



THE WEST VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUALITY

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

SPRING - SUMMER 2019 HAPPENINGS AT WVIS

Message from our Executive Director Sister Carole Riley, CDP, Ph.D.



*Lectio is Divina because lectio brings the
Mystery into the heart.*
Bernardo Olivero

At a recent meeting, WVIS leaders decided that 'HEART' would be an appropriate 2019 follow up to our 2018 theme of HOME. Both heart and home are concrete experiences that have a unique history with each of us.

2019 is my 60th jubilee year. Although being Sister Mary Patrick seems like yesterday, actually I've spent 21,900 days trying to dedicate my living to the love and service of the God of my understanding, to experience the Mystery in my heart, my being.

Do you remember the day you gave your 'heart', your core essence, and all of your hopes and desires to God? How has God taught you to live more fully and to bring joy and peace to those around you? Who depends on you for support, a kind word, a gentle touch? Whom do you carry 'in your heart'? Whose heart holds you in sacred trust?

I've been blessed to experience the birth of two grand nephews and one grandniece in the last few weeks: Cole, Colin, and Sabrina. Different families, different traditions, but related to 'me'. As I gazed at the photos of these new babies, I was filled with a yearning to reach and touch them in a meaningful and long lasting loving gesture. I became aware of the age difference between us. I may not see them or know them as adults. What do I want to share? How can I mark their birth and reach the 'heart'?

I chose special paper reflecting the young life I saw, and I wrote a letter from my heart to their heart. That was my intention: to give them 'lectio', a piece of my history, the joy of their birth, a word to ponder, my way to make the mystery of who they will become a part of the Cosmic Christ Event.

As I continue to dedicate my living in the simple ways I feel called, I invite you to join me. How are you urged to bring the Mystery into the hearts of those in your circle of Love?

Write to me. Let me know. I would benefit from your sharing.

From God's heart and my heart to your heart, I send a blessing and a promise of holding you in my heart.

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A Reflection

A Daily Check-in

Jesus
you have been with me in my life today
Be near, now.

Let us look together at my day.
Let me see through your loving eyes...

When did I listen to your voice today?
When did I resist listening to you today?

Jesus,
everything is gift from you.
I give you thanks and praise
for the gifts of this day...

I ask you healing in _____
I ask your forgiveness and mercy for _____

Jesus,
continue to be present with me
in my life each day.

Amen

Message from our Board President

Truly it is an honor to serve as board president of the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality a place where so many lives have been and are being touched in a meaningful and positive way. We now experience in excess over 5,000 people who come through our house on a yearly basis. We thank you for your contributions in times past. Your continued support ensures that we can continue to meet the needs of those who come to us for help in the future.

Excitement is in the air and preparations are being made as we move closer to our Almost Heaven Retreat scheduled May 24- July 14, 2019. I trust that you will pray for our staff and participants that this will be another successful retreat.

In closing I am looking forward to our time together in October 18-19, 2019 as we share together the topic: Inter-racial spiritual direction with particular focus on the unconscious assumptions of the director in companioning African Americans.

To God be the Glory,

Pastor Michael A. Poke, Sr.
WVIS Board President
mpokesr@aol.com



On-line learning now offered at WVIS:

WVIS continued its on-line initiative by offering **Dispositions of the Heart and Spiritual Direction Ministry** from January through May through zoom with 20 participants throughout the United States. Sr. Carole facilitated four of the sessions and was joined by guest lecturer, Dr. Patrick Foley who lectured on the Incarnational sources of Adrian Van Kaam. Dr. Foley resides in California. Guest lecture Brother Michael Avila, also from California, co-taught with Sister Carole in another segment. WVIS hopes to continue to integrate Formation Science, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius with spiritual direction ministry.

The Reverend Kim Webster

I was the master carpenter in the Drama Department at Lynchburg College. We worked five days a week for 3 hours a day, and when crunch time hit, we worked until the work was done. My boss, the Technical Director of the department, would give the staff two days a semester off with pay, if we came to him personally, looked him in the eyes and said, “Boss my heart ain’t in it today.” It meant we were healthy but we were telling him we would be worthless because our head was not in the game that day. Most of us never used the heart day off but when you needed it, that day was a Godsend.

As a parish priest, I have had days when my heart/head is not in the game. Emotional labor is demanding and draining on some days, fulfilling and fantastic on other days, but the heart/head has to be in the game every day. Spiritual direction opens people and allows them to open their hearts to another human being without judgement, without another person attempting to “fix” an issue, and helps to open pathways to the divine. God can and will step into our lives when we share ourselves with others and open a space in our hearts and head for Him to dwell.

I pray daily for WVIS and all who will serve and be served in this holy place. I pray our hearts/heads will be open to the whisper of the divine every day and that we will be somehow enabled to share that whisper with the world. May we be blessed today with energy and enthusiasm for the Gospel, hearts that are open and willing to listen, and time to be quiet and connected to the One who directs our hearts every day.

Peace

Pat Grebe

The Call of Spiritual Direction

When I left the corporate world a decade ago, I searched for a path that would open up the most meaningful life I could live. That desire led me to a graduate degree in pastoral studies, volunteer ministry work, and the ongoing reshaping of my soul.

I had applied to a program for spiritual direction certification years ago. The director told me I was a spiritual junkie and needed to focus. She was right.

Along the way, I learned more about discernment. The topic of spiritual direction kept coming back into my life – friends were seeking it and becoming certified spiritual directors themselves.

I completed the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and found the experience so grounding, I wanted to offer them in my parish myself. But my parish requires anyone who offers the Exercises to be certified in spiritual direction.

I researched every spiritual direction program I could find and chose WVIS.

Why WVIS?

For its approach to the formation of the whole person. For the rigor of the content, supervision, peer review, and emphasis on practicums. The faculty – their integrity, experience, and concern for individuals. The community of caring persons WVIS creates. And because WVIS graduates are truly able to serve.

The Holy Longing - Donna K Becher

On Lenten Sunday evenings, WVIS hosts a five-week reflection and group spiritual direction series on Fr. Ronald Rolheiser's book *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*.

I read this book when it was first published almost 20 years ago, and it remains a favorite. Fr. Rolheiser describes non-negotiables of a healthy spirituality which include private and communal prayer, social action, and the cultivation of a grateful heart. The centrality of the Incarnation is woven throughout, and he artfully explains how spirituality impacts every aspect of our lives, through our innate desire to rest in that place of peace – to “dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of our lives.” (paraphrasing Psalm 27).

Participants read selected portions contemplatively, using the ancient practice of Lectio Divina- reading, then quietly reflecting- not for information, but to ruminate slowly on God's movement within - contemplating the words, focusing on what moves the heart, stirs the soul, and captures the attention. In sharing our individual reflections, we discern a common experience of God - touching our hearts and speaking to us through the words we have prayerfully pondered.

Grief and Breaking our Hearts Open in Lent – Peg Nagem

In December of 1993, when our daughter was six months old, Tom, my husband, died from a blood clot in his heart. My friend Joan died in January of '94. Roger, my boss, died in February of '94. Lent **began** in mid-February, and as grief and loss had made me even more crazy than usual, I knew I needed to go to Reconciliation. I went to Fr. Mario, my pastor. For my penance, he told me that I had already given up far too much, and that my penance was, for this Lent, not to give anything up, but to take something on: to take better care of myself. To quit beating myself up for every imperfection. To let Jesus love me.

Though death and loss continued all throughout that year, I remembered the lesson of that Lent. I carry it with me to this day, holding Fr. Mario's wisdom from that long ago Lent in my heart. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are not meant to be a burden, and Lent is not just a time for giving things up. It is a time for, once again, redirecting our hearts toward Jesus, for giving ourselves more completely to God.

This Lent, we are all invited to break our hearts open to the Lord who loves us through death into life. Let us sit quietly with those who mourn. Offer a smile and a kind word to strangers in line with us at the bank or the grocery as well as the clerk who serves us.

And let us never forget to offer a look of loving-kindness to God's beloved child, the person in the mirror.

RETREATS – PROGRAMS AT WVIS

Would you like more information?

Contact:

The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality

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WEEKLY EVENTS AT WVIS

Monday: The Next Step – Writing for Discovery 7 pm

Wednesday: 11th Step Contemplative Prayer 7 pm

Thursdays: Contemplative Prayer 5 pm

Thursdays: Women's AA Group 5:30 pm

MONTHLY EVENTS AT WVIS

1st Friday: Soup and Silence 12 noon

2nd Tuesday: Charleston Chapter of the Thomas Merton Society 7:00 pm

1st and 3rd Tuesday: G.R.A.S.P

(Grief Recovery After Substance Passing) 6-8 pm

Rev. Meredith Ann Hutchison

I was ordained in 1981 in the United Church of Christ after teaching choral music in the public schools in NY for 7 years. I am a graduate of Andover-Newton Theological School in MA, and during my time there I became close friends with a Roman Catholic sister who took me on my first directed retreat. Through her influence I continued in spiritual direction, eventually meeting up with Sr. Ritamary Schulz, an Associate Spiritual Director at WVIS. Sr. Ritamary introduced me to Ignatian spirituality and contemplative prayer.

All of this experience became integrated into my ministry as a local church pastor and also as a teacher of our lay ministers. In 2017 the United Church of Christ, which considers itself to be “United and Uniting,” but which is also evolved and evolving, put out a bold new draft of our Manual on Ministry. In that draft, the church offered to the whole church the opportunity to live into a resolution, “Multiple Paths to Ordination,” which had been adopted back in 2009. This allowed for people to enter into a process to seek ordination without attending seminary.

I had, for years, heard the term discernment used in the United Church of Christ, but it was not how I had experienced Ignatian discernment. “Discernment” in my denomination often meant “decide” with maybe a little help from God, but it did not have the deep implications of Ignatian discernment. Another colleague and I were experiencing this same discomfort when it came to people discerning a call to ordination, and together, we envisioned a process that our people might undertake to deeply discern their call. That is where we brought Sr. Carole Riley into the picture as we received a grant to offer group spiritual direction, bookended by two retreats. At the retreats Sr. Carole would introduce participants to Ignatian Discernment, complimented by the formation spirituality developed by Adrienne Van Kaam. Our first retreat was in January 2019 and the final retreat will be in November.

Partnering with Sr. Carole and working with my group in spiritual direction has truly been a blessed experience. I have seen people move closer to God, listening for God’s call in all aspects of their lives. I am working with two of these folks in individual direction, and have found that my work as a spiritual director has brought me into a deeper relationship with Christ at this phase of my life, having “retired” from full time ministry this past year. I am currently working with my church of membership, Emmanuel Reformed United Church of Christ in the Greensburg-Murrysville area (east of Pittsburgh) to establish a permanent site where I can offer individual spiritual direction. My email is mercomp@aol.com for those who wish to arrange to meet. I am also available to direct individuals at the Almost Heaven Retreats at WVIS.

Sr. Barbara Goodridge, O.S.F.

During Lent last year, I was blessed with an opportunity to make a 30 Day Directed Retreat at WVIS. It was a way of celebrating my 50th Jubilee as a Franciscan Sister. My only hope was to open more deeply to the miracle of God’s Love.

In the past, my ministry experiences had been rich and varied. I had served as a Secondary School teacher, a Parish Minister, Caregiver for the older Sisters of my religious community, Novice Director, Campus Minister, Alcohol and Drug Counselor, and Spiritual Director.

The greatest blessing and surprise of my 30 Day Directed Retreat last Lent has been my discernment to minister in a new way. I am now a Staff member and Associate Spiritual Director at the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality. I am grateful for this wonderful opportunity.

I am hoping to minister in a special way to my sisters and brothers in 12 step programs, and am open to whatever ways I can best serve. If I can be of service to you, please contact me at (304) 345-0926 or by email: barbaragood1943@gmail.com I have been deeply moved by the ways I see so many of you sharing your many gifts. I am grateful for your welcoming spirit. It is so true. West Virginia is almost heaven!

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 Riley
(412) 901-4259**

Connie Cruthirds

This time a year ago, I was a mess. My distressed state of being - mentally, spiritually, and physically - hadn't happened overnight. Life dealt our family some tough blows. My need to ignore and numb the piercing pains was keeping me separate from God and others. When I arrived at WVIS in June 2018 for an "Almost Heaven" retreat, I righteously saw myself as a victim of life's trauma full of blame and feeling weak.

With God and Sister Carole's breathe more deeply; discern God's my body's natural rhythms of sleeping where I wasn't tethered tight enough to

I put down my worn out and stepped into many truths including coping habits and compulsive behaviors. step recovery through Overeaters July 9, I became abstinent, fearlessly sponsoring others.

Asking for help last year refilled my access to God's guidance is just a away. People notice my weight loss first, them is how much brighter and at peace my heart is now. Life has continued to be full of itself, but we have a very different relationship with each other. Gratefully, each morning, I surrender my day to God to do for me what I could never do for myself.

Thank you, Sister Carole and WVIS.



help, each day I learned to guidance; and pay attention to and eating. It became clear God to navigate life's journey.

"victimhood badge of honor" acknowledging my unhealthy Having been in and out of 12 Anonymous for 23 years, on worked the steps, and began

and refueled me. I learned that brief pause and one deep breath but what I wish I could show

Intensive Workshop: Methods of Directing the 19th Annotation Retreat in Everyday Life

**Intensive Training Program
Certificate Provided
January 16-19, 2020**

This concentrated program will focus on the Grace, the Dynamics, Content and Process of the Spiritual Exercises and assist those spiritual directors who are presently or who desire to give the 19th Annotation. Emphasis will be placed on the role of the Spiritual Director, as well as the essential elements of Discernment.

**For more information – registration:
Contact**

Sr. Carole Riley, CDP, Ph.D, Executive Director
wviscr@aol.com

West Virginia Institute for Spirituality Spiritual Direction Training Program

Each September a new group of candidates begin a three-part journey of development at The West Virginia Institute For Spirituality. This Spiritual Direction training program is a part time course of study that prepares spiritual directors for ministry in parish communities and religious congregations. Application deadline: August 1.

For dates and more information:

<http://wvis.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/2018-WV-Institute-of-Spirituality-Brochure.pdf>

For prerequisites and program components:

<http://wvis.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/3-5-17-WVIS-Spiritual-Direction-Certification-Training-Program.pdf>

Application form:

<http://wvis.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/WVIS-Spiritual-Direction-Certification-Training-Program-Application-Form.pdf>

Questions: Contact Sister Carole Riley, CDP, Ph.D.
wviscr@aol.com

INDIVIDUAL DIRECTED RETREATS



Almost Heaven Retreats

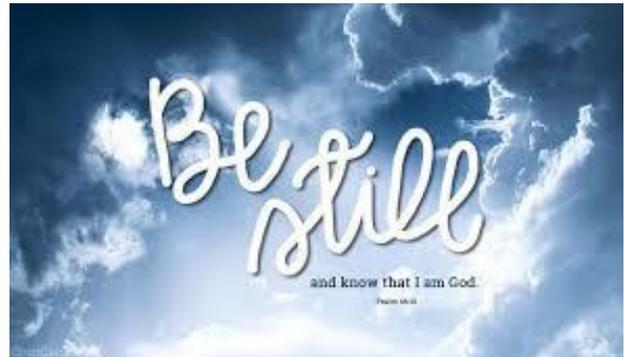
May 24 – July 14

The directed retreat is a silent time in which the retreatant is guided through a prayer experience by a personal spiritual director. The retreatant meets daily with the director to reflect upon the prayer experience and to discern in the light of the experience how to proceed. The material for prayer is Scripture. If you have never made a directed retreat, a Friday evening through Sunday morning is a recommended introduction. A weekend retreat is helpful in preparing retreatants to make longer retreats such as a 3 to 8 day retreat, or the thirty day experience. We hope you will register soon so we can guarantee a space for you. If you would like more information or the opportunity to talk more about this, call (304) 345-0926. Our meals always include a vegan option and the facility is air conditioned.



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.



WVIS HAS NEEDS – CAN YOU HELP?

- Scholarship for Almost Heaven retreat between 86-130 dollars a person
- Any canned foods
- paper products (paper towels, toilet paper, cups, kleenex)
- Specialty paper from Paper Direct
- 6 sets of white towels (cloth, bath, hand)
- Laundry detergent
- Volunteers for yard care, gardening, painting basement, office tasks, phone answering especially Wednesday

A deep prayer of gratitude to those of you designating WVIS as your charity of choice with Pay Pal and AmazonSmile.

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___ I would like to help The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality.

I am enclosing a donation: \$ _____

WVIS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Credit Card: _____ Visa _____ Master Card _____ Discover

Name on card: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date _____

___ Please send me information on _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Work ph: _____

Email address: _____

**Mail to: West Virginia Institute for Spirituality
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