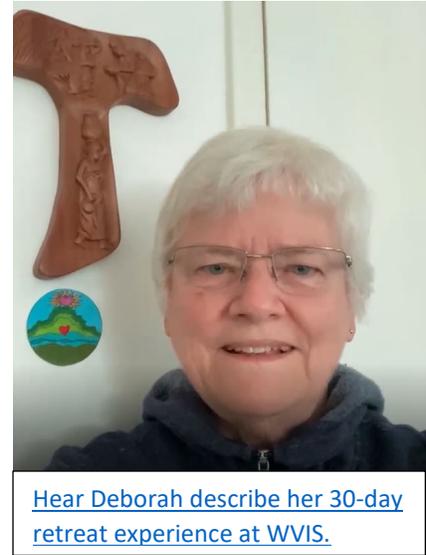


Hi, my name is Deborah Lockwood. At the beginning of 2020, I completed a term of ministry for my congregation and began a time of transition as I returned home from Rome, Italy. I was searching for a “program” that would give me the time and space I needed before embarking on a new adventure in ministry. Being able to do the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius through a 30-day retreat was a blessing not comparable to anything else I have ever experienced. I say this because of the space and freedom to see myself more clearly and to deepen in my relationship with God through contemplative prayer.



I had heard about 30-day retreats before I went to WVIS and was apprehensive about the method and the schedule that might be part of the Spiritual Exercises. Those ideas faded and my fears vanished after meeting with my spiritual director and learning about and plunging into the process. The Spiritual Exercises were a grounding for me that enabled depth and spontaneity in the Spirit of God. Ignatius calls us to use all our senses as we relate to God: I especially like the encouragement and appreciation of attuning my spirit to the Spirit of God through deep prayer, drawing mandalas, writing haikus, praying with music, getting my stiff fingers able to play the recorder again, having time to read and reflect, walking in the park and by the river, attuning my inner senses to notice and enjoy life from the smallest bird to the tallest trees. All this fed my spirit and enhanced a contemplative response.

I enjoyed my time at WVIS and going through the Spiritual Exercises of the 30-day retreat because my spiritual director guided me through the process in a life-giving and creative way, enabling the whole of me to respond to the invitation and personal encounter with my God. It was an intense time, I must say, but an intensity that was accompanied by overflowing grace and peace unparalleled.