**“Who Then Shall We Be? A Contemplative Prayer for the World”**

**The Leadership Conference of Women Religious**

**invites all to be part of an online contemplative experience**

**Friday, August 16**

**2:00 – 3:00 PM EASTERN**

*A link to the livestream will be sent closer to the date*

**“Who Then Shall We Be? A Contemplative Prayer for the World”** is a segment of the assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) where the approximately 700 participants will engage in a contemplative experience created to be in solidarity with the fragility of the world while reflecting on our call to respond to that fragility as bearers of the gospel message.

The prayer experience is based on the belief that lament and grief over the pain of the global community must take place before we can embrace new realities and receive them as gift.

Through the use of the arts, brief readings, and reflective questions, participants will engage in a process of lamenting the suffering of the world -- particularly the realities of climate change, racism, migration, and polarization and their intersection.

Participants will have times for silent reflection to ponder the transformation that is being asked of us – individually and collectively – as we consider the state of the world and how our presence to it may be a source of healing and restoration that leads to a response.

This contemplative experience will be live-streamed and open to the participation of all who would like to experience it. LCWR hopes that as many people as possible will choose to participate, thus increasing the power of our collective prayer, presence, and response.

**Suggested Ways to Participate**

This reflection process can be powerful when experienced with others. Groups may want to gather in a large meeting space for the one-hour time. If there is interest, participants may want to share their reflections in small groups and/or in the large group following this contemplative experience.

Invitations to participate in watching the livestream may be extended to other groups: parishes, organizations, and more.

If members of a religious institute gather, you may want to use this as an opportunity for media coverage – particularly if any of the leadership team members are present at the assembly which will take place in Orlando, Florida. This could be an opportunity to speak publicly about why you believe that this effort is important. You may want to consider preparing a spokesperson to handle any requests for interviews. You may also want to consider writing an op-ed or submitting a letter to the editor to your local media outlets. The talking points below may be useful for you and can be adapted as you wish.

**Talking Points for Religious Institutes**

* Sisters of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ gathered for a virtual contemplative experience in solidarity with the approximately 700 participants in the national assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), gathered in Orlando, Florida from August 13-16. LCWR is an association of the leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The conference has about 1300 members, who represent approximately 66 percent of the nearly 35,000 women religious in the United States. Founded in 1956, the conference assists its members to collaboratively carry out their service of leadership to further the mission of the Gospel in today's world.
* Participants at this national assembly come from all parts of the United States and several other countries. Many of their own communities are also participating in this virtual prayer, thus making this an experience of prayer for several thousand Catholic sisters, their associates, and other partners in mission.
* As Sisters of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we are committed to building a more compassionate world and want to share with others the ways we are finding to do this. We believe that all of the study we do, the advocacy in which we engage, our work for the common good, and the small acts of generosity and love we perform all contribute to the work of helping shape human consciousness. We believe that we must find ways to value difference and diversity and know that the future of our global community is dependent on our being able to live with peace and appreciation of differences.
* Religious communities have taken seriously a call that was stressed strongly at the Second Vatican Council – the call to “read the signs of the times.” This refers to our responsibility to be well informed about the important political, social, and economic events or developments taking place – locally, nationally, and globally. We feel an obligation not only to be informed of the events occurring around us, but to understand their significance and their deeper meaning. We do that with a view that looks at the theological, spiritual, and ethical implications of what is happening.
* As Sisters of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we value participating together in experiences like these because we believe that when we are listening together powerful, creative ideas often emerge.
* The desire among women religious over the last couple of decades to live from a contemplative stance seems to have grown stronger and deeper. While the idea of a “contemplative stance” may be somewhat different for all of us, basically, this is a call to make listening, observing, noticing a priority. At times, it may mean being in silence for a period of time – intentionally slowing our minds and hearts so that we can be more aware of the purposes and desires of God. Living from a contemplative stance also implies that we live with our questions and challenges in a way that integrates facts, feelings, and our values.
* Following the virtual prayer, our community will engage in a process of contemplative dialogue. This involves a slower moving conversation where the priority is listening, where we allow for silence after one person speaks and before another starts, where we intentionally try to find commonalities in what we say and build on those commonalities as the conversation continues. We enter into a contemplative dialogue not desiring that our own position or thinking is final, but rather we desire to arrive at what we do not yet know or arrive at what we already know with added wisdom. We ask ourselves throughout the conversation: What is the discovery that is unfolding among us? What new possibility might be arising?

This document is also available on [the LCWR website.](https://www.lcwr.org/2024-lcwr-assembly-information)