



# Imagining Leadership in a Global Community

2019 - 2020 Annual Report  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious



# Annual Report of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious 2019 — 2020



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# Imagining Leadership in a Global Community

The theme for the 2019 LCWR assembly proved to be prophetic: “Imagining Leadership in a Global Community.” The repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and our deepened awakening to systemic racism have clearly shown the interconnectedness of humanity and creation.

The coronavirus has had a particularly profound impact on our lives. As the pandemic spread, leaders have been tapping into their creativity and imaginations, finding new streams of connection and solidarity in our global sisterhood.

In order to lead in these disquieting and ever-changing times, LCWR continues to reach out to members, inviting us to virtual meetings where we share what is happening “on the ground.” The ability to come together using technology continues to bring home our desire to be more “technologically astute” and globally connected.

The passion and witness of our lives enables us to pivot and lead during this time of crisis. Early on as the virus took hold around the globe, we recognized that it spreads regardless of any real or imagined borders. We held in creative tension the needs of our members and the needs of the larger world. We re-imagined gatherings using virtual platforms and each of the national office ministers continued working remotely.

Lent was experienced very differently this year. Replacing the traditional washing of the feet were images of caregivers helping the most vulnerable to draw their next breath. Liturgy, which some of us might have taken for granted pre-COVID-19, evoked a deep, visceral desire for communion and celebration with other members

Knowing that there is no such thing as returning to “normal”  
we move into the future as ecclesial women  
living in hope  
and rooted in our faith.

*Standing: Elise García, OP; Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ; and Sharlet Wagner, CSC; seated: Carol Zinn, SSJ and Cardinal Joseph Tobin in November 2019*

of the Body of Christ. The empty tomb of Holy Saturday was something we were experiencing in real-time as we were awash in misery, sickness, grief, and death. Our current experiences became profoundly linked to the experiences of Jesus’ earlier followers.

Easter enabled us to reflect on hope and light in the midst of this pandemic. The living hope of the resurrection fuels our desire to continue to be God’s light and love. Knowing that there is no such thing as returning to “normal,” we move into the future as ecclesial women living in hope and rooted in our faith. We move into the future also knowing that we must give closer attention to our own part in racism.

The LCWR Call for 2015-2022 reminds us that we are committed to seeking God who beckons to us from a future abundant in grace, full of challenge, and rich in possibility. We continue to embrace this time as holy, our leadership as gift, and our challenges as blessing.

*Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ -- LCWR President  
Elise García, OP -- LCWR President-Elect  
Sharlet Wagner, CSC -- LCWR Past President*



# Offering Our Gift of Leadership in a Global Community

Our departure from the beauty of the Arizona desert in August 2019 invited us to continue “Imagining Leadership in a Global Community” and we began our journey to our home communities energized by the experience of assembly 2019. The words spoken during those days in Scottsdale invigorated us to: widen the tents of our hearts; be present at the borderlands; embrace vulnerability; celebrate our luxurious diversity; engage in web-watching and web-weaving; create the space for the transformation of religious life; stand shoulder to shoulder as global sisters and speak a different word to the world; realize our global sisterhood; create porous borders; develop integrative partnerships; express our mission in the public square; become technologically astute; lead religious life of the whole; deepen our sense of the charism of religious life; ground ourselves in contemplative practices; focus on making meaning in these times; understand the root causes of injustice; explore the integration of racism, migration, and climate crisis. (*Excerpts from content presented at assembly 2019*)

In the spirit of imagining how we might offer our gift of leadership in a global community, we committed to this work and packed our suitcases, downloaded our boarding passes, and headed home. And so life continued for the next few months with LCWR board, region, and committee meetings all focused on furthering the work presented in Scottsdale, Arizona.

In March 2020, this work *became* our life in ways we could have never imagined and continues to this day. COVID-19 turned the world upside down and it remains in a suspended place of multiple crises that appear to be with us for the foreseeable future: health and wellbeing, safety, travel concerns, group gatherings, uncertainty of the future, and a myriad of other concerns. Religious life here at home and around the world continues to be impacted by this reality.

In May 2020, our lives were strongly impacted in another way with the brutal death of George Floyd. We are grateful to all of those who are opening our eyes in new ways to the reality of systemic racism and calling us to significantly deepen our commitment to work for true racial equality.

Even as LCWR suspended all of its in-person activities from March through the end of June as well as its annual assembly, and discerns

how the work of LCWR will continue to unfold, we have, in fact, incarnated the challenges presented in Scottsdale. We know in our heart and soul that the tents of our hearts have been widened by the shared vulnerability of pain, suffering, and layers of loss experienced by our own members and people all over the world. We feel in our spirit the gift of solidarity birthed through our diversity as we come to know one another at the borderlands made possible by new partnerships and a fuller use of technology. We sense in our psyche the need to develop our global sisterhood through porous borders so we can stand together and witness to the world in this time of dual crises that our hope lies in the power of the Spirit of the Risen One. And we realize in our contemplative space the call to address the many consequences of failed systems and structures that impact our most vulnerable and marginalized sisters and brothers near and far as well as the cries of our common home, Earth, who pleads for healing.

In the pages of this most unusual LCWR annual report, we invite you to journey with us from Scottsdale through COVID-19 and through this period of social unrest in light of racism as we share how we felt called to put into practice the challenges of assembly 2019. We pray that our work might serve the needs of religious life leadership in ways that offer hope to a world in need. As we prepare for an online 2020 assembly, we once again open our hearts, minds and wills to “God’s Infinite Vision: Our Journey to the Borders and Beyond.”

Carol Zinn, SSJ - LCWR Executive Director



Carol Zinn, SSJ (second from left) addresses a meeting of sisters of various cultures in Richmond, Virginia in October 2019.

We pray that our work might serve the needs of religious life leadership in ways that  
*offer hope to a world in need.*



# Imagining Leadership from New Perspectives

## LCWR Assembly 2019

The 2019 LCWR assembly, entitled “Imagining Leadership in a Global Community,” engaged participants in the exploration of religious life leadership as this way of life grows more diverse and becomes ever more interconnected across cultures and continents. Held in Scottsdale, Arizona, the event brought together 663 members, along with more than 100 guests who included young religious, religious from a variety of ethnicities, facilitators who work with religious communities, and representatives of many of the national organizations serving religious life.



explore the root causes of injustice and, in particular, the intersection of racism, migration, and climate crisis, as well as the complicity of their congregations in these injustices. The resolution was affirmed after members listened to a panel on the intersection of these three matters.

During the assembly the members elected new leadership for the organization. Elise Garcia, OP, a general councilor for the Adrian Dominican Sisters in Michigan was selected as the president-elect. Elected to the LCWR national board were Marcia Ann Fiutko, FSSJ; Susan Francois, CSJP; Jane Herb, IHM; Theresa Sandok, OSM; and Michelle Stachowiak, CSSF.

LCWR honored with its 2019 Outstanding Leadership Award Norma Pimentel, MJ, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley and one of the nation’s strongest champions of immigrants.

Highlights of the assembly included the keynote address by Pat Murray, IBVM, executive secretary of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), and Sharlet Wagner, CSC, LCWR president, both of whom addressed the challenges and opportunities of leadership in a globalized world.



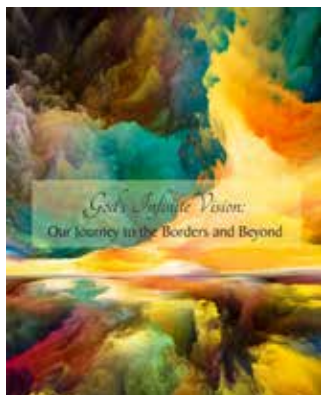
Several sessions of the assembly were dedicated to further reflection on trends occurring in society and religious life that shape the type of leadership that LCWR and its members must provide.



Weaving world and local realities into the assembly prayer, content, and conversations, the participants engaged in two actions to make their collective voice heard. In the first, the 663 members sent a letter to the president of the United States beseeching him to end all divisive rhetoric. In a second action, the members affirmed a resolution in which they committed for the next three years to continue to



## LCWR Assembly 2020



Throughout much of 2019 and early 2020, LCWR worked on plans for its annual assembly in August 2020 in Dallas, Texas. In May 2020 it became clear that the risks of holding an in-person assembly were too high due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a new plan was begun to host a virtual assembly instead.

While the title of the assembly, “God’s Infinite Vision: Our Journey to the Borders and Beyond,” did not change, the entire plan for the assembly did. The virtual assembly aims to help leaders name the transformation they are observing within the world, their institutes, and in themselves -- and to ask: What is being called for from women religious today?

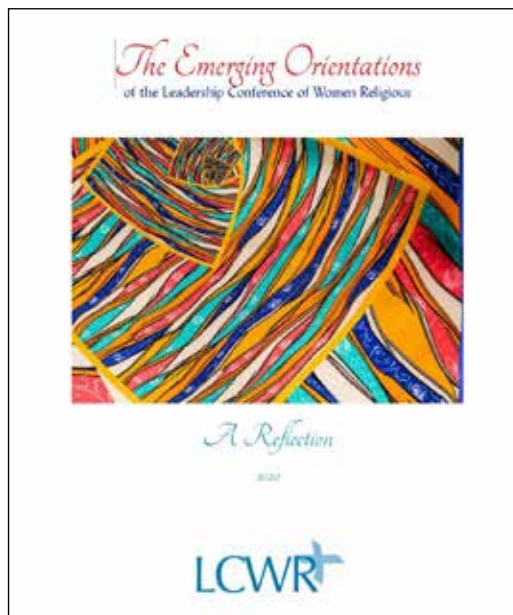
Preparation for the assembly has included reflection guides on two topics: “Transforming Our Individual and Collective Grief and Trauma for the Sake of the World” and “Embracing Vulnerability in Our Service of Leadership.” LCWR members and associates were asked to pray with these guides and were invited to participate in contemplative dialogue sessions with other leaders on questions provided.

## The LCWR Emerging Orientations

After a wide consultation process with both LCWR members and diverse groups of persons who offered insights about religious life, a committee of LCWR members created a set of “emerging orientations” to guide the conference as it moves into the future. The orientations identify realities in the world that are impacting and shaping the context of religious life.

Following the presentation of the orientations at the 2019 assembly, the committee created a reflection document for all members. In the document, members are asked to consider how the orientations invite them to:

- Use them as a lens to discern and meet the future
- Be aware of them as signs of the times that challenge us
- Make space for wayfinding ~ for new seeing, thinking, doing
- Recognize the seeds of the new already present in and among us
- Tend the evolving religious life for the sake of our fragile earth
- Embrace our vulnerability and meet God in the experience of dislocation
- Imagine leadership at “the crossing place”



### The LCWR Emerging Orientations

- 1 Global Consciousness Encounter
- 2 More Porous Borders for LCWR — ‘To Widen the Tent’
- 3 Integrative Partnerships
- 4 Mission in the Public Square
- 5 Technologically Astute



## A National Discernment on a Breakthrough Possibility for Religious Life

**L**CWR initiated an important new effort to explore collaborative and creative ways of leading US religious life in the near future. This new initiative provides an opportunity for leadership teams within LCWR to participate in a national discernment on future possibilities.

LCWR views this moment as a breakthrough possibility for this lifeform. As US religious life has experienced at other times over the centuries, this is a time for religious institutes to respond to the challenge of their realities and create a whole new way of working together across institutes.

The initiative began with all LCWR leadership teams watching a 20-minute video presenting the background and purpose of this new initiative and then engaging in reflection and conversation on the video content. All member institutes were asked to then participate in a survey conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) that looked at the capacity each institute believes it has for future chapters and future leadership.

At the same time, LCWR gathered in November in Chicago approximately 40 professional facilitators and consultants currently working with religious institutes, as well as executive directors of charism groups and federations. The participants discussed the need to explore possible new ways for religious institutes to collaborate on leadership in the near future. The facilitators and executive directors spent the day discussing how they might collaborate with LCWR and with one another as they accompany religious institutes throughout these next challenging years. The participants noted the importance of their being kept up to date with the national and geographic initiatives so that they can best assist the communities with whom they will be working.

All leadership teams were also invited to send two of its members to one of five LCWR geographic gatherings in spring 2020. At the gatherings, the leaders were to begin conversation about possible creative collaboration around questions of leadership of their institutes. Through a generous grant from the GHR Foundation, the costs of travel, accommodations, and materials were to be covered for each participant. With the outbreak of the pandemic, all of these meetings were cancelled.

This initiative will now be launched at the LCWR assembly.

... this is a time for religious institutes to respond to the challenge of their realities and create

*a whole new way of working  
together across institutes*



# Programming to Deepening Leadership Capacities

In fall 2019, LCWR offered a number of leadership opportunities to members that included expanded efforts to strengthen the awareness of the gift and challenge of being embedded in a global community.

In addition to offerings already available through Leadership Pathways, a new workshop focused on facilitation skills was developed and made available. The materials for this workshop include specific attention to intercultural facilitation. Many of the key elements of the workshop were translated into both French and Spanish. The workshop was offered both online and also to an in-person group consisting of two international leadership teams with representatives from a variety of cultures and no common language.

In September, 48 LCWR members gathered at the Carmelite Spirituality Center in Darien, Illinois to explore Practicing Leadership: How To Embrace a Vital and Vibrant Future. Participants imagined and re-imagined leadership for a global community in new ways. In January, 33 members gathered for the Leading From Within Retreat, spending time touching the deep grounding of their ministry of leadership.



*Practicing Leadership Workshop*

Final touches had just been completed on an updating of the New Leaders Workshop scheduled to be held at St. Mary of the Lake University in Mundelein, Illinois when the decision was made to suspend all in-person LCWR gatherings through June 30. The arrival of the coronavirus pandemic broke open in ways never anticipated the need to imagine and reimagine leadership in a global community. The need to suspend all in-person gatherings has meant the cancellation not only of the New Leaders Workshop but also of the Imagining Justice Workshop and the September Practicing Leadership Workshop.

## The New Questions

The crises of 2020 have also precipitated the need to think differently and ask different questions. The advisory committee for Leadership Pathways and the committee working on a revision of the LCWR Leading From Within Manual have been engaging the questions:

- What is it that leaders most need now?
- What can LCWR offer that will respond to those needs?
- How can LCWR do its work differently in response to this new reality?



## Sexuality Webinar

More than 430 LCWR members participated in LCWR's webinar, "Sexuality: An Evolving Understanding" in April with Lynn M. Levo, CSJ. The webinar provided leaders with a better understanding of what is evolving in the area of sexuality, especially with issues and questions related to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender,



*Leading from Within Retreat*

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## Programming for Deepening Leadership Capacities

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questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) persons. Participants reported that the information is helping them work with their current members, new members, the church, and those with whom they minister, especially in sponsored institutions. Participants also indicated a desire for additional education on topics related to sexuality and interest in continuing to use the webinar format of delivery. LCWR will be working with those results to develop other resources.

## Accompanying the Transitions of Religious Life

**L**CWR continues to offer an array of services to those religious institutes experiencing significant moments of transition due to their demographics and sense of their future mission.

It became clear this year that these activities have fallen into one of three -- sometimes overlapping -- stages of planning and implementation. The first was that of activities as usual. The second was that of transition to the transitions. The third stage, the one in which all institutes find themselves at present, is what writer and performer Lin-Manuel Miranda has called the time of "intermission."

The months following the August assembly continued to be filled with invitations to LCWR's director of transition services from communities to speak with leadership and/or membership about creating a viable future. In addition, the East Coast Vicars for Religious and for the religious in the Diocese of San Francisco called for presentations. LCWR was invited to lead two gatherings of religious who were new to the life. One group sought to deepen relationships with one another. The other included members of eight congregations in a particular geographic area. These women will carry religious life forward into the future. Their goals were to form relationships with one another as well as to learn to work and lead together.

At the same time, there were plans for transition to this transitional service. While this LCWR ministry during the past five years has given the conference an opportunity to assist a number of institutes to make changes enabling their life to continue, albeit differently, LCWR has learned that working one congregation at a time is slow. Some institutes have needed little assistance to make necessary changes. Still others believe they might have more time ahead of them than might be so. One of the learnings from these years is that most often a key element in the collaboration among institutes is geographic location. So, a number of steps were put into place to continue this work into the future..

"Intermission" came through COVID-19 causing a suspension to the in-person ways members enjoy gathering. Lin-Manuel Miranda describes intermission as a time when performers could let down their guard, connect with one another, change their costume, and recoup their energies for when the curtain opens next. Clearly, this is where LCWR members are today -- preparing for the next rising of the curtain.



One of the learnings from these years  
is that most often a key element in the collaboration  
among institutes *is geographic location.*

# Communicating the Message

LCWR provides a number of communications vehicles that are utilized by its members, other women and men religious, and the wider public throughout the United States and in other countries. These include:

- a monthly newsletter, *Update*
- a quarterly theological reflection on global concerns, *Resolutions to Action*
- a biannual journal, *Occasional Papers*
- a yearly reflection journal
- a website with many leadership and religious life resources
- Facebook and Twitter accounts

In early 2020 LCWR moved its Resource Sharing Forum (a listserv) to a new platform. The new listserv now automatically includes all LCWR members and associates and has become a helpful way to pose questions when a leadership team is searching for recommendations, processes, policies, and other matters.



## LCWR's Voice in the Public Square

The conference continues to be a source for information and analysis and is often contacted by media outlets and researchers throughout the country and the world seeking LCWR's insights on many societal and ecclesial matters.

The World Religions & Spirituality Project (WRSP) has now included a chronology of LCWR's history on its website. WRSP was established in 2010 at Virginia Commonwealth University to provide objective, reliable, and comprehensive information about the world's diverse array of religious and spiritual groups. The LCWR entry, along with the profiles of other groups, includes the organization's history and leadership structures.





## Imagining a More Just Global Community

**L**CWR's commitment to social justice is grounded in its 2015-2022 call which claims the moral imperative of the Gospel and pledges its collective voice in solidarity with others to establish economic justice, abolish modern-day slavery, ensure immigrant rights, promote nonviolence, and protect Earth.

### Educating for Justice

The associate director for social mission (ADSM) regularly writes on justice issues for LCWR's *Update* newsletter. She also publishes the monthly, News and Notes from the Social Mission Office, to share information, resources, and opportunities with those involved in the ministry of social justice.

LCWR also offered the 2020 Imagining Justice Alternative Program, April 20-23. Originally planned as a three-day event with Carrie Newcomer, the planning committee was able to deliver a simplified electronic version to participants. In addition, the ADSM presented two webinars, Advocacy 101: Building Relationships with Members of Congress and Earth Day at 50/Laudato Si' at 5: An Urgent Appeal for Action.

The Global Concerns Committee published four *Resolutions to Action* in 2019-20. Most dealt directly with the content of the LCWR 2019-22 assembly resolution, Creating Communion at the Intersection of Racism, Migration, and Climate Crisis. The committee also developed materials for use at the spring 2020 regional meetings to help members examine the systemic causes of racism, forced migration, and the climate crisis.

### Organizing for Justice

The social mission office seeks to help members and their justice, peace, and integrity of creation (JPIC) promoters take common action on justice concerns before the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government. The ADSM manages three affinity groups: immigration justice (397), creation justice (237), JPIC promoters (323), and a comprehensive database of more than 4,500 justice seekers which can be used to organize and mobilize women religious across the country.

LCWR is co-sponsoring the now-postponed SHARE El Salvador's Roses in December 40th Anniversary Pilgrimage to El Salvador and Honduras. Although the pilgrimage must be rescheduled, LCWR is still inviting members to organize 40 celebrations in 40 cities in remembrance of the 40th anniversary of the martyrdom of the four church women.

### Acting for Justice

LCWR used its collective voice to highlight justice concerns in 16 public statements; 13 statements to the press; and six amicus briefs. The conference also submitted comments on eight administrative rules; endorsed five pieces of legislation; provided written testimony to two congressional committees; and signed 68 joint letters to the Trump administration or Congress.

The ADSM joined #Faith4Asylum in planning and speaking at a public protest on the anniversary of the Trump administration's Migrant Protection Program (MPP) that forces migrants seeking asylum in the United States to remain in Mexico while they await their hearing. She also had the opportunity to visit the border in El Paso, Texas and to meet migrants made to wait in the streets of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua for a chance to exercise their right to seek asylum in the United States.

### Working with Partners

The ADSM serves on the core group of several USCCB staff committees including: Justice for Immigrants; Catholic Climate Covenant; and Coalition of Catholic Organizations against Trafficking. She also represents LCWR on the steering committees of the Justice Conference of Women Religious and the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and on the boards of NETWORK and US Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking. In addition, she serves on the Coalition of DC-Based Catholic Organizations and is the LCWR liaison to the Catholic Health Association and the United Nations Department of Public Information.

### Racism

After the horrific display of racist behavior in Minneapolis in May 2020, LCWR joined with many organizations, religious institutes, and individuals throughout the world in decrying the issue of unaddressed systemic racism in the United States. Recognizing that hateful remnants of slavery persist in the form of systemic racism, LCWR as an organization and its members are examining how the undeniable truth of this evil impacts nearly every aspect of life and how all have responsibility to be part of the solution to end this reality that is eroding the values of this nation.



## Governing the Conference in a Time of Significant Change

The LCWR national board has met several times throughout the year. Two of the meetings were in person – one in August at the assembly venue in Arizona and the other in February at the Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center in Sierra Madre, California. At other times the board gathered virtually. Some parts of each meeting have included the chairs of the 15 LCWR regions and members of the LCWR national office staff. Among the matters coming before the board were the following:

### Effectiveness of the Regions

The board reviewed the results of a survey that provided information on the effectiveness of the 15 LCWR regions and the challenges they face, and discussed the overall governance structure of LCWR. All were particularly interested in keeping the communication lines strong with the LCWR members, particularly given the changed make-up of the national board.

### Keeping Connected with LCWR at the Grassroots Level

Conversations took place on creating synergy among the board, the regions, and the national office to assure there is a solid connection among all.

### Other

Other topics on the board agenda have included:

- the LCWR emerging orientations
- the 2019 and 2020 LCWR assemblies
- the response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- the cry to address systemic racism

The LCWR board also met jointly with the board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men at their February meeting in California. This included sharing reflections on an excerpt from *New Wine in New Wineskins*, a publication of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, focused on the question: Considering the call to men and women religious to respond to the needs of today's world, what are you seeing today in religious life?



Considering the call to men and women religious  
to respond to the needs of today's world

*what are you seeing today  
in religious life?*



## Collaborating to Strengthen Religious Life as it Serves the Global Community

LCWR's service to religious life is greatly enhanced by the many collaborative partnerships it has with other organizations that serve religious life that includes, but is not limited to: the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), the National Black Sisters Conference (NBSC), Association of Latin American Missionary Sisters (AHLMA), the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI), the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC), the Religious Formation Conference (RFC), the Religious Brothers Conference (RBC), the Communicators for Women Religious (CWR), the Justice Conference of Women Religious (JCWR), Giving Voice, the Leadership Collaborative, and the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO).

Collaborative efforts with these organizations have resulted in significant consultations to share information and engage in transformative dialogue, produce resources and plan programs for religious, participate in one another's major conferences, and explore what can be created together for the future.

The following illustrate just some of the fruits of this collaboration.

### UISG

This year has provided a number of opportunities for the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) to collaborate with LCWR – both formally and informally as the two organizations work together on many matters facing religious life internationally. This included a visit to the LCWR offices in Maryland by the UISG president. At UISG's invitation, LCWR has also participated in several UISG offerings.



### Webinar on Reimagining the Future

In May UISG initiated a new series of webinars in which the leadership of religious conferences across the world shared updates on the lives and mission of religious in their countries, particularly as they are impacted by the pandemic, and their plans for the future. The first webinar was on religious life in the United States and included presentations by the three LCWR presidents and the executive director.

### Talitha Kum Assembly

LCWR's associate director for social mission was one of 86 delegates attending the first assembly in Rome of the Talitha Kum international network of consecrated life against trafficking in persons, a project of UISG where they set direction for the network for the next five years. She also received an award for her part in developing the network.



### Women Religious and Communications

LCWR's director of communications led a workshop in Rome on religious life communications that was co-sponsored by UISG and Multi-Media International. The workshop was preceded by a public gathering on the coverage of women religious by the media which featured an interview of a Reuters reporter based in Rome and the LCWR communications director.



### Discerning Future Directions Together

Leaders and staff from the organizations serving religious life often attend one another's conferences or meet to share ideas and plan for the future.

Every November the executive committees of the boards of LCWR, CMSM, and CMSWR spent an afternoon together for prayer, reflection, relationship-building, conversation, and planning. At their 2019 meeting the document, "New Wine in



*(continued on page 14)*

# Collaborating to Strengthen Religious Life as it Serves the Global Community

(continued from page 13)

New Wineskins," (published in 2017 by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) provided the framework for the group's conversation.

The group also discussed the joint visits that CMSM and LCWR had planned to make to various Vatican dicasteries in May 2020 and some of the topics the conferences wish to raise with Vatican officials. Due to COVID-19, the visits to Rome were cancelled.



LCWR members missioned  
more than 1000 women religious  
*for volunteer service at the border and*  
*donated more* than \$1000000.

## Rivers of Hope/Rios de Esperanza

The Porticus Foundation provided a grant to be utilized for leadership formation programs relative to Hispanic ministers/ministries. LCWR, in collaboration with CMSM, AHLMA, RBC, and the Mexican American Catholic College (MACC) worked throughout the year to plan two gatherings for women and men religious who serve in Hispanic ministries. These gatherings, entitled "Rivers of Hope/Rios de Esperanza" were scheduled to take place in July 2020 in Maryland and October 2020 in Texas. Due to the pandemic, these programs are being postponed until July 2021. MACC is interested in incorporating the learnings gleaned from this program into its curriculum and is conducting listening sessions to hear what religious serving in Hispanic ministries are experiencing as the participants await gathering in 2021.



## Collaborating at the US-Mexican Border

One of the finest examples of the power of collaboration was seen in the response of women religious to help meet the needs of asylum-seekers at the US-Mexican border.

In September 2019 Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) honored LCWR and its members with its Good Samaritan Award for a rapid and generous response in helping with this crisis.

LCWR members missioned more than 1000 women religious for volunteer service at the border and donated more than \$1,000,000.





# Forging Relationships to Serve the Wider Church

**A**s a national organization, LCWR associates with leaders of the Catholic Church on a number of commissions and committees through the US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB).

## USCCB General Assembly

This year the LCWR presidency and executive director attended two days of the November USCCB general assembly as observers. The LCWR officers had many opportunities during breaks to speak with various bishops and to provide a visible presence of LCWR women religious to members of the hierarchy. The meetings also provided an opportunity for the officers of LCWR and CMSWR to share a meal and ideas together.

## Commission on Religious Life and Ministry

The Commission on Religious Life and Ministry exists within the structure of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as the venue for conversation among the executive committees of the leadership conferences of religious (CMSM, CMSWR and LCWR), the National Conference of Vicars for Religious, the National Religious Retirement Office, and the bishops. At its November meeting, the commission members reported on the activities of each of the conferences over the past year and the intersection of the work of each, as well as the pending Vatican document on mutual relations.



We commit ourselves to work with others  
to nurture a church that is

*a more inclusive,  
welcoming community,*  
one that encourages meaningful expressions  
of faith and spirituality.

-- LCWR Call 2015 - 2022

## Committee on Clergy Consecrated Life and Vocation

The Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (CCLV) functions within the USCCB and is the venue for bringing together the various aspects of vocations to consecrated life and priesthood. This committee had been chaired for three years by Cardinal Tobin and its meetings are attended by the executive directors of the more than 15 national organizations representing the ministries of vocations, consecrated life, and vocations. The focus of its November meeting was “hope in the midst of challenge,” with conversation centered on the places where hope exists even if not always raised up.

Cardinal Tobin completed his term at the end of 2019. Bishop James Checchio (Metuchen, New Jersey) is the new committee chair and has invited different bishops serving on the CCLV to serve as a liaison to each of the three religious life leadership conferences. Bishop Ronald Hicks (Chicago) has been appointed the committee’s liaison to LCWR.

## Leadership Roundtable

The LCWR executive director served on a panel at the 2020 Catholic Partnership Summit hosted by the Leadership Roundtable in Washington, DC. The summit, entitled “From Crisis to Co-Responsibility: Creating a New Culture of Leadership,” created space for church leaders to address the most pressing church management challenges and opportunities of our times – including the twin crises of abuse and leadership failures.



# Leading Through a Pandemic

The outbreak of COVID-19 has called forth the best of all the competencies, wisdom, and compassion of LCWR members – as well as skills they may never have dreamed would be needed -- as they continue to lead through this unprecedented crisis. All leaders have been challenged to lead their institutes through an experience of uncertainty, and many have also experienced pain and deep grief as they have watched their sisters, employees, family, and friends struggle with the coronavirus – and/or with the financial challenges the pandemic has created. Some institutes have also had the wrenching experience of having their sisters die alone because of the quarantine restrictions in hospitals and other care facilities. In addition, the traditional rituals of prayer services, funeral liturgies, and burials have been postponed or carried out in highly modified forms.

Recognizing the difficulty of leading during this time, LCWR attempted to monitor the needs of its members during the pandemic. Members also have been receiving weekly messages from LCWR with resources. These include:

- Weekly reflections that can be used by individuals and/or groups designed to help all be conscious of the transformation occurring within themselves, their congregations, the nation, and the global community because of the pandemic and its impact on life. Through the generosity of the Sisters of Providence (Montreal) and the Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, most of these reflections are also available in Spanish and French.
- A suggested advocacy action in which leaders may invite their members to engage to assure that the needs of society's most vulnerable are being met as the world attends to the demands of the pandemic crisis.
- Print materials that offer both practical and inspirational ideas that may be useful to leaders.

In addition, many members took advantage of the opportunities to engage in virtual contemplative dialogue where they spend an hour with other members in prayer and conversation. Leaders report that these times of deeper reflection have helped create a sense of solidarity as they share with one another their hopes and challenges through the lens of faith and prayer.

LCWR also worked in close collaboration with the Resource Center for Religious Institutes which supplied many important resources addressing the legal and financial questions raised by religious leaders.

LCWR, like so many others, repeatedly has extended its deepest gratitude to all people who have been on the front lines of the crisis

as they care for the sick and prepare for what might be required of them next. Gratitude has gone as well to all who have been working tirelessly on the research needed to halt the spread of the virus, and, of course, to all people in the many roles of service that have kept society functioning throughout the pandemic.

At the time of the production of this annual report, the United States and the world are still undergoing the ravages of the pandemic and most of the member institutes of LCWR remain in lockdown.





# Life in the LCWR Regions

## Region 1

The 15 LCWR regions were asked to address the following questions in a brief report:

- What important issues did you address this year?
- What are some of the interests and concerns of your region members that surfaced consistently this past year?
- Is there something unique that your region has done that you think other LCWR members might find beneficial to hear?



Two of the major matters emphasized this year were:

- **The transitions experienced by many congregations and the grief that accompanied those transitions.** We decided that the fall meeting would concentrate on the needs of the leaders themselves. We invited Peter Lillian Di Maria, OCarm. Her 35 years of geriatric experience was evident in her presentation "Taking Care of Yourself While Caring for Others." Her talk provided us with plenty of material for contemplation and group discussion as well as valuable resources.
- **The two main initiatives of Region 1: Wisdom's Way and the Institute for Community Economics (ICE).** ICE is an investment group that focuses on building affordable housing, much of it in the New England area. Wisdom's Way is a program started by the members of Region 1 to support women who are pursuing education and would benefit from some extra assistance. Region 1 gives grants of up to \$3,000 to women for expenses related to their education but not covered by other educational aid—such as childcare costs, transportation, supplies, and more.

Connecticut | Maine | Massachusetts | New Hampshire | Vermont

## Region 2

Region 2 met in Latham, NY in October 2019. Former LCWR executive director Janet Mock, CSJ presented on the "Spirituality of Mission." The presentation focused on God's people seeing who we are – a mission that is captured in our presence of love. The question we probed was "How do we claim the grace and gifts of our Body of Wisdom inviting us to be this presence of love for our suffering world?" We also dedicated time during the fall meeting for the national agenda including the Emerging Orientations and Religious Life Leadership. Each meeting we dedicate time for the justice agenda and assembly resolution process led by our justice subcommittee.

Our spring meeting was planned for the end of March 2020. After consultation with the executive committee, we decided to cancel the meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The region rescheduled presenters Ann Scholz, SSND and Annmarie Sanders, IHM from the LCWR national office for the fall 2020 meeting.

Our region chair created a video for the region in lieu of not having the spring meeting and included brief updates on national LCWR business items.

New York



## Region 3

Region 3 responded to LCWR's challenge to raise consciousness of its complicity in racism. Sharon Durham, a Sister of Mercy associate and long-time activist with expertise in diversity training, invited us to open ourselves to hear her, even when what she said was painful to hear. We learned about white privilege from Sharon's sharing of herself and the excellent resources she brought. We also took a long, hard look at how we have failed to genuinely welcome sisters, associates, and co-workers who were not part of the dominant culture in our communities. Our fall meeting changed many of us from the inside. We committed to take on the difficult work of fashioning a culture of inclusion, now that we begin to recognize the poison in what generations – past and present -- learn both consciously and subliminally. "You've got to be taught to hate and fear; You've got to be taught from year to year. It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear. . ." (from "You've Got to Be Carefully Taught," Richard Rodgers)

COVID-19 cancelled our plans for a springtime exploration into intercultural competency, but a smattering of us from eight Region 3 congregations joined a Zoom conference in April just to connect at the heart level and share prayer and life's blessings, sorrows, and joys – a welcome respite!

New Jersey | Pennsylvania (East)





## Region 4

In response to the LCWR assembly resolution, members of Region 4 pledged to go deeper into the critical work of recognizing racism as a systemic, structural cause underlying and contributing to the multiple situations of injustice identified in the LCWR Call. Kari Pohl, CSJ coordinated a panel that offered during our fall 2019 meeting a one-day workshop entitled “Intersection of Racism, Immigration, and Ecological Devastation.” The panelists’ sharing helped the sisters to see the reality of the intertwining of the issues taking place right where they live, as well as the immediacy of using their collective power to take a stand on these issues.

At the spring 2020 meeting, drawing on her vast experience, Caroljean Willie, SC guided the women religious leaders through the day, focusing on how everything in our evolutionary universe is interconnected and constantly changing. Her presentation helped to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society, culture, and especially our interrelationship with the cosmos. She spoke about coping as we move out of our comfort zones and urged the sisters to continue to reflect on their “grace margins” as individuals and as congregations. Finally, she offered resources for developing a spirituality for the 21st century to enable the sisters to be transformed and transformative.

Delaware | Maryland | North Carolina | Pennsylvania (West) |  
South Carolina, Virginia, DC, West Virginia

## Region 5

Our only meeting this year was in October at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama. Our time together is always enriching as we share, both formally and informally, the joys, struggles, excitement, and conundrums of leadership at this time. The diversity of sizes, cultures, and charisms of our congregations, as well as the ages and cultural backgrounds of our LCWR members provide fruitful discussion while at the same time offering challenges to the ways we participate in and contribute to common projects and issues.

We continue to explore the LCWR Emerging Orientations. Technology is one area of focus for us – maybe the present social-distancing impositions will help us, as technology is no longer a choice, but sometimes the only way to effectively communicate!

We have dreams of being more intentionally inclusive, in our meetings and actions, of the congregations in our region who belong to CMSWR. There are pockets of the region where prayer and social gatherings on diocesan levels allow for some familiarity, so the foundation is laid.

Region 5 is presently evaluating our common project regarding race relations in Lake Providence, Louisiana. This was to be the focus of our May meeting which was canceled.

Alabama | Florida | Georgia | Louisiana |  
Mississippi | Puerto Rico | Virgin Islands



## Region 6

A two-day Region 6 meeting was held in fall 2019 which began with a prayer focusing on the presidential address by Teresa Maya, CCVI, “Comunión En Salida.” This prepared us for the delightful and insightful presentation, “Giving an Account for the Hope That is Within Us” by Marie McCarthy, SP, from the LCWR staff. Marie led us through an engaging time of reflection including creative table conversation and sharing around the need for communion among women religious today.

The following day we attended to the materials derived from the LCWR assembly. The videos presented helped us in pursuing the meanings and implementations of the Emerging Orientations and Essential Dimensions of Religious Life Leadership. A great deal of energy abounded among the group as we discussed the assembly resolution 2019-2022. Members expressed a strong desire to continue the conversation around this resolution at our next meeting.

Because the coronavirus outbreak occurred so close to the time of our spring meeting we were not able to convert our in-person meeting to a virtual meeting. Instead, the leadership of Region 6 communicated to the membership in writing an overview of plans from the LCWR national office and requested feedback on the plans.

A virtual region meeting is scheduled for early November.

Kentucky | Ohio | Tennessee



## Region 7

At Region 7 gatherings, we address the national agenda and discuss significant region issues, including having a better global understanding of religious life. At our fall regional, we had a videoconference with Ragheed Saeeds, OP, of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine, who shared her vocation story and mission of her community in Iraq. They teach all Iraqis, both Christians and Muslims. Conversation was intense but provided insight into the lives of Christians suffering in a war zone.

At our spring gathering, we had a process to help us look at different cultural communication styles and engage cultural diversity. We also had a follow-up presentation on one way to address climate change. The Dominican sisters, with the help of Graystone Consulting, shared their impact-investing fund, “Climate Solutions.”

We try to have extended conversations on issues that impact our ministry of leadership that include both internal congregational issues and the challenge of external global, societal, and ecclesial issues. These conversations surfaced topics, which we will continue to address at future gatherings and include: collaboration, the sexual abuse crisis, climate change, and leadership, particularly leadership development for younger members.

Indiana | Michigan





## Region 8

This year, our region was 18 congregations and 47 leaders strong! We gathered in mid-October to pray, play, ponder, and dream together. To that end, we:

- Invited Pat Bergen, CSJ to engage us collectively and dynamically in “Considering Evolutionary Consciousness”—a topic requested by members at our last gathering. Pat introduced the psychocultural concept of memes, how they grow and change over time, and why this concept matters as we consider the essential dimensions of religious life leadership — now and into the future.
- Engaged in extended conversation and discernment concerning the future of Project IRENE (Illinois Religious Engaging in Nonviolent Endeavors). Founded in 1995, Project IRENE is a not-for-profit organization of Illinois women religious, under the leadership of LCWR Region 8, that is dedicated to social systems change on behalf of women and children in Illinois through research, education, and action. With the retirement of Rose Mary Meyer, BVM, Project IRENE’s highly respected and effective executive director, the region recognized its call to engage LCWR’s Emerging Orientations by envisioning new ways of promoting the essential dimensions of Project IRENE.

The region did not convene its spring meeting due to the COVID-19 shutdown but looks forward to gathering again soon.

### Illinois



## Region 9

The speaker for the fall regional meeting, Bryan Massingale, STD, challenged the assembled leaders to explore their assumptions with regard to the systemic insidiousness of racism and the failure of the church to respond publicly and forcefully to the current rise of white nationalism. His presentation, “The Catholic Church and the Struggle against White Nationalism: Missing in Action?” asked each leader to acknowledge her discomfort as the reality of our own complicity in this was exposed. Fr. Massingale began his presentation with a reminder that he, and his fellow priests, look up to women religious as powerful voices in the struggle reminding us that though we are fewer in number we still have work to do in our church and our country.

The region’s legislative network committee offered a collaborative prayer for Earth Day. The COVID-19 pandemic halted plans to open all of our motherhouses for contemplative prayer on Earth Day but in true “can do” fashion, the prayer was made available to all publics via social media.

Plans are underway to welcome and house members of NETWORK, as well as to undertake actions to assure that our voices on behalf of justice will be heard when the Democratic Convention is held in Milwaukee.

As the pandemic continues, many congregations have dug deep to support local not-for-profit partners with financial assistance, food, and supplies, as well as volunteers when it is possible. Aware that the crisis of immigration has not ended, many congregations continue to assist at the southern border of the United States.

The formative work of the Wisconsin Religious Collaborative is ongoing. Director, Lyn Korte, has organized various advisory groups in many areas among them: archives; staffing and management; justice, peace and integrity of creation. These committees are made up of both sisters and lay staff from the member congregations.

### Wisconsin

## Region 10

Members of Region 10 continue projects in the various states promoting justice and serving basic needs.

The English tutoring program in St. Louis celebrated 21 years. Even though the program experiences challenges, 105 refugees and immigrants are enrolled. Also in St. Louis, Marian Middle School celebrated 20 years. An outstanding characteristic of the school is the follow-up provided from grade school onto college years.

The Omaha coalition trains and educates on human trafficking with hotels, motels, security, business travelers, utility groups, corporations, casinos, and bartenders. Online training is on the coalition's website, [Nottrafficking.org](http://Nottrafficking.org), making the hotel-motel training available throughout the country and internationally. Five countries have requested the training manual.

Iowa congregations continue working on human trafficking, especially struggling to pass a bill requiring state employees to use hotels where employees are trained to recognize human trafficking. An intercongregational day was sponsored with Ray Mattes speaking on grief, which many congregations face as changes rapidly happen. The 160 attendees positively evaluated the retreat-like experience and appreciated the input.

At the fall Region 10 meeting, Dorothy Heiderscheidt, OSF addressed "Creative Self Care," focusing on what prevents self-care and how to engage in it while in leadership. The spring meeting focused on the Spirituality of Interbeing and Our Common Home.

Iowa | Missouri (East) | Nebraska



## Region 11

Region 11 members identified the need to focus on partnerships — with lay staff and associates, and various constituencies and members in all age cohorts. We strive to use technology and social media to give voice in matters of moral authority and to risk letting go of what has been in order to embrace the Paschal Mystery bringing us to witness to a new way of life.

We have refocused educational and enrichment programs within our regional meetings with goals of providing access through technology to a broader audience. As we examine our efforts to "create communion at the intersection of racism, migration, and climate crisis," we affirm an emphasis on responding to the needs of our diverse region populations — specifically farmers and American Indians. We believe that our target populations on the margins are best equipped to teach us how to help them address systemic changes — to partner with them in the use of our voices and our resources.

Our gathering at the assembly was an important way of forming community within the larger LCWR community. Although we did not meet this spring due to the pandemic, we remain committed to the goals of LCWR and are grateful for the resources provided for our spiritual needs.

Minnesota | North Dakota | South Dakota | Wyoming





## Region 12

Region 12 primarily focused on the LCWR emerging orientations and the religious life leadership dimensions. Table sharing invited us to explore how to concretely live global sisterhood as inter-congregational and intercultural women religious. Conversations centered on how to create porous borders among congregations through collaboration within membership and with our lay co-ministers.

As a region of diverse cultures, we choose to invite international sisters who may not have leadership in this country to table conversations.

The region named a committee to expand the established inter-community initial formation sessions and broaden opportunities for “formation days” that bring together women and men religious in initial formation and those in life-long formation to engage in presentations and contemplative dialogue along topics of the LCWR emerging orientations.

Conversations about the LCWR assembly resolution led us to designate a region member to create a global concerns blog as a clearinghouse for social concerns and calls to creating communion at the intersection of racism, migration, and climate crisis. The region’s border projects fund donated to Global Response Management (GRM) for humanitarian response particularly during this pandemic crisis in the refugee camp in Matamoros, just steps from the international bridge between Matamoros and Brownsville, Texas.

Due to COVID-19 a virtual spring meeting was held to check-in and share on the deeper invitations amidst this pandemic.

Arizona | Arkansas | New Mexico | Texas

## Region 13

The past three years we have received presentations, education, and materials to understand the root causes of racism. In July 2019 one community hosted a theological institute with Shannon Dee Williams presenting.

Several of the communities have addressed the migration crisis by sending volunteers to El Paso and Juárez to help to provide welcome, shelter, and hope and to fill out applications. Most have sent monetary and actual supplies to help serve the migrants. They have also collaborated with the National Advocacy Center. Two communities are sponsoring a migrant family.

To combat climate change some motherhouses have installed solar panels, other through renovations or by building have reduced carbon footprints. On some of our property is low-income housing. Another community has an apiary to help repopulate bees. One community has adopted a land ethic to care for the earth into the future. Two have created an earth care committee and an ecological integrity committee.

A series to educate about human trafficking has been offered to growing numbers for five years. Two of our communities have collaborated with other agencies to establish a board of directors and set up a 501c3 to create Bakhita Mountain Home for women who have been trafficked and want to begin a new life. They have rented a house and are remodeling it to have seven women residents. The home is modeled after the Thistle Farms program in Kentucky.

Kansas | Colorado | Missouri (West) | Oklahoma



## Region 14

In response to the emerging orientations presented at the LCWR national assembly, Region 14 invited Donna Fyffe to facilitate our fall meeting in Burlingame. As part of her process, Donna encouraged us to brainstorm practical ways that we could implement the orientations in our region.

A committee from Southern California focused on ways to make the boundaries between sisters in our area more porous. Leaders from all religious communities were invited to come together for a conversation on our shared commitment to being women of the Gospel and to celebrate our “global sisterhood.” To our surprise, 54 sisters from a variety of congregations attended.

At the end of the experience the participants expressed an interest in meeting again to get to know one another better and explore ways to work together to further the mission. The group is now called Southern California Sisters Together and is a direct response to the LCWR call to create porous borders.

In place of the spring meeting, the executive committee invited region members to join a virtual call to share blessings, challenges, and ways to support one another during this challenging time. The response was enthusiastic and future calls are being planned.

California | Guam | Hawaii | Nevada | Utah



## Region 15

Last fall, as we do every 10 years, we traveled to Cottonwood, Idaho to the Benedictines’ St Gertrude’s Monastery. The distance is burdensome yet we gathered as 12 members. Periodically we participated in the monastic services. We had two local speakers who taught us about successful struggles against white supremacy in Northern Idaho. In addition, we heard from native tribes who historically occupied North Idaho in large numbers. Now white occupants and native people cohabitate peacefully.

The issue of time commitment kept surfacing. Our semi-annual gatherings decreased from three days, down to two-and-a-half days to two days. This made it challenging to cover the three to five hours of national LCWR business and have robust programming. This remained an unresolved dilemma.

Following the national movement of Nuns & Nones, we assembled a “panel in the round” with six women who identified as spiritual seekers who have no religious affiliation. The guests were an intergenerational mix of Latinas, lesbians, and mothers. One guest was a woman belonging to “Freedom from Religion.” Their stories were well received. Our plan for this spring had been to assemble speakers to address the intersectionality of race, immigration, and climate crisis.

Alaska | Idaho | Montana | Oregon | Washington

We ask the blessing of God on these initiatives  
placing our actions with the great activity of God  
*for the good of the world.*

LCWR Call 2015 - 2022



# Stewardship of LCWR's Financial Resources

During 2019, the LCWR finance and audit committee and the office staff continued to work diligently to ensure the careful stewardship of LCWR's resources. Despite a decline in leadership members and congregation members, LCWR remains financially viable. Re-configurations of congregations will continue to affect LCWR membership. The committee was aware of significant changes that have been occurring and in 2018 recommended that the 2019 and 2020 membership dues remain the same, \$730.00 per congregational unit and \$9.00 per congregational member.

## Auditor's Report

Linton, Shafer, Warfield and Garrett, PA completed an audit of LCWR's financial statements and issued an unqualified opinion, noting that the statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of LCWR as of December 31, 2019 and 2018. It notes that the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended are in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. In 2019, LCWR adopted several new accounting standards including: Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2014-09, Revenue from Contracts with Customers (Topic 606), as amended. ASU No. 2018-08, Not-For-Profit Entities: Clarifying the Scope and the Accounting Guidance for Contributions Received and Contribution Made (Topic 958) and ASU No. 2016-01, Recognition and Measurement of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities, Financial Instruments – Overall (Subtopic 825-10). The auditor noted no transactions entered into by LCWR during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. All significant transactions were recognized in the financial statements in the proper period.

## Investments

The LCWR finance and audit committee continues to meet with representatives of Christian Brothers Investment Services (CBIS) to review investment performance. The socially responsible investment (SRI) guidelines were reviewed and updated by the finance and audit committee and approved by the national board. In 2019 the mutual fund investments increased in value from \$11,375,363 at December 31, 2018 to \$14,370,832 at December 31, 2019. The realized and unrealized gain was \$2,995,469. Net purchases of investments in 2019 were \$1,300,000. Reinvested interest and dividends in 2019 \$3,699.

## Audited Revenues

The total operation revenue decreased 4% over 2019 compared to the prior year. Revenue from operations was \$1,600,850 in 2018 and \$1,541,937 for 2019. The major contributors to the operating revenue are membership dues, assembly contributions, publications, and grants.

## Audited Expenses

There was an increase of 8.6 % in expenses in 2019 compared to 2018. The major categories contributing to the increase are the programs and grant expenses.

## Net Assets

In 2019 LCWR net assets increased by 16.5% due to increases in investment activity.

## Budget 2019 to Actual 2019

Budget targets for expenses and revenue were carefully monitored. Operating revenues were 5 % over budget and expenses were 1% over budget resulting in a positive operating variance to budget due mainly to unrealized gains and assembly contribution increases in 2019. The operating revenue, excluding grant income, was \$1,541,937 verses budgeted revenues of \$1,368,600 for a favorable budget variance of \$173,337. The operating expenses, excluding grant expenses of \$353,015, were \$1,621,373 verses budget expenses of \$1,560,326 for an unfavorable budget variance of \$61,047 mainly due to an increase in program expenses.

## LCWR Building Proceeds Invested Fund

The existing LCWR building proceeds fund amount was \$1,242,303 at December 31, 2018. With the additional LCWR proceeds from the sale of the 8808 Cameron Street property and increased value in the investment, the fund increased to \$2,414,201 at December 31, 2019, an increase of \$1,171,898.

## Membership and Assembly Financial Assistance Donations and Grants

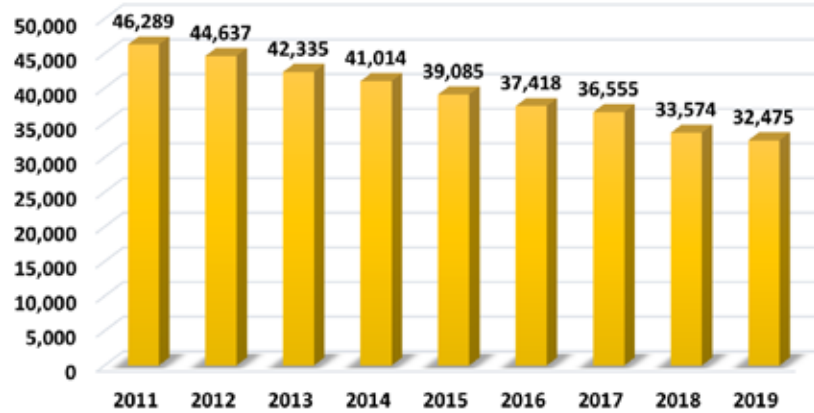
During 2019 donations from 55 congregations (five more than 2018) to be used to grant financial assistance for LCWR membership totaled \$19,541, an increase of \$1,158 from 2018. In 2019, 21 congregations, the same as 2018, received membership financial assistance grants for a total of \$10,380, a decrease of \$2,478.

In 2019, 66 congregations, one less than 2018, donated \$22,950 for assembly financial assistance grants, a decrease of \$9,815 from 2018. Assembly financial assistance grants were awarded to 15 congregations in 2019, one more than 2018, totaling \$21,194, an increase of \$2,237 from 2018.

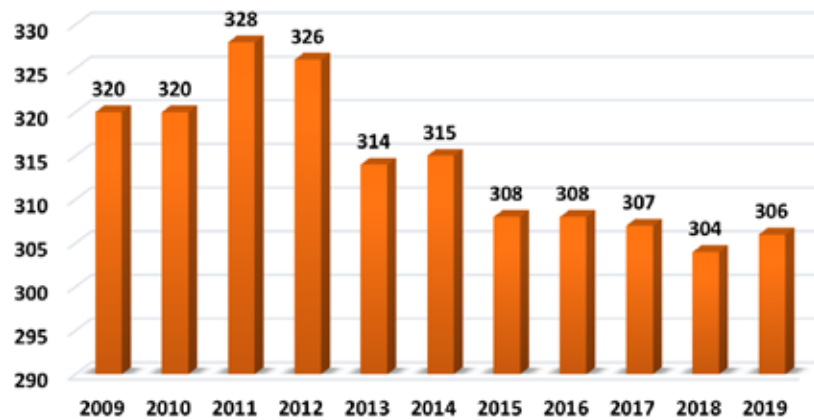
## COVID19 Outbreak in United States

LCWR expects that there will be a negative impact on LCWR operating results due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. At this time, however, the related financial impact and duration of COVID-19 cannot be reasonably estimated.

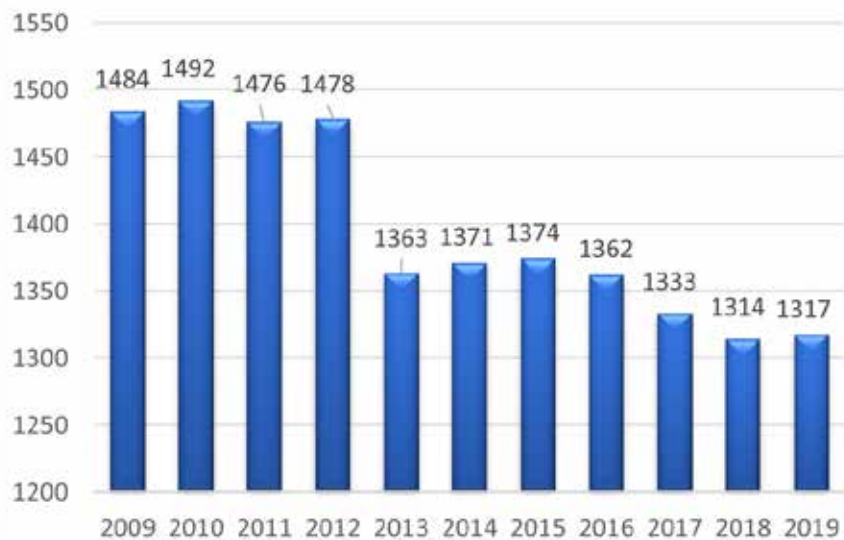
### Total Congregation Members



### Congregation Units

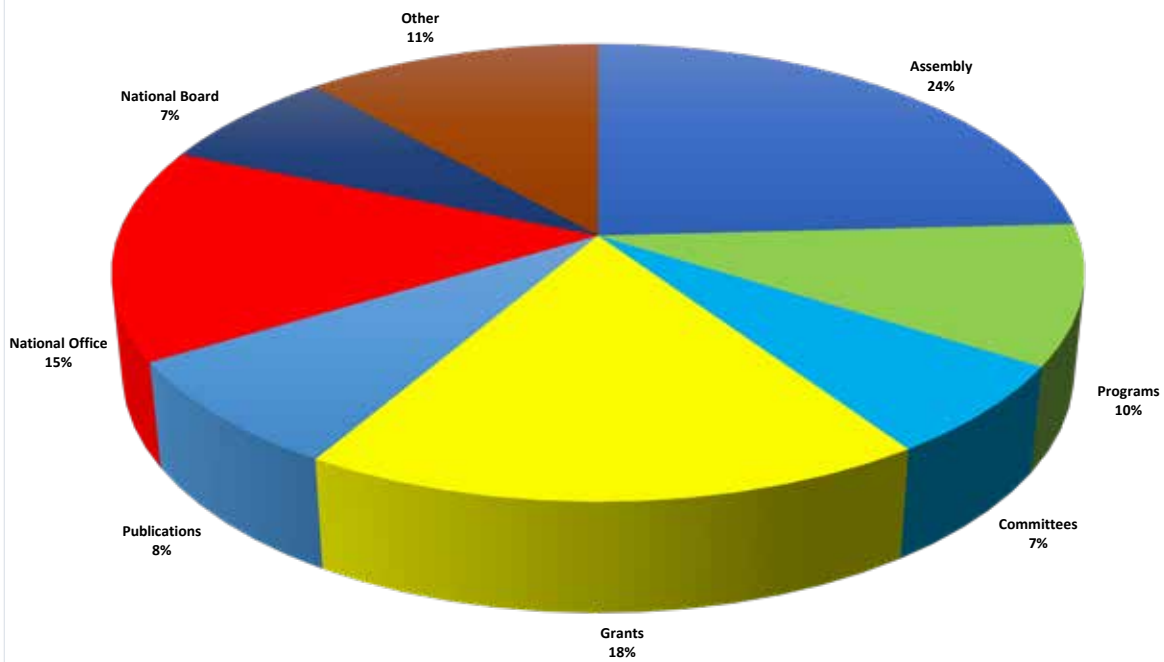


### Elected Members

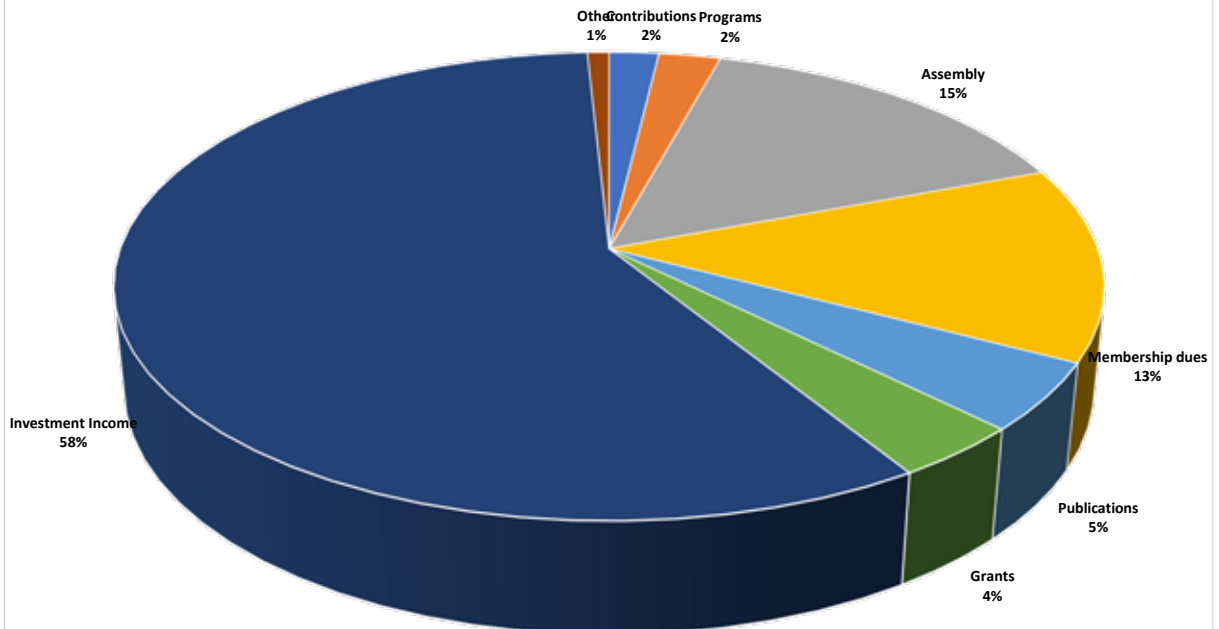




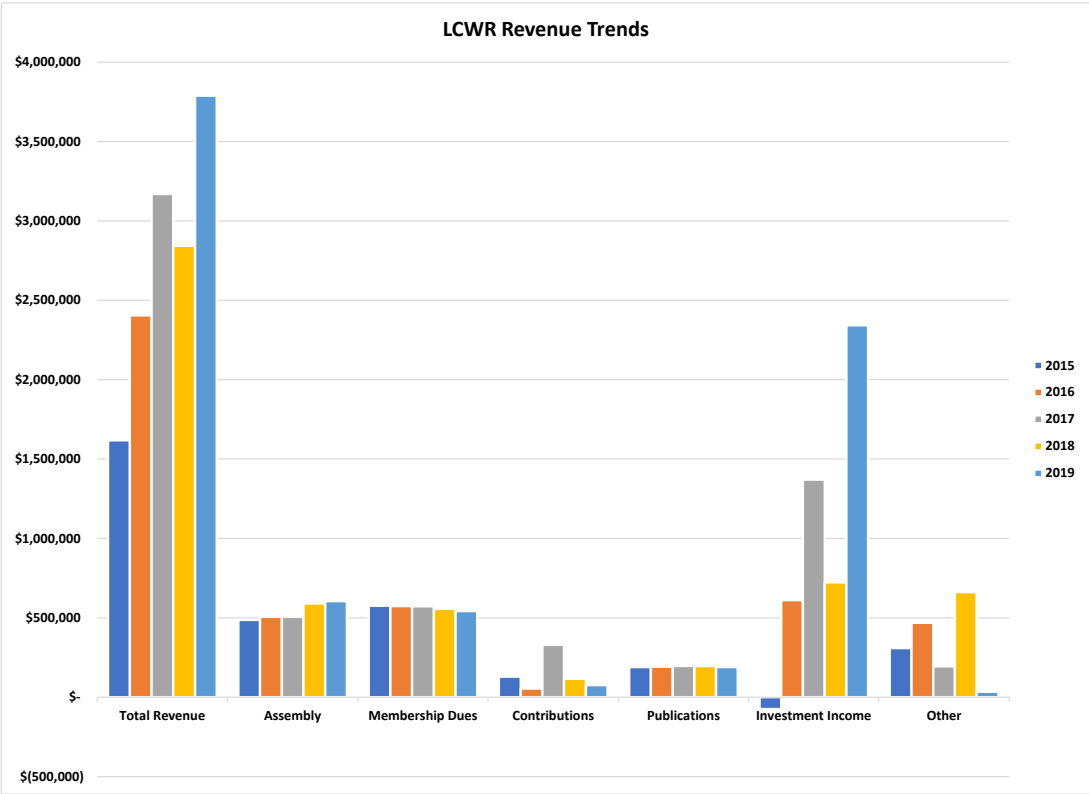
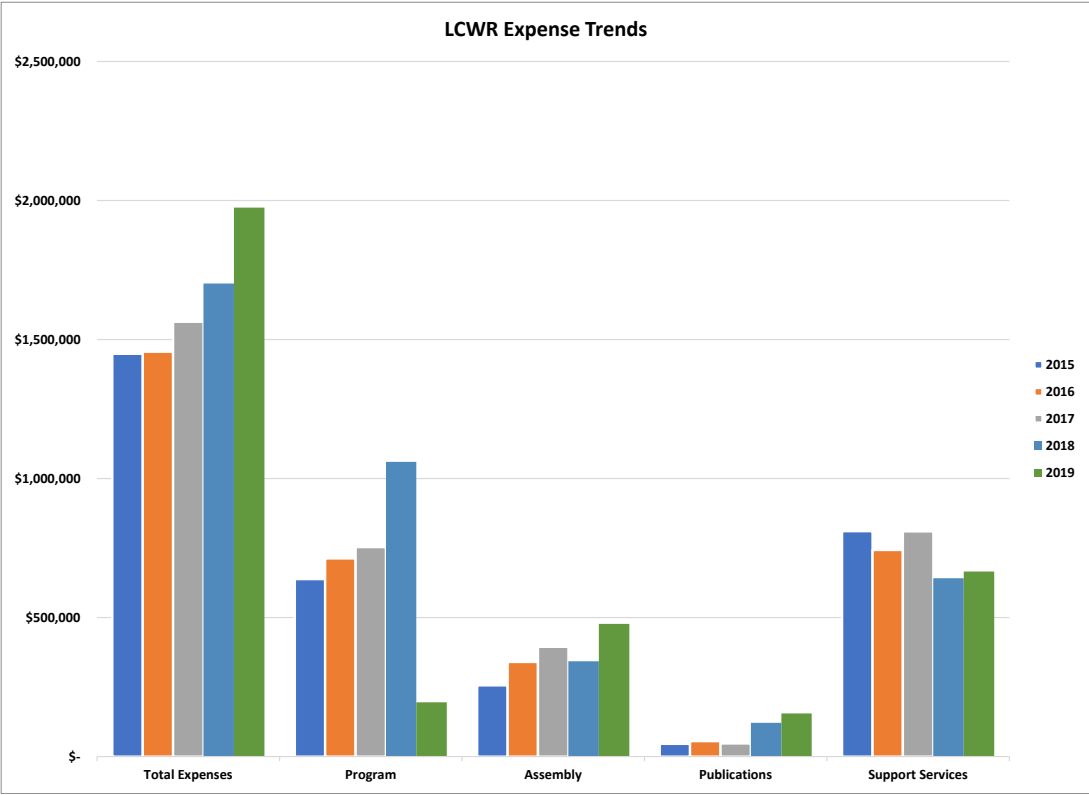
2019 LCWR EXPENSES



2019 LCWR REVENUES



# LCWR FINANCES



# Collaborating for the Mission of Religious Life

LCWR works closely with other organizations

serving women and men religious in the United States.

These organizations describe some of their activities since summer of 2019.

## Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Thomas Southard - Chief Operating Officer

Over the past year, CMSM has been moving forward in three primary areas: a strategic planning process that began with our national assembly in August 2019, refreshing and expanding programs, and undertaking a consultative process to update the national safeguarding standards.

CMSM will launch *Review for Religious: A New Series* in fall 2020, with Catholic University Press as our publication partner. Over the past year, we worked with the Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province (the prior publisher), to launch the new journal, hired a managing editor, and put an editorial board in place. The journal will have a print and online component, and a companion website for shorter, more reflective pieces, at [www.RFRjournal.org](http://www.RFRjournal.org).

The conference also is developing a program for younger religious that is focused on strengthening life and ministry during the early years, building fraternity across institutes, and developing skills for ministry and leadership.

The board has opened a search for an executive director after Mark Padrez, OP, was appointed to a position for his Dominican order in Rome.

Working with the Religious Brothers Conference, NRVC, and RFC, we planned a tri-annual Religious Brothers Symposium, scheduled for April 4. This was put on hold due to the pandemic.



## Resource Center for Religious Institutes

Sharon Euart RSM - Executive Director

During the past year RCRI's board of directors and staff continued to seek ways to carry out its mission of assisting religious institutes in tending to their stewardship responsibilities. Our annual conference in Dallas was a major highlight of our activities. The attendance was excellent and the spirit of the gathering, the workshops, speakers, worship celebrations, and opportunities for networking were exciting and enthusiastically received by the participants.



We had planned to provide a workshop for vicars/delegates for religious on the canonical options for governance for institutes in transitions. The presence of COVID-19 precluded our holding the workshop. We hope to reschedule the workshop in 2021. In fall 2020, with the support of the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocation (CCLV) and through the generosity of our GHR grant Planning for the Future, we will hold the fifth "Fidelity to the Journey" workshop. This will be similar to the 2018 gathering of a group of US bishops and leaders of institutes in transition entitled "Together in Communion." The aim of the workshop is a better understanding of the experience of transition and its impact not only on the religious institute and its members but also on the local church and to provide an opportunity for dialogue and mutual support between bishops and religious leaders.

The toolbox on the RCRI website continues to expand with new resources available to members of RCRI, LCWR, CMSWR, CMSM, UISG and vicars for religious. We are very pleased to expand the access giving more religious assistance with planning for transition.





## Religious Formation Conference

Ellen Dauwer SC – Executive Director

In October 2019 the Religious Formation Conference held its biennial Congress themed, “Being Signs of Courageous Hope.” The messages of keynoters, Bryan Massingale, SVD and Norma Pimental, SJ have been both inspirational and motivational in the unprecedented days that have followed.

This congress theme was integrated into the RFC annual programs, publications, and services. These include ForMission (two-year, cohort-based, nonresidential program for new formators), Life Commitment (eight-day preparation for final vows), and webinars with initial/ongoing formation themes.

Orientation to Formation, a weekend program for formators, leaders, and others, will be offered in October 2020. It will include an additional day-and-a-half for leaders as part of RFC’s commitment to supporting formators and leaders in the work of initial and ongoing formation.

RFC launched in fall 2018 with support from the GHR Foundation, Together, a program men and women religious in temporary vows or who are newly professed that provides theological education, community, and ongoing formation. The program’s intercongregational, intercultural participants shine with hope in the global sisterhood.

Recently RFC was delighted to announce a three-year grant from the Hilton Foundation. It will support two initiatives: the development of an intercongregational novitiate and the establishment of an online database of formation resources.



## National Religious Vocation Conference

Deborah Marie Borneman SSCM  
Director of Mission Integration

The National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) is committed to its mission to serve as a catalyst for vocation discernment and the full flourishing of religious life for the ongoing transformation of the world. Lifelong education, professional development, and ongoing formation is offered throughout the year in our 12 member areas. Nearly 250 participated in the summer and fall institutes – coming from Bangladesh, Canada, France, Ghana, Guam, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, the United States and the West Indies.

With the support of the GHR Foundation, NRVC released the NRVC/CARA Study of Recent Vocations to Religious Life, on the women and men who entered religious life between 2003 - 2018. This is the fifth major study commissioned by NRVC since 2009. The key findings include:

- Endless Call: Women and men continue to respond to the call to religious life
- Appeal: Drawn by prayer, spirituality, charism, community life, and mission
- Attributes: Culturally diverse; embrace intercultural and intergenerational living
- Lifestyle: Committed to living simply and in solidarity with the poor
- Outlook: Filled with abundant hope for religious life amid changing demographics

NRVC has more than 1,000 members representing more than 325 institutes and organizations. VISION Vocation Network and HORIZON Journal were recognized with 12 awards from the Catholic Press Association and Associated Church Press. The National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations awarded \$111,921 to help offset the impact of education debt.

## National Religious Retirement Office

Stephanie Still PBVM – Executive Director

Over the last year, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) has continued its mission to help religious institutes address retirement funding shortfalls, enhance eldercare, and plan for the ongoing needs of senior members.



In 2019, a total of \$28 million was distributed to 360 religious congregations to aid direct retirement needs. Known as Direct Care Assistance, this funding can be applied towards immediate expenses or invested for future needs. In addition, targeted financial assistance and consultative support were directed toward religious institutes with critical deficits in retirement funding.

The NRRO offers ongoing educational support on a wide range of retirement planning and eldercare topics. Resources include workshops, webinars, various online publications, and a five-part video series designed to promote effective property planning. Moreover, the NRRO's extensive network of volunteer consultants provide hands-on assistance to help participating religious communities evaluate everything from care delivery to financial and demographic projections.

In recent months, COVID-19 has changed the ways the NRRO operates, but it has not changed the NRRO mission. Whether working remotely or in the office, the NRRO staff strives to help religious institutes across the United States to embrace their current retirement realities and plan for the future.



## Friends in Solidarity

Joan Mumaw IHM

President and Chief Administration Officer

Friends in Solidarity, the US partner to Solidarity with South Sudan, began its fifth year as a not-for-profit and its seventh year in offices with LCWR and RCRI. We are grateful for this community of colleagues who are so supportive of our work with Solidarity. Over the past two years more than one million dollars has been raised to support the work in South Sudan. One third of this has come from congregational ministry funds and contributions. Your support of this collaborative initiative is greatly appreciated.

Solidarity with South Sudan has continued to be a pastoral presence to the people through civil war, a faltering peace process which resulted in a government of national unity and now the pandemic. South Sudan is the last of countries in ratings of preparedness to deal with this virus. All institutions have been closed since March of this year by order of the government and Solidarity struggles to care for their local staff persons who are totally dependent upon salaries to support their families. All this is happening in an environment of fewer contributions. Again, religious congregations have provided for the poor from their own decreasing resources and for this we are grateful.

# Generous Service to the Leadership Conference

LCWR thanks all who have contributed their time and talent to the conference through service as national board members, regional chairs, committee members, and as liaisons to other organizations.

## National Board

Yesenia Fernandez, MGSps  
Marcia Ann Fiutko, FSSJ  
Susan Francois, CSJP  
Elise García, OP -- President-Elect  
Eileen Haynes, SCL  
Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ-- President  
Jane Herb, IHM  
Kate Katoski, OSF -- Treasurer  
Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM  
Theresa Sandok, OSM  
Sharlet Wagner, CSC-- Past President  
Michelle Marie Stachowiak, CSSF  
Carol Zinn, SSJ-- Executive Director

## Regional Chairpersons

Barbara King, PBVM -- Region 1  
Cathy Sheehan, DW -- Region 2  
Eileen White, GNSH -- Region 3  
Toby Lardie, HM -- Region 4  
Renee Daigle, MSC -- Region 5  
Sharon Gray, SCN -- Region 6  
Ginger Downey, OLVM -- Region 7  
Betsy Pawlicki, OP -- Region 8  
Sharon Glumb, SLW -- Region 9  
Rita Menart, PBVM -- Region 10  
Rosemary DeGracia, OSB -- Region 11  
Elizabeth Ann Vasquez, SSCJ -- Region 12  
Jan Ginzkey, OSB (Phyllis Stowell, SCL -- Interim)-- Region 13  
Kathy Stein, CSJ -- Region 14  
Guadalupe Guajardo, SNJM -- Region 15

## Committees

### Advisory Committee for Leadership Pathways

Ellen Dauwer, SC  
Karin Dufault, SP  
Alba Letelier, SP  
Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP  
Pat Kozak, CSJ  
Marie McCarthy, SP, (LCWR staff)  
Margo Ritchie, CSJ  
Susan Weber (facilitator and evaluator)

### Awards Committee

Dawn Tomaszewski, SP  
Vicky Larson, PBVM  
Constance Phelps, SCL  
Susan Durkin, OSU  
Christine Beckett, SCN (LCWR staff )

### Contemporary Religious Life Committee

Ricca Dimalibot, CCVI  
Sheila Lemieux, CSJP  
Lisa Kane, OP  
Marie McCarthy, SP (LCWR Staff)  
Patricia McDermott, RSM  
Eileen McKenzie, FSPA  
Rosalia Meza, VDMF  
Annmarie Sanders, IHM (LCWR staff)  
Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR staff)  
Catherine Bertrand, SSND (Facilitator)

### Finance and Audit Committee

Kate Katoski, OSF -- Treasurer  
Janice Bader, CPPS  
Christine Beckett, SCN (LCWR staff)  
Mary Jane Herb, IHM  
Kathleen Keenan, RSM  
Patricia Moriarty, RSM  
Maureen O'Connor, OSF  
Veronique Wiedower, CSC

### Global Concerns Committee

Sue Dunning, CSJ  
Christine Garcia, SSND  
Donna Marie Gribschaw, CDP  
Eileen Haynes, SCL  
Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR staff)  
Patricia Siemen, OP  
Lucy Slinger, FSPA

### Governance Committee

Sangeeta Ayithamattam, SCN  
Vicki Bergkamp, ASC  
Maureen Geary, OP  
Maria Iannucillo, SSND  
Theresa Sandok, OSM (chair)  
Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR staff)  
Sharlet Wagner, CSC

### Occasional Papers Advisory Board

Cathy Bertrand, SSND  
Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP  
Pat Kozak, CSJ  
Anne Munley, IHM  
Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM  
Annmarie Sanders, IHM (LCWR staff)

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## Liaisons to Other Organizations

### Catholic Health Association Board

Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR Staff)

### Commission on Religious Life and Ministry

Elise Garcia, OP

Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Kate Katoski, OSF

Theresa Sandok, OSM

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

Sharlet Wagner, CSC

### Justice Conference of Women Religious

Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR Staff)

### Leadership Collaborative

Annmari Sanders, IHM (LCWR Staff)

### National Religious Retirement Office Assistance Review Committee

Susan Scholl, FSM

### National Religious Retirement Office Management Committee

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

### NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice Board

Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR Staff)

### Resource Center for Religious Institutes

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

### USCCB Accounting Practices Committee

Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM

### USCCB Committee on Consecrated Life and Vocations

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

### USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

### USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

### USCCB National Advisory Council

Kathryn Dougherty, OSF

Jenny Howard, SP

### US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking

Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR Staff)



We lead congregations  
faithful to the call of the Gospel  
that attempt to bridge the tradition  
which grounds us and  
the future which calls us forward  
LCWR Call 2015 - 2022

## LCWR National Office Staff



Carol Zinn SSJ  
Executive Director



Christine Beckett SCN  
Associate Director for  
Business and Finance



Mary Hughes OP  
Director of  
Transitional Services



Marie McCarthy SP  
Associate Director  
of Programs



Annmarie Sanders IHM  
Associate Director  
for Communications



Ann Scholz SSND  
Associate Director  
for Social Mission



Janette Cahill  
Executive Assistant



Carol Glidden  
Administrative  
Assistant/  
Membership  
Coordinator