



March 2005

LCWR to Begin Jubilee Celebration at 2005 Assembly

"Proclaim God's Favor: Our Time is Now!" is the theme of the upcoming LCWR assembly that will open the year of jubilee. The August 19-23, 2005 event will mark the beginning of the 50th anniversary celebration of the conference's 1956 founding.

The flow of this year's assembly will be a series of conversations all centered on the wisdom gained by women religious throughout these 50 years, and on the hope of the future.

The assembly will include an address by LCWR president Christine Vladimiroff, OSB and a joint keynote address by theologians Margaret Brennan, IHM (a former LCWR president) and Maria Cimperman, OSU (a faculty member at the Oblate School of Theology).

Assembly participants will be able to choose from two of nine "conversation sessions." During these sessions the presenters will share their experience as well as serve as catalysts for the group in probing, exploring and envisioning the new.

Madeleva
Williams, CSJ
designed the
assembly logo.



The topics chosen for the conversation topics spring from the biblical themes of jubilee as well as from the LCWR Call 2004-2009. The topics and presenters are:

LEADERSHIP

Leadership as a Holy Art

Regina Bechtle, SC

(continued on page 3)

The advertisement for "LCWR Reflection Books" is set against a background of a blue sky with a yellow sun or moon and a green horizon. The text is in a white, elegant script font. It reads: "LCWR Reflection Books", "Peacemaking in Violent Times", "Many LCWR members have ordered copies of the new LCWR reflection book on peacemaking for members, boards of sponsored works, and benefactors, or have shared the order information with others interested in praying the reflections. Orders must be received by MARCH 1. Order forms are available on the LCWR website under 'Publications' (www.lcwr.org).", and "Order by March 1".

LCWR Reflection Books

Peacemaking in Violent Times

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Order by March 1

Inside this issue:

- 3 2006 Leading From Within Retreat in California
- 4 LCWR Public Statement on Murder of Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN
- 6 LCWR Board Meeting

From the LCWR Presidency
The Urgency for Reconciliation

by Christine Vladimiroff, OSB -- LCWR President

There must be something in the monastic gene pool that enables us to embrace Lent each year as a sure part of our journey to God. Benedict in his rule tells us, "The life of a monastic ought to be a continuous Lent." (RB49:1) He goes on to explain that few would have the strength for such a rigorous life, so we should, at minimum, use the season of Lent to our advantage. There are definite behavioral expectations: adding to our prayer, our reading, abstaining from food and drink, time in silence and lectio beyond the ordinary measure.

Monasticism is a lifestyle, not merely a concept. It must translate to action and behavior in our individual and communal life. It is time to renew and strengthen the religious center of gravity that holds us, as community, in the common search for God.

We have forgone past practices of public penance and "culpa" chapters, but I wonder if we have not lost the



ing hurts, limits the possibility of God's reign breaking in on our lives. It fractures the *communio* that is gift we bring to the Church as monastics.

I have no answer to how we might recover a true sense of reconciliation as a Church. I was saddened as the sex abuse scandal unfolded that we as Church did not have the grace and humility to ask for forgiveness. There was no acknowledgement that trust had been betrayed and the Church community had been violated by the

acts of individuals, in their role as pastors, i.e., priests and bishops. In this crisis, forgiveness and seeking reconciliation was not the immediate movement of our soul. Impulse was to save face, to protect. Perhaps, we need to use Lent to recapture what it is to seek and give forgiveness to each other. In this way we will open ourselves and by extension the ecclesial community to God's mercy and compassion.

*Perhaps, we need to use Lent
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profound sense of urgency for reconciliation in our lives. Honesty translated into humility is a life-time task. It is the acceptance of who I am as I stand before God. "Healthy human living demands of us the capacity to regret, to apologize and to admit to being and doing wrong." (Michael Casey, OCSO) The early church understood sin as a violation of the community (common union). Penance was seen as a sacrament of healing in and through the community of believers.

Those of us who live in community know that to forgive and ask for forgiveness is not easy. It is acknowledgement that we have broken bonds and the rupture diminishes us as persons. Its consequences affect the quality of our shared life. Living un-reconciled, harbor-

Spirituality is about channeling the longing and desire within us. Our world and our Church have need for healing. As a nation we have broken faith with former allies, disregarded treaties, our word no longer translates to commitment. As a Church we are deeply

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divided, harboring hurts and in need of healing. Let us use this Lent as a time of repentance, of rending our hearts, opening them to God's mercy and forgiveness and embracing those with whom we share life. Forgiveness presumes a horizon larger than self. It is a decision for freedom with and before God.

LCWR to Begin Jubilee Celebration at 2005 Assembly

(continued from page 1)

Leading with Hope
Helen Garvey, BVM

CONTEMPLATION
Integration of Contemplation and Leadership
Bette Moslander, CSJ and Marcia Allen, CSJ

Sabbath-Keeping
Dianne Bergant, CSA

RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS
The Church
Theresa Kane, RSM

The Earth
Carole Zinn, SSJ

The World
Simone Campbell, SSS

LIVING INTO THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE
Welcoming New Members
Janet Mock, CSJ and Kristen Matthes, SNDdeN

Welcoming the New, the Innovative, the Unexpected
Maria Elena Martinez, OSF

The president, keynoters and presenters will gather on the final day of the assembly for a conversation reflecting on all that emerged from the previous days. This time will be followed by a process for all the assembly participants intended to allow a vision of the future to unfold.

The days will also include prayer, ritual and liturgy centered on the themes of jubilee, opportunities for small and large group processing of ideas, membership meetings, a resolution hearing, a public witness event, election of officers and the banquet and presentation of the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award.

Registration materials will be sent to all members and associates in the spring.

Leading From Within Retreat to be Offered in January 2006

LCWR will again offer the Leading From Within Retreat which is open to the first 25 national members who register and send a deposit.

The retreat will be offered from January 15-20, 2006 at the Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center in Sierra Madre, California.

Regina Bechtle, SC and Nancy Schreck, OSF will facilitate the retreat which will include input, quiet contemplative space, a variety of ritual experiences, and some opportunity for group and individual spiritual direction.

Registration forms for the retreat will be sent online in March to all LCWR national members.



Partial Scholarships Available for LCWR Assembly

For the fourth year, LCWR will offer partial scholarships to attend the 2005 assembly in Anaheim, California. The scholarships are available for members who may find it difficult to manage the full cost of attending the assembly. The scholarships are made possible through the generosity of other members who donate to the fund.

The scholarship fund can be applied to the costs of registration and hotel expenses, as well as to assistance with additional LCWR membership (which may be necessary since the assembly is only open to LCWR members). Anyone interested in exploring the possibility of applying for partial scholarship assistance is asked to contact the LCWR executive director Carole Shinnick, SSND at 301-588-4955 or cshinnick@lcwr.org.

Donations to the scholarship fund can be directed to Eleanor Granger, OSF at the LCWR national office.

LCWR Issues Public Statement on the Death of Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN



*Dorothy Stang,
SNDdeNamur*

LCWR issued a statement on February 16, 2005 calling on the world community to exert its influence to protest the brutal death of Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN and to advocate for the persons and causes to which she gave her life.

The statement, which was sent to US President George Bush, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and various United Nations officials, urges action to stop all terror and violence perpetrated against those working for the protection of the environment and human rights. LCWR also issued a press release with the statement to the major secular and religious media.

All LCWR members and associates were urged to participate in advocacy actions for the work of Dorothy and all Brazilian rural farmers who have lost their lives in pursuit of human rights.

A copy of the LCWR public statement is on the LCWR website at <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrpress-releases/publicstatements/Public%20statement%20-%20Stang%20death.htm>.

Nominations for LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Due by March 15

All LCWR members have the opportunity to nominate persons for consideration for the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award. This award is given annually to persons who have significantly contributed to the ministry of leadership and who reflect the LCWR mission.

Criteria for the award are:

- Modeling commitment and collaboration to the ministry of leadership in the wider church and society
- Creative and innovative leadership in the church and society
- Significant contribution, as a leader on the national and/or international level, particularly to women religious congregations in the United States
- Prophetic stance in living the Gospel values.

The nomination forms, which were sent to all members electronically in January, are due in the LCWR national office by March 15.

The award will be presented at the LCWR assembly in August. Prior award recipients are Mary Luke Tobin, SL (2003) and Theresa Kane, RSM (2004).



Consider recycling empty laser toner and ink cartridges from printers, fax machines and copiers and having the proceeds go toward the LCWR scholarship fund that assists congregations who cannot afford to send their leaders to the LCWR assembly. For more information see the January 2004 *Update* or contact Michael Flick of Caritas Funding at mflick@caritasfunding.com.

Social Justice Updates

Millennium Development Goals

Since the 2004 LCWR assembly, LCWR has continued to promote awareness of the Millennium Development Goals and has encouraged action when opportunities are available.

DEBT: participation in the work of Jubilee USA to achieve a commitment of the wealthy nations to 100% cancellation of debt of all impoverished nations without harmful conditions. During their February 5, 2005 meeting, the G-7 Finance Ministers took a small step forward as the group officially indicated the need for "as much as 100% multilateral debt relief," the first time such language has been used by the G-7 as a whole. But they provided no specifics and have referred important decisions to the April meeting of the IMF/World Bank. Jubilee's focus will now be on the April meeting.

TRADE: opposition to CAFTA, (Central American Free Trade Agreement) which would liberalize trade between the U.S. and five Central American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua without assessment of the social and environmental impact. CAFTA is modeled after the 10-year old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and is considered to be a stepping stone to the larger Free Trade of the Americas (FTAA) that would encompass 34 countries. CAFTA has been opposed by both Central American and US Bishops. As one implementation of the LCWR 2003 Assembly Resolution opposing NAFTA, ten representatives are participating in the LCWR/WFP trade delegation to Mexico, February 19-26, 2005.

Also, LCWR joined many religious leaders around the world in signing a petition titled "Trade for People, Not People for Trade," which will be presented to Dr. Supachai, executive director of the World Trade Organization, during a Global Week of Action, April 10-16, 2005.

RESOLUTIONS TO ACTION: The February RTA, written by Eileen Gannon, OP provides a synopsis of the Millennium Development Goals and suggested actions. Titled "Millennium Development Goals: The Promise of a Better World," the RTA is posted on the LCWR website at <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/resolutionstoaction.htm>

Human Trafficking

The Catholic Coalition on Human Trafficking

The Catholic Coalition on Human Trafficking met on January 27, 2005. In addition to sharing activities of the participating organizations, members reviewed and revised the second draft of a communications plan. The plan includes goals, key messages, target audiences, and recommendations for action for each audience. The hope is to reach as many Catholics as possible through parishes, colleges and schools, Just-Faith groups, state Catholic Conferences, media, and trafficked persons themselves.

The goals are:

- Increase awareness of human trafficking and promote greater understanding of its root causes and solutions. Tell ordinary citizens how to identify victims and provide direct help, and how to get direct help if they are victims.
- Explain how people can have a greater impact on helping to decrease human trafficking at the points of both origin and destination.
- Emphasize Catholic social teaching whenever possible in communications.

LCWR Public Witness

During the 2005 LCWR assembly in Anaheim, California, LCWR will sponsor a public witness event focused on human trafficking. Region 14, which has made trafficking a priority issue, is preparing the event which will take place during the lunch break on Sunday, August 21.



Update is an official publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious published monthly and distributed to members nationally.

Editor: Annmarie Sanders, IHM

8808 Cameron Street -- Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: 301-588-4955 Fax: 301-587-4575

E-mail: asanders@lcwr.org Website: www.lcwr.org

LCWR Board Meets in February in Florida

The LCWR board recently met in Winter Park, Florida where they discussed a number of issues regarding the conference, its current projects and future plans.

Among the items on the board's agenda were:

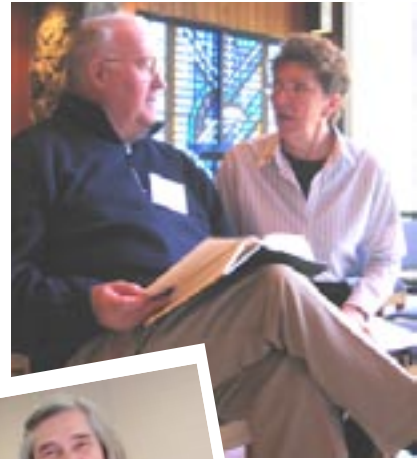
- the LCWR jubilee
- the jubilee history project
- possible partnership with Call to Renewal
- the future of the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) collection
- the LCWR 2005 assembly
- the LCWR budget and other financial matters
- the member misconduct fund
- updates from the LCWR regions
- the InterAmerican Conference
- the role of the LCWR secretary
- sexual abuse allegations.

The LCWR board also met with the board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men where they discussed the NRRO collection, the InterAmerican Conference, evaluations of the 2004 joint assembly and the Cameron Street building that is jointly owned by the two conferences. Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, director of the Center for the Study of Religious Life, joined the two boards as they discussed current projects and plans of the center.

Prior to the board meeting, the Commission on Religious Life and Ministry also met in Winter Park where they discussed the NRRO. Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; Beatrice Eichten, OSF; Constance Phelps, SL; Catherine Leary, SSJ; and Carole Shinnick, SSND; represented LCWR at the commission meeting. Andrée Fries, CPPS, executive director of the NRRO, joined the meeting by conference call.

Joining the 20-member board at the meeting were LCWR staff members Carole Shinnick, SSND; Eleanor Granger, OSF; Marie Lucey, OSF; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM. Helen Maher Garvey, BVM, chair of the LCWR Jubilee History Project Subcommittee, and Ann Margaret O'Hara, SP, chair of the LCWR Jubilee Committee, also participated in the meeting by conference call.

CMSM board member Thomas Krosnicki, SVD with Beatrice Eichten, OSF before one of the Eucharistic liturgies held at the LCWR and CMSM board meetings



Catherine Leary, SSJ and Margareta Black, OSF (representing LCWR Region 7)



Maria Elena Martinez, OSF preparing the ambiance for prayer



Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; Mary Catherine Rabbitt, SL; Sara Dwyer, ASC; Jane Iannucelli, SC; and Alacoque Burger, OSF (representing LCWR Region 6)





The board blessed those whose terms end in August 2005: Constance Phelps, SL; Rose Jochmann, OSF; Catherine Leary, SSJ; Jane Iannucelli, SC; Marilyn Kesler, SSND; Maria Elena Martinez, OSF; and Rita Brink, OSB.

Jeanne Bessette, OSF; John L. Franck, AA; Robert Schieler, FSC; Nancy Reynolds, SP; William Quigley, CICM; and Sara Dwyer, ASC



SSNDs: Patricia Murphy (top), Carole Shinnick, Catherine Bertrand, and Marilyn Kesler (seated)

Constance Phelps, SL and Patricia Murphy, SSND



Marilyn Kessler, SSND; Mary Catherine Rabbitt, SL; Clyde Phillips, MM; Michael W. Barry, SSCC; Margaretta Black, OSF; and Dominic Izzo, OP

From the LCWR Executive Director

Work as Art

Once worked in Newark, New Jersey which meant a daily drive on the New Jersey Turnpike. The exit for Newark opened into a bank of toll booths numbered 1 through 12. One would think that the exiting commuters would seek out the shortest line in order to get through the tolls, but at this exit that was not true. There was one toll booth that people actually lined up to use. That was because the gentleman who was the toll-taker was somewhat of a legend on that gritty Jersey highway.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

Each day he found a way to make the brief moment of taking the tolls from commuters bright and memorable. On certain days, like Halloween or Valentine's Day, he would hand candies to drivers in exchange for their toll money. Some days he would be wearing a funny hat. Or there might be a sign at his booth offering a little thought for the day. Because he made an effort to be creatively relational in what could be a dull and routine

The working environment is very congenial and pleasant, but what makes it really special is the little touches and surprises that come unexpectedly.

job, people would actually wait in line at his toll booth to get the little boost he offered them at the outset of each day.

When the man died unexpectedly, the northern New Jersey papers carried his story and hundreds of people – many who only knew him by his booth number - attended his funeral.

I often think of that gracious man who was able to bring meaning to what some would consider a rather menial, boring job. I wonder what he would think about E-Z Passes or about all the technology that lessen the human contact in the course of a day – mechani-

cally-voiced telephone menus, ATM machines, and self-serve gas pumps.

Most of us spend the major part of our waking hours in workplace settings. I spend my workday as part of a small staff of nine people within a building with four other offices. The working environment is very congenial and pleasant, but what makes it really special is the little touches and surprises that come unexpectedly.

Maybe Eleanor will bring in some peanut-butter cookies. Maybe Suzanne will surprise us with those wonderful doughnuts that weigh half a pound each. Rain or shine, our receptionist Kathy greets everyone with a warm hello that can make your day. Eva could be wearing a pair of her wildly colored shoes – orange running shoes for instance – that makes everyone smile. Marie might send a political cartoon around, or Annmarie might bring in some issues of *People Magazine* so we can catch up on celebrity tidbits at lunchtime. Maybe one of the other offices in the building will send out word of an unexpected ice cream social in the afternoon, or Dan Ward will host his annual pesto pasta lunch made with fresh basil from his own garden. (I know what you're thinking – "They sure do a lot of EATING at Cameron Street!")

If you're reading this column, you likely have a rich, meaningful ministry. I certainly do. But I know that

I would want to be remembered as a person who touched people in the midst of the ordinary day, like the toll taker from Jersey.

I don't want my epitaph to read, "Carole was always very busy." Who cares? But I would want to be remembered as a person who touched people in the midst of the ordinary day, like the toll-taker from Jersey. For him, work was not just a job – it was a sacred art.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR New Leader Workshop
Passionist Retreat Center -- Riverdale, NY
 March 17-19, 2005

LCWR Assembly
Anaheim, California
 August 19 -- 23, 2005

LCWR-CMSM Delegation to El Salvador
 November 30 -- December 6, 2005

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat
Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center
Sierra Madre, California
 January 15-20, 2006

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank,
Franciscan Center -- Tampa, Florida
 February 12-14, 2006

LCWR New Leader Workshop
St. Mary of the Lake -- Mundelein, Illinois
 March 30 -- April 2, 2006

LCWR Assembly
Atlanta, Georgia
 August 18 -- 22, 2006

LCWR Assembly
New Orleans, Louisiana
 August 2-6, 2007

Government Programs Resource from LRCR

The Legal Resource Center for Religious plans the release of its *Government Programs Notebook* in spring 2005. This important new resource will help religious institutes in their efforts to take advantage of a broad range of government programs including Social Security, Medicare, SSI, Medicaid, Qualified Medicare Beneficiary, public housing, and more. The manual contains introductory sections explaining the government programs as well as more detailed explanations of managing the benefits. An important part of the resource is its practical explanation of how these programs apply to members of religious orders and its time-tested advice on resolving problems commonly encountered by religious. The publication includes links to further information on the Internet which make it a helpful tool in working with government programs.

The *Government Programs Notebook* is a unique resource that draws on the experience of principal author Constance Neeson, a licensed social worker in the state of Indiana, who has 14 years of experience working first with the Medicaid office and then as the benefits coordinator for a religious institute. The publication also draws on years of experience of LRCR attorneys who have worked with religious orders across the country in resolving many of the particular issues of religious who participate in government programs. It is the most comprehensive resource of its kind and an invaluable publication.

The *Government Programs Notebook* will be mailed on a CD-ROM to all LRCR subscribers, and will be available to all subscribers on the LRCR web site: www.LRCR.org. Communities who are not LRCR subscribers are encouraged to purchase a copy of this valuable publication from LRCR.

LRCR's annual Legal Seminar to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, April 21-24, 2005 will feature a full-day pre-seminar workshop on government programs presented by Constance Neeson. The session will introduce participants to the new *Government Programs Notebook* and to the various ways religious can tap into government programs to help with living expenses and health care costs of aging members. Information on this workshop and the Legal Seminar is on the LRCR web site: www.LRCR.org/mission/seminar.htm

From the Religious Formation Conference Orientation to Formation for Leaders

It's not just new leaders who might feel like they are "not in Kansas anymore, Toto" as far as formation/ incorporation processes today are concerned.

The Religious Formation Conference has two programs related to formation ministry – the ForMission Program and the Orientation Program. For leaders, the latter provides a way of getting (back) into a changing dimension of religious life.

The annual two-day Orientation Program with Maryann Seton Lopicollo, SC and Don Bisson, FMS has been billed as being for "new directors." But frequently new leaders with formation responsibilities have attended and found it to be a challenging and directional session for them. In the next issue of the RFC newsletter, *InFormation*, Regina Zelenik SND who holds both leadership and formation responsibilities, offers her reflections. This year's program is being described as being for those "new to formation ministry," whether that is as directors or leaders.

Formation has, to state the obvious, changed over the years. Those moving into it as a responsibility of leadership, along with those who direct its various stages, are well-served by hearing the same information and taking time (even at the program) to shape its meaning and implications for the unique reality of their congregation. In 2005, an RFC congress year, the Orientation Program is held in the two days before the congress begins – November 30 and December 1, at the congress site in San Antonio, Texas. Information is on the RFC website – www.relforcon.org and is available on both the congress page and the Orientation Program page. Detailed information and an application will appear there shortly. Information can also be obtained by calling (301-588-4938) or emailing (rfc@relforcon.org) the national office.

In 2006, a non-congress year, this program will be held in Xavier Center, Convent Station, New Jersey on November 10-12.

The congress itself (Dec. 1-4, 2005) is an ongoing formation experience, with quality international theologians and inspiring process and ritual that will continue the conversation on theologies of religious life. Marie Chin RSM, Don Goergen OP, and Anthony Gittins CSSp are keynoters. The theme is Running to Catch Up with the Spirit – *Espiritu de Esperanza!*

FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religious Leadership Forum Filling Up Quickly

This may be the last opportunity to register for the Religious Leadership Forum being held April 24-26, 2005 at Shalom Retreat Center in Dubuque, Iowa. As of mid-February, close to 40 registrations had been received. Although the last day for signing up is April 11, the forum registration will close when the limit is reached.

The forum entitled "Building Congregational Imagination: Skills and Strategies for Living Your Community's Passion" will be led by David Couturier, OFM Cap. and Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ, the presenters and facilitators.

"Building Congregational Imagination" will begin on Sunday, April 24 at 3 p.m. and end after lunch on Tuesday, April 26. Registration discounts are available for members of the center. For further information and registration materials, contact vpiecuch@visioni.com.