A Publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious

April 2004

InterAmerican Delegates Work to Strengthen Relationships Between the Hemispheres

nnually, representatives of the conferences of Canada (CRC), Latin America (CLAR), and the United States (CMSM and LCWR) meet for the purposes of building solidarity among the religious of the northern and southern hemisphere and of sharing common concerns and experiences of religious life. This year's meeting was jointly hosted by CMSM and LCWR and was held in Washington, DC.

In addition to the usual conference reports, the meeting focused on the next InterAmerican Conference to be held in Itaicí, Brazil (outside of Sao Paolo) in May 2005. LCWR will send a delegation of 10 persons including staff and officers to the event. Entitled Religious Life as Leaven in the Americas, the conference will incorporate processes intended to strengthen the relationships and communications between the conferences of the North and South that would will allow them to speak prophetically, coherently, and more efficiently about issues of importance in the present context of the Americas. The InterAmerican Committee meeting in Cuba last March identified the title and the objective for the Brazilian gathering.

The delegates, gathered from March 2-5 at Centro Maria, a retreat house near Catholic University, also issued a joint statement calling for the restoration of peace in Haiti (see page 4). They had an opportunity as

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Standing: Arturo Sosa, SJ; Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; Gisele Turcot, SBC; Matt Wade, SM; Esperanza Quintanilla Moran, RFSA; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; and John Doctor, OFM. Seated: Carole Shinnick, SSND; Margaret Toner, SCIC; Ted Keating, SM; and Dina María Orellana Aguilar, RM.

Inside this issue:

- - Responding to the Crisis in Haiti
- - Denouncing US Landmine Policy
- Forming Delegations to Latin America

From the LCWR Presidency

Announcing Resurrection in the Company of Mary Magdalen

hvariably Easter draws me into the company of Mary Magdalen. Like her, I am inclined to cling with a fierce tenderness to those I love dearly. And, like her, I know the liberating power of letting love spill out, without reserve, on a multitude of persons and situations. Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me. . . but go to my sisters and brothers. And Mary Magdalen went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" (John 20: 17-18).

I thought of Mary Magdalen in Scottsdale, Arizona, during our February LCWR Board meeting as each regional chair highlighted significant regional events:

- Creation of a Border Project fund to assist people on either side of the Texas-Mexico border to be self-sustaining, and reaching out beyond all continental borders to the people of Africa;
- Advocacy on behalf of women and children, and the poor by supporting Project Irene, creating collaborative funds available to women who want to learn a skill, and adopting Lake Providence, Louisiana, named by *Time* Magazine as poorest area in the United States;
- Becoming more educated so as to speak out credibly about the implications of NAFTA, the need for universal health care, and the national and global issues that beg to be addressed in this national election year;
- Addressing and owning our racism and homophobia and engaging with Pace e Bene so as to walk more truly the path of nonviolent right relationship;
- Participating in the transformation of our church through involvement in Circles of Healing, honest dialogue with our bishops, and using our communal voice on behalf of those treated unjustly in our church;



by Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM LCWR Past President

- Making conscious connections with Earth through visits to ecologically sensitive places like Jubilee Farm and White Orchard and letting an Earth spirituality guide us in revisioning the meaning of our vowed life;
- Nurturing our life as leaders by sharing our experiences with one another, naming together distinctive facets of a spirituality of leadership, and learning skills that keep us energized as we respond to the many dimensions of leadership ministry.

Each regional chair concluded by identifying a gift her region brings to LCWR and, by

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extension, to our church and world. They were gifts of:

- Vitality, fertile ground, lapping water that changes the shoreline little by little;
- Hospitality, sensitivity to diversity, openness to the wisdom in us and around us,
- Courage, tenacity, and integrity;
- Beauty and power of close and irrevocable relationship;
- Salt of the earth people who, practical and down-to-earth, have not lost their flavor.

As each woman named the gift of her region, she placed a flower on a map of the LCWR regions superimposed on a visual of our planet Earth. Flowers bloomed in the Arizona desert. It felt like Jesus released from entombment. It felt like love, non-clinging, poured out freely, prodigally, and abundantly. It felt like an announcement of resurrection. It felt like Mary Magdalen.

InterAmerican Delegates Work to Strengthen Relationships Between the Hemispheres

(continued from page 1)

well to visit the Cameron Street offices for an afternoon, and take a night sight-seeing tour of Washington.

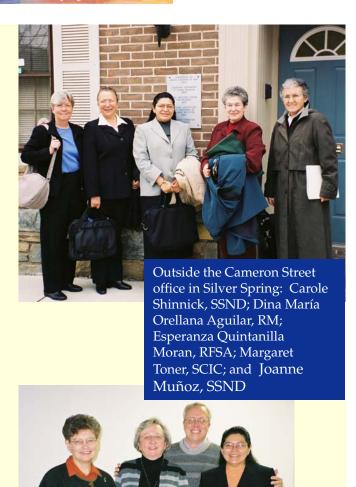
The president of the Canadian Conference, Gisele Turcot, SBC from Montreal, and the new executive director, Margaret Toner, SCIC also from Montreal, represented the CRC. CLAR's newly elected president Esperanza Quintanilla Moran, RFSA, a native of Guatemala, and the newly appointed executive director of CLAR, Dina María Orellana Aguilar, RM, a native of Ecuador, were making their first trip to the United States. Arturo Sosa, SJ, the former provincial of the Venezuelan Jesuits and the facilitator for the InterAmerican Conference of 2005, was present as well.

Representatives from CMSM included vice-president John Doctor, OFM; and staff members Ted Keating, SM; Matt Wade, SM; and Stan De Boe, OSST. Vice-president Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; and staff members Carole Shinnick, SSND and Annmarie Sanders, IHM represented LCWR. Joanne Muñoz, SSND served as translator for the meeting.

LCWR Lends Support to the Bringing America Home Campaign

CWR has joined NETWORK, many other organizations, and several religious congregations in supporting The Bringing America Home Act (H.R. 2897), a comprehensive bill designed to end homelessness in the United States and which includes housing, health, income and civil rights components. Introduced by Representatives Julia Carson (D-IN) and John Conyers (D-MI), the bill has more than 40 cosponsors but needs many more.

Calls to Representatives are urged. Further information about the bill and a list of supporters are available at www.nationalhomeless.org.





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number of congregations that have submitted the name of their justice and peace coordinator for inclusion on a new LCWR e-mail list. Names may still be submitted to Eva McCrae at emccrae@lcwr.org.

Religious of the Americas Respond to Haitian Crisis



The leaders of the four religious conferences of the Americas issued a statement to government officials calling for the restoration of order to Haiti by

committing themselves to long term reconstruction plans that respect the independence and autonomy of the Haitian people, their culture, their values and their social traditions.

The leaders, who issued the statement during the March 2004 InterAmerican Committee meeting, noted that "another ill-conceived, short-term invasion to restore order to the long-term needs of Haiti will only prolong the tragedy and suffering of this nation."

The leaders called upon all nations collaborating in the effort to restore order to Haiti to:

- immediately provide all forms of humanitarian aid;
- disarm all factions so that peace can be restored both nationally and in local communities;
- commit resources and personnel to help in training for conflict resolution and processes of reconciliation at the local and national level; and
- train an effective police presence under civilian control within effectively supervised standards of international human rights law and practice; and
- model international human rights law and practice by assuring that intervening forces are carefully monitored.

In addition, the leaders called upon the international community to:

- help Haitians form a transitional government with a minimum one-to-two year mandate so that elections are only held in a peaceful context and thus, have meaning;
- avoid imposing foreign structures of government and economics that would trample on Haitian values, and to strengthen the role of government in its ability to protect its people;
- help the Haitian people develop an economy that can produce real jobs in order to lift the nation from its structured poverty and endemically radical economic class divisions; and
- begin a widespread and concerted effort to raise the education level so that Haitians will be equipped to compete in the world market.



The leaders also recognize that the government leaders need to:

- provide mechanisms for redressing the human rights violations by helping victims document the violations and have their cases heard to eliminate impunity and lessen the need for the private redressing of wrongs leading to another spiral of violence;
- effect immediate changes in immigration practice and policy, especially in the United States, in order to assure that those asserting refugee status can truly have their asylum petitions heard, and suspend deportation of Haitians until order is restored in Haiti as the Dominican Republic government has recently done; and
- work with and through the United Nations in helping the people of Haiti.

This statement followed a letter sent in the name of LCWR by Constance Phelps, SCL, LCWR president, to Secretary of State Colin Powell reflecting the concerns that LCWR had heard voiced by women religious in Haiti and by some NGO representatives regarding the involvement of the United States in Haiti. Shortly after this letter was sent, President Aristide was removed from Haiti and every request in the LCWR letter was counteracted.

For Additional Information...

The following websites offer additional pertinent information on Haiti:

- www.paxchristiusa.org/ news_events_more.asp?id=889;
- www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/ haiti04.htm;
- www.globalexchange.org (click Find It; Search: Statement on Haiti and see Haiti:Current events and actions)

LCWR-CMSM Issue Statement on Landmine Policy

ment by the Bush Administration, reversing the US landmine policy goal of ratification of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty by 2006, LCWR-CMSM issued a joint statement in the form of a press release, stating that the United States had taken "a huge step backward in foreign policy." The new policy abandons any commitment to ratify the Treaty, maintains the right for the United States to use what are called "smart" landmines, and states that the United States will maintain its stockpile of older landmines until 2010.

The joint statement, signed by Carole Shinnick, SSND, LCWR executive director and Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director for social mission; as well as Ted Keating, SM, CMSM executive director and Stan DeBoe, MSST, justice and peace director; reaffirms the position of the two conferences expressed in a letter to the President in 2001, that the members of the conferences urge the country to join the international community in banning the use and production of landmines. Today, 141 countries have ratified the treaty, including all NATO nations except the United States. In addition, the recent statement declares: "The Bush Administration has made itself the leader in the war on terrorism, yet by this action, the President has placed our nation among those very nations he has identified for their terrorist activity. Nations that continue to produce and use landmines pose a threat to the safety of military personnel and thousands of innocent civilians, especially children, who are often the victims of landmines left behind after conflicts."

So called "smart" landmines, which are self-activating or self-destructing are also condemned: "The use of "smart" landmines is not an acceptable alternative to the complete ban, destruction, and pledge to never use these weapons."

In the name of the two conferences the statement urges national leaders to reverse this decision and join the international community in working toward the elimination of all landmines.

Two LCWR Delegations Planned for 2005

CWR is planning two important delegations in 2005. It is not too soon to consider regional participation in one or both of these delegations. Updated details will be shared with LCWR region chairs to disseminate to members.

Trade Delegation to Mexico in Collaboration with Witness for Peace

Purpose: As one means of implementing the 2003 Resolution opposing the FTAA, LCWR and Witness for Peace are organizing a delegation to help build understanding and solidarity between LCWR and the people of Mexico and to learn first-hand about the effects of free trade neo-liberal economic policy.

Where: Mexico City and one rural community

When: February 19-26, 2005

Group size: 10-20

How long: 7 days including travel

Estimated cost: \$600 to \$700 plus airfare

Delegation to El Salvador in Collaboration with SHARE

Purpose: to participate in the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the killings of four U.S. churchwomen

When: November 30 to December 8, 2005 (possibly two days shorter)

Group size: Can be up to 100. LCWR delegation in 2000 was 70

Estimated cost: \$700 to \$750 plus airfare

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LCWR Helps Small-Scale Farmers

he LCWR national office, in an effort to be supportive of the coffee growers in Latin America, Africa and Asia, has invited fair trade certified companies to work with the hotels to have fair trade coffees at its assemblies.

In the last months several of the religious conferences at Cameron Street in Silver Spring, Maryland have begun to order coffee from Equal Exchange and other companies that are fair trade certified.

The Equal Exchange mission is to build long-term partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, foster mutually beneficial relations between farmers and consumers, and demonstrate through its success the viability of worker-owned cooperatives and fair trade.

Equal Exchange began in 1986 and has expanded its work to include 17 trading partners in 10 countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa and is now the largest fair trade certified coffee company in North America.

Equal Exchange pays a fair price including a guaranteed minimum price regardless of how low the commodity market falls; works with democratically run cooperatives (small farmer co-ops that are governed by the farmers themselves). This company buys directly from the farmers which means that the benefits and profits actually reach the farmers and their communities.

Consider Purchasing Fair Trade Coffee



Consider purchasing coffee from fair trade certified organizations. Listed below are some websites that offer resources.

Explanation of the concept of fair trade coffee:

http://www.fairtradeaction.org/about.html

Websites for ordering coffee:

http://www.equalexchange.com

http://store.yahoo.com/eeretail/index.html

http://www.groundsforchange.com/

http://www.qualitycoach.net/coffee.htm

http://www.newharvestcoffee.com/

http://www.coopamerica.org/coffee/

Aid the Earth and Contribute to the LCWR Scholarship Fund



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.

World Day for Consecrated Life Materials No Longer Offered Through USCCB

he World day for Consecrated Life was established by Pope John Paul II in 1997. In his first address on this occasion, the Holy Father said: "The celebration of the World Day for Consecrated Life which will be observed for the first time on 2 February, is intended to help the entire Church to esteem ever more greatly the witness of those persons who have chosen to follow Christ by means of the practice of the evangelical counsels and, at the same time, is intended to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment and rekindle the fervor which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord."

For several years, the materials for celebrating this event in the United States have been distributed through the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and funded by the USCCB, the Conference of Major Superiors of Women, the Council of Major Superiors of Women, and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Two people in particular need to be acknowledged as key in the development of the materials: Jeanean Merkel, former director of communications for CMSM and LCWR, and Mary Ann Walsh, RSM, deputy director for media relations for the USCCB. Both of these communicators developed very attractive publications, and of late, Mary Ann has developed a fine website.

At the meeting of the Commission for Religious Life and Ministry in February 2004, a meeting of representatives of USCCB, CMSM, CMSWR and LCWR, a decision was made to discontinue providing materials through the USCCB. The decision was based on difficulty finding communication personnel who could continue the work, and on recognition of budget restraints affecting all four groups. In addition, materials for World Day of Consecrated Life are also produced by the National Coalition for Church Vocations (http://www.nccv-vocations.org/) and the Commission realized that quality materials would continue to be available even if USCCB stopped providing them.

NCCV produces very fine resources in both English and Spanish. Diane Poplawski, OP, the NCCV executive director is aware of the decision to discontinue

providing materials through the USCCB, and looks forward to offering materials for World Day for Consecrated Life in the future. NCCV can be reached at the website address above, or by calling 773-955-5354.

LCWR Supports 'A Catholic Peace Initiative'

CWR has endorsed an effort initiated by Pax Christi USA to develop a grassroots process that will involve a wide participation of Catholics, in reflection and dialogue about peacemaking in the 21st century.

By signing on as a "participating organization," LCWR is committed "to promote the initiative and process with its membership, stay informed on the initiative, and provide on-going input, as possible."

Pax Christi's invitation to Catholic organizations was in response to the statement of USCCB President Bishop Wilton Gregory on the occasion of the 20th anniversary in 2003 of the bishops' peace pastoral, The Challenge of Peace, in which he encouraged dioceses, parishes, and Catholic organizations to consider how to use this anniversary, as well as the 40th anniversary of Pope John XXIII's Pacem in Terris, to "raise up the essential vocation of peacemaking." Co-sponsoring and participating organizations include the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, the Mexican American Cultural Center, National Black Catholic Congress, National Catholic Council of Hispanic Catholics, Tekawitha Conference, National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry, NETWORK, Catholic Charities, Just Faith and others.

Seen as a people's peace initiative, the process will begin in Fall 2004, with intentionally simple materials that can be used in parishes, colleges and universities, Catholic groups and organizations, ideally with cross-cultural exchange. The hope is that responses will ultimately result in a document of Catholic voices on peace. LCWR will disseminate materials through the regions with an invitation to use in a variety of settings.

From the LCWR Executive Director

Hidden in Plain Sight

here were about 60 students in my third grade class, which seemed like a fine sized group in 1950. Our teacher, a sister, was quite stern, and I suppose that 60 squirmy eight-year olds contributed somewhat to her demeanor.

One rainy day when it was too wet to play in the school yard, Sister decided on a post-luncheon recreation that would keep us all in our seats and in the classroom where we ate lunch, but would offer us a change of pace. We would play the game in which an object is hidden and the person who is "It" has to find the item. As the searcher neared the

hidden object, the class would shout "warm, warm, HOT!" And if he or she drifted in the wrong direction, the class would chant, "cold!"

After some of my classmates had searched for chalky board erasers and Sleeping Beauty thermos bottles, Sister – much to our surprise – offered to be "It." In retrospect, I have to ask myself, "What was she thinking?" because – of all things - she gave us her big ring of keys to hide. I'm not sure whose creative young mind conceived the idea, but it was brilliant. One of our classmates, Ronald, was tall and skinny for his age, and his ears, which sprouted perpendicular to his head, were quite large. Would Ronald let us hang Sister's keys on his ear as a hiding place? Ronald agreed, and sat quite straight in his seat while someone carefully hooked the ring over his left ear.

"Ready!" we called to Sister, and in she swept, a rare smile on her face. We shouted "cold, cold" and "warm, warm" to steer her towards Ronald's ear. She looked in desks. She peered into inkwells. She opened lunchboxes. But she never looked up at the reddening appendage where her keys hung in plain sight. Her momentary good humor began to fade, and our glee at pulling a fast one on her soon turned to quiet terror. We feared for Ronald. We feared for ourselves. Somehow, we knew that we had been more clever than was allowed, and someone would have to pay. Our nervous eyes darted encouragingly between Sister's scowl and Ronald's ear until she eventually discovered her suspended key ring. The next time it rained, we colored pictures after lunch.

That dangerous moment of precocity returns to me when I am working too hard to figure something out. Usually that



Carole Shinnick, SSND

is when I'm looking into all the obvious, but wrong, places, and my frustration is growing. I'm reminded that sometimes what I'm searching for is hidden in plain sight. But in order to see it, to find it, I need to free myself from outdated mental models and familiar templates. A trap for the seeker is the belief that critical information is likely buried, complex, remote or abstruse. Perhaps it's helpful to keep this in mind as we wrestle with the pressing questions of our time – our identity, our future, the nature of consecrated life, the evolving expressions of community.

Even the Easter message reminds us that what we seek is waiting for us in plain sight: "Why do you seek the Living

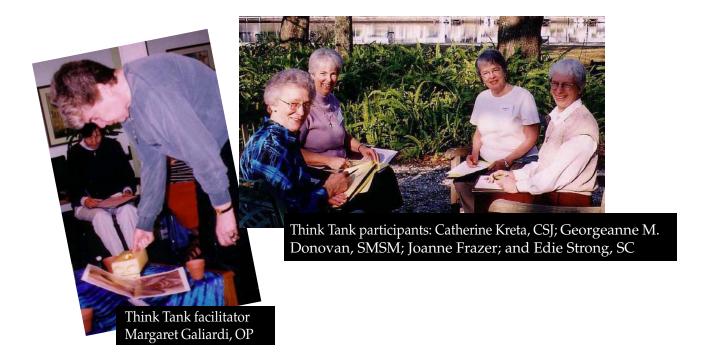
Sometimes what I'm searching for is hidden in plain sight. But in order to see it, to find it, I need to free myself from outdated mental models and familiar templates.

One among the dead? He is not here. He has risen." Good news, indeed, for us! Good news for all seekers!

LCWR Offers Waiting List for Leading from Within Retreat

egistration is now closed for the Leading from Within Retreat to be held in Winter Park, Florida from January 16-21, 2005.

In the event that there is a cancellation among those who registered, the LCWR national office has a waiting list for the retreat. Any national LCWR member who would like to be added to the waiting list is asked to contact Suzanne Delaney, IHM at sdelaney@lcwr.org. No deposit will be required of those on the waiting list.



Reflections on the LCWR Think Tank VII: 'Planting Another Row: Change Giving Birth To Life'

by Margaret Mayce, OP

uring the 2003 Think Tank, participants were invited to consider the Earth Charter as a framework for bringing about systemic change. At the 2004 Think Tank, participants were invited to consider "Earth" herself, as our framework. "Planting Another Row: Change Giving Birth To Life," was facilitated by Margaret Galiardi, OP (Amityville) - who, along with Nancy Sylvester, IHM, was one of the "founding mothers" of the LCWR Think Tank on Systemic Change seven years ago.

The peaceful, river-side location of the Franciscan Center in Tampa, Florida provided the perfect setting for our February 8 - 10 experience. Margaret moved us through a process which was based on the premise that there is a fundamental "split" between the human and the natural world, and, consequently, our "systems" reinforce this split. This being the case, there must be an alternative way of acting, of being, of thinking – for the sake of the *whole*. Reminding us of Einstein's great insight that no problem can be solved by the same level of consciousness that created it, Margaret prepared us to "receive the Vision," from the land. We were thus sent

out on the land to receive the Vision, which Earth reveals to us in her natural rhythms. We grappled with the questions: what is it that we need to die to in order to access a deeper wisdom? What is the deep vision for structural change which will move us into systems that support a life sustaining society — one that satisfies its needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations?

As we shared the Vision, we realized the importance of acting our way into a new way of thinking and, thinking our way into a new way of acting. We spoke of the need to learn from the Earth, how to be part of the Earth and, like the Earth, periodically enter into contemplative darkness to be in touch with the Source of new vision. We then considered a "case study" - a CSA (community-supported agriculture) project – a small, yet compelling example of an alternative to the hightech system of agribusiness; an alternative which fosters a respect for natural balance, and the good of the whole, versus profit. The case study illustrated Margaret's challenge to us - that we "withdraw our energy" from dysfunctional systems - thereby consciously choosing what we wish to empower. (Gloria Karpinski, Where Two Worlds Touch).

We then discussed how we might act and what we might do to bring about "alternatives" in several key areas that included: trafficking, environmental responsibility for our lands, healthcare and vowed religious life.

FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Reflections from Facilitators to be Published

uring the summer of 2004 the Center for the Study of Religious Life (CSRL) will publish a booklet with the reflections of women and men who facilitate chapters, assemblies and other large gatherings of religious. The facilitators are sharing the signs of hope and areas of concern they see in religious congregations today. A complimentary copy of the reflections along with brief background information of each facilitator will be sent to members of the center. Additional copies will be available for purchase. Anyone who would like to participate in this project, may contact the center at csrl@visioni.com.

New Dates Set for Conducting a Cultural Audit Workshop

wo workshops are scheduled for participants to learn how to conduct a cultural audit for their own communities:

June 10-12, 2004

Catholic Theological Union at Chicago

January 6-8, 2005

Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA

For further information and registration forms contact Virginia Piecuch, CSRL program coordinator, at 773-752-2720 or vpiecuch@visioni.com.

Discounts: The center will give a \$50 rebate on registration costs to CSRL members for the second (or more) member of a congregation attending the same workshop.

If a Cultural Audit Notebook is ordered from CSRL prior to the workshop and is picked up at the workshop by a participant, the cost is \$200. The regular price is \$300 plus shipping and handling.

Theological Reflection Book Available

heological Reflection for Transformation, the book with a theological reflection method developed for religious communities to use to reflect and take action on issues facing them, was mailed to members in March. Copies are available for purchase from NCCV, 1-800-671-NCCV (6228) or fax 773-363-5530.

CMSM Executive Director Announces Departure

n March 8, 2004, Ted Keating, SM, current executive director of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, announced his departure from CMSM to occur at the end of 2004. Ted has been with CMSM for 12 years, first as its justice and peace director and then as the executive director. Ted will be taking some sabbatical time before assuming formation responsibilities in his congregation, the Marist Fathers and Brothers.

LCWR wishes Ted blessing on his remaining months with CMSM and on his next adventures.

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 are available on the RFC website:

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

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Upcoming LCWR Dates

Fort Worth, Texas
August 19 -- 22, 2004

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

> LCWR Delegation to Mexico February 19-26, 2005

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

LCWR Delegation to El Salvador November 30 -- December 8, 2005

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