



THE WEST VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUALITY

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

News from WVIS

2019 # 3

Message from our Executive Director

Sister Carole A. Riley, CDP, Ph.D.



I will sing and give thanks to our God.

My heart is so full of gratitude as I write this. Why?

First, WVIS is twenty years old, having been birthed from the Cenacle. The Cenacle retreat ministry arrived in Charleston in 1977 under the guidance of now 97 year old 'Resident Consultant and Master Gardner', Sister Mary Pellicane.

Second, Lorena D. Thomas wrote a grant that was awarded to provide support for a reconciliation program with members of the Methodist denomination and Catholic rural ministry. The support letters from Father John Finnell, Adriana and Jonathan Marshall captured what WVIS hopes to 'be' in the area of spiritual ministry. It just felt good to read the supportive words.

Third, I'm blessed to have witnessed the spiritual maturation of five of our associate directors 'in training' who provided guidance during retreats in Almost Heaven. From different main line churches they adapted the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius masterfully and God's graces flowed visibly. A woman from Mexico promised to return again, having completed a 30 day retreat.

Fourth, Sister Molly Maloney's and Father Bill Petro's liturgical preparation enhances the experience for all those who gather for silence.

Fifth, Ed Neely fed the body and soul with his delicious and nourishing meals. He volunteered to 'help' and found himself the chief cook. 'Our Ed,' we hope, returns next year with a little lighter schedule. Tanya, Karen, Harry, resident volunteer Bob Sylvester, Lisa, and Ann join me in this hymn of gratitude.

Sixth, Anna Poulitt, PJ Scarr, Peg Nagem, Sister Barbara Goodridge, OSF and BA Miskowiec volunteer to cook, deliver homemade recipes, and if I'm not really alert, arrive and depart unnoticed...in soft humility.

Seventh, our online presence has increased through affiliation with the Graduate Theological Foundation and satellite leaders volunteering to teach in our expanding ongoing formation programs ... we are developing a 'curriculum.'

Eighth, the supportive board guides me and prays continually that our mission and charism brings peace, understanding and support to our troubled neighborhoods.

Ninth, Pastor Michael Poke, Sr., our board President, will provide interracial training in spiritual direction in October.

Tenth, I give thanks for you, your witness! If you are reading this message, cup your own face in your hands and give thanks with me for the image of God that you are for WVIS, for the people who will only see the Christ image in you. Bless you own face as beautiful at every age, and as a unique reflection of Christ at this time and in this place. Here. Now.

Thank you for your faithful witness, your love and support of WVIS, your gracious 'face' to the world. May Christ's face shine continually on, through and from each of you. And may we all 'give thanks.'

Gratefully,
Sister Carole A. Riley

Message from our Board President:

Rev. Dr. Michael A. Poke, Sr.

WVIS Associate Spiritual Director

Pastor, Saint Paul Missionary Baptist Church

mpokesr@aol.com



The spirit of gratitude is among us at WVIS. We thank God for our staff and our volunteers who continue to give of themselves and allow God to use their giftedness for God's glory. We are truly grateful unto God for the relationships that are being built, the ministry that is going forward, the lives that are being touched, and the many blessings that God continues to bestow upon us, knowing that the best is yet to come. As always your continued support matters; it ensures that we can continue in this great work and be there for those who need us.

I am excited as the time quickly approaches for our class: "Inter-Racial Spiritual Direction" with particular focus on the unconscious assumptions of the spiritual director in companioning African Americans. Our time together will be October 18-19, 2019 at the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality, 1601 Virginia Street East, Charleston of WV. The class has been opened to all interested participants. Texts for the class will be "*Waking Up White*" by *Debby Irving* and "*White Fragility*" by *Robin Diangelo* - two great texts to facilitate our time together. I am truly thankful to have been provided this opportunity for leadership and commend WVIS for its commitment in providing a healthy atmosphere for dialogue.

To register for the class contact Sister Carole A. Riley, C.D.P., Executive Director at wviscr@aol.com. I may be reached at michaelpokesr@gmail.com.

To God be the Glory.

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Main Campus Update

Thank you to **Beacher and Joe Neenan** for the butterfly garden, complete with hummingbird feeders. Look outside the hermitage. Beautiful!

Thank you also for the glider from **Grace Gosselin**, for a hydraulic door for exit from the lower level to Nazareth, and for lawn care by **Pastor Poke**, supported financially by Associate directors **Bob Sylvester** and **Rev. Alan Kim Webster**.

Welcome Sister Ritamary Schulz!



We are happy to welcome Sister Ritamary Schulz, ASCJ, to full time spiritual direction ministry. Sister Ritamary is hoping to provide prayer guidance at the WVIS main campus and expand her presence to Bluefield, Beckley, Hurricane and St. Albans. An associate spiritual director and board member of Fairfield University, Sister Ritamary holds an M.A. in counseling and has served four years as Provincial of her order. To be companioned by Sister Ritamary, please contact her directly by phone at (304) 444-5009, or email WVSrRitamary@aol.com.

Soup Ministry:

Eileen Chwalibog, Anna Pollitt, Thomas Soper, Rindy Trouteaud, Diane Shoaf, and Bob Harrison frequently contribute homemade soups for our retreats and Friday Soup and Silence. Help me to both acknowledge and thank these creative chefs who provide 'eucharist' with a small 'e' for us. If you are creative and feel inclined to provide soups for WVIS, please contact Tanya Ivy at wvistanyaivy@aol.com, or just bring a container for 8!

Dr. William (Bill) Brown died on June 12, 2019. Bill moved into the 19th annotation with Sr. Carole and smilingly quipped "I think I'll finish the fourth week in heaven, I have 4th stage cancer." As God provided, Bill did 'finish his retreat in heaven.' You may remember that Bill wrote for our Advent and Lent reflection booklets. Bill was a professor, a prolific writer, and deeply spiritual man who is grieved by his wife, Eliza and their adult children. WVIS was blessed by Bill's giftedness.

Sister Donna Marie Beck, CSJ beloved faculty and friend of WVIS died on June 12, 2019. A tribute to her tenure with WVIS will appear in our next newsletter.

WVIS HAS NEEDS – CAN YOU HELP?

- Volunteers for yard care, gardening, painting a portion of the basement – front and back doors
- Finishing 5 hardwood tables
- Water container for service area
- Gift card for food
- Help with Appalachian Power bill
- Copy paper
- Broom sweeper for the massage area
- Outdoor brook
- Scholarship for Almost Heaven retreat between 86-130 dollars a person

Bio: This will make you SMILE Today.

Tanya Ivy
WVIS Secretary
wvistanyaivy@aol.com

It's been an honor to serve here at WVIS since March. I'm Tanya Ivy, born and raised here in Charleston, WV. I'm the fifth child of nine siblings. My mother raised us up Baptist, and we were all baptized at twelve years of age. Being born between two different generations has its plusses. My blessing was being born between the boys and hanging out with my brothers. I got to climb trees, hop moving trains, box golden gloves, karate, and had earned my black belt by age fifteen. I was the fastest in track at Stonewall Jackson High School (many moons ago.) Smile! I was my mother's worst and only tomboy, and I was hard on all my dresses. Smile! But her hard work and patience with me paid off.



I became a Secretary III for Kanawha County Schools, married a Charleston policeman, and moved to Myrtle Beach for the past 20 years. I became a Certified Personal Trainer and exercised all the beautiful people on the beach. Smile! I ran two Get ready for Summer boot camps and three Get fit for Winter boot camps. Trained one on one with many. My best client was a 92 year old at a gym where I was also a physical therapy aide and trainer. He came in one morning with an angry look on his face and was looking for me. In a deep voice he said he "had to talk with me." He was mad because I took his wrinkles out of his arms. All the staff was at the office door to see what was going on, and we could hear them laughing through the doors and walls. Life has many roads we must travel down.

Blessed with one girl child, (God is humorous, a mini me,) Taya graduated from Capitol High, attended Marshall in Huntington, then served in the Air Force. She got out in August 2011, finished college, and is in her 19th year of service as a veteran at the Veterans Hospital as a Respiratory Therapist. My grandchildren are two cats and a BMW, which I can take for a ride without asking. Smile!

I enjoy being back home, walks on the boulevard, riding my bike, and working myself out. (What a task at 64 years young!) Smile! It's no roaring ocean, but it's home and people I know. My walk with God has led me through many paths. I've sung in choirs, and I've taught Bible study classes; Alpha was one, and it was eye opening. I played a character of the woman in the crowd who cried when they hung Jesus on the cross, (real tears and crying - no acting), Teen Director, Youth Choir director, Sunday School Teacher, Intercession Prayer Team member, Deacon.

My new journey and steps with God is my Spiritual Journey, listening to and being guided by the Holy Spirit. Thank you [WVIS](#) for being here for such a time as this.

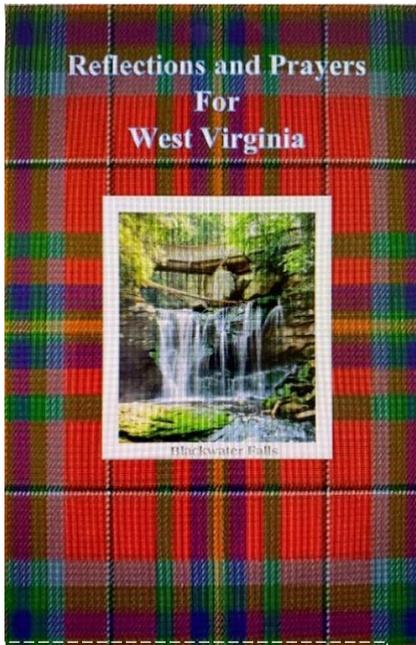
Could You Use a Mentor to Finish Your Portfolio?

Elaine Soper

Elaine Soper, PhD is offering to help anyone who wants to finish their Portfolio and gain their WVIS Associate Spiritual Direction Certificate... but could use a mentor to walk with them on their path and give advice along the way. If you are interested, or would like to just discuss how this might work, contact her at: 304-667-9432 or elainesoper@gmail.com. No questions are too big or too small.

Reflections and Prayers for West Virginia: *Touching Lives-Changing Hearts*

By Susie Pace and Bob Harrison



The cover reflects the contents.

“What hath God Wrought?” was the official first Morse Code message transmitted in the United States on May 24, 1844 to officially open the Baltimore-Washington telegraph line.

In May 2019, 175 years later, the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality began posting **Reflections and Prayers for West Virginia** on the WVIS website, as well as made the reflections and prayers available in a printed version.

The response to this collection of reflections and prayers has been overwhelming based on the number of donations received for printed copies. What makes this publication so popular? First, the publication is about West Virginia and her people, beauty, and abundance of natural resources. Second, the 30 authors who volunteered to write the 30 reflections and prayers contained in this booklet, are either residents or friends of “The Mountain State” who believe in the power of prayer to touch lives and change hearts in not only West Virginia, but also the United States and the world.

Although **Reflections and Prayers for West Virginia** was published in May 2019, to be available for West Virginia Heritage Month and the WVIS Almost Heaven Retreats in June, the publication is still available electronically on the WVIS website or as a printed version (contact WVIS). Consider beginning or

continuing to reflect and pray for West Virginia as this year unfolds.

Affirmation of Rev. Meredith Hutchison’s Covenant with WVIS

On May 19, 2019, Father Bill Petro represented WVIS at the affirmation of The Rev. Meredith Hutchison’s four-way covenant with her local church, Emmanuel Reformed United Church of Christ, The Westmoreland Association of the Penn West Conference of the United Church of Christ (her judicatory), and WVIS. The liturgy was a part of Emmanuel Reformed UCC’s regular Sunday service.

The United Church of Christ has a covenantal polity, and authorized ministers have accountability to be faithful to this covenant. The four-way covenant is for clergy serving in settings beyond the local church. The intent of the 4-way covenant is:

1. To strengthen, support and sustain the ministries of all the partners that share in this covenant.
2. To encourage mutual participation and accountability of and for the life of each by the others.
3. To observe, nurture, celebrate and call forth Meredith’s ministry.

All of the partners regularly review the covenant document. The local church pledges to support Meredith’s ministry and WVIS, and WVIS recognizes that in the United Church of Christ, the local church is the locus for all ministry.

Emmanuel Reformed United Church of Christ is providing space for Meredith to offer Spiritual Direction so that Murrysville, PA may become a satellite of WVIS. They have already participated in group spiritual direction led by Meredith, and plan on continuing group direction during Advent. Meredith can be contacted at mercomp@aol.com.



Almost Heaven Retreats and the WVIS Associate Spiritual Direction Training Program

Sister Molly Maloney, OSF, M.A.

Coordinator of the Associate Spiritual Direction Training Program



It is June, and WVIS has a lot to be grateful for and to celebrate. This month we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of our Almost Heaven retreats! Under the guidance of our talented editors: Bob Harrison and Susie Pace, a unique and inspiring reflection booklet celebrating West Virginia was created. In this booklet, many of the riches and traditions of the Mountain State are brought to light through the daily reflections of our Associate Spiritual Directors.

In reflecting on our beautiful state, one particular place comes to mind: “Dolly Sods”. It is a very rocky, high altitude plateau, which is located in the Allegheny Mountains of Eastern West Virginia. The view from the top of Dolly Sods is spectacular. The panorama of the West Virginia Hills invites the hiker to stop and take it all in!

Our summer retreats afford us the same opportunity. It gives us another view, the ability to pause and see things from a different perspective, so to speak. The WVIS logo is that of a beautiful tree, and each season the tree experiences is illustrated. In regard to our spiritual direction training program, WVIS continues to branch out in new and exciting ways.

In 2019-2020, we are beginning to provide spiritual directors who have trained in other programs, to participate in our scheduled WVIS weekends. Through WVIS, they will receive education in two components of our program: How to direct retreats in the Ignatian tradition and Group Spiritual Direction. In our second semester program, our Associates complete a practicum in which they receive supervision and provide Group Spiritual Direction in their churches or small faith communities during the season of Lent. In the summer, our Associate Spiritual Directors are here guiding their directees in a silent directed retreat.

Men and women enrolled in other training programs, who desire these additional educational opportunities at WVIS, can now either be with us on site or use the technology of ZOOM to participate as an off - site learner.

The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality takes our commitment to the formation of competent and compassionate spiritual directors very seriously. As we continue to be a bountiful resource for our Associates, it is evident through the requests and responses of other certified spiritual directors that expansion in programs we offer is the fruit of God’s abundant graces and the skill and dedication in this ministry of all our Associate Directors.

Another Way of Mentoring...

Could You Use Help Providing an “Orientation to Spiritual Direction” to Your Church Members?

Tom and Elaine Soper

Tom and Elaine Soper have also given “Orientations to Spiritual Direction” in one-hour to six-hour Orientation Sessions. These ecumenical orientations can include topics like: What is spiritual direction, interactive sessions on ways to develop your spirituality as a group and individually, etc. using the Ignatius and van Kaam methods from WVIS. If you would like help with options for assessing what topics might be best for your church community, how to create an “Orientation to Spiritual Direction,” or presenting an “Orientation to Spiritual Direction” to your church community, we would be glad to help! Please feel free to contact us and talk about it, at: 304-667-9432 or elainesoper@gmail.com.

Continuing Professional Development Days - 2020

What is it that gives coherence and consistency to the ongoing formation of our lives? The answer is found not in acts as such, but rather in the dispositions that underlie our actions. They dispose us to act coherently and in keeping with the direction we have chosen to follow.

For example, we may have formed a transcendent disposition for aesthetic appreciation, a functional one for the management of family finances, a vital one for physical exercise, and a sociohistorical one for world peace. Such form dispositions direct our formation energy in our daily activities. They are the basis of our actual empirical life formation.

We will look at these dispositions and their connection with formation fields and dimensions; with formative memory, imagination and anticipation; with formative apprehensions, appraisal and affirmation; and with initial and ongoing formation history. We will consider the heart, or core form, and its enduring dispositions as decisive for the basic direction of our empirical life form as a whole.

As is evident, these days will presume our familiarity with some of the fundamental concepts of the science of formative spirituality, most of which are found in Adrian van Kaam's Formative Spirituality, Vol. 1: Fundamental Formation. The specific text for these days is Volume 2 of the same series, entitled Formative Spirituality: Human Formation (New York: Crossroad), 1985.

These days will take place Friday and Saturday, 16-17 October 2020, at WVIS. A more detailed schedule will be forthcoming. The primary facilitator will be Dr. J. Patrick Foley, an experienced lecturer, spiritual director and researcher in Formation Science. To register, contact wviscr@aol.com.

Merton's Nothingness

Father Bill Petro and Bob Sylvester

We have been fans of Thomas Merton for many years. Fr. Bill introduced me to Thomas Merton who became Father Louis, a monk at Gethsemane Abbey. Fr. Bill studied his life, visited Gethsemane several times, and has given several workshops on this prolific writer and seeker of the true self, created in God's image.

Merton's nothingness strikes home as we read and meditate on his willingness to better develop a deeper human connection. His "Book of Hours," by Kathleen Dignan, gathers together some of his most beautiful and insightful passages, arranged as prayers to be offered at the dawn, midday, dusk, and night hours of each day.

Everything Merton writes invites us to join him in listening to God in the silence. To paraphrase from Dawn in the "Book of Hours," Merton invites us with "praises and canticles to anticipate each day the singing bells that wake the sun and to open the secret eye of faith and drink these deeps of invisible light." In the same volume, one can read about his "point of nothingness...at the center of our being, which is untouched by sin and by illusion." His point of truth – "a point or spark which belongs entirely to God."

The West Virginia Chapter of the Thomas Merton Society meets on the second Tuesday of each month at The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality from 7:00 to 8:30pm. All are welcome.

For more information: Fr. Bill Petro: frbpetro42@gmail.com or Bob Sylvester: bsyl@msn.com

Healing from Life's Hurts



Every Wednesday in May from 4:30 to 6pm, The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality conducted a group to discuss aspects of Healing from Life's Hurts. Each session explored different types of grief: (1) Healing when I don't know why I'm hurting, (2) Healing when someone I loved died, (3) Healing when a relationship failed, (4) Healing when a part of myself is lost. A web based seminar, 'zoom' was used for those who were not able to attend in person. Grief is an important step in the healing process. Learning to heal after a loss is sometimes difficult. The WV Institute for Spirituality allowed individuals to discuss their grief in a safe environment during an emotional time. Death may be one of the biggest factors of grief, but any loss can cause grief no matter how subtle. The loss of a friend, loss of a job, death of a pet, and many other losses can trigger a sense of grief. As we gathered around and shared our grief with each other, a sense of hope prevailed. Everyone needs time to mourn alone, but we also need each other. God promises, "For where two or three gather in My Name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). We learned how to seek gratitude with our grief. For without love, there cannot be grief. We can choose to accept or resist our grief, but we cannot end it, and we would not want to, because grieving is the other face of love.

Ashley Huffman Smith, intern and a single mother of four, facilitated the sessions in collaboration with Sr. Barbara Goodridge, BA Miskowiec, and Sister Carole Riley. WVIS will benefit from Mrs. Smith's skills until August, 2019. Ashley is a graduate student at Regents University in Virginia.

Soup and Silence

"I do not need to be silent to hear the Lord. Why is our church having a lunch during the Lenten season, where we are to be quiet after worship?" An older man, a church member, Glen, was questioning my reasoning to engage in this opportunity. I was eager to share this experience with Glen and the others, for I found through participating in Soup and Silence with the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality I experience the fruits of being silent with the Lord are captive for a growing relationship with Him. "I do not believe I will be coming to the Soup and Silence. Thank you anyway," responded Glen.



Soup and Silence began at our Church about 12 years ago with little attendance. In the beginning there were some church members who felt uncomfortable during the silence. They had never allowed themselves to draw into an interior quiet space listening for the Lord. At first during the lunch, the members would converse with themselves, really not knowing what else to do because of the uneasiness of the silence. Over the years, devoted members who attended the Lenten Soup and Silence appreciated the experience, for they began to see that silently reading the scriptures and praying with one another brought the stillness into their relationships. More people started attending until we got a steady attendance of 18 people each year. Glen was one of these people. He and his wife started coming five years ago, and he is now comfortable with experiencing moments of silence with his church family during Lenten Soup and Silence. This year people were asking about Soup and Silence months before, looking forward to that quiet, still time with the Lord, wondering what they could do to help. They eagerly signed up to bring their favorite soup each Sunday after worship throughout the Lenten season.

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10

Paula Osborne

Berkeley Springs Presbyterian Church

Berkeley Springs, West Virginia

John's Poems

John's Hole

Against the levee,
Just below the river bridge
Slave and free collide,
Light and darkness war,
Stirring deep water.

Mothers fear drownings
Plugs plop and twist;
Canoes tack opposite
Avoid this hole.

Into this I was born
Easter Candle in the font
Dunked with vow to take
Death into Life

Mercy to my mission,
Defend body and cause
No pride submersing
No devil grab my feet

John M. Thorp, Jr., MD
University of North Carolina
Distinguished Professor of
Obstetrics and Gynecology
WVIS 2019 Almost Heaven Retreatant



EPIKLESIS

I thought you would....
Smash the net
Work the clay
Restart the wheel
Reform your vessel

Instead you....
Rained inside me,
Trans substantiated molecules
Remade my interior

Thereby you...
Perplexed the steward,
Pleased the bridegroom
Cheered the guests.

Then your mother smiled
As....
You saved the day,
Saved me.

John M. Thorp, Jr. MD
University of North Carolina
Distinguished Professor of
Obstetrics and Gynecology
WVIS 2019 Almost Heaven Retreatant

RETREATS – PROGRAMS AT WVIS

Would you like more information?

Contact:

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Continuing Professional Development

Every year, the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality offers programs to enrich the professional development of spiritual directors. In these offerings, we use a formative approach to the material which will be presented. To enhance your own continued education in the ministry of spiritual direction and for the benefit of your directees, you are invited to join us for this next opportunity.

OCTOBER 18-19, 2019
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:
Sister Carole A. Riley
(412) 901-4259

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