of work at WVIS: 2017 CPD on Rohr's *The Divine Dance*, 2018 CPD on Van Kaam, an Episcopal Parish Vestry Retreat we led on "Community," Creative Awakenings presentations over the years, and a prayer service we developed for catechists from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston this past August.

It was a holistic approach to the theme of Community with the Cross as the main symbol: the Vertical beam signifying our relationship with God as Trinity (the Community of the Godhead) and the Horizontal Beam representing our relationship with others. We employed art, music, video, short presentations, individual time for reflection, sharing, silence, body prayer, creativity as prayer, imaginative prayer, and group vocal prayer and song.

The comments we received can all be summarized by a poem that was sent to us by one of the male participants nearing 80 years of age which follows. He identifies himself only as I. M. Willing!

### To Flow or Not to Flow

By I.M. Willing

Around the candle and the cross,  
We shared our hurts, our fears, our loss.  
Pulled back the veil where feelings live,  
Each asking have we more to give?

And so:

Next we split the atom.  
I felt so small and odd.  
Then all that changed because we share,  
The DNA of God.

With eyes shut tight we stretched our minds,  
The breath of God did blow.  
Through colored paints we "would be"  
saints,  
Allowed creation's flow.

The meal prepared and grace we shared,  
Was filled with joy and hope.  
We're not alone in what we try,  
The "Third Way" helps us cope.



We listed what we all do well,  
And things we see "off track."  
And learned to let the Spirit move,  
Providing what we lack.

The leadership we sought "out there",  
We found more close at hand.  
It's not just Bishops and their Priests,  
It's from the hearts of man!

## **A CALL TO SERVE**

### **Rev. Dorinda Trouteaud**

Eighteen months ago, I accepted a call to serve as pastor of what our Presbyterian Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, Jr. identified as “the most difficult call in our country now.” I serve a makeshift, deeply wounded congregation created by a denominational schism caused by a cultural shift involving differing definitions of Christian marriage and the full inclusion of LGBTQTA+1 folks in the life of the church. To complicate matters, the congregation has been embroiled in two wrenching lawsuits over property issues for more than two years.

All the members of Central Presbyterian Church PCUSA have been subjected to documented pastoral abuse and leadership harassment and intimidation for over 15 years, so I routinely deal with overt and covert anger directed at former pastors, presbytery leadership, and me. “You’ve got to begin your pastorate with the work of healing and reconciliation,” one presbytery executive reminded me, “and quickly before your congregation implodes!” I began with prayer...slow, quiet, steady, contemplative prayer, which did little to ease frazzled presbytery executive nerves. It did, however, bolster my courage to take one open-ended, no-success-guaranteed step in the direction of healing. I formed several small groups for the purpose of reading contemplatively Lewis Smedes’ book, *Forgive and Forget, Healing the Hurts We Don’t Deserve*.

The small groups, schooled in a Deep South, Bible Belt evangelical tradition suspicious of what some labeled as non-Protestant practices, really struggled with the freedom of communal contemplative reading and prayer. “Just tell us what we need to know!” members would beg. So many times I would leave our sessions with the insights of Fr. Bill Petro and Sr. Carole Riley about using familiar vocabulary to describe spiritual practices racing through my mind as a way of defusing the groups’ anxieties.

My personal practice of contemplative prayer freed me from expectations of “success” and forward progress in the journey of reconciliation. At unexpected times I found myself overwhelmed by the grace of “not knowing”, a grace that steadied my mind and heart so that I could listen to painful stories. From these excruciating stories I discovered a deepened sense of call to accompany a courageous band of disciples as they deal with their frightening anger with God and their distrust of the office of ministry. And the Good News? Jesus Christ was, is, and will always be the Lord of Central Presbyterian Church PCUSA!

## **HEART IS WHERE THE HOME RESIDES**

**Sister Linda Hylla, CDP, LCSW**

Growing up, I would watch my parents and my younger sister entertain guests. Laughter and embarrassment would erupt, as my sister would bare all behind her towel while singing for my great aunt and uncle. Mortified, my mother would rush my sister into the bathroom for a change of clothing. We still tell this story of my sister imitating Ginger on Gilligan’s Island. There are many examples where the spirit of love was present. Our home was a welcoming space. There was a sense of community, and my parents would take on a parenting role with our friends who spent enough time there.

Today, the experience of hospitality has changed radically. Homes are only open houses during the holidays. Schedules, busyness, and boundaries keep us separated. Heart is where the home resides! Home is more than just a physical space to live and entertain. It is an attitude that we bring to others. It is a gesture of extending our hospitality beyond our borders and comfort zones. Let us carry the spirit of hospitality to those most in need and not just to those for whom we are most familiar.

## FATHER BILL PETRO'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION

### Deacon Tom Soper

On October 20<sup>th</sup> Fr. Bill celebrated Mass in honor of his 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his ordination. The Mass was concelebrated by several priests; Fr. Paul Wharton, Fr. Harry Cramer, Msgr. Dean Borgmeyer and Deacon of the Mass, Deacon Tom Soper.

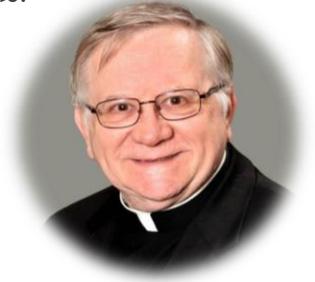
Fr. John Finnel was host and Master of Ceremonies for this gala event. Many family and friends celebrated with Fr. Bill.

A social was provided by the Blessed Sacrament parishioners in honor of Fr. Bill. It was a great time for sharing memories. A collage of video pictures, covering these past fifty years, and the sharing of memories with past and present acquaintances while eating great food, provided a family-oriented venue.

Fr. Bill was ordained October 19, 1968 and has had a number of different assignments, in and out of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, which have provided many rich experiences through the years.

His association with WVIS these past years has provided rich experiences in Spiritual Growth through his direction and Merton presentations, which have enhanced each of our Spiritual lives.

Thank you, Fr. Bill and many more blessed years.



### WVIS HAS NEEDS – CAN YOU HELP?

10 luggage racks Two shower stools (small plastic or small wooden) for Basement or Bethany 1 Bed in a Bag and towel set for twin bed	Hp ink cartridge M452W Copy paper Box of blue ball point pens
Contributions toward heating bills, sump pump, flood damage Contributions to electric bills (Appalachian Power)	Clorox Wipes, Paper towels Any canned or frozen foods Vegan soups to be frozen in portions of 8 Decaf coffee or tea pods
Heavy duty broom for outside sweeping Large Recycle bin Clear Recycling plastic bags	2 identical chairs for spiritual direction (white, green, brown or beige) 2 folding lawn chairs
Volunteer hours on Wednesday for telephone Volunteer hours for light secretarial work Tuesday - Friday morning Volunteer to answer phone 4:00-5:00 pm daily	Scholarships for Almost Heaven Retreat or Lenten Retreat (85 dollars)

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