

August -- September 2005

LCWR Executive Committee Prepares for National Assembly

The LCWR executive committee met from July 15-19 at the Serra Retreat House in Malibu, California. Margaret O'Brien, OSU, facilitator for the 2005 and 2006 LCWR national assemblies, joined the committee for part of the meeting to finalize plans for the 2005 assembly. The plans include several engaging processes for reflection and dialogue on the direction for LCWR for the future, including a dynamic plan for conversation among the 14 assembly presenters and conversation session leaders on the final day of the assembly. Discussion among and feedback from the participants at the assembly will be key to setting directions for LCWR as it moves into the future.



Margaret O'Brien, OSU



The LCWR executive committee at the Serra Retreat House in Malibu, California (standing): Carole Shinnick, SSND; Maria Elena Martinez, OSF; Rose Jochmann, OSF; Mary Catherine Rabbitt, SL; and Constance Phelps, SCL; (seated) Beatrice Eichten, OSF and Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

The executive committee members worked on a number of other issues during their meeting including:

- the commemoration events of the 60th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- the June 2005 USCCB meeting
- the USCCB International Policy Committee meeting
- follow-up to the CARA inventory
- plans for the 2006 LCWR national assembly
- meeting with the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL)
- finance reports
- LCWR Jubilee Committee and History Committee reports

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LCWR Commemorates 60th Anniversary of Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: August 6 and 9

As Bea Eichten, OSF, LCWR vice president, represents the conference in Japan during the commemoration events of the 60th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, LCWR member congregations will be in solidarity with her, with the Major Superiors' Association of Women Reli-

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From the LCWR Presidency
Love Changes Everything

by Beatrice Eichten, OSF -- LCWR Vice President

This is the time of year for many transitions. Many of you have or are completing your ministry of leadership and moving on to other endeavors! Many are entering into this ministry and are experiencing the steep learning curve that comes with the job! Whether you are serving for the first time or as a "recycled" leader, you are beginning a journey into an unknown future with your sisters and colleagues.



sisters will remember is if you loved them." And my contribution to that word of wisdom is that love sees and seeks goodness. It means that the ministry we do finds its energy in our experience of the goodness of God and in our love for our sisters. That and a commitment to see the goodness in each person and event changes everything. The wonder to me is how much love I receive and how blessed I feel by the love of my sisters and my God. It turns my world around and will never, never let me be the same.

As I reflect on these transitions, I am reminded that, regardless of the important and significant things we are called to do as leaders of our communities, the core of our ministry is love.

Before being elected, as I was discerning about leadership, I heard a song¹ that periodically comes back to me as a reminder, a challenge, and an affirmation.

Love, love changes everything
Hands and faces, earth and sky
Love, love changes everything
How you live and how you die.....

Love, love changes everything
How you follow, Why you lead
Love will turn your world around
And that world will last forever.....

Yes, love, love changes everything
Live or perish in its flame
Love will never, never let you be the same
Nothing in the world will ever be the same

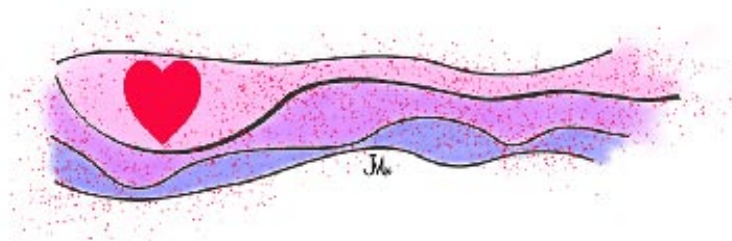
After election, a wise woman reminded me that while our leadership will do many things, "What the

To all of you who have served and loved your communities as leaders, we say "Thank you!" Thank you for the commitment, energy and vitality you have brought to your communities and to LCWR. We will

*The ministry we do finds its energy
in our experience of
the goodness of God
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miss you. To you who are beginning your ministry of leadership, we say "Welcome!" We look forward to building relationships of support and challenge as we seek to serve our communities, our church and our world with fidelity and love.

¹ Love Changes Everything, Andrew Lloyd Webber, from the musical *Aspects of Love*



LCWR Executive Committee Prepares for National Assembly

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- collaboration with other organizations
- updates on the Cameron 5 +2 meetings
- updates on the work of the Commission on Religious Life and Ministry

More information on some of these topics will be forthcoming at the LCWR national assembly and through other communications.

LCWR Commemorates 60th Anniversary of Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: August 6 and 9

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gious of Japan, and with the Japanese people.

LCWR members are encouraged to invite their members to engage in several activities:

1. Select, as a congregation, August 6 or August 9 as a day of prayer and fast that both nations will work for true peace and reconciliation. Invite others to participate in prayer services held by congregations and/or regions.
2. Be aware of local events held to commemorate the anniversary and participate if possible.
3. Send messages to President Bush and congressional representatives calling for an end to all deployment, testing, and use of nuclear weapons and support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Some members will be participating in one of four major events on August 6:

Nevada: "Many Stories, One Vision for a Nuclear-Free World" sponsored by Pax Christi USA and the Nevada Desert Experience held August 4-7, 2005 in Las Vegas, Nevada at the test site (www.paxchristiusa.org)

Tennessee: Several busloads of women religious from around the country are traveling to Oak Ridge where

nuclear weapons continue to be built. (www.stopthebombs.org)

California: Rally and march to Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab where scientists continue to develop new and modified nuclear weapons (www.trivalleycares.org) Site also has a link to nationwide community events: www.besafenet.com/nuclear.htm

New Mexico: in Los Alamos at Ashley Pond Park to say "Never Again! It started here-let's stop it here!" (www.lasg.org)

In addition, many local peace groups around the country will be conducting their own commemorations. Whether by prayer and fasting, or by participation in public events, or by both, women religious of LCWR will take this opportunity to call for peace among nations and a nonviolent way of living and resolving conflicts.

LCWR Endorses Children's Sabbath

LCWR has endorsed the 14th annual National Observance of Children's Sabbath, October 14-16, 2005, promoted by the Children's Defense Fund. The 260-page interfaith resource manual, *Putting our Faith into Action to Seek Justice for Children*, is available to assist congregations, parishes, and individuals plan worship, education, service and justice activities that focus attention on the plight of nearly 13 million poor children in our rich nation and call people of faith to respond. Single copies are \$7 each plus \$3.50 for shipping and handling. For information see CDF's web site at www.childrensdefense.org.

LCWR Offers Systemic Change Think Tank in 2006

LCWR's Think Tank VIII, The Roar and the Whisper, will be held in Tampa, Florida, February 12-14, 2006 and will be facilitated by Patricia Siemen, OP. The flyer is now available in the "LCWR Members Information" section of the LCWR web site. The flyer will also be made available to member congregations' justice, peace, and environmental coordinators. Registration is now open with a due date of December 1, 2005.

LCWR Supports Immigration Campaign

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops and a number of Catholic organizations with national networks launched in May "Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope," an immigration campaign with four specific goals:

1. Educate the public, especially the Catholic community, about church teachings on migration and immigrants.
2. Create political will for positive and comprehensive reform.
3. Achieve legislative and administrative reforms based on principles articulated by the Catholic bishops.
4. Organize and support Catholic networks to help qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms.

A core group of Catholic organizations is working to promote the campaign in all dioceses in the United States. While LCWR and CMSM are not connected to diocesan structures, the conferences are core members with a commitment to support the campaign in ways appropriate to us.

The Office of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) has also established a comprehensive website intended to be a resource for efforts on behalf of the campaign: www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

One of the first challenges is to assure that each bishop promotes the campaign in his diocese by appointing a "point-of-contact" to be the liaison with MRS. If any LCWR member knows that the diocese in which she is located has not identified a point-of-contact, especially in dioceses where sisters are working with immigrants, she is invited to encourage the bishop to make this appointment in order to promote the work of the campaign and to send the name of the person to Leo Anchondo, campaign manager, at LAnchondo@usccb.org.

Another challenge is the US climate of negativity toward immigrants, including many in the Catholic community. The MRS office has received a number of negative responses to the campaign. Such attitudes highlight the necessity of this particular campaign.

Following the announcement of the USCCB's campaign, a bi-national migration conference was held in El Paso,

Texas from June 23-25, 2005. Bishops from both Mexico and the United States, as well as bishops from Central America were numbered among the 200 participants. One of the speakers was Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington DC. Participants acknowledged that more intensive church efforts are needed on behalf of migrants for the following reasons:

- The migration of people in this era of increasing globalization of economies is a sign of our times that challenges governments, civic society and the Church to ensure human responses.
- There is a growing sentiment of negativity toward migrants, largely born from misunderstanding and misconceptions
- Inadequate public policies intensify the plight of the most vulnerable migrants faced with danger, family separation, and inhumane conditions.
- The increasing emphasis on border enforcement has contributed to a deterioration of the condition of migrants while not diminishing the flow of migrants.
- The church at all levels must recommit herself to provide a loving pastoral presence for migrants before, during and after their journey.

Attending bishops signed an agreement to increase coordination in advocacy on behalf of migrants, to increase cooperation in educating the Catholic faithful in both countries about immigration, to expand the dialog and collaboration to include the Central American bishops, and to increase coordination to promote public policies that address the root causes of migration through the elimination of poverty.

In acknowledgment of the last agreement, the elimination of poverty, the US Catholic Campaign will be coordinated with the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty, initiated by the USCCB and Catholic Relief Services. That campaign aims to reduce poverty through trade, aid, and debt reforms.

LCWR Bids Farewell to its Business Manager

Janes Moldiz, who has served as LCWR's business manager since 2003, completed her work at the conference on July 15. The LCWR staff wishes her many blessings as she moves on to new endeavors.



From the LCWR Executive Director

'Why Again Are We Doing This?'

Like so many groups of religious, my own province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is in the process of reconfiguration. My province, which is centered in Wilton, Connecticut, will merge with our provinces of Baltimore and Chicago on December 31, 2005 and will become the "Atlantic-Midwest Province." I have been very enthusiastic about this move for the last four years as it has progressed from an idea to a reality. It made perfect sense to me – in my head. I had neglected to attend, however, to my heart.

All that changed in early July when our province entered into a Graced History Retreat, a communal experience of reflection on the light, the shadow, and the hope of our shared history.

Our motherhouse is an exceptionally beautiful structure, and it never looked more beautiful than it did on that week-end. It sparkled like a jewel nestled in the rolling green of the Connecticut hills. Just about everyone who could participate in the retreat was there, including all seven of our living provincials.

As the days unfolded, we were drawn into remembering the wonderful and the difficult moments in our province's story. We sang. We laughed. We cried. We hugged. We prayed. We danced. We remembered. And as we did, feelings I did not even know were there bubbled up. I felt deep loss of the only province I have ever called my own. I felt sadness realizing that even now we have stopped referring to the place as "the motherhouse" and have given it a new name – so new, in fact, that I can't even recall it as I write this column!

All of this climaxed for me on the last evening prayer during which our provincial council unveiled a lovely wood bas relief sculpture of our foundress. In one hand she is holding the church in Bavaria to which we trace our foundation, and in the other hand she is holding the bell tower of our Wilton motherhouse. (If you would



Carole Shinnick, SSND

like to see a picture of the carving, just click this hyperlink: <http://www.ssnd-wilton.org/coveragesunmon.htm>)

As the picture was unveiled, our provincial, Mary Maher said something like, "This is our gift to the sisters of the Wilton province so that we may always remember that there was, indeed, a Wilton Province." That did it. I began to weep and could not stop. It hurt mightily to lose this, my congregational home. And for the life of me I could not

remember why in the world we were putting ourselves through this pain. "Somebody – anybody – remind me quickly – why are we doing this?"

Throughout the event nine of us had been assigned to take pictures. One late afternoon I had taken a shot of one of our older sisters, Sister Aquin, leaning on her cane and chatting with a cellist who had been playing during a reconciliation service. I love the picture of this wonderful woman, sitting at a respectful distance, deeply engaged in conversation with the young man.

The picture came to mind as I sat weeping in the chapel. And I had my answer. We were doing this as a communal generative act, creating a future some of us will never see. The cost, the sadness, the effort of restructuring is about stewarding the mission for future generations. It didn't stop the hurt, but it did bring peace.



Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly

Anaheim, California

August 19, 2005

Registration: 1:00 - 6:00 PM

Opening of Assembly: 7:00 PM

August 22, 2005

Assembly adjourns after LCWR Banquet

August 23, 2005

Departure and Travel Day

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

RFC Provides Formation Orientation for Leaders

The Religious Formation Conference is providing two events in 2005 that can be helpful for leaders interested in updated information on formation ministry, a changing dimension of religious life. RFC's two-day orientation program (Nov. 30 - Dec. 1, 2005 in San Antonio) is for those "new to formation ministry," including directors and leaders with responsibility for formation. The RFC Congress (Dec. 1-4, 2005 in San Antonio) also provides quality input on theologies of religious life. Contact RFC at rfc@relforcon.org or 301-588-4938 for more information.

FROM THE

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS LIFE

Visit the CSRL Exhibit at the August Assembly

All LCWR assembly participants are invited to stop at the exhibit of the Center for the Study of Religious Life (Booth #102) at the assembly in Anaheim. CSRL will have its publications on hand as well as information on the upcoming series of Interdisciplinary Forums on "The Individual and the Common Good."

There will be a drawing for a complete Cultural Audit (notebook and CD) on Sunday afternoon, August 21. Details will be available at the exhibit.

The new Young Religious' Reflections book will be on display containing comments from women and men religious 40 and younger. They discuss what religious life means to them and what they dream for the future of religious life in this country. Members of CSRL should receive their complimentary copy before the assembly.

Copies of the Facilitators' Reflections book published last year will also be available. This book included the responses of 40 women and men who facilitate chapters, assemblies and other large gatherings of religious. The facilitators shared the signs of hope and areas of concern they see in religious congregations today.

Issues of *Kindling* will be available, including the summer one focusing on the uses of the Cultural Audit along with other intercultural, cross-cultural and diversity resources.

Remember Mission Congress 2005

The Congress will be held October 13-16, 2005 in Tucson, AZ. Participants will journey into the desert for reflection through storytelling and experience engaging the question: What is the responsible contribution of the church in the United States in mission with the global community today? For further information and online registration see: www.uscatholicmission.org.