

Update

A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

January 2004

School of the Americas Watch

Fort Benning: Harmony and Cacophany

People from across the country gathered at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia, November 22-23, to once again demand closure of the "School of Assassins." As always, there was high energy and strength in solidarity in the group of approximately 10,000 women, men, teenagers, and children. LCWR was "officially" represented by Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM, past president, and Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director for social mission, but was represented in reality by several hundred women religious from many congregations.

On Saturday, November 22 there were the inspiring speeches, the energizing music ranging from rap to Pete Seeger, and the camaraderie of people united for a single purpose. This year, however, a discordant note was struck by Fort Benning which played loud military music throughout the day to harass and drown out the School of the Americas Watch speakers and music. They did not succeed, of course, because the speakers, musicians, and crowd, refusing to be overcome, responded by increasing their decibels.

During the witness on Sunday, without competition from the base, participants proclaimed their commitment to nonviolence, then walked 10 abreast in solemn procession to place small white crosses on the fence of the military base. Year after year, as the names are chanted of those killed by military and para-military trained by SOA (recently renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) graduates, the crosses are raised as thousands of voices respond "Present!" And every year, hearts are stirred and inspired. For three hours the chanting was the only sound heard in the sunlit air over Fort Benning, home of SOA/WHISC.

"In this year, when we felt so powerless to prevent the war in Iraq," shared Mary Ann Zollmann, "being at



Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM, LCWR past president (left) and Joellen McCarthy, BVM at the Fort Benning protest.

(Photo courtesy of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

the SOA held more of a global meaning for me. Surely it meant taking a stand to close the School of the Americas and, at the same time, it felt like standing with so many others for peaceful resolution to all conflict. In a year when the United States acted independently of

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From the LCWR Presidency

A Star Rising in the East

by Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM

January begins with a "star rising in the East."

What if we revised the story of the Epiphany in the context of the universe story and imagined the "star rising in the East" as the sunrise really seen for the first time? Gazing at the rising sun-star, we are compelled to stay with it finding ourselves led into a place of consciousness so brilliant that it appears as dark as a cave. What we see is the sun pouring its energy out, without reference to rank or distinction, on straw and stable, oxen and sheep, shepherd and king, mother and father and child. All is sun particle, star dust, birthed into the light of life by the magnificent stellar generosity of the sun. Transformed by this epiphany, we choose a wisdom path alternative to Herodic privilege and position and, in the way of the sun that we are, pour out our energies prodigally in mutually life-enhancing ways.

I would like to share examples of how we as a presidency have lived inside this epiphany story by encouraging mutually life-enhancing relationships in our conference, our church, and our world during the past few months.

Desiring to create a strong relational ground for our work together as presidency and executive director, Constance, Christine, Carole, and I spent a day in reflection and conversation. The time was not only beneficial for us, but has freed us to serve the conference more effectively, thanks to the energy that comes from better understanding of one another, a knowledge of each other's particular gifts, a greater clarity about our roles, and a sense that we are exercising this conference leadership in genuine solidarity with one another.

We have continued our communication with Rome clarifying our position that the inclusion of non-clerical religious in any potential revised norms contradicts the



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relational dynamics of trust and internal accountability at the heart of healthy religious life. Perhaps it is our expressed desire to work for healing in our church by not assuming adversarial relationships with our bishops that prompted the bishops, at their recent USCCB meeting, to extend a public invitation to us to participate in yet to be identified processes for healing in our church.

Continuing to stand with those oppressed by violence, we participated in the annual SOA demonstration calling for the closing of the School of the Americas and for peaceful resolution to global conflict. As a result of our commitment to Call to Renewal, LCWR accepted an invitation to participate in a delegation to England to

meet with lawmakers to encourage legislation that alleviates the causes of poverty. The presidency made the decision to support the participation of Carole Shinnick, SSND in that delegation on behalf of all of us.

There is a "star rising in the East" and, wisdom women that

we are, we are being led by the light of its epiphany.

Call to Renewal Trip Re-Scheduled

The Call to Renewal trip to England, sponsored by Sojourners has been rescheduled for May. Originally Carole Shinnick, SSND was to attend as a delegate in a planned meeting with British church and government leaders. However, because of a variety of logistical difficulties, the timing of the trip needed to be changed. Because of a conflict of dates, Carole will no longer be able to participate as a delegate.

Jubilee 2006 Committee Formed

In 2006, LCWR will celebrate its 50th anniversary as an organization. LCWR began as the Conference of Major Superiors of Women (CMSW) in 1956, its statutes approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious. It became the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in 1971, with a new constitution and statutes. As Lora Ann Quinonez, CDP (LCWR executive director, 1978-86) says in the introduction to her work, *A Historical Overview of the LCWR*, "LCWR is an organization worth studying. It came into being almost at the inception of a worldwide movement for change among religious communities of women. Its course coincides with critical historical developments in the Church, in religious communities of women, and in society – the kind of developments that ultimately produce major paradigm shifts." Truly LCWR has an amazing graced history to celebrate.

At the LCWR regional meetings, members generated some ideas about the ways in which LCWR might mark the 50th jubilee. Three people who have agreed to serve the conference on a national level will review the regional suggestions in February. This same group will also look at what structures and committees LCWR might eventually need as the jubilee year approaches. For now, LCWR is in the initial phases of dreaming and planning.

The Jubilee 2006 Committee members are: Sherri Coleman, FSM (Region 10), Ann Margaret O'Hara, SP (Region 7) and Beth Taylor, CSJP (Region 15). The first meeting of the group will be on February 2, 2004 in St. Louis. A summary of recommendations and initial ideas from this meeting will be shared with the LCWR national board at its February 2004 meeting. The spring regional meetings will include a report and invitation for additional feedback.

LCWR thanks Sherri, Ann Margaret, and Beth for their willingness to share their time and creativity with the conference.

Fort Benning: Harmony and Cacophany

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the community of nations, I experienced the relational solidarity of standing for peace with 10,000 other persons as a protest not just against the war but against unilateral processes of decision-making."

Marie Lucey observed that what she found encouraging "was the changing hair color of the crowd! This cause has been embraced by young people, especially students from Jesuit and other colleges and universities. These young women and men were fired up for justice, for peace, for a different kind of world from the one they've been handed. They lifted my spirit and renewed my energy."

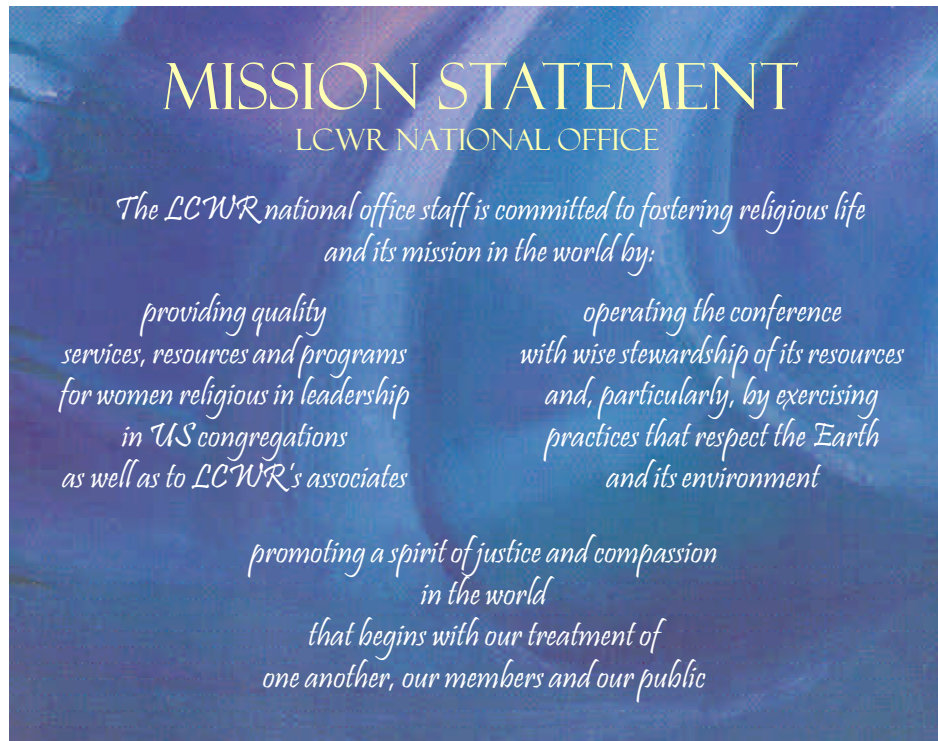


Marie Lucey, OSF (third from left) with other members of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia at the protest.

(Photo courtesy of the Sisters of St. Francis.)

Change at LCWR National Office

In December, Linda Thomas left the LCWR national office staff where she worked as a secretary and membership coordinator. LCWR thanks Linda for her years of service and wishes her well in her future endeavors.



The members of the LCWR national office have been working on a mission statement that simply and clearly names what the staff members do, why they do it and how they do it. The statement above is the result of their work and will be used to help the staff members focus their energies, evaluate their effectiveness and plan for the future as they seek to better serve the conference.

Committee Established to Guide Goal-Setting

Every five years, LCWR engages in a goal-setting process. The goals, affirmed at the annual assembly, focus conference activities for the coming five years. At the fall 2003 regional meetings, participants were asked to review the current LCWR goals, and, in the context of present realities, to suggest directions for LCWR for the cycle 2004 through 2009.

Three LCWR members have agreed to review the regional materials and to draft a set of goals to be reviewed by the LCWR national board at its meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona in February. They are: Marcelline Koch, OP (Region 8), Rosemary Moynihan, SC (Region 3) and Kathy Schmittgens, SSND (Region 10).

The feedback from the February national board meeting will be incorporated into a second draft of the goals that will be revised based on board feedback. The revised draft will be reviewed at regional meetings in

spring 2003. Then the goals will be further refined by the Goal-Setting Committee, reviewed by the Executive Committee at its July meeting, and presented to the assembly delegates in Fort Worth for final approval.

The Goal-Setting Committee will meet in St. Louis on January 7 and 8 for the first phase of the work. It is anticipated that additional work on the goals will be accomplished via e-mail and conference call.

LCWR is most grateful to Marcelline, Rory, and Kathy for their willingness to serve the conference on a national level.

LCWR Provides New Resource on Tending the Holy

LCWR's new resource, a book of reflections on caring for the Earth written by 45 LCWR members, is currently in production. This new booklet can be a valuable instrument for anyone interested in reflecting further on the call in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, as well as in the Earth Charter, to tend the Holy of the created world.

The book includes a daily reflection for every day from April 22 (International Earth Day) to June 5 (World Environment Day) and includes a suggested creative action for deepening one's commitment to care for the environment.

Special prices will be available for bulk orders of this publication. Several congregations already have expressed interest in purchasing copies for all of their members.

LCWR will print only the amount of copies that are pre-ordered. Anyone considering ordering copies is asked to complete an order form which will be sent by electronic mail in the beginning of January.

All LCWR members and associates will receive a free copy of this publication.



cartridges from its printers, fax machines and copiers. Caritas Funding, the group coordinating this project, will provide the organization prepaid UPS labels to be used in shipping the empty materials.

Estimates show that keeping just one laser toner cartridge out of a landfill saves the energy equivalent of three quarts of oil.

In addition to helping the environment, Caritas Funding also rewards the organization for their efforts. Caritas will donate to an organization anywhere from \$.50 to \$26 for each cartridge that is sent.

LCWR has decided to apply the earnings it receives to the scholarship fund that assists LCWR members who wish to attend the national assembly but cannot afford to do so.

LCWR congregations are invited to assist in building this scholarship fund by sending their cartridges directly to Caritas and having their earnings applied directly to the LCWR scholarship fund. Congregations are encouraged to invite companies and other organizations to participate in this effort as well. If a firm or organization wishes to send an exceptionally large supply of empty cartridges, arrangements can even be made for prepaid shipment through a trucking company.

This is a very practical and easy way of carrying out the LCWR 2003 assembly theme of "tending the Holy." The only steps involved are:

1. Contact Caritas for pre-shipping labels.
2. Pack cartridges in the original equipment manufacturer boxes so they are protected.
3. Address all boxes to Caritas Funding.
4. Call UPS for a pick-up.
5. Send at least 10 cartridges at a time.

All UPS shipments will be keyed to the LCWR account. Once the shipment is processed, Caritas sends LCWR a check on the 25th of the following month.

For more information, contact:

Caritas Funding, Inc.
Michael Flick, President
4200 W. Diversey Avenue
Chicago, IL 60639
mflick@caritasfunding.com
773-308-7159

Protect the Environment and Support the LCWR Scholarship Fund by Recycling Ink Cartridges

Recently LCWR started participating in an ink cartridge recycling project that could help in some small measure to "secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations" (Earth Charter).

LCWR invites its members and associates to also consider participation in this project -- one which has no cost to the organization, but will help preserve the integrity of God's creation. The project requires only that an organization save its empty laser toner and ink

Remember Jubilee Justice?

What does privatization of water have to do with cancellation of debt for impoverished nations? A lot, apparently. During a recent meeting of the Jubilee USA Network in Washington, DC two panelists representing Jubilee South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America)

addressed the issue of water privatization. Magda, from Nicaragua, described the attempt to make international aid conditioned upon water privatization even though it is against the Nicaraguan constitution. A protest proposal signed by 70,000 people was introduced into and passed by the Nicaraguan national assembly. Speaking for South Africa, poet and activist Dennis Brutus observed that although the constitution declares that water is a human right, city councils are selling rights to private companies, so water is going to those who can pay. He decried the trend of the IMF and World Bank to make binding loan conditions in opposition to national constitutions.

In the July 2003 LCWR *Resolutions to Action* on the World Bank Bonds Boycott, Ann Oestreich, IHM recalled that LCWR has a history of calling for cancellation of the debts of impoverished countries. Acting on the 1998 joint resolution on World Debt, a number of congregations joined the Jubilee 2000 campaign, and throughout 1999 prayed, fasted, and advocated for passage of debt relief legislation by the United States. A few congregations even forgave debts owed to them. Some communities have joined the Jubilee Congregations Program.

When the Jubilee Year was over, committed groups of people in this country and in countries bearing the burden of international debt continued to work for debt cancellation, suspension of debt service (annual payments), ending IMF structural adjustment programs (imposition of nearly impossible-to-meet conditions for debt relief), and expansion of the number of countries eligible for debt relief. Currently, under the IMF/ World Bank program, the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative), a number of very poor countries are not eligible, among them Haiti, one of the poorest nations on earth. Jubilee South and Jubilee USA



Graphic from the Jubilee USA Network website

continue to move the debt cancellation agenda and to make the connections between debt and trade, debt and HIV/AIDS funding, and debt and militarization.

Jubilee USA Network is alive and well due to the staying power of Jubilee congregations, the commitment of the Network Council (of which LCWR is a member), and to the very hard work of the three young dedicated, knowledgeable staff persons. The network is an alliance of churches; diverse faith communities; and labor, environmental, solidarity, and community organizations building a grass roots movement to achieve the complete cancellation of debts owed by impoverished nations and an end to unjust economic policies imposed on those nations.

The strategizing session of the December 10 meeting focused on three 2004 realities: the 60th anniversary of the IMF/World Bank; a meeting in the United States for the first time since 1997 of the G-8 richest nations; and the presidential elections. Specific actions developed by the Jubilee USA staff were discussed and enhanced by three working groups. Activity for getting presidential candidates to address the debt issue will begin in January, with staff developing a set of questions to pose to candidates.

Religious congregations who are not currently Jubilee congregations can obtain information about joining and about the 2004 strategies by contacting Mara Vanderslice at 202-783-0129 or mara@jubileeusa.org.

Jubilee USA is one of the sponsors of Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice, titled "I will feed them with justice." The event is scheduled for March 5-8, 2004 at Doubletree Hotel Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia and will include tracks on Africa, Asia (Korea), Latin America, Middle East (Israel and Palestin, Iraq), jubilee and economic justice, and nuclear disarmament. For further information see www.advocacydays.org.



Revisiting the Relationship Between LCWR and NETWORK

The memory of the relationship between LCWR and NETWORK may have dimmed since 1971 when LCWR members founded the National Catholic Social Justice Lobby to do what LCWR as an organization is unable to do—lobby for social justice with members of Congress. As stated in its brochure, “NETWORK was founded in 1971 by 47 Catholic sisters moved by the Gospel call to act for justice. Now supported by 11,000 members from many faith traditions, NETWORK is a forceful presence on Capitol Hill for economic and social justice.”

Under the leadership of women religious, NETWORK has grown in numbers and in influence on Capitol Hill. Over the years the staff and board have become more diverse, including lay and religious, as well as members of different faith traditions and cultures.

Today, special attention is being paid to anti-racism/anti-oppression work. This increasing diversity is to be welcomed and applauded. However, it would be a loss for both NETWORK and LCWR if the origins and history are forgotten.

LCWR holds an ex officio position on the NETWORK board in the person of the associate director for social mission who also serves on the NETWORK Coordinating Council (formerly, Executive Committee). In the beginning of December, Marie Lucey participated in her first board meeting, which included an evening and day with staff, and also met with the Advocacy Support Committee. In this time of transition, when a new national coordinator will be sought, and interim

director, Maureen Fenlon, OP is working with the staff on some organizational changes, it is timely to revisit the 32 year history of the organization and to honor the LCWR/NETWORK relationship.

QUESTION:

How many members of LCWR hold membership in NETWORK?

The electronic legislative updates are very informative and helpful, as is the bi-monthly publication *NETWORK Connection*, which explores current issues in more depth.

During this election year, it is particularly important that LCWR members are informed about the issues, and NETWORK will be offering information and resources electronically. The e-mail address is www.networklobby.org.

The Nonviolent Peace Force Remembered

The Catholic church is known by most as a just war church rather than a peace church, even though there are many individuals and groups within the church committed to peacemaking through nonviolence. In the July 7, 2003 issue of *America*, Gerald Schlabach points out that the just war theory requires the exhaustion of alternatives but the church offers no alternatives. He even suggests that the church develop its own nonviolent peace force.

At the 2000 assembly, LCWR passed a resolution endorsing *the establishment of a global nonviolent standing peace force to support local and regional groups striving to resolve conflict*. Subsequently, the fourth Systemic Change Think Tank, held in February 2001, focused on identifying systems that support violence in our world today and searching for ways to more actively support the Global Nonviolent Peace Force. In October 2001, *Resolutions to Action* provided some analysis and recommended actions.

Today, the Nonviolent Peace Force project has gained support around the world, and an 11-member peace force team began work in Sri Lanka in September 2003. The organization is planning and fundraising for additional teams. For further information contact Pat Keefe, OSF at Nonviolent Peaceforce USA in St. Paul, MN, 651-487-0800 or www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org.



From the LCWR Executive Director

70 x 7 x 7 x 7 x 7 x 7 x 7 ...

It's a new year and another chance to retrieve my annual resolutions. I dust them off affectionately. They're like old friends now. We wink at each other, knowing that our yearly ritual will follow a familiar path. I will launch into the year with high hopes, begin to fall apart by January's end, revive again for Ash Wednesday, and be a lost soul by St. Patrick's Day. In truth, I've grown kind of attached to these little efforts at self-improvement. Even truer – I think I've grown fond of the flaws they're intended to improve. Maybe it's time I called a truce with these less-than-stunning aspects of my personality. Maybe it's time to forgive myself for watching "Law and Order" at 10:00 PM rather than reading *Commonweal*, for preferring Ben and Jerry's Super Chunk Fudge to celery sticks, and for hating to balance my check book.

Forgiveness is in short supply these days. We seem to be swamped by the rhetoric of vengeance. Our

Reconciliation needs two people.

In contrast, forgiveness (so convenient and efficient!) only needs one person.

highest leaders speak with relish of the shame and the dehumanization of Saddam Hussein. Persons harmed by violent crimes call for the execution of the perpetrator so that the victim can find closure and peace. And the unending cycle of hate, violence and retaliation in the Holy Land seems to be unstoppable. It makes me wonder if we would be, could be, more forgiving of others if we were more forgiving of ourselves.

Anthony DeMello told this parable. In a small rural village in a little European country, an old peasant woman was reportedly having visions of Jesus. Hear-



Carole Shinnick, SSND

ing of this, the bishop of the diocese summoned the woman to his episcopal office. "I understand that Jesus is appearing to you," he said. "Yes, Your Excellency," the woman replied. "Well, I think that if Jesus had something to say in my diocese, he would be appearing to ME!" he grumped, and continued. "The next time that you are talking to Jesus, I want you to ask him to reveal to you my deepest, darkest sin. Then come back and tell me what he said. We'll see if Jesus is really appearing to you." A month later, the woman returned. "Well," asked the bishop, "have you been talking to Jesus again?" "Yes, Your Excellency." "And did you ask him

Forgiveness comes easier when I've found a way to forgive myself for my own flaws and foibles, and have accepted my own humanity.

my question?" "Yes, Your Excellency." "And what did he say?" demanded the bishop. "He said he forgot."

Many times we carry around bags and bags of hurt, hoping for reconciliation so we can let it all go. But reconciliation needs two people. In contrast, forgiveness (so convenient and efficient!) only needs one person. Reconciliation may never happen, but forgiveness can happen now – bringing with it freedom from whatever we have been lugging around. Forgiveness comes easier when I've found a way to forgive myself for my own flaws and foibles, and have accepted my own humanity. So, this new year, I'm adding what I'll call the "Seventy Times Seven" resolution to my list.

Oh - pass the Ben and Jerry's please.

FROM THE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS LIFE

Registrations for January 2004 Workshop Closed

Registration has closed for the Center's workshop, "The Transformed Community: Enlivening the Corporate Imagination of Members," to be held January 25-27, 2004 at the Marywood Center, Jacksonville, FL. The 60 religious leaders who are registered participants represent 26 religious institutes. The workshop presenters are David Couturier, OFM Cap. and Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ.

Documents and Archive Information

Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, director of the Center for the Study of Religious Life (CSRL), extends a thank you to all the leaders and archivists of religious congregations who have responded so generously to CSRL's letter requesting documents and archive information for the religious life collection at the Catholic Theological Union Library. The center is receiving three to five packages a week from congregations with copies of their constitutions, histories, formation plans, etc. for the Paul Bechtold Library.

To check whether your community's publications are in the Bechtold Library use the CTU web site www.ctu.edu. On that web page, click on *Bechtold Library* (top right corner); click on *Voyager Catalog* (left column); and click on *Catholic Theological Union Library Catalog*. Search by congregational official name as *Author* or *Subject* for congregational documents.

To date CSRL has received more than 200 archive information forms back from congregations. This information will become part of a database available to researchers.

**Publication Provides
Opportunities to Consider the
Perspectives of Younger Women
Religious**

Giving Voice: The Voices of Younger Women Religious is entering its sixth year of publication.

This newsletter, published three times a year, provides a space for younger women religious to voice

their experiences, hopes, and passion in religious life and provides all readers the opportunity to consider the perspectives and insights of these younger women religious. Newsletter topics for 2004 include Religious Life and Citizenship, Religious Life and the Economy, and Religious Life and Social Activism.

The 2004 subscription rate is \$20 for addresses in the United States and \$25 for international addresses. Special bulk rates are also available. See the Giving Voice website (www.giving-voice.org) for more details. Please direct any questions to Kristin Matthes, SND at Kristin@giving-voice.org.



**A MOVEMENT IN HOPE
Continuing the Conversation
on a Theology of Religious Life
Religious Formation Conference
Regional Jubilee Workshops
2004-2005**

Donald Goergen, OP
January 16-17, 2004—New Orleans, LA

Anita DeLuna, MCDP
February 6-7, 2004—Los Angeles, CA

Patricia Walter, OP
April 2-3, 2004 - Villa Maria, PA

Theologian TBA
April 23-24, 2004—Chicago, IL

Janet Ruffing, RSM
April 23-24, 2004—Wichita, KS

Anita DeLuna, MCDP
April 2-3, 2004—Seattle, WA

For leaders, formation ministers,
seasoned and newer members and associates

Contact: [rhc@relforcon.org](mailto:rfc@relforcon.org)

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

Roman Project Seeking Executive Director

The Jubilee Community Centre is a residence and network of services in Rome initiated by the Roman constellation of the UISG. It provides housing, community, and guidance to sisters from economically disadvantaged countries and/or young congregations who are studying in Roman universities and schools. The Centre is searching for a woman religious to serve as executive director. The position involves the exercise of leadership and creativity in a collaborative, multicultural undertaking.

Responsibilities include recruiting and working with residential staff, recruiting student-residents, networking with similar organizations, maintaining contact with scholarship agencies, grant writing and fundraising, and representing the Centre to a variety of publics. Experience in administration and leadership, good interpersonal and communication skills, initiative, energy, and enthusiasm are required. Multicultural experience, and the ability to speak - or willingness to learn - Italian are important.

A full job description is available upon request by contacting Carole Shinnick at cshinnick@lcwr.org during January 2004, and Carol Regan, SUSC at caregan@tin.it after January.

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