



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.

Summer - Fall 2019 HAPPENINGS AT WVIS

Message from our Executive Director

Sister Carole Riley, CDP, Ph.D.

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.

- Robert Frost



In this edition of our newsletter, WVIS introduces the 2020 theme "2020 Vision."

In our publications and other online materials, we will try to provide an accurate and inspirational vision of how we can move forward in harmony with God, ourselves, our world, our roles and in all of our relationships.

In Parker Parmer's reflection on education as a spiritual journey, he writes that many of us are 'one-eyed in our life. (Palmer, 1993) We need 'whole sight', a vision of the world in which mind and heart unite seeing both facts and reason. We unite the eye of our spiritual vision and journey to God with the eye of our avocation to see the whole.

I hope you are blessed with eyes to see. Some of us have visual challenges. Since I've worn glasses since I was 12, I'm aware of my friends with eye diseases, particularly my close friends with macular degeneration. Yet, our 'vision' is not only physical. We have intuition, hopes, dreams coupled with an obligation to make the world better each day we are graced with presence on the planet.

As you know, 'the little Prince' is one of my favorites, and I DO believe that 'it is only with the heart that one sees rightly.'

So, I challenge you to be stout and warm hearted, to see deeply and appreciatively with the eyes of your heart. I challenge us to expand our vision of what can be, and to risk the unknown.

Journey with me, seeking 2020 vision. And, of course, to sing "Be THOU my Vision, God of my heart! Thank you for your nurturance of WVIS.

I send a blessing of peace for you and all those whom you love.

~Sister Carole Riley, C.D.P., Ph.D.

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A Reflection

A Daily Check-in

Lord you are always faithful.
You give me comfort in times of distress
I am humbled in times of joy,
knowing that you, not me
are the source of all goodness.

I find you Lord in the depth of silence
I find you in the excitement of life
I feel you even when I can't
I know you are there even in the darkest pit
Always faithful, always loving

Never demanding only wishing and hoping
For my faithfulness and obedience
to your desires for me
when I stray you remain faithful
When I ignore or turn deaf you remain present

Lord journey with me as I seek you
Alone I cannot find you
With you guiding and leading me
I can find and experience you
This is my desire
You and you alone

Please fulfill my desires

Rev. Dr. Ted Babcock
Episcopal priest

Message from our Board President

The concept of vision is thousands of years old. The words of the wise and ancient writer of Proverbs testify to the eternity of the words of God when he declared, “without a vision the people perish.”

Vision can refer to various types of prophetic revelation and may occur as a dream. A good example in our day is Dr. Martin Luther King who said, “I have a Dream...” He envisioned a world in which racial discrimination was nowhere to be found, where love reigned supreme and overcame all distinctions and inequalities based on race, creed, or background.

In recent times we have experienced an influx of hatred and violence, and our vision has become skewed and obstructed.

How many of us know that it is a terrible thing to have vision skewed or obstructed; when this happens, visibility becomes blurred and we fail to navigate our way. We end up off course and traveling down the wrong path.

Vision comes from God to keep his people focused, under control, and devoted to endeavors that are meaningful to him.

Vision tells us what to do.

Vision can be written down. The Lord commanded the prophet Habukuk to write the vision.

Vision sustains people by giving them a compelling reason to persevere and stay focused on what really matters.

The theme “2020 Vision” challenges us to see life through the eyes of God where we will be able to see clearly and focus on what really matters in these difficult times. Reflection: Proverbs 29:18 Ezekiel 1:22-26; 10:9-22

*~Rev. Dr. Michael A. Poke Sr.
WVIS Associate Spiritual Director
Pastor Saint Paul Missionary Baptist Church
michaelpokesr@gmail.com*



Pastor Michael A. Poke, Sr.

"God's spirituality pervades within the walls of this building..." - Bob Sylvester

Sr. Carole received this letter which she shares with the permission of the author, Bob Sylvester:

I feel a need to amplify on our conversation this morning about the felt commitment and lifetime dedication I feel to WVIS, our charism, our staff, and all the programs we offer to the community.

I was serious when I talked about the necessity of giving up cherished parts of myself in order to feel and soak in

the spirituality of this large grey house on the corner of Elizabeth and Virginia.

God's spirituality pervades within the walls of this building and throughout the campus. By extension, we also feed on and feed into the spirituality of the Synagogue, Trinity Lutheran, the Women's Club, West Virginia Capitol and its campus, the Historic East, Sacred Heart and Blessed Sacrament, and virtually the entire world. That's a Big Wow for this old seeker of the truth through the wisdom of God which we promote and enhance at WVIS!

“God’s spirituality... (continued)”

Many times, I hear the people in recovery who come through the front doors for an A.A. meeting talk about the spirituality they feel inside the building – from the greeting of Sr. Mary, the spiritual sharing of Charlie Boll, the conscious connection with God through the 11th Step Meditation Group, and even the hospitality of the sweet rolls, cookies, drinks, and no questions asked about your faith tradition, belief in God or not, cut of your jib, color of your hair, or depth of your pain.

There is a feeling of total acceptance, understanding and inclusivity by the people in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. (There are always comments about the spirituality of Cenacle Hall during the meditation meeting.)

Among the blessings I feel for myself in the giving of my cherished comforts are:

- I get to fill the ice chest each day from the Trinity machine.
- I get to work in the garden until my back says, “no more for today.”
- I get to compete with Sister Mary for the best garden plot.
- I get to sit at the table for meals.
- I get to be a Spiritual Director and walk with men and women their very personal and intimate relationship with God.
- I get to see the goings and comings of the staff, some who hang around, some who do not. I get to try to feel their feelings about why they do not hang around. I get to sympathize with them and perhaps even unfairly judge why they have decided to leave. I get to feel sorry that they have missed something important by leaving, including their opportunity to give something back!
- I get to teach, guide, and mentor new and experienced Spiritual Directors.
- I get to walk through the garden gate to the outside and imagine the world of the Synagogue and Trinity Lutheran and their leadership as they too try to promote God’s goodness.
- I get to be confronted by a homeless person on the street or a stranger and tell them something of what goes in on our building.
- I get to take a leisurely prayer walk every time I go to and from my apartment or to sit in the park and think about my role at the Institute and

perhaps how I can be less selfish about it and give more of my gifts and talents.

- I get to heal my stress fractures every time I come through the door because, usually Karen is there to greet me, or Rita – two people in particular who move me deeply through their own stress fractures.
- I get to make sure my stress fractures do not erode into full fractures., so I freely talks about this with all of you. I get to defend what we do as a non-denomination institution dedicated exclusively to helping people better understand their God and develop a deeper relationship with their Creative source.
- I get to write more poetry, which seems to get better and better.
- I get to take it all in, one day at a time, knowing full well that God is in charge of what I experience each time I walk through the doors of WVIS.
- I get to sit quietly outside or inside Nazareth House and feel, see, and hear God.
- I get to shout our message of love from the rooftops and not be ashamed about it.
- I get to let humans be humans and bygones be bygones and bask in the gestation of God’s pregnant moments.
- I get to be me!
- I get to feel the love and support as if you all are my family.

On and on I could go in this gratitude of being a “Resident Volunteer” and staff member. The blessing is more than a hundred-fold. I know it and I know you know it.

We both also know the frustrations of trying to convey this joy to others, don’t we? We will both persist in this double-edged sword of cutting through the bullshit with one edge and cutting away the devil’s hair suit with the other, don’t we?

In case there be any doubt in your mind, know that this seasoned trekker is in the trenches with you and others who feel the same commitments. I cannot conceive of that ever changing!

~ *Bob Sylvester*

A Vision for the Rural Outreach Program

Having lived in rural West Virginia for thirteen years, Tom and I recognized the need to do some Rural Outreach. So, we started a WVIS Rural Satellite a few years ago. We've gone to several rural churches in southeastern WV, giving group spiritual direction, which the people really enjoyed. But, traveling an hour or so, one way, for five weeks was very difficult. However, last year, one church in Hinton, WV, asked us to do a day retreat. After discussing it with the pastor, we decided on a 6-hour workshop/retreat. It provided an understanding of spirituality, how to do Lectio Divina and the Examen on one's own, and how to do group spiritual direction together. We went to one church, but most small towns have a ministerial committee where pastors from all the denominations come together and support each other. This is a great opportunity to increase the number of participants and reach five small towns using about the same travel resources as one.

However, as we looked around the state, we quickly knew we could not cover all the small towns, even as we moved to a 1-day program. So, we are asking the 73 WVIS Associate Spiritual Directors in West Virginia if they might be interested in sharing in this Rural Outreach Ministry? If so, please let us know. We'd be glad to share all our materials, and it doesn't have to be 6-hours; it can be whatever works for you.

Just one workshop from each Associate Spiritual Director in West Virginia would be a great opportunity and gift to the communities we serve! Contact us for more information.

~Deacon Tom and Elaine Soper - elainesopr@gmail.com

19th Annotation Retreat in Daily Life

The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality announces the 19th Annotation Retreat in Daily Life. The goal of this experience is alignment of your mind, heart, body and spirit with the God of your understanding. This retreat is like a personal coaching program for your "be-ing."

This ten-month, individually directed retreat is offered via the internet (via ZOOM) with the following Spiritual Directors:

Sr. Molly Maloney, OSF, MA, LMT
Cindy Neely, RN, BSN, M.S.
Sr. Carole Riley, CDP, PhD, LPC, AAPC-Fellow
Sr. Ritamary Schulz, ASCJ., MS, MSEd

wvissrmolly@aol.com
neelycynthia@gmail.com
wviscr@aol.com
wvSrRitamary@aol.com

Participants need:

1. An interview with the director of their choice
2. A computer
3. Time for weekly conversation and daily prayer
4. Desire to deepen a relationship with God through this retreat in daily life

Suggested offering for this 10-month program is \$2,100.00. Modest scholarships are available.

To register, contact your choice of Spiritual Director at the email addresses above, or call WVIS at 304-345-0926. The deadline for registration is January 1, 2020.

RETREATS – PROGRAMS AT WVIS

Would you like more information?

Contact:

The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality

1601 Virginia Street East

Charleston, WV 25311

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Email: wviscr@aol.com

Website: www.wvis.org

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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

Tributes to Sr. Donna Marie Beck from WVIS Associate Spiritual Directors

There is a quote that has often captured my imagination because I believe it to be true: "Wherever you go, leave a heart print". Whenever I think of Sr. Donna Marie Beck, this quote comes to mind. Wherever Sr. Donna Marie went, her loving heart was so visible, and she had a way of leaving her heart print on our souls!

The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality was privileged to have Sr. Donna Marie as a member of our faculty. Her gifts were extraordinary! The students involved in the Associate Spiritual Direction Training program were fortunate to learn from her. She would lead us in powerful and moving music meditations and the creation of mandalas which captured our personal experience. She used her skills as a supervisor for associate spiritual directors, listening, encouraging and supporting us "fledglings" as we strove to become spiritual directors. She led us in a most creative weekend titled "Music and Masks," in which each participant literally had a mask made of their own face, and through music, we explored the masks/personas we present to the world. Sr. Donna Marie, literally and figuratively, left an impression on all of us.

She was the epitome of joy, and in between presentations, she would often be humming or singing a familiar tune, to which we would all join in singing. Sr. Donna Marie utilized her many years of music education and applied them towards a unique program that WVIS offers annually: Intensive: Methods of Directing the 19th Annotation Retreat in Everyday Life. Sr. Donna Marie prepared all of the music which complimented the dynamics of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Her life could only be described as a "tour de force"! Blessed are all those whose lives she influenced!

~Sr. Molly Maloney, OSF - WVIS Associate Spiritual Director

There is no one in this world like Sr. Donna Marie Beck. Her light shone so brightly as love and music flowed from her as healing balm to all. She supervised me in my student days and her counsel always encouraged me and found good things to comment on when I was struggling and so often missing the mark.

I remember a special session I had with her, one on one in which she used music to minister and heal emotional pain and trauma. It remains one of my cherished memories of her as God used her to touch and heal me at a very difficult time of my life. And, God did so through this loving, giving, musical Irish fairy whose touch was always so light and grace filled. She made music wherever she went. I love her. God truly blessed all of us in Sr. Donna Marie Beck.

~Eileen Chwalibog - WVIS Associate Spiritual Director

I first met Sr. Donna Maria Beck, a caring, loving devotee of music therapy and guided imagery, in December of 2000 when this Duquesne University music professor came from Pittsburgh, PA to facilitate music workshops at The West Virginia Institute for Spirituality. I still have my class notes. We learned about the psychodynamics of music and how its rhythms can instill personal transformation. We learned how to use music as sacred space to get in touch with the deepest aspects of the heart and better listen to the voice of the Spirit. We learned about music as a healing agent. We learned how to illustrate our experience and express it in a Haiku.

Sr. Donna taught us how music can help uncover the stories of our lives. During several of her visits to WVIS, I've had several private sessions with her while mostly classical played in the background. Sometimes smooth, sometimes dark and violent sounds invited important memories about my life. I still have her notes from those sessions. I have retained many of the illustrations and Haikus.

I loved to do guided music imagery with Sr. Donna. As I reposed at her feet, Mahler, Debussy, John Rutter, Rachmaninoff, Mozart, Wagner, and others, would tease the depths of my soul as she jotted everything down on her yellow legal pad. As the music tempered imagery and moods, thoughts and images from perhaps an expanded imagination or affected response would come to awareness, or a gradual body relaxation, a letting-go and letting-be, and the freeing of the psyche and soma.

I have memories of relaxing at her feet, eyes closed, and relating the most intimate memories- images evoked by an oboe concerto, guitar melody, a cello movement, or perhaps a piano trio. Her notepad would fill with my descriptions of Mom and Dad, my children, my marriage or in-laws, and whatever stories of my life revealed. I was amazed at how the change in tempo changed my receptivity to both the exciting and the challenging. Among her favorites were: Healer of My Soul by John Michael Talbot, the Les Tilleuls Orchestral Suite by Massenet, the Humming Chorus from Puccini's Madame Butterfly, the Oboe Concerto by Albioni, and many others.

Over the years we formed a special and close relationship. This wondrous woman of music blessed me in many ways. I miss her deeply.

~Bob Sylvester, MA - Spiritual Direction Associate

A New Journey

Two phrases that I reflected on as I was asked to leave my ministry at WVIS were “Do not be afraid” (Matthew 26:10) and “Man proposes, and God disposes” (taken from Proverbs 19:21). Sometimes the latter is said in jest and other times seriously. Just about two years ago the latter was true for me. God stepped into my life to challenge me to a new call on my journey...one which I would never have chosen myself.

With God’s promise of help and encouragement to fear not, and after having honest and serious conversations with the members of my leadership group about the sacrifice of my leaving WVIS, I agreed to open my heart to answer God’s call to serve my community. I was invited to become the Local Coordinator of our newly built Motherhouse.

In this new ministry I would serve and oversee the transition of our leadership members, formation group, Sisters living in our former motherhouse, and our Sisters from our convent home in Pennsylvania which housed our aged and infirm Sisters and those who cared for them...at the time 105 religious Sisters. Some people

may have thought this was a promotion, where in fact I was being called to serve in a new and significant role.

So exactly what does this ministry of service entail? To be honest, it is difficult to describe. There are no two days alike, and whatever agenda I may have planned, usually must be substituted for something unexpected. My main ministry is being a listening, loving presence to each Sister, making sure their physical and spiritual needs are taken care of in appropriate ways. Because some of our Sisters had compromised health issues when they arrived, it was not long after we moved into our new home that I quickly learned to care for our eight Sisters entrance into eternal life. This was a very moving, spiritual experience for me, one that is ongoing in my role as local coordinator.

Many other activities include working closely with the kitchen staff, facilities manager, activities director, and the administrator and director of nurses. Within the 164,000 square feet of this home, I easily get my 10,000 steps in almost daily! And, what do the Sisters ask of me? Just a smile. It is my joy to give that to them!

~Sr. Mary Irene Sorber, SCC, MS

Gifts Beyond Measure ... shared generously

If we at the WVIS should ever have a huge attitude of gratitude, it would be for all that Susie Pace has contributed to the life energy of WVIS.

A woman who has for more than ten years coordinated the Advent and Lenten reflection books, who has not only been the ‘go to’ for newsletter formatting, the website, collating and posting on Facebook, and for marketing, it is Susie. Her contributions, so often done quietly and without any type of fanfare, have helped enormously in publicizing and making the gifts of WVIS better known.

Susie’s quiet manner of just ‘getting things done’ has been a gift beyond measure...flowing over...and for this we are most grateful. She has publicized the opportunities available at WVIS and had contributed to its growth in a significant way.

Her expertise in producing professional reflective booklets and ability to serve and share her gifts are certainly true expressions of a woman exemplifying loyalty, love, dedication and hard work. All these traits have helped bring many to appreciate the spirituality available at WVIS so needed in the world today.

Susie will continue to serve in the area of Princeton especially in her giftedness in the ministry of faith formation. We wish Susie the best in her continued generosity of service. A woman with a smile and magnanimous heart who lives: ‘God loves a cheerful giver, let us be glad and rejoice....’ Let us be glad and rejoice in the gift that is Susie. We are grateful for your many kindnesses during these 10 years of service and dedication... thank you, Susie!

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**

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.



WVIS HAS NEEDS – CAN YOU HELP?

- Volunteers for yardwork once a month
- Electric skillet
- Rice cooker
- Vegan soups for 12
- Desserts that can be frozen
- Keurig cups
- Cooking /dropping off a meal a month for 12
- Copy paper and gift cards for office supplies
- Scholarship for a day spirituality program (\$100)
- Amazon gift cards for spiritual materials & house items
- Sheets and towel sets for twin beds
- Gas cards for travel to rural areas for ministry
- 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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