



February 2004

Jubilee USA Network Urges Action in Preparation for Elections 2004

In the January *Update*, members were reminded that LCWR is a member of the Jubilee Network Council, represented by the associate director for social mission, and that one of the strategies that Jubilee will pursue during the coming year will be related to the national elections. This month's strategy focuses on connecting debt issues with global AIDS.

All are urged to educate the presidential candidates about the importance of debt cancellation as a tool to fight global AIDS, a critical tool that can mobilize desperately needed resources for impoverished nations, freeing up money for social services, health care, and the fight against AIDS. While all the candidates have committed to fight global AIDS, they have not yet highlighted debt cancellation as a key tool to achieve this. Experts estimate it will take at least \$10 billion annually from wealthy nations to fight AIDS. Africa pays \$15 billion each year in debt service. The math is easy.

Jubilee recommends three ways to raise the issue with candidates:

Attend debates, forums, and town meetings with candidates and ask questions. For sample questions contact neil@jubileeusa.org or 202-783-0129.

Set up educational meetings with staff in local offices. For informational materials see www.jubileeusa.org/candidates.htm.

Send e-mails to all presidential candidates. To send an e-mail visit www.jubileeusa.org/tellthecandidates.htm.

Jubilee USA Network is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and is strictly non-partisan. All materials are sent to all candidates from all major parties.

New Feature Added to Update

The PDF version of *Update* now provides readers with active links to websites (the links are in blue). This added feature benefits readers who view the newsletter electronically and wish to see related resources available on the Internet that are referenced in an article.

This issue of *Update* provides readers with links to several resources on the Web. Links within *Update* function much the same as links on Web pages. Simply click on the link and navigate to the recommended resource.

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From the LCWR Presidency

We Can Make a Difference

by Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

The political rhetoric is filling the air from the Primaries to the State of the Union speech. So many promises yet our society has a sense of having been betrayed and trust is withheld. Our faith is challenged by a world filled with war and alienation, a world in which people are broken and enslaved by poverty and unjust structures. For people who believe, it is a call to engagement and commitment to bring hope to a people and to our time. Life does not have to be arranged so that a few prosper and many suffer. The fear, alienation, domination, exclusion and violence that mark our century are consequences of human actions and decisions. What is needed is a transformation.

I have a favorite story: A small child had gone to bed, and the father was downstairs reading the paper. A terrible thunderstorm came up, with lightening and fierce noises. The young girl shouted down to her father: "Daddy, I'm scared! Come up and help me." Her father, engrossed in the paper, shouted back, "Don't worry, Milly. You'll be all right. You know God loves you!" Suddenly another flash of lightening and clap of thunder and Millie cried, "Daddy, come here I am afraid." The father not wanting to leave the comfort of his chair responds: "God loves you and will protect you." Millie, exasperated, cried out "I know God loves me, but I need someone with skin on."

In our present time, the world needs "someone with skin on" to take the narrative of hope, that is the gospel, and bring it into dialog with the world. Our resolution on advocacy passed at the LCWR Assembly in August is a commitment to do just that. It is to take our voice, our political capital, our resources and most importantly our passion to be on the side of the poor. The realities of poverty, war and violence today are shaped by powerful economic, moral and cultural forces. There is the rapid pace of globalization that connects us to one another in new and incredible ways. Yet the differences we experience in our lives across borders lead to increased alienation. It causes some to defend a way of



life with weapons because of unwillingness to acknowledge a debt to those who live with less.

The prophets are unrelenting in their call to care for the poor, the widow, and the orphan. Jesus' words and witness urge us to a special love of the vulnerable. To feed the hungry and shelter the homeless is not a simple invitation to charity. It is a call to justice. We must view political and economic decisions in their moral and human dimensions.

The presence of poverty, oppression and suffering in our nation and the world is a condemnation of the ethic of individualism. Our faith calls us to a radical ethic of solidarity, not only as individuals but as a nation. Society acting through its institutions and legislation has a responsibility to the common good that excludes no one from its benefits.

Let our commitment to advocacy be a promised kept. Women religious can and will make a difference.

Check the LCWR National Directory

All LCWR members and associates should receive a 2004 LCWR directory in the mail by the end of January. All are asked to check the listing of their name to see if the information is correct. Since this information is also used by the LCWR national office to communicate to the members and associates, it is important to be sure that the listing is accurate.

Any errors may be reported to Ann Branch Nash at the LCWR national office -- 301-588-4955 or anash@lcwr.org.

LCWR Creates New E-Mail List of Social Justice Directors

In order to assist with the dissemination of information on justice related events and issues, LCWR will be creating a list of persons who serve as social justice directors/contacts in members' congregations. This list will be utilized by the associate director for social mission in communicating information on justice actions, advocacy efforts and upcoming events.

All LCWR members will receive a message electronically from the national office requesting contact information for the persons in their congregations and/or provinces responsible for coordinating social justice efforts. All members who would like to include their social justice directors on this list are asked to watch for the message and reply to it with the requested information.

Presidential Pardon Sought for Three Dominican Sisters

A letter to President Bush urging the pardon and release of three Grand Rapids Dominicans was created by Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents to War and written by Joseph A. Gump. Ardeth Platte, OP is serving a 41 month sentence at FCI Danbury, Connecticut; Carole Gilbert, OP is serving a 33 month sentence at RI FPC Alderson, West Virginia; and Jacqueline Hudson, OP is serving a 30 month sentence at TPF Victorville, California.

The letter is available for reading and signing at www.petitiononline.com/know0001/petition.html. Details about the action of the three sisters are contained in the letter.

Orders for LCWR Earth Books Accepted Until February 10

A number of congregations and organizations have ordered the LCWR Earth reflection books. Congregations are ordering books for their members, associates and co-workers, giving the books as gifts and arranging for the books' sale in their gift shops.



A few sample pages are available in PDF format for anyone still considering purchase of the books. The pages can be obtained by contacting Eva McCrae at emccrae@lcwr.org.

Only one printing of these books is planned, so orders must be made by **February 10**.

LCWR National Office Welcomes New Staff Member

Ann Branch Nash joined the LCWR national office staff on January 12 as the membership coordinator/secretary. Ann comes to LCWR with a bachelor of arts degree in business administration from Catholic University and a master of arts degree in multicultural studies from Georgetown University.



Her work experience has included positions at Catholic University of America, Southeastern University, Prince Georges Community College, and the US Department of Defense. She also has volunteered her services for a number of organizations including the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus and the National Black Catholic Congress.

LCWR Clarifies Policy on Mailing Labels

Periodically persons and groups request use of the LCWR membership mailing list. It is important for members to be aware of LCWR's policy about mailing labels, and how the national office responds to these requests. According to the policy handbook, "The LCWR membership mailing labels will be made available for a fee at the discretion of the executive director to those individuals or groups announcing educational programs/services/products consistent with Conference goals."

Ordinarily, LCWR charges \$75 for a set of printed mailing labels for a one-time use. The office requests a copy of the material that will be mailed before releasing the labels to insure that the contents of the mailing are in keeping with LCWR's mission and goals. In general, LCWR does not permit the labels to be used for fundraising purposes. Nor are the labels available electronically because electronic versions can be replicated in high numbers and sent far and wide. This is less likely to happen with paper labels.

LCWR values members' privacy, and is committed to making sure that the contact information on members is treated with care and respect. Anyone who has additional questions concerning the policy regarding mailing labels, may contact Carole Shinnick, SSND (cshinnick@lcwr.org) or Suzanne Delaney, IHM (sdelaney@lcwr.org).

LCWR Seeks Nominees for its Outstanding Leadership Award

LCWR will again be honoring at its annual assembly an individual who has contributed to the ministry of leadership. Nomination materials for the 2004 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award will soon be mailed to all members. Any member who wishes to submit a name for consideration is asked to submit the application form.

LCWR gave its first Outstanding Leadership Award to Mary Luke Tobin, SL at the 2003 assembly.

Registration Forms Sent for Leading from Within Retreat

On January 22 the registration forms for the Leading from Within Retreat were sent to all LCWR members online. The retreat, to be held at San Pedro Retreat Center in Winter Park, Florida from January 16-21, 2005, is open to LCWR national members.

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 individual and group spiritual direction.

Participation in the retreat is limited to the first 25 LCWR national members who register and send to the national office the \$100 deposit toward the total of \$525. When registration is closed, a notice will be sent online to all members and checks will be returned to those whose registrations could not be accepted.



LCWR Members Join Effort to Recycle and Support Scholarship Fund

To date, 10 LCWR member congregations or organizations associated with LCWR members have joined the ink cartridge recycling project. This project helps preserve the environment as well as build a scholarship fund for LCWR members who are not able to afford the conference's annual assembly.

Information on participating in the recycling project can be found in the January 2004 issue of *Update* or by contacting LCWR executive assistant Suzanne Delaney, IHM at sdelaney@lcwr.org.

Evaluating the White House Proposal on Immigration

President Bush is getting good press about his proposal on immigration. Mexico's president Vicente Fox has praised it as positive for immigrants. Evidently, many immigrants think it is already a law that has been passed and want to take advantage of it. However, groups who worked with immigrants and immigration policy view the proposal with greater skepticism.

The day after the White House held a press conference describing the proposal, the National Immigration Forum, through the Mennonite Central Committee in Washington, DC, issued a cautionary statement about the proposal, the details of which they had not been able to obtain. From the information they did have, the Forum stated that "it is not the right solution" and offered a critique with three observations:

The White House Proposal Does Not Provide a Path to Permanent Status for Undocumented Immigrants in the United States. The proposal is a guest worker program offering no option for permanent residency at the end of the life of the visa — i.e. three years, or, if the visa is renewable, longer. The proposed program "seems to create a permanent underclass of workers, or a path to removal from the United States."

The Proposal Fails to Fix the United States' Limited and Broken Immigration System. "It may permit potentially millions to register for a temporary work permit. It won't change the limited and already over-subscribed employment immigration categories. It is disingenuous to claim that the White House is offering a solution to our broken immigration system unless it also updates our immigration laws to accommodate the millions of workers who have been working in the United States, contributing to our economy, and desire to become fully and legally integrated into our society."

The Proposal Does Not Change Existing Family Categories. It does not address the backlogged family-based immigration categories that have caused families to be separated for 5 to 10 years or longer.

At this date, the proposal is only a proposal. Positive elements are being touted in the press. If it moves into

the legislative process, the proposal bears scrutiny. Perhaps some members of LCWR congregations and LCWR associates have immigration experience that may shed light on the issue for the rest of the members. Insights and observations can be sent to Marie Lucey, OSF, LCWR associate director of social mission, at mlucey@lcwr.org.

Reserving Hotel Rooms for the Joint Assembly

For the convenience of the members, LCWR has booked a large block of hotel rooms at the Radisson Plaza and Fort Worth Plaza Hotels for the LCWR-CMSM Joint Assembly. In exchange, the hotels and convention center have reduced their fees for meeting rooms. In the contract with the hotels, the conferences must meet at least 80 percent of this block in order to get this discount on the meeting rooms.

The conferences, in collaboration with Nix and Associates (a conference management organization), continue to work at finding reasonable accommodations for the members as well as ways to keep expenses down and registration fees reasonable.

The conferences thank their members for considering this information and booking their rooms for the upcoming assembly at the Radisson Plaza Hotel or the Fort Worth Plaza Hotel. More information on hotel registration will be on your registration form that will arrive by May 1, 2004.

SOAW Organizes Events in March in Washington, DC

School of Americas Watch is once again organizing an event in the nation's capitol to call for closure of the SOA/WHISC. March 27-29 will feature events leading up to March 30. See www.SOAW.org for details.

From Darkness to Light: Further Information Revealed about US Failures in Iraq

Before the January 11, 2004 interview by *60 Minutes* of Former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neil, and the debate it created in the press, a revealing document was released in the form of a report from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace titled "WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications." The study calls for the elimination of a US policy of unilateral preventive war, i.e., preemptive war in the absence of imminent threat. Key findings of the study include:

- Iraq WMD was not an immediate threat
- Inspections were working
- Intelligence failed and was misrepresented
- Terrorist connection was missing
- Post-war WMD search ignored key resources
- War was not the best – or only -- option.

To read the report see: <http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/IraqReport3.asp?from==pubdat>

Website Offers Ideas for Celebrating World Day for Consecrated Life

World Day for Consecrated Life is on Sunday, February 8. Ideas and materials for marking this day through liturgy or other activities are available at www.consecratedlife.org. In addition to providing an array of information on religious life and profiles of contemporary men and women religious, the site also has a downloadable brochure that explains the intentions of this day.

FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

New Publication Available: *Theological Reflection for Transformation*

A team of practical theologians chaired by Dianne Bergant, CSA, has prepared a theological reflection method for the Center for Study of Religious Life (CSRL) that can be used by religious communities to study and respond to issues facing them and to help them move from reflection to action. A conversation between contemporary experience, cultural realities and religious tradition are at the center of this method. *Theological Reflection for Transformation* will be available in February 2004 through NCCV (1-800-671-6228). Single books are \$7.00. Large orders are discounted.

CSRL Newsletter Available to Members

Kindling, the newsletter of the Center for the Study of Religious Life, will no longer be sent to all LCWR members; it will only be sent to those congregations who are members of CSRL.

The newsletter contains information on CSRL's programs and publications as well as providing input on topics of interest to religious in the United States and reports on studies of religious life. Any congregation that is not a member of the Center for the Study of Religious Life and would like to become one, or would like additional copies of *Kindling* (paper or pdf form) may contact CSRL at csrl@visioni.com or 773-752-2720.

From the LCWR Executive Director

The Kindness of Strangers

It has been pretty cold here in Washington. It's not as cold as Minnesota where you have to plug your car in at night to keep it from freezing, (really!) or as cold as it has been in Boston where you can skate across the Charles River to Cambridge. But it has been cold enough for me to seriously consider storing my garbage on the porch until April rather than schlepping out to the dumpster after supper. So you can imagine my bliss when I flew in from a trip to St. Louis at 11:00 PM only to discover that my car battery had died in my absence. "Oh, darn!" I exclaimed. (Or something like that.)

A kind attendant from the long-term parking lot jumped the car, and I was able to drive it away. However, as I hit the highway, traveling behind one of the parking shuttles, the car whimpered sadly and rolled to a stop. I managed to coast to the shoulder of the road. Even my flashers weren't working. In the dark, I dialed the AAA emergency number. I spoke to "Darlene" who I think must have been in Bermuda. She was not sure where BWI Airport was, but she cheerfully assured me that someone would be coming to tow my car "within the next two hours." It was eighteen degrees outside. I began to search the horizon in hopes that a St. Bernard dog would soon come, a cask of brandy around his neck.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

*In a day when suspicion runs high and
when fear can control our interactions with others,
two van drivers, a parking lot manager,
a tow truck driver, a merciful friend
☒yes, and even ☒Darlene☒
had made me feel companioned and safe in a cold, dark car.*

Well, no St. Bernard ever showed up, but two different van drivers as well as the manager from the parking lot stopped by to see if I was OK. Then, at midnight I called Pat, a Mercy friend and neighbor. True to her charisma, Pat wanted to come to the rescue, instantly performing a work of mercy, but I told her that AAA was on mercy-call that evening.

Finally at 1:00 AM, Lawrence, the tow truck driver, arrived. I wanted him to invite me into the cab so I could thaw, but he wanted me to watch the intricacies of hauling my Cavalier onto the truck bed. Once we got into the cab, Lawrence asked me immediately what I thought of the

present administration and the war. He was a young Panamanian married to a woman serving in the military in Iraq. Soon I was warm and animated and the trip went quickly. At 2:00 AM we got to the service station. And there was Pat waiting for me with a thermos full of hot cocoa.

Falling asleep about an hour later, I remembered Blanche DuBois's line from *A Streetcar Named Desire*: "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." In a day when suspicion runs high and when fear can control our interactions with others, two van drivers, a parking lot manager, a tow truck driver, a merciful friend – yes, and even "Darlene" – had made me feel companioned and safe in a cold, dark car.

NATRI Offers Financial Management Seminar

The 2004 NATRI *Orientation to Financial Management Seminar* is being held from June 7 to 11 at Mont Marie Conference Center in Holyoke, Massachusetts. This Monday-to-Friday program is geared to new finance personnel and leadership with financial oversight in religious institutes.

NATRI's annual seminar covers a comprehensive range of topics presented by highly qualified presenters in a supportive environment. Topics include the role of the finance office vis-à-vis leadership and membership, civil and canon law issues, government programs, planning and financial forecasting, accounting and investment topics, retirement planning, and resources for ongoing support. The areas of accounting and investments will have both basic and advanced tracks to accommodate the varying backgrounds of the participants. Other breakout sessions and evening forums provide opportunities to network and address particular questions. The center is conveniently located near Bradley International Airport in Hartford and major highways.

The registration brochure is being mailed in late February to major superiors. For more information about the program or for additional brochures contact the NATRI Office at 301-587-7776 or e-mail natri@natri.org.

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Upcoming Dates

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank
Tampa, Florida
February 8-10, 2004

LCWR New Leader Workshop
Mundelein, Illinois
March 25-28, 2004

LCWR/CMSM Joint Assembly
Fort Worth, Texas
August 19 -- 23, 2004

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat
Winter Park, Florida
January 16-21, 2005

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

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

Religious Formation Conference Regional Workshops 2004-2005

**A Movement in Hope:
Continuing the Conversation on a
Theology of Religious Life**

With theologians:
Janet Ruffing, RSM
Katherine Hanley, CSJ
Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD
Patricia Walter, OP
Donald Goergen, OP
Mary Ellen Sheehan, IHM
Anthony Gittins, CSSp
Donald Senior, CP
Barbara Reid, OP
Anita de Luna, MCDP

Dates, locations and registration information available
on the RFC website:

http://www.relforcon.org/5_wkshops/5_2004workshops.htm