

Update

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Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

April 2018

LCWR Initiates New Governance Model

From February 18-22, the newly formed LCWR national board met for the first time at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson, Arizona.

Following the vote at the 2017 LCWR assembly to move forward with a restructuring of the national board, the conference elected during the fall nine members to serve on the board: Rita Cammack, OSF; Jan Cebula, OSF; Susan Durkin, OSU; Yesenia Fernandez, MGSpS; Elise Garcia, OP; Eileen Haynes, SCL; Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ; Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS; and Mary Jo Nelson, OLVm. They join the LCWR presidency (Teresa Maya, CCVI; Sharlet Wagner, CSC; and Mary Pellegrino, CSJ) secretary Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF; treasurer Kate Katoski, OSF; and interim executive director Carole Shinnick, SSND in forming the new board.

In this time of shifting demographics and complex concerns for women religious, and ever-increasing needs in the mission they serve, it is hoped that this new board structure will allow for more nimble responses to the matters and initiatives that come before the board.

At its first meeting, the board put particular emphasis on assuring that close connections are established and strengthened with the regions and the members-at-large. To this end, the board initiated a new communications structure where three members of the board serve as liaisons to the 15 regions – with one board liaison relating to five regional chairs. The liaison will be the primary board contact for the five regions; she and the

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Members of the LCWR national board and staff meet in Tucson: Carole Shinnick, SSND; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; Mary Hughes, OP; Christine Beckett, SCN; Eileen Haynes, SCL; Mary Jo Nelson, OLVm; Yesenia Fernandez, MGSpS; Ann Scholz, SSND; Cathy Bertrand, SSND (consultant); Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ; Jan Cebula, OSF; Rita Cammack, OSF; Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS; Teresa Maya, CCVI; Kate Katoski, OSF; Sharlet Wagner, CSC; Marie McCarthy, SP; Elise Garcia, OP; Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF; Susan Durkin, OSU; and Mary Pellegrino, CSJ.

From the LCWR Presidency

Finding the Samaritans

by Teresa Maya, CCVI — LCWR President

We need to find the Samaritans. They are all around us, anchored in a faith that brings them into communion with God's most vulnerable people. I have been blessed with meeting some of them recently. Always intrigued by their witness, I cannot help asking "why" -- why do you feel compelled to be here? And their answer is always the same: these are human beings. They remind me that our call as apostolic women religious -- responding to critical human need -- is the heart of who we are.



LCWR has taken me to the border twice in the past six months. My first trip was with LCWR Region 12 to the Rio Grande Valley where we visited the community-based program ARISE¹ and also met with Norma Pimentel, MJ who shared her story. She explained that, early on, when the wave of migrant women and children reached a human rights emergency, an officer came into the hall where she and other volunteers were serving meals and helping families asking, "Sister, what are you doing here?" and her reply "we are restoring human dignity," moved the officer to go and get more help. More recently, the newly elected LCWR national board met in Tucson for the very first time, miles from the border. The conversations about the horizon for our conference and how to bring our core values and contemplative dialogue learnings into this new moment for our governance all took place with the saguaro cactus and the Arizona desert crossed by hundreds of desperate migrants on foot as a backdrop. Our board had the opportunity to meet the leaders of the conferences of our continent -- north and south.

Following the board meeting, we opened the meeting of the InterAmerican Committee (comprised of representatives from the religious conferences of Canada, CLAR, LCWR, and CMSM) as well as representatives from the Mexican conference. Together, we drove to the border with Jeanette and Cliff representatives from a Samaritan organization,²

-- a group of brave men and women in Arizona who daily trek into the desert to leave water for migrants, in response to the humanitarian call to provide aid. The journey these migrants make, on foot, without food or water, alone for days, facing inclement weather and dehydration even in the heart of winter, left me speechless. "The red dots on the GPS screen mark the places we have found human remains," explained Jeanette. There were so many my heart was crushed. Later she would add, "here, we had a cross, that marked the place where we found a still-born

child." The horror of a woman, in labor, exhausted, dehydrated and alone, forced to leave her child behind... the desperate cries for human dignity lost in the unforgiving heat have haunted me for weeks.

Praying at the border wall between Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, I felt a void, a black hole of pain and sorrow. How many thousands try this, every year? how many die in the attempt? and what kind of life do those who make it lead, hiding, afraid, exploited? Why? What is ours to do as a conference, as men and women religious of a continent with so many migrants, with so many walls?

The InterAmerican Committee conversations made me "over eager"-- here we were -- representatives of religious from Canada to Chile. A whole continent of men and women called to live the charism of religious life every day -- responding to critical human need. We can do something, surely, something! At the very least, notice the Samaritans who are already out there placing water where desperate human beings can find it, simply "restoring human dignity."

1. ARISE is co-sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Houston. www.arisesotex.org/
2. Tucson Samaritans | Los Samaritanos, www.tucsonsamaritans.org/

LCWR Initiates New Governance Model

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five regional chairs will connect via videoconferencing after each LCWR board meeting and at other times, as needed. In order to strengthen connections and communication with the national office, members of the staff will also be invited to participate in these calls. Susan Durkin, Elise Garcia, and Mary Beth Gianoli are temporarily serving as the liaisons while the board works on determining all of the responsibilities for the new board members and then assigning roles.

The board also recommended initiating a new column in the LCWR newsletter entitled, “News from the Regions.” The column will provide the regions an opportunity to share items of interest, such as outstanding speakers, deepening conversations, or justice actions engaged by that region.

Spring Regional Meetings

The board also set the agenda for the national business portion of the LCWR spring regional meetings. Included on the agenda are: an LCWR needs assessment process, the process for surfacing names for the LCWR president, the LCWR resolution process, the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry, the LCWR executive director search, the LCWR annual report, and ideas for promoting the upcoming LCWR book, *However Long the Night*, and planning possible events connected to it.

LCWR Needs Assessment Process

At their spring regional meetings, LCWR members will begin work on a two-part process that will highlight the services and resources provided by LCWR that actively support the ministry of religious life leadership as well as identify desires and hopes for the conference as religious life evolves. The process has been developed by Rita Cammack, Mary Beth Gianoli, and Mary Jo Nelson.

Regions will engage in an appreciative inquiry process at their spring meetings. At the end of May, an online survey will be sent to all members to glean additional information.

Orientation

LCWR engaged the services of attorney Martha Riva to lead an orientation session for the LCWR board and staff. The former senior vice president of governance at Bon Secours Health System, Inc., she brought her more than 30 years of legal and governance experience to the group as she conducted a presentation on governance for not-for-profit boards.

Appointments

The following appointments were made by the board:

Susan Durkin, OSU and Yesenia Fernandez, MGSps
LCWR executive committee

Theresa Sandok, OSM
LCWR secretary

Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ (chair); Judith Desmarais, SP;
Barbara Dreher, CSJ; Maria Iannucillo, SSND;
Joyce Lehman, CPPS; Theresa Sandok, OSM; as well as
Mary Pellegrino, CSJ; Sharlet Wagner, CSC, and
Christine Beckett, SCN; and Carole Shinnick SSND
(staff)

LCWR Governance Committee

The board also asked Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS to represent LCWR in the planning of “Together: A Collaborative for Theological Education, Formation and Community,” a program co-sponsored by Catholic Theological Union and the Religious Formation Conference. The program is for sisters and brothers who are in formation and have completed their canonical novitiate year. Participants will enroll in a graduate theology program at CTU, share community in the residence hall, and participate in ongoing formation together.

Meeting of LCWR-CMSM Boards

The national board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men met at the same time as the LCWR board, allowing the two groups to share together in prayer, liturgy, and meals. The two boards also met together for a morning.

InterAmerican Committee Visits US-Mexico Border to Pray for Migrants

A meeting of the InterAmerican Committee took place on February 23 in Tucson, Arizona immediately following the LCWR national board meeting. The InterAmerican Committee is comprised of the president and executive director from the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR), the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), and LCWR. This year the committee was joined by representatives of the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious in Mexico (CIRM).

The meeting began with updates from each organization and discussion of ways in which the groups may continue to collaborate. The participants then traveled to the US-Mexican border wall at Sasabe, Arizona where they prayed for all migrants, and particularly the Dreamers. They also heard from a leader of Tucson Samaritans, a group that takes food and water into the desert along migrant trails and provides medical aid when needed.

Participants in the pilgrimage were Brian Terry, SA; Mark Padrez, OP; Roberto Salvidar-Ureno, MSPS; and John Pavlik, OFM Cap from CMSM; Teresa Maya, CCVI; Sharlet Ann Wagner, CSC, and Carole Shinnick, SSND; from LCWR; Clara Alcantara Torres, ME; Francisco Flores, FSC; and Fr. Gerardo Maya Gonzalez, MJ

from CIRM; Mercedes Leticia Casas Sanchez, FSpS from CLAR; and Louis Cinq-Mars, OFM Cap; and Michelle Payette, MIC from CRC.

“Thank you for allowing us to participate in this experience of solidarity and presence with the reality of migration and dreamers,” said Clara Alcantara following the journey. “In religious life we have to be where there are no signs of the kingdom and actions such as today are steps to create chains of encounter and prayer.”

Michelle Payette added, “At the foot of this wall, in the desert, we prayed in solidarity with Dreamers and migrants. The text of Leviticus 19: 33-34 guided our prayer: If a foreigner resides with you in your land, you will not mistreat them. The foreigner who resides with you will be for you like your compatriot and you will love them as yourself, for you have been strangers in the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.”

“Standing on the US-Mexico border contemplating the miles of desert where thousands of migrants have died in an effort to get to a better life I prayed for our church,” noted Tere Maya. “I prayed because I realized what losing DACA means. We could fail the young men and women who deserve the basic human rights of work, education, and legal personality. But I prayed for all Christians everywhere to stand up and refuse to fail our fellow human beings by the complicity of silence. This would be the greater moral failure, to remain silent when human dignity is being refused.”



Top, right -- InterAmerican Committee participants prepare for their trip to the border. Top, left and bottom, right -- Committee members pray in Sasabe, Arizona at part of the border wall between Mexico and the United States

Anita Baird, DHM to Receive LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award

The LCWR 2018 Outstanding Leadership Award recipient will be Anita Baird, DHM.

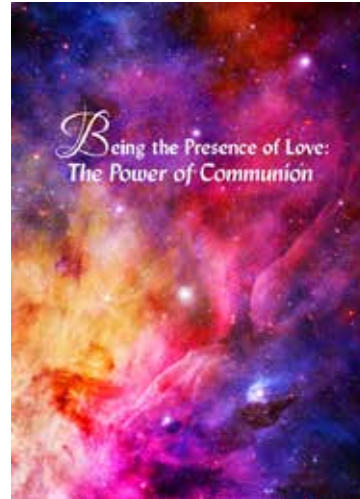
Anita has played significant roles in effecting systemic change for persons who experience poverty and marginalization, and has worked for decades to address the root causes of racism on local and national levels within the Catholic Church and in the civic community. She was the first African-American to serve as chief of staff to the archbishop of Chicago, was a founding director of the Archdiocese of Chicago's Office for Racial Justice, and served as liaison for Cardinal Francis George for race relations in the city of Chicago.



A member of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, Anita has served as her community's regional superior, provincial councilor, and most recently as its US provincial. Among her many leadership positions, she was president of the National Black Sisters' Conference.

LCWR will bestow this honor on Anita at the August assembly in St. Louis, where members will have an opportunity to learn more about her groundbreaking leadership.

LCWR thanks all who participated in the selection process for this year's award, and most especially the members of the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Committee: Jeannie Masterson, CSJ; Dawn Tomaszewski, SP; Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM; and Christine Beckett, SCN (staff).



LCWR Members are Asked to Encourage Participation by Facilitators in the LCWR Assembly

LCWR is inviting professional facilitators who work with institutes of women religious to attend the LCWR assembly. The conference invites its members to encourage the participation of these women and men who are assisting religious congregations in significant ways.

The conference recognizes that many leaders are using the services of facilitators for their chapters and assemblies, for work with their leadership teams, and in other capacities.

As a service to both LCWR members and to the facilitators, LCWR began to make attendance possible for them in 2016. The facilitators are present for all the general sessions, and have the opportunity to be at tables and small group conversations with other facilitators. They report that this participation and opportunities for networking with other facilitators have been invaluable.

Any LCWR members who are working with a facilitator who has not already received an invitation to the 2018 assembly and who would like that person to be on the assembly invitation list is asked to send the facilitator's name and email address to Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org.

LCWR President Featured in US Catholic

The March 2018 edition of *US Catholic* magazine includes a four-page feature on LCWR president Teresa Maya, CCVI, entitled, “Live the change.” The magazine’s editors interviewed her on the evolution of religious life into the future.



Translation of LCWR Article into French

“Entrer dans une communion plus profonde,” a translation into French of the *Occasional Papers* article, “Moving into a Deeper Communion” by Liz Sweeney, SSJ, is now available on the LCWR website. The translation was provided to LCWR by the Society of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ).

A number of articles from *Occasional Papers* have been translated into other languages and can be accessed on the [LCWR site](#).

LCWR Noted in Houston Chronicle

The Houston Chronicle ran a front-page story on February 26 entitled, “As DACA deadline looms, churches open doors,” detailing the work across the country among Christian leaders advocating for immigrants. The article quotes LCWR associate director for social mission Ann Scholz, SSND saying, “Priests and nuns accompanied immigrants to this country and served them as they settled here, a mission that continues with more recent arrivals. Our hospitals, schools, social service agencies serve communities in need and those tend to be immigrant communities. It is still our call to work with the most vulnerable. The story of immigrants is our story.”

Suggestions for LCWR Award Nominees Due by April 16

The LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Committee invites members to suggest the name(s) of women religious for the 2019 award. A form is available at lcwr.org/members. The committee will take all offerings into consideration as it prepares the slate of nominees to be presented to the regions during the fall 2018 meetings. Completed form(s) should be sent to Christine Beckett, SCN at cbeckett@lcwr.org by April 16, 2018.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR New Leader Workshop
 Conference Center
 University of St. Mary of the Lake
 Mundelein, Illinois
 April 12 — 15, 2018

LCWR Assembly
 St. Louis, Missouri
 August 7— 11, 2018

Leading from Within Retreat
 Bethany Retreat Center
 Lutz, Florida
 February 10 – 15, 2019

LCWR New Leader Workshop
 Conference Center
 University of St. Mary of the Lake
 Mundelein, Illinois
 April 4 — 7, 2019

LCWR Assembly
 Scottsdale, Arizona
 August 13 — 17, 2019

Leading from Within Retreat
 Redemptorist Renewal Center
 Tucson, Arizona
 January 12 – 17, 2020

LCWR Assembly
 Dallas, Texas
 August 11 — 15, 2020

Catholic Community Stand with Dreamers, Prays for Congress

The Catholic community continues to advocate for passage of the Dream Act of 2017. It remains the best legislative response to the crisis President Trump created in September when he determined to end the program initiated by President Obama to protect migrants brought to the United States as children. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program expired on March 5. Today, the only things standing between 800,000 DACA recipients and deportation are two temporary injunctions protecting the program while the courts consider challenges to President Trump's action.

On February 26, nearly 50,000 Catholics participated in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) national "Call-in-Day" for the Protection of Dreamers. Catholics across the country called their members of Congress to urge them to find a just and humane solution for these young people without threatening the well-being of their communities.

The next day, in response to requests from Dreamers, the PICO National Network and Faith in Public Life partnered with a coalition of Catholic organizations, including LCWR, to organize a Catholic Day of Action with Dreamers. Hundreds of Catholics gathered for morning mass with [Bishop John Stowe, OFM](#) at St. Peter's Church. Following a brief orientation to the day, they processed to the Capitol for a press conference which included remarks by Daniel Neri, a Dreamer from Indiana who told his story; JoAnn Perch, RSM; and Elise Garcia, an Adrian Dominican, who said she was risking arrest as "an act of solidarity" with Dreamers. In his remarks, Tom Reese, SJ, recounted the story of Paul on the road to Damascus and called out Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wisconsin) for his inaction on immigration reform leading the crowd in a chant of "Paul, Paul, why do you persecute me?"



LCWR staff member Ann Scholz, SSND (center) prays at Capitol Hill

After the press conference those gathered prayed the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary connecting the sufferings of Dreamers to those of Christ. As they completed the 4th mystery the group made its way to the Rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building. There they received Bishop Stowe's blessing and continued their prayer.

When ordered by Capitol Hill police to disperse, a group of 40 Catholic leaders chose to continue to pray and sing. They participated in this simple, prayerful act of nonviolent civil disobedience to protest the lack of movement by Congress and the Trump Administration in addressing the crisis faced by Dreamers and their families and to demand a narrow legislative response that will protect Dreamers without harming their families or communities and without further militarization of the border. Twenty-four women religious were among those arrested. The Day of Action was captured on [Facebook Live video](#).

Six Catholic bishops sent [statements of support](#) for the action, with Cardinal Joseph Tobin declaring: "The Archdiocese of Newark supports Bishop John Stowe and the other participants in the Catholic Day of Action. May your testimony soften the hearts of our legislators so that justice may flourish for our brothers and sisters, the Dreamers. Count on our prayerful solidarity."

On March 5, Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso participated in [a rally](#) for Dreamers on the national mall and in a briefing on Capitol Hill to discuss border issues, featuring the Hope Border Institute's recent study, *Sealing the Border: The Criminalization of Asylum-Seekers in the Trump Era*. The [report](#) chronicles the ongoing denial of due process rights to asylum-seekers at the southern border.



LCWR member Elise Garcia, OP addresses the crowd

Catholic Energies Program Helps Communities Actualize their Values

In response to Pope Francis' environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Catholic Climate Covenant developed the Catholic Energies program as a turnkey resource to help any Catholic campus improve their climate impact by reducing energy waste on their campuses.



Buildings in the United States waste \$200 billion a year on energy and emit more than 2,600 million metric tons of CO2. Many aging, Catholic-owned buildings and campuses are ripe for energy-related improvements. Catholic Energies aims to help Catholic communities deliver measurable financial savings in operations and maintenance with proven, affordable energy demand improvements, renewable energy resources, and the procurement of cost reductions.

Catholic Energies seeks to help communities address four of the most common barriers to action.

- *Lack of time* – Most campuses lack the time and money to pursue energy-saving programs that are big enough to truly make a difference to their bottom line.
- *Lack of trust* – Catholic Energies is grounded in Catholic social teaching and they believe that it is vital to inform Catholics about their opportunity and obligation to care for creation and those who suffer from environmental harm, especially the poor and vulnerable. They offer a full menu of educational programs linking the energy programs with *Laudato Si'*.
- *Lack of money* – Implementing energy projects can be daunting, and figuring out ways to pay for these projects can be just as hard. Many projects can be paid for through the energy savings alone, and Catholic Energies offers a variety of financing options to campuses that are interested.
- *Convincing a large number of stakeholders* – Catholic organizations are centerpieces of their communities, and as such many people play a role in shaping campus priorities. Catholic Energies provides resources to help move leaders to action, and convince stakeholders that pursuing energy projects is the right course of action for reasons of stewardship, practicality, and to more fully live their faith.

Anti-Human Trafficking Legislation Passed by House

Two pieces of anti-trafficking legislation recently passed the House of Representatives and are currently under consideration by the Senate.



[H.R. 767: Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Act of 2017 \(SOAR\)](#) directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a program, train health care providers to identify potential human trafficking victims, work with law enforcement to report and facilitate communication with such victims, refer victims to social or victims service agencies or organizations, provide such victims with coordinated care tailored to their circumstances, and consider integrating this training with existing training programs.

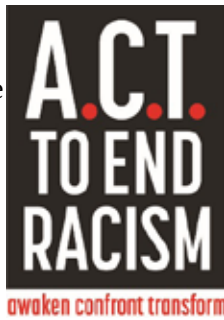
The companion bill, [S. 256: SOAR to Health and Wellness Act of 2017](#) must still be considered by committee. The bipartisan legislation is sponsored by Senator [Heidi Heitkamp](#), (D-ND) and currently has six co-sponsors, four Democrats and 2 Republicans.

The House also passed [H.R. 1865: Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017](#) which would allow the government to prosecute websites which knowingly help or promote sex trafficking, and also allow users to sue those websites. The word “knowingly” is key, as the legislation was sparked by the results a Senate investigative report in July, [“Backpage.com’s Knowing Facilitation of Online Sex Trafficking”](#) which found that the website consciously allowed advertisements for child prostitution and other crimes.

The Senate version of the bill, the [S. 1693: Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act \(SESTA\)](#), has been reported by committee and is awaiting a vote by the full Senate.

People of Faith Unite To End Racism

On the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 50,000 people will travel from across our nation to Washington, DC and kick start a multi-year campaign to put an end to racism in US communities and institutions. The campaign, an initiative of the National Council of Churches USA, seeks to build a faith-based movement to ACT to End Racism. The aim is to: Awaken the nation to the truth that racism is ever-present, deeply rooted in American culture, and profoundly damaging to our communities; Confront racism, speak truth to communities and institutions, and stand against injustice; Transform the hearts, minds, and behaviors of people and structures that shape society.



Events in Washington will include an Ecumenical Worship Service at 6:30 PM at St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Tuesday, April 3; ACT to End Racism Rally on the National Mall on Wednesday, April 4; and a national day of advocacy and action on Thursday, April 5.

Among the speakers at the rally will be Bishop Vashti McKenzie, Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Jennifer Harvey, Bishop Darin Moore, Rev. Freddie Haynes, Danny Glover, Esther Lopez, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, DeRay McKesson, Bishop Michael Curry, Phil Lee, Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, Rev. Jim Wallis, Lou Gossett, Jr., Rabbi David Saperstein, Christie Duncan-Tessmer, and many others.

Those planning to attend the rally should register at www.rally2endracism.org.

Catholic Climate Covenant to Celebrate Earth Day

Many faith communities have incorporated Earth Day into their annual calendars for awareness and action. This year, the Catholic Climate Covenant's (CCC) Earth Day resource focuses on how overuse of single-use disposable plastics contributes to what Pope Francis calls "the throwaway culture." From contributing to land and marine pollution to increasing our use of carbon-producing fuels, reliance on single-use plastics has a devastating impact on God's creation.



CCC's one-hour program, *Beyond a Throwaway Culture: Reduce Waste—Grow Community*, addresses the growing problem of single-use plastic. It includes prayers, readings, actions, and a video. The program may be used by a parish, school, youth group, university, religious community, or other group that is interested in exploring how we as Catholics can work individually and collectively to move beyond a throwaway culture. By the end of the hour, individuals and communities will be ready to commit to using less disposable plastic and participating in activities to reduce single-use plastic. Program materials may be downloaded [here](#).

Looking for Easter or Jubilee Gifts?

Consider supporting LCWR and purchasing sets of 10 greeting cards based on contemplative insights of its members. Priced at just \$10.00 for the set of 10, these folded cards make great gifts and are a means of sharing ideas about contemplation, communion, and Gospel-centered living. All proceeds from the sale of cards go toward supporting the work and mission of LCWR.

Cards may be purchased online at lcwr.org/item/contemplative-greeting-cards. For more information, contact Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org.





- Letter to members of Congress expressing signers' commitment to securing permanent protections for Dreamers and calling on Congress to pass the Dream Act without further delay. LCWR (2/13/18)
- Endorsement of Senator Kamala Harris's amendment to prohibit federal officials from applying penalties or bringing criminal charges against a person if they are providing or attempting to provide humanitarian assistance to unauthorized immigrants. LCWR (2/13/18)
- Letter to members of Congress expressing support for passing the Dream Act, while rejecting proposals that would punish asylum seekers and vulnerable children, or abolish the limited protections created by Congress to prevent their return to persecution, trafficking, and other serious harms. LCWR (2/14/18)
- Open letter mourning the brutal murder of 17 children of God at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and calling on Congress to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Ann Scholz, SSND (2/15/18)
- Endorsement of Act Now: Unite to End Racism events on April 3-5, 2018 to launch the National Council of the Churches USA and partners' campaign to end racism. LCWR (2/19/18)
- LCWR Statement condemning the epidemic of gun violence in the United States and calling elected officials to immediately take up legislation that requires universal background checks and mandatory waiting periods for all gun purchases; bans civilian ownership of high-capacity weapons and magazines; and makes gun trafficking a federal crime. LCWR (2/23/18)
- Letter to Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi in support of H.R. 1865, the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017 (FOSTA), legislation which would ensure that websites that knowingly facilitate sex trafficking will be held accountable for their actions. LCWR (2/26/18)

- Letter to House and Senate appropriators asking them to oppose President Trump's request to fund the construction of a wasteful border wall and the expansion of an indiscriminate deportation force that targets immigrant youth and long-term residents. LCWR (3/5/18)
- Letter from faith-based organizations asking members of Congress to cut funding for immigration detention, deportation, and border militarization. LCWR (3/7/18)
- Letter to Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen from faith-based organizations respectfully requesting that the Department of Homeland Security extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nepal for 18 months. LCWR (3/12/18)
- Endorsement of Senator Diane Feinstein's the Assault Weapons Ban of 2017 (S. 2095). LCWR (3/14/18)
- Amicus Brief in support of the plaintiffs appeal for affirmation of the injunction stopping the President's order to end DACA in the case before the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit: Regents of the University of California, et al. Plaintiffs-Appellees, v. US Department of Homeland Security, et al. Defendants-Appellants. LCWR (3/16/18)

Upcoming Conference on Religious Archives

Boston College will host a program entitled, "Envisioning the Future of Catholic Religious Archives," on its campus from July 11-13, 2018. The program will bring together religious leaders, archivists, historians, and scholars to explore issues surrounding religious collections and available options to preserve and make these significant collections accessible to religious communities, scholars, and the larger public.

The program planners are looking for religious leaders who can join the conversation and bring their unique perspective as the group attempts to develop a national strategic plan to preserve these collections. An application must be submitted by April 14, and invited participants will be notified by May 8. Additional information is available at: catholicarchives.bc.edu.

Resources Available for Religious from NRRO

In addition to direct financial assistance, proceeds from the annual Retirement Fund for Religious (NRRO) collection enable the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) to furnish a broad array of retirement and eldercare resources. For example, the Management and Continuing Education Assistance program provides eligible religious communities with distributions of up to \$5,000 per calendar year for financial and retirement-related education and/or the acquisition of basic management tools. The application form is quick and easy to complete and can be submitted at any time throughout the year. Distributions can be used for various purposes, such as



- Workshops on eldercare, fund-raising, or financial planning
- Software and training for the first-time computerization of accounting and/or development activities
- Financial forecasts
- Eldercare consultations

Additional information about NRRO funding and resources is available on the following links:

Financial assistance: <http://www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office/financial-assistance/index.cfm>

Resources and services: <http://www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office/resources/index.cfm>

Tending the Vineyard Videos, a free, online series on property planning: <http://www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office/tending-the-vineyard/index.cfm>

Is Your Leadership Term About to End?

If your leadership term is ending this month, we ask you to submit a change of leadership form found in the LCWR Members' Information section (password-protected) of the website at lcwr.org/members/lcwr-membership-information.



World Day of Prayer for Vocations - April 22, 2018

The purpose of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations is to publicly celebrate vocations to ordained ministry and religious life in all its forms. Many parishes and religious institutes commemorate this day with prayer for vocations and vocation promotion events. Considering that 73% of women and men professing final vows participated in one or more parish activities and 88% served in one or more parish ministries before entering religious life, the presence and participation religious in activities that mark this special day is important.

Annual Summer Institute

The NRVC annual Summer Institute will offer five workshops at the downtown campus of DePaul University, July 10-21, 2018. Participants may attend one or several workshops to enhance professional development, network, and learn best practices in vocation ministry. The five workshops being offered are:

- Orientation Program for New Vocation Directors, July 10-14, 2018
- Behavioral Assessment 1, July 16-18, 2018
- The Assessment of Family of Origin Issues for Candidates to Religious Life, July 16-18, 2018
- Ethical Issues in Vocation and Formation Ministry, July 20-21, 2018
- Developing Intercultural Competencies in Screening and Assessment, July 20-21, 2018

Online registration is available at NRVC.net.

Recognize Vocation Directors

At its convocation, NRVC recognizes the outstanding accomplishment of its members and asks leaders to consider nominating their vocation director to be recognized. Nomination forms are online at <https://nrvc.net/274/publication/4171/article/16562-2018-convocation>.



RFC Partners with Catholic Theological Union to Launch Together Program

Together: A Collaborative for Theological Education, Formation, and Community will be offered as a pilot program beginning with this Fall semester (2018). Religious sisters and brothers who are currently in formation and have completed their canonical novitiate year are invited to participate. Participants will enroll in a graduate theology program at CTU, share community in a designated space in the residence hall, and participate in ongoing formation together as an inter-congregational, intercultural, and intergenerational cohort.

Applications now open for the first Together living/learning community!

More information and an application are available at www.together-formation.com.

News from the UN

April 22—International Mother Earth Day

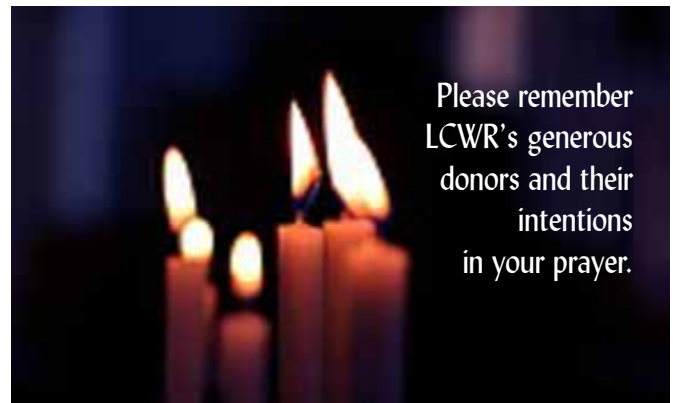
In 1972 the United Nations organized the first UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. It marked the beginning of a global awareness of the interdependence that exists among human beings, other living species, and the planet.



In 2009, the United Nations General Assembly recognizing that Earth and its ecosystems is home to the global community and acknowledging that in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social, and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with Earth, designated April 22 International [Mother Earth Day](#).

Position Open at Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation is looking for a senior program officer for the United States and Latin America. The person will carry out grantmaking activities, contribute to the strategic development of specific funding portfolios, interface and support key grantees, and collaborate with the program team to advance the mission of the foundation in its Catholic Sisters Initiative. A [full job description](#) is available online.



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by Joan Mumaw, IHM
 President
www.solidarityfriends.org

Solidarity is Having an Impact!

"At Solidarity I have become a better man who respects women. I have grown academically and spiritually. I have learnt primary class management skills which apply well beyond the primary level. I have grown socially and learnt how to relate with diverse personalities and cultures. I know that commitment, hard work and loyalty, with prayers and faith leads to success. Finally, Solidarity has clarified my personal vision and has strengthened my confidence and competence."

These are the words of a graduate of the Teacher Training College (TTC) at Yambio. He is being considered for a scholarship for further studies with a view to returning as a tutor at the college. Two graduates are already studying in Uganda with this in mind. Several other students have also reflected on the meaning of their time at the TTC. Most have mentioned the value of living and studying with persons from different ethnic groups. These are the future leaders of the new South Sudan. Solidarity and all who have supported this effort can be proud of what has been achieved. Nearly 400 teachers have graduated from this program since 2013.

This year there are 108 students coming from all over the country and Nuba Mountains which are in Sudan; the staff includes 10 Solidarity members, including

one lay volunteer. The campus development is almost complete with a new library/computer building and two new dorms which will enable the college to accept more women students. The curriculum is compressed into five trimesters in order to reduce the cost of transport. (Roads are insecure and many students must be flown in and out of Yambio.) High inflation, a bankrupt government, and civil unrest have increased the cost of educating a student to \$4000 per year for room, board, tuition, and transport for those who need it.

Graduates are reporting back on their employment. Many are being made headmasters and/or education supervisors in their areas. Given that many teachers only have four to six years of primary education, the graduates of the Solidarity TTC are viewed as highly educated. The college is pursuing affiliation with the Catholic University in Juba.

Religious of the world supporting Solidarity are making a difference. For further information on how you can become involved contact joanmumaw@solidarity-friends.org.

