

# Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Annual Report  
2008 — 2009



Midwiving an Unknown Future

# Annual Report of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious

*2008 – 2009*

- 3 A LETTER FROM THE LCWR PRESIDENCY
- 4 A LETTER FROM THE LCWR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- 5 THE YEAR IN REVIEW
- 17 THE LCWR REGIONS
- 25 LCWR FINANCES
- 27 LCWR COLLABORATORS
- 29 LCWR NATIONAL BOARD AND COMMITTEES
- 30 LCWR NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF



## **Leadership Conference of Women Religious**

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# Midwiving New Life...

**W**e have framed our reflections, vision, and directions this year with the challenge of Midwiving a Vibrant Future. At the 2008 assembly Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ reawakened our spiritual call to Climb the Holy Mountains before us in our present reality as religious leaders.



J Lora Dambroski, OSF

The challenge to midwife was clearly laid before us with the presidential address of Mary Whited, CPPS. We heard, "How do we 'midwife' religious life into a future that is unfolding even as we assemble? How do we encourage our members to hold on to what is needed and to let go of what is not essential so that we are freer to climb? Can we risk conversing about the hopes and fears that stir in our hearts? Are there other mountains we need to be climbing? Are the mountains we are scaling worth the climb?"



Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA

Hebrew midwives, Puah and Shiprah, companioned our work as a conference looking for the stirrings of new life. From a midwife's perspective, we were challenged to lead in a graced manner, indeed challenging a cultural stance that could easily be individualistic, thoughtless, and withdrawn.

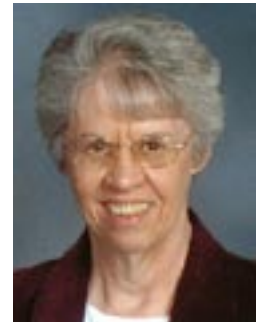
The Shared Futures process stretched us to risk new thinking and yet to retain what is core to who we are. The national board and regional focus on this brings us to a new place of discernment at our 2009 assembly.

Regions were intent on looking at ways in which we could stir new life as leaders seeing potential in places not tried before. By sharing our ideas and

resources, we learned the extended meaning of communal. We took our joint LCWR/CMSM resolution on climate change and moved in concrete ways to reduce our carbon footprints to protect all of God's creation.

The *Women & Spirit* history project came off the planning boards, opening in Cincinnati, Ohio, with the Smithsonian, Ellis Island and other sites on the horizon.

**Reframing difficult realities into situations of hope.** As the apostolic visitation of congregations of women religious in the United States was announced by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, we were true to our contemplative approach to realities before us. We encouraged our members to participate in the visitations and to tell our own stories.



Mary Whited, CPPS

**Leading from a midwife's perspective — a communal, reconciling, contemplative, and hopeful perspective.** The call rings in our ears and in our hearts as we are engaged in a doctrinal assessment of the LCWR initiated by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. With the prayerful and strong support of one another, we are proud to represent LCWR from a place of integrity open to the lead of the Spirit of God.

Thank you for midwiving hope and life on this year's journey and the climb of one more Holy Mountain! (*Women & Spirit*, indeed!)

J Lora Dambroski, OSF — President  
Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA — President-Elect  
Mary Whited, CPPS — Past President

... we are proud to represent LCWR from a place of integrity...

# Nine Months

In April I received an e-mail notifying me that it was time to prepare our annual report. When I received the request I found myself saying: "It's only been nine months since I assumed the position of executive director!" But as in so many things, this request meant it was time to step back and take a look at the days and months that have now passed while focusing on what still lies ahead. I was again aware that the end is also about beginning.

Nine months, a time synonymous with preparing for new life and all that comes with the birthing process. I have seen both during these months as I became involved with *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, the LCWR history project. To the LCWR women who brought that dream to life at the opening in Cincinnati on May 15, 2009 and who will continue to nurture it along the way for the next three years, we say many, many thanks. You've made history come to life! And you've made it clear that we witness to the fullest degree possible the mission of our congregations.

During the last nine months I learned of the New Orleans Recovery Project and saw firsthand the work that has been accomplished in bringing new life to a city that almost died. To the women who gave birth to the idea of developing a project that would bring much needed assistance both emotionally and financially, we say many, many thanks. We

will celebrate that new life in New Orleans come August 2009 at our annual assembly with the theme of "Women of Spirit: Creating in Chaos."

In nine months I have also had the privilege of laughing and crying, praying and fasting, feeling pain and sorrow, anger and frustration with the many women of the LCWR. In these days we face the unknown together as we continue to wait to learn what new life and energy we will embrace as LCWR member congregations cooperate in the apostolic visitation of women religious congregations in the United States and as the national office participates in the doctrinal assessment of the LCWR's activities and initiatives.



Out of all we have experienced over these months will come new life, birthed in collaboration with our members, in the deep certainty that we are who we claim to be, faithful daughters of our congregations, of the Church, and to the people of God. We look to the future secure in the knowledge that we have been promised a future full of hope.

Jane Burke, SSND  
Executive Director

Out of all we have experienced over these months will come new life...

## 2008 LCWR-CMSM Assembly: On This Holy Mountain

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men held their annual August assemblies together in Denver. The assembly title, “On This Holy Mountain,” reflected both the natural setting of the assembly site as well as a prevailing theme in religious life today – transformation and conversion.

Keynoters Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ and Richard Rohr, OFM drew upon Scriptural mountain imagery to illustrate that what happens on mountains is often transformative of persons and societies. In her presentation “The Banquet of Faith,” Elizabeth explored, in the context of the creed, the relationship of traditional Catholic teaching and the countercultural challenges of following Jesus, and she described understandings of Jesus’ death and resurrection in light of today’s realities. Richard encouraged leaders to develop more fully the contemplative dimension of their lives. Neither provided answers to the questions LCWR members had been raising about religious life, but they did inspire leaders to look more deeply into what is expected of them as they provide spiritual leadership within their congrega-

tions. They also encouraged leaders to take up the challenges facing religious life today with the members of their congregations as a way to bring about fruitful change and growth.

LCWR president for 2007-2008 Mary Whited, CPPS addressed the call to leaders to serve as midwives in this critical time in religious life. She said, “We become aware that, in each of us and among all of us, there lives a midwife, who is both mystic and prophet. She aligns with God toward comforting the weary, attending to dreams, speaking to power, reconciling gaps, piercing the numbness, and nurturing new life, whatever the costs.”

A clear desire voiced by the members at this assembly was to find ways to exercise their leadership from a contemplative perspective. Many LCWR publications and events throughout the year focused particularly on this need to assist leaders desiring to heighten their own capacity to lead from a stance of deepened contemplation.



We come to the mountains to gain perspective.  
— Mary Whited, CPPS, 2007-2008 LCWR President



## Planning the 2009 LCWR Assembly

The 2009 LCWR Assembly Planning Committee and staff members met in New Orleans in September to plan the next annual assembly. The convergence of several events – meeting in a city still in the midst of recovery, the opening of the history exhibit on Catholic sisters, and the recognition that religious life is in the process of being formed into something new – led the committee to choose as the assembly theme, “Women of Spirit: Creating in Chaos.”

The assembly will focus on capturing the best of the legacy of women religious in order to faithfully and creatively live into the new expressions.



## Shared Futures: Envisioning New Life for LCWR

Throughout this year, LCWR members continued the important process of naming what is most needed to support today’s religious life leaders. At the 2008 national assembly, participants noted a desire for the conference to focus on these areas:

- Enhancing collaborative efforts of LCWR with other international and national organizations
- Exploring opportunities for restructuring LCWR
- Enhancing relationships between women religious leaders and US bishops
- Increasing awareness of US religious life through communications vehicles
- Providing resources for leadership development

The LCWR national board and staff worked throughout the year to develop a plan to meet these needs. At the August assembly, the members will vote on the plan proposed.



## LCWR National Board

The LCWR national board holds responsibility for planning for the conference, setting the theme and direction for the annual assembly, exercising stewardship of all conference funds, and many other significant roles. In addition to its biannual meetings, the board participates in online communications and conference calls throughout the year.

This year the board met in Denver, following the assembly, and in Jacksonville, Florida. Among the issues addressed were:

- LCWR Shared Futures process
- Evaluation of the LCWR-CMSM assembly
- The CARA inventory
- Iraqi refugee trauma training
- The Vatican's apostolic visitation of US women religious and doctrinal assessment of LCWR
- Upcoming LCWR assemblies
- LCWR membership dues
- Collaboration with CMSM



LCWR Executive Committee — Standing: Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; Mary Whited, CPPS; Kathryn Clauss, IHM; Nancy Reynolds, SP; Pam Chiesa, PBVM; Seated: J Lora Dambroski, OSF; Ellen Dauwer, SC

## Annual LCWR-CMSM Joint Board Meeting

Meeting in Jacksonville, Florida in February, the boards of both LCWR and CMSM had opportunities to pray, celebrate Eucharist, and socialize, as well as meet for business. Among the topics on the meeting agenda were:

- Evaluation of 2008 assembly and future joint assemblies
- Commission on Religious Life and Ministry
- Resource Center for Religious Institutes
- Center for the Study of Religious Life
- Cameron Street Building
- Annual visit to Rome
- InterAmerican Meeting
- *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* exhibit



# Resources for Communicating and Networking

## Monthly Newsletter

The LCWR newsletter, *Update*, is published 11 times a year to keep members informed of conference news as well as activities of the officers, committees, and national office.



## Broadcast Messaging System

LCWR utilizes a broadcast online messaging system for nearly all of its communications to members, associates, and subscribers, whose numbers total more than 1800.



## Reflection Book

For the sixth year LCWR published a daily reflection book with contributions written by 53 members. *Midwiving a Vibrant Future* focuses on the profound hope and steadfast trust in God that are needed to creatively bring new life to birth in challenging times.

Approximately 21,000 copies of the books were distributed throughout the country and beyond.



## Biannual Journal

*The LCWR Occasional Papers* is a journal published twice a year by the conference that offers articles and reflections on topics pertinent to women religious leaders.

This year the publications focused on leading from a contemplative perspective and creating religious life anew amidst the chaos of the unknown.



## Resolutions to Action

*Resolutions to Action*, published four times a year, provides theological reflection, social analysis and suggested actions on various justice issues.



## LCWR Resource Sharing Forum

The conference offers its members the option of participating in the LCWR Resource Sharing Forum, a listserv where LCWR members and associates may ask one another a question or share information. One hundred-fifty people now participate in the forum.



## Educational and Spiritual Resources

### New Leader Workshop

Each year LCWR offers a workshop for new and returning leaders that provides invaluable information on spiritual leadership, finance, canon and civil law, human development, communications, and other topics of critical importance to leaders today. Participants are encouraged to attend as councils to explore the implications of the presentations for them as a group and for their congregations. This year more than 100 members attended the workshop held in March at the Retreat Center at St. John's in Plymouth, Michigan.



### Leading from Within Retreat

At the fifth annual LCWR Leading from Within Retreat, 24 members gathered for a week to focus on religious life leadership via several spiritual life themes. The days were led by Kaye Ashe, OP and María Elena Martínez, OSF.



### Assuring the Safety of Children

LCWR has continued to work for the safety of children and young adults by asking all congregations of women religious to have policies and procedures in place to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition to encouraging the use of the many educational resources available on these topics, in the fall of 2008 LCWR also commissioned the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to reissue a study of the best practices regarding the sexual abuse of minors. In 2005 LCWR and CARA had conducted a study to assess the extent to which religious institutes of women have put in place policies, procedures, and practices to prevent sexual abuse by members and to address allegations when they arise. The 2008 study measured the extent to which institutes have continued their practices or improved upon them.



## Annual Consultation with Vatican Offices

Lora Dambroski, OSF; Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; Mary Whited, CPPS; and Jane Burke, SSND traveled to Rome in April for the annual consultation with various Vatican officials. In addition to speaking about the apostolic visitation with representatives of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and the doctrinal assessment with members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, they also met with the staffs of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, the pontifical councils for Justice and Peace, Promoting Christian Unity, Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, and Interreligious Dialogue. The LCWR officers visited some of these offices alone and others with the representatives of CMSM.

The two delegations also met with representatives of the International Union of Superiors General and the Union of Superiors General. The LCWR officers held a meeting as well with women general superiors in Rome whose congregations have provinces in the United States.



## Commission on Religious Life and Ministry

The Commission on Religious Life and Ministry (CRLM) is composed of members of LCWR, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. The commission meets annually to discuss significant issues concerning religious life.

At its meeting this year, the commission heard from the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) which reports to CRLM, as well Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, executive director of the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) and Mary Bendyna, RSM, executive director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), who presented research results on recent applicants and entrants to religious life. Their report noted an increase in inquiries, applicants, and numbers in initial formation from a variety of ages. According to their research, key attractors are faithfulness to church teachings, common prayer, community living, justice and peace outreach, ministry with the congregation, and the habit.



## InterAmerican Committee Meets in Jamaica

The InterAmerican Committee, comprised of representatives of LCWR, CMSM, the Confederation of Latin American Religious, and the Canadian Religious Conference, meets annually for education on and discussion of religious life issues in the Americas. LCWR past president Mary Whited, CPPS, and LCWR communications director Annmarie Sanders, IHM represented LCWR at this year's meeting held in Kingston, Jamaica.

Theologian Maricarmen Bracamontes Ayón, OSB presented her reflections on "Leadership for Religious Life from the Viewpoint of the Emerging Realities of Migration and Ecology: Who Are We and What is Our Call?" She noted that the problems facing the world today connote a system crisis and challenged the leaders to "move firmly forward towards the new paradigm with the gifts we have to offer: the Gospel values that reveal God's power as the love that makes humanity equal, created in the divine image and likeness." The four conference presidents also formed a panel and spoke of how religious are addressing the issues of migration/immigration and the environment. The committee also learned more about the social, political, and economic situation of Jamaica and the unique challenges facing the rapidly decreasing body of women and men religious of the Antilles.



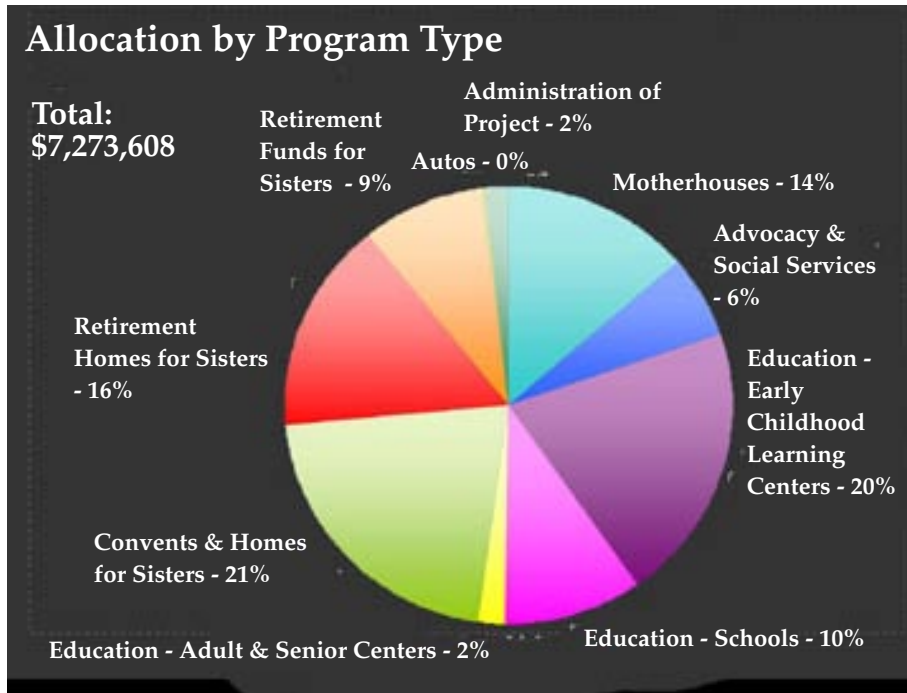
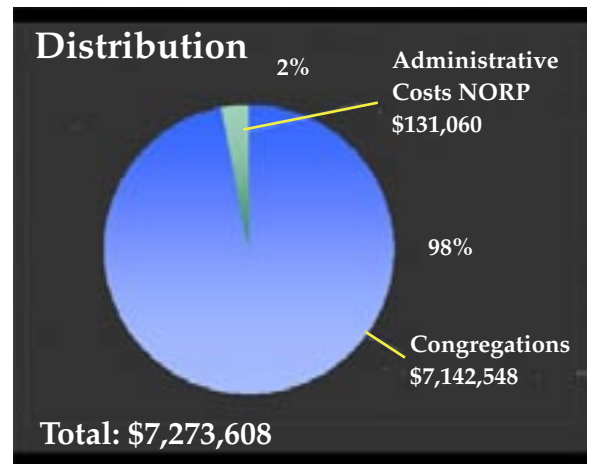
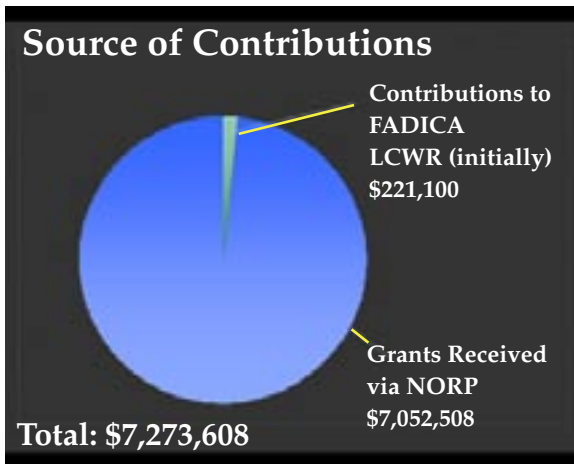
When possible LCWR, CMSM, CRC, and CLAR try to participate in one another's assemblies. In 2008, LCWR took part in the CRC assembly held in Quebec City. The theme of the gathering, "Remembering for the Future," reflected the 400th anniversary of Quebec City and celebrated almost 400 years of religious life in Canada. Shown here are Donna Geernaert, SC, CRC president, and Mary Whited, CPPS.

# New Orleans Recovery Project (NORP)

At the 2006 LCWR assembly, members called for a coordinated effort to assist the women religious in New Orleans in their recovery from the previous year's hurricanes. In response, LCWR, in collaboration with the Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA), established the New Orleans Recovery Project. Under the direction of Suzanne Hall, SNDdeN, the project has continued to aid the women religious and will complete the major funding of its work by the end of August 2009. (See accompanying charts for information on income and expenditures.)

With the funds received, women religious have been able to reconstruct schools, senior citizen centers, nursing homes, early childhood learning centers, neighborhood social programs, and adult GED programs. They were also able to restore motherhouses, homes for their elderly and infirm sisters, and other homes/convents in the city which enabled the sisters to remain a presence to the people of New Orleans.

Suzanne is now working on a feasibility study of the needs of the "New New Orleans," particularly issues of healthcare delivery via mobile clinics (including mental healthcare) and a Catholic teacher clearing-house.



## LCWR History Exhibit Begins Three-Year Cross-Country Tour

After more than four years of meeting, fundraising, researching, writing, editing, videotaping, and learning about the world of museums and exhibits, the LCWR History Committee brought to life *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* on May 15, 2009 in Cincinnati. Spearheaded by Helen Maher Garvey, BVM, this effort to tell the story of women religious and their contributions to the growth of this nation went beyond all expectations. Approximately 200 people, including major donors to the project, gathered for the opening which received excellent coverage by the media.

The exhibit showcases numerous artifacts which have never before been on public display. Among the approximately 70 items assembled from more than 400 communities are a handwritten letter from Thomas Jefferson, a cradle from the New York

*(continued on page 14)*



## LCWR History Exhibit Begins Tour

*(continued from page 13)*

Foundling Home, a replica of an infant incubator designed by a sister, along with traveling trunks, journals of immigration experiences, pioneering healthcare devices, diaries, samplers, musical instruments, student work, and ephemera associated with a number of women religious saints. The exhibit also includes video projections and listening stations that highlight archival video.



The exhibit is fully funded for a three-year tour and thus far is scheduled at The Cincinnati Museum Center, The Women's Museum: An Institute for the Future (Dallas, Texas), the S. Dillon Ripley Center at the Smithsonian (Washington, DC), Statue of Liberty National Monument/Ellis Island Immigration Museum (Liberty Island, New York), and the Mississippi River Museum (Dubuque, Iowa). Some venues will include space for regional stories

of Catholic sisters.

The exhibit provides a gateway for teachers and students to explore many facets of US history. The exhibit website ([www.womenandspirit.org](http://www.womenandspirit.org)) includes educational materials suitable for use in public as well as parochial K-12 schools and is linked to national and state standards in history and social sciences. Other educational opportunities include volunteer docents, film and speaker series, and the chance to use the exhibit for special showings and events.

This project represents the extensive efforts not only

of the LCWR History Committee, but of numerous congregation archivists, leaders, communications directors; the team from the exhibit design corporation, Seruto & Co; numerous donors; exhibit consultants; and many other persons who contributed their time, expertise, and resources to the effort to tell this remarkable story.



*LCWR History Committee: Jane Burke, SSND; Mary Dacey, SSJ; Karen Kennelly, CSJ; Helen Maher Garvey, BVM; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; Barbara Ceroenka, OP; Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ; Carole Shinnick, SSND; and Constance Phelps, SCL*

# LCWR Advocates for Justice

## Significant Issues Addressed Since the 2008 Assembly

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform:** With a new administration and congress, LCWR members took advantage of new opportunities by urging their legislators to support CIR when it would be proposed and encouraged support of the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act. Growing concern about raids and detention led members to remember the first anniversary of the Postville, Iowa raid on May 12, 2009. Some congregations work directly with detainees and their families.

**Climate Change:** LCWR congregations engaged in many creative efforts to implement the 2008 resolution on climate change and many supported the Catholic Climate Covenant by signing and promoting the St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor. Advocacy for clean energy legislation was included in members' work.



**Torture:** A number of LCWR congregations are participating or endorsing members of National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT), which worked successfully with other groups to have the newly inaugurated president sign an executive order banning torture on January 22, 2009. NRCAT also promotes an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate US torture policies and practices since September 11, 2001. The Catholic Leadership Council of NRCAT, of which LCWR is a member, developed a study guide on torture and Catholic social teachings for JustFaith groups and co-sponsored with the Life Cycle Institute of the Catholic University a conference on "Torture, Conscience, and the Catholic Moral Tradition" on March 19, 2009.

**Human Trafficking:** Trafficking continues to be a high priority issue for LCWR congregations, many of whom engage in education, assistance, and/or advocacy efforts.

In November 2008, LCWR participated in a conference on "Trafficking in Persons in the Americas," and served on a panel titled "Church Responses

from the Americas" to describe efforts undertaken by US religious congregations, primarily women. Meetings of the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking, under the Migration and Refugee Services office of the USCCB, were attended in October 2008 and May 2009.

**Other:** LCWR also addressed assistance to Iraqi refugees and displaced persons, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Extractive Industries and Water.

## Systemic Change Think Tank

LCWR held Systemic Change Think Tank XI in Tucson, Arizona in February 2009 in which 40 participants, including both elected leaders and justice coordinators, explored "Diving Deep for Effective Transformation: the Theory of U."



## Assembly Resolutions Committee

Members of the committee introduced the joint resolution on climate change for a vote at the 2008 assembly, reviewed the proposed 2009 resolution on reducing our carbon footprint, and prepared to introduce it at the hearing during the assembly.

## LCWR Representation on Boards and Committees

LCWR is represented on a number of boards and committees by Marie Lucey, OSF, Associate Director for Social Mission:

- Catholic Health Association: attended CHA board meetings as a participating observer and presented reports on LCWR activities; responded to CHA legislative alerts; promoted comprehensive health care reform
- National Coalition on Catholic Health Care Ministry (NCCHCM): with three LCWR members attended a meeting in March with representatives of the USCCB, CHA, the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, and Catholic Charities.
- NETWORK: attended two board meetings and participated in monthly conference calls of the coordinating council.
- USCCB Committees: participated in meetings of the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking, monthly meetings of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign, and meetings of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change.
- Religious Working Group on Water: attended meetings of the total group as well as meetings of the subcommittee on extractive industries and water
- Catholic Mission Forum: participated in meetings to plan Mission Congress 2010.
- Jubilee USA: attended the annual partners meeting and participated in the lobby day.
- Faithful Security: The National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger: attended biannual meetings and one special meeting on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

## Global Concerns Committee

- Developed, disseminated, and reviewed regional response forms for implementation of the 2008 joint CMSM-LCWR resolution on climate change
- Identified topics and invited writers for four issues of Resolutions to Action as follow-up to the resolution on climate change
- Developed a resolution for the 2009 assembly, "Reduce Our Carbon Footprint," which was sent to regions for their review
- Proposed to the 2009 assembly planning committee a rebuilding tour of New Orleans prior to the opening of the assembly and worked with local Catholic Charities to arrange the event
- Worked with LCWR members in New Orleans to hold a public prayer witness focusing on Save Our Wetlands
- Met in Denver in August 2008 and St. Paul in October 2008; coordinated a joint meeting with CMSM justice committee in Washington, DC in April 2009



LCWR Global Concerns Committee and CMSM Justice and Peace Committee: (Back row) Juan Molina, OSsT; Andrea Nenzel, CSJP; Andrew Small, OMI; Michael McNulty, SJ; Jim Stormes, SJ; Chris Promis, CSSp; (Front) Miriam Mitchell, SHSp; Marie Lucey, OSF; Susan Schorsten, HM; Jackie Doepker, OSF; Seamus Finn, OMI; Janet Lehmann, SC; Kathleen Storms, SSND





# Midwiving New Life in the LCWR Regions

The 15 LCWR regions respond to the question:  
**In what ways has your region midwived new life this year?**



Region 15



Region 9



Region 1

## Region 1

**F**all 2008 brought with it the reality of striving to live out the challenge of the inspiring address of Mary Whited, CPPS: to be a midwife. The members of Region 1 tapped into the energy of the summer assembly as we struggled with the issues of the Symposium on Religious Life held at Stonehill College. The discussions around these issues moved us to reclaim with great vigor, our Spirit-filled response to Vatican II. This response continued to deepen within us even as we received the news of an apostolic visitation.

Our fall presenter, Simone Campbell, SS, and our spring presenter, Elizabeth Olesak, SP, both reminded us of our role and responsibility as women religious. "If we are faithful to our call, we will never be in the center. It is our role to call (the church and society) back to whom they're supposed to be."

It is within this vision that Region 1 will continue to support:

- Wisdom's Way (our commitment to financially supporting women seeking to empower themselves through education)
- ICE (our commitment to provide housing to those women made poor)
- LCWR's Resolutions to Action (our commitment to move the resolutions to action within our congregations and to act as a Region when called for)
- NETWORK (Region 1 calls members of LCWR to financially support the efforts of this organization begun by a few women religious and embraced by thousands)

It is in the Spirit of those who founded our congregations that we continue to walk into the future, Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America!

## Region 2

The movement to birth new life is a response in faith to the present reality that we experience in our congregations. It is also a time to envision the future of religious life through our work as leaders in our own congregations and in our relationship to the church.

In Region 2, we birthed new life through our fall and spring conferences.

At the fall conference, we chose to build on the experiences of contemplative dialogue that we had shared the year before and use the process to look deeply at community life. To help us, we invited Fintan Sheeran, SSCC, to share with us his perspective on "Community: Our Radical Expression of the Gospel?"

At our spring meeting, we continued looking at the future and the centrality of the contemplative experience as we move forward together. With the guidance of Mary Persico, IHM, we looked at the contemplative roots of justice.

Other conversations at both our conferences were very much centered on the relationship of LCWR with the church we love. Our regional plans for next year are centered on this as we seek to engage our bishops in dialogue.



## Region 3

The board of the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC), an effort sponsored by several Region 3 congregations, decided to include an associate membership category: that is, in addition to the congregations currently members, US religious congregations and ACCU Colleges that wish to promote and further the mission of ASEC could join ASEC as associate members.

The Region 3 fall meeting at the Jersey shore included contemplative space on the schedule to allow reflections offered by presenter Joanne Bauer, SBS, and time to prayerfully consider nature. All business was accomplished well and we left refreshed and relaxed!

At our spring meeting in Philadelphia we had the opportunity to reflect on the apostolic visitation with canonist Dan Ward, OSB. In addition, he addressed some issues we had suggested at our fall meeting regarding rights and duties of religious members and leaders regarding mental health care and ministry contracts as well as our rights and responsibilities regarding property and institutions.

We now have a listserv to enhance communication among us in the region. For the first time we used Survey Monkey to collect data from the sisters in our region regarding the business of our spring meeting.



## Region 4

Members of the region have midwived new life this year in many ways, all of which have been informed and framed by insights from the presentations of Helen Cahill, OP on “The Spirituality of Power” (Fall 2008) and Kathleen Duffy, CSJ on “Global Spirituality” (Spring 2009). Both presentations midwived new consciousness and insights among us and helped to shape our understanding of ourselves as leaders. These presentations also helped us to grow in our understanding of the interconnectedness of all of life and life’s processes.

We have midwived new life through the exercise of our relational power by welcoming and mentoring new leaders in the region; by cultivating intercongregational relationships and opportunities for sharing and networking among our congregations; by birthing and sustaining shared ministries in response to regional needs; by our prayerful support for the leadership of LCWR and by our response to issues facing LCWR; by exploring together the meaning of changes in religious life in the present and for the future; by actively engaging in the United States’ electoral process; and through our ongoing responses to legislative issues in the United States.



## Region 5

The areas in the region continue to struggle with rebuilding after hurricanes battered the areas in Florida and Louisiana, especially. Not only have many efforts been made to bring to birth new physical structures, but efforts continue to help rehabilitate the lives of the people who were so badly scared by the hurricanes. Region 5 also aided in the relief efforts that were and are taking place in Texas after their devastating hurricanes. The region sent a donation to Region 12 to be distributed to places where they felt the need was greatest.

The membership of Region 5 is pleased that the 2009 national assembly will be in New Orleans. Although the region had originally suggested a public witness event to advocate the end of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO), the state government and the Army Corps of Engineers have already deauthorized the project. The public witness will now focus on the wetlands, which is in line with the resolution we presented at the 2007 assembly.

The Lake Providence Collaborative Ministries project, sponsored by Region 5, continues to make a difference in the poorest county in the state of Louisiana, with townspeople expressing great gratitude for the three sisters who minister in Lake Providence.

Jean Alvarez gave a splendid process workshop at our March meeting which included the provision of very good tools to use when working with our own members.

The region lost some very vital members due to the formation of a new Dominican congregation. The Eucharistic Missionaries of St. Dominic and the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary are two of the seven congregations that now form the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

Region 5

## Region 6

Members of Region 6 have been involved as midwives of new life in the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Not only have we hosted the *Women & Spirit* exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum Center, we pioneered the design for the local exhibit, coordinating it to be in harmony with the national display. During the run of the exhibit, we initiated several special events, including a symposium for women in leadership and various discussions on topics highlighted in the exhibit, providing a richer understanding of the legacy of women religious. We also sponsored admission to the exhibit for low-income women served by and/or involved in the ministries founded by members of the local congregations.

On another front, new life was birthed through the efforts of different congregations in the region focusing educational and action plans on healing the Earth and supporting efforts to reduce the use of energy, plant community gardens, recycle, reuse, and promote eco-spirituality among themselves and their constituents.



## Region 7

A primary way that Region 7 midwived new life this year was through the sharing and encouragement of one another in our role as congregational leaders. We shared our hopes, our struggles, our concerns, our new venture — all in the context of deep prayer. In particular we journeyed with leaders of three congregations engaged in reconfiguration processes. In the fall and spring, we invited congregation justice promoters to join us for a day to assist us in focusing on the role of congregation leadership in fostering the work of justice. A rich conversation in the fall, led by members of the staff at the 8th Day Center for Justice, offered us tools for reflection and analysis.

In the spring we put those tools to use, inviting Daniel Groody, CSC to share his work on the theology of immigration. Following this input, working groups developed strategies for collaborating as a region to foster just immigration policy.



## Region 8

For several years our region has been working with the bishops of Illinois to draft a statement on the injustice of human trafficking. In April 2009, we approved this statement for final review by the bishops' representative, Bishop Lucas of Springfield. Cosponsorship of this statement is part of our overall effort to increase our collaboration with these bishops. In our regional meetings we have been blessed to have inspirational speakers such as Jo Ellen McCarthy, former leader of the BVM community, on spirituality, and leadership, Simone Campbell, SSS, executive director of NETWORK, and Jean Okroi, IBVM, executive director of the Intercommunity Retirement Network. In addition, we have had spirited discussions on options for healthcare coordination within communities led by Marie McKenna, SLW. In an effort to expand our networking possibilities in the state, we have begun to develop outreach efforts to other women religious, especially those representing immigrant communities and to those not yet active in LCWR.

Region 8 has a solid legislative advocacy system in place through Project I.R.E.N.E. (and the work of Rose Mary Meyer, BVM as its director) and in this way has midwived new life among women and children in Illinois in myriads of ways. Some of the issues this past year were: increasing penalties for domestic violence; strengthening truth in advertising regarding alcopop beverages; creating the Commission on the Elimination of Poverty which outlines specific plans to cut extreme poverty in Illinois in half by 2015; providing young adults with the option of staying on a parent's health insurance policy until age 26; providing protections against trafficking of minors, child pornography, and sex offenses as well as other initiatives addressing autism in individuals under 21, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), and funding for school districts serving children who lack housing.



## Region 9

When we come together for regional meetings, we midwife ourselves: there's a time to breathe and a time to push. We come to these meetings because we are energized by them. We have quality speakers; the agenda is tight and has the right stuff. The meetings serve as ongoing formation for us. We take a positive approach even to hopeless situations. We go back and enrich the communities from which we come. Networking is natural to us. Over the past year we have taken out a series of ads in the five Wisconsin diocesan papers under the rubric "Catholic Sisters Lighting the Way" to celebrate World Peace Day in September, encourage people to vote in November, and promote the gift of Christmas peace in December. Our legislative network and communicators network are working together in advancing our social justice initiatives. Our members in the Milwaukee area are birthing the dream of providing a memory care facility for women and men religious. Also in Milwaukee, where the position of vicar for religious was eliminated for financial reasons, we have invited our brother religious and bishops to dialogue about our mutual concerns.



## Region 10

Region 10 midwived new life this year by promoting right relationship with church hierarchy through efforts to dialogue with bishops. Dan Ward, OSB helped us to reflect on the role of congregational leaders when bishops have differences with individual sisters and Nancy Sylvester, IHM led us in a contemplative process anticipating the apostolic visitation. There was new life in the quality of our interpersonal support of one another in welcoming new leaders to the region, in our animated exchanges, in St. Louis' monthly breakfast meetings and shared contemplative silence. We've supported one another's congregational projects: the Sisters of St. Joseph's mission in Uganda, the Loretto Sisters' mission in Pakistan, and the Franciscans' water project.

The St. Louis region continued to midwife their collaborative efforts in housing, education of poor girls, and teaching English. With input from Sharon Zayac, OP we've deepened our ecological awareness, reflected also in a number of ecological workshops and events in St. Louis. We've birthed collective influence by forming an inter-congregational justice group in Iowa, an inter-school ecological council in St. Louis, and by co-sponsoring a Carolyn McDade concert to benefit Marian Middle School. We've rallied around the BVMs' leadership in responding to the Postville ICE raid, strategizing and being educated together on engaging the impasse of immigration. As a result of our joint efforts, the *Women & Spirit* exhibit is scheduled to open in Dubuque in early 2011. Region 10 has birthed new life!



## Region 11

Region 11 members met in October 2008 and April 2009.

The October meeting was at Blue Cloud Abbey in Marvin, South Dakota. Because one of the goals of Region 11 is to foster communications with local bishops, Bishop Paul Swain, diocese of Sioux Falls, was invited for dialogue on the topic, "Relationships/Reconciliation between Official Church and Women Religious." Other bishops of dioceses within Region 11 will be invited to the fall 2009 meeting.

The April meeting was at Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota with a visit to Saint Benedict's Monastery, Saint Joseph. In addition to other business, three sisters who work with immigrants talked about their ministry: Teresa Ann Wolf, OSB described her work at the Benedictine Multicultural Center which is sponsored by Mother of God Monastery, Watertown, South Dakota.; Anna Marie Reha, SSND, director of Hispanic Ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota, talked about the effect of deportations on families; and Janet Horstman, PBVM, program director of Caminando Juntos, the Presentation Sisters' ministry with immigrants in the Sioux Falls area, addressed legal issues related to immigration.

In July 2008, Region 11 sponsored a workshop by Lynn M. Levo, CSJ, director of education for Saint Luke Institute, Silver Spring, Maryland. About 450 Sisters from the region attended. In summer 2010, the region will sponsor a workshop on consecrated life and the common good, with Christine Vladimiroff, OSB as speaker.



## Region 12

Region 12 journeyed to New Mexico in the fall of 2008 to learn of water issues in that part of our region. The region published a statement on water for each member congregation to use among its membership and sponsored ministries:

We, the members of LCWR Region XII, have become more aware of water as a precious resource to which all life is connected. The issues of the accessibility, distribution, and quality of water are becoming increasingly urgent and complex. We, therefore, urge all members of our congregations to seek ways to honor and respect the use, distribution, and quality preservation of water.

Region 12 devoted a day of its spring meeting as a retreat day with Bea Eichten, OSF presenting on the spirituality of leadership and Fr. Larry Christian on the theology of leadership.

Region 5 donated \$1000 to Region 12 to give to congregations affected by Hurricane Ike. Region 12 matched the funds and divided them between the two congregations.



## Region 13

This year Region 13 “midwived new life” by both spiritual enrichment and further education on the social justice issue of immigration. At the October 2008 meeting, Irene Nowell, OSB used her experience of developing The Saint John’s Bible commissioned by Saint John’s University of Collegeville, Minnesota to lead us to prayer on the Old and New Testament.

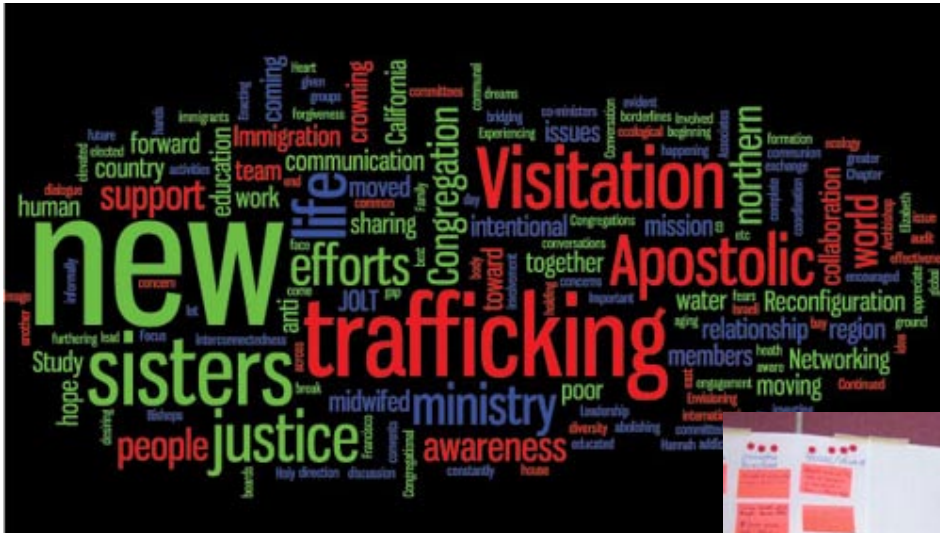
The issue of immigration was again before us as we listened to Jennifer Piper from the American Friends Service Committee. She explained how her organization is handling various immigration issues, such as immigration rights and family reunification. She noted the need to examine trade policies that cause people to lose their livelihood and force them to migrate in the first place.

Region 13 hosted the last two LCWR national assemblies in Kansas City and in Denver. This we feel has continued to “midwife new life” in LCWR.

Finally, this year we said goodbye to the Ursuline Sisters of Paola and the Dominican Sisters of Great Bend, Kansas, and saw Red Plains Monastery of Piedmont, Oklahoma join the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas.



# Region 14



# Region 15

**L** CWR Region 15 has midwived new life in 2009 by sponsoring "Living Simply in a Complex World" by Mary Jo Leddy, by holding a retreat with Lucy Wynkoop, OSB "Listening to All of Life" and through the IPJC publication *Care of Creation* which can be used for individual or group use. The spring meeting focused on "Tending to the Stirrings of New Life" based on the Winter 2009 *Occasional Papers*.

The Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation IV in May opened with a 30-minute ritual featuring liturgical dancers portraying the "Dawn of a New Story, Radical Hope," and a choir of 50 members and various instrumentalists. Featured speakers were Riane Eisler, Ivone Gebar, Cokie Roberts, and Margaret Wheatley. The crowd of nearly 2000 women and a few good men gave rave reviews to all of the speakers as the sessions concluded on Saturday with a final, high-energy ritual.



The effort to stop the demand for human trafficking by placing ads on buses throughout Seattle/King County, Washington during the month of March, and by holding a vigil in downtown Seattle on first Sundays to make the general public more aware of the worldwide prevalence of human trafficking has been highly successful.



# Stewardship of LCWR's Financial Resources

During 2008, the LCWR Finance Committee and the office staff have worked diligently to ensure the wise stewardship of LCWR's resources. It was a challenging year due to the unprecedented decline of the US stock market in the third quarter, which signaled the beginning of a recession likely to last throughout 2009.

## Auditor's Report

Linton, Shafer, Warfield and Garrett, PA completed a review of LCWR, noting that there are no significant concerns or material weaknesses. Upon the recommendation of the auditors and with the approval of the board, the Finance Committee is developing guidelines for the establishment of an audit committee.

## Investments

The LCWR Finance Committee met with Eileen O'Connell, representative of Christian Brothers Investment Services (CBIS). The committee reviewed the performance of the managers and discussed the volatility of the markets. At the end of 2008, the LCWR investment portfolio had declined by 27% percent. Market volatility is expected to continue to be a significant factor throughout 2009. The committee will continue to closely monitor the portfolio and its asset allocation with CBIS.

The committee also drafted a revision to its investment policy, including CBIS social responsibility investment strategies. The committee will seek board approval of the revision.

## Budget

Overall, with the exception of the significant unrealized investment losses, most areas of operational income and expense met budget expectations. One area that the committee continues to monitor is income from membership dues. LCWR is seeing that both the increasing number of congregational and provincial mergers and the declining numbers of professed members are significantly impacting the projected LCWR income.

## Dues Structure

In 2008 dues were based on a fee per congregation that allowed all team members to be members of LCWR. However, this fee was a set amount for a range of congregation census numbers. In February 2008, the

board gave approval to a change in the dues structure so that in 2009 and 2010 there will be a flat fee per congregational unit plus a per capita charge per congregational unit census. This is designed to lessen the impact of mergers, although the decline in membership will continue to reduce the funds available from dues revenues.

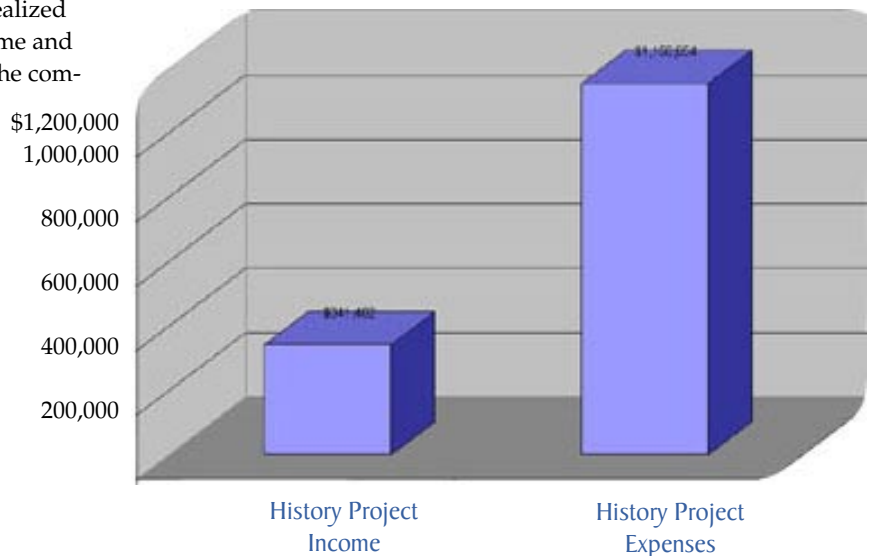
## History Project

During 2008, the capital campaign to support the history project, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, continued to collect pledges. During the year, project expenses increased as implementation moved forward. This restricted fund will continue to be expended as the exhibit travels. The ongoing operations of the exhibit will also be funded from these restricted funds in 2009-2012.

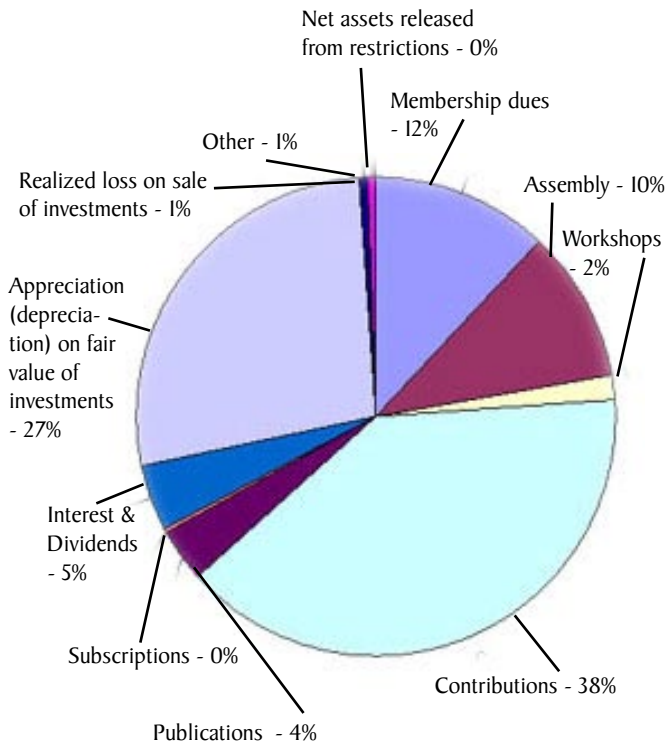
## LCWR Building

Each year the CMSM and LCWR national boards meet to review the capital needs of the building and budget resources to assure the building's safety and security for its tenants. The building, jointly owned by LCWR and CMSM, includes offices for their own staffs as well as the Religious Formation Conference and the Resource Center for Religious Institutes.

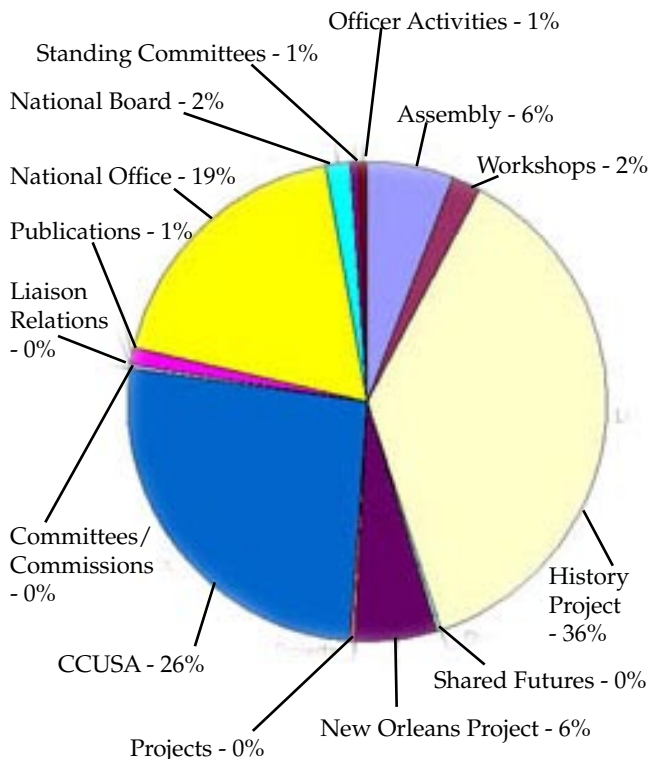
2008 History Project



## 2008 Revenue



## 2008 Expenses



## LCWR Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2008 and 2007

ASSETS	2008	2007
<b>Current Assets</b>	(Reviewed)	(Audited)
Cash	\$ 2,981,049	\$ 1,450,505
Account receivable-other	\$ 24,628	\$ 15,303
Promises to give	\$ 150,355	\$ 1,347,897
Prepaid expenses and other	\$ 21,417	\$ 47,942
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 3,177,449</b>	<b>\$ 2,861,647</b>
<b>Furniture &amp; Equipment at cost</b>		
Furniture and equipment	\$ 28,082	\$ 42,175
Less: accumulated depreciation	\$ (18,935)	\$ (32,300)
Furniture and equipment, Net	\$ 9,147	\$ 9,875
<b>Other Assets</b>		
Investments	\$ 2,365,264	\$ 4,214,675
Investment in common fund	\$ 16,349	\$ 15,674
Investment in real estate, net	\$ 341,767	\$ 325,835
Total Other Assets	\$ 2,723,380	\$ 4,556,274
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 5,909,976</b>	<b>\$ 7,427,796</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	(Reviewed)	(Audited)
Accounts Payable and Accrued expenses	\$ 36,397	\$ 30,726
Deferred Revenue	\$ 521,662	\$ 455,694
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 558,059	\$ 486,420
Fund Development Loans Payable	\$ 314,050	\$ 342,050
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 872,109</b>	<b>\$ 828,470</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Unrestricted</b>		
Undesignated	\$ (225,112)	\$ 544,946
Board designated-support fund	\$ 2,597,144	\$ 2,573,260
<b>Total Unrestricted Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 2,372,032</b>	<b>\$ 3,118,206</b>
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 2,665,835	\$ 3,481,120
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 5,037,867</b>	<b>\$ 6,599,326</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES/NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 5,909,976</b>	<b>\$ 7,427,796</b>

## Statement of Revenues and Expenses

	Dec 31, 2008	Dec 31, 2007
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Membership Dues	\$ 404,698	408,945
Assembly	\$ 345,046	373,973
Workshop	\$ 61,390	76,412
Contributions	\$ 1,336,242	2,947,395
Publications	\$ 126,614	110,851
Subscriptions	\$ 4,227	5,432
Interest and dividends	\$ 154,786	147,279
Appreciation (depreciation) on fair value of investments	\$ (920,502)	28,698
Realized loss on sale of investments	\$ (18,889)	
Other	\$ 18,273	13,336
Net assets released from restrictions		(371,505)
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 1,511,884</b>	<b>4,112,321</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>		
Assembly	\$ 179,815	206,261
Workshop	\$ 56,303	31,166
LCWR History Project	\$ 1,150,655	245,215
Shared Futures Project	\$ 1,116	
New Orleans Project	\$ 172,968	97,127
Projects	\$ 7,923	2,583
CCUSA	\$ 804,016	
Committees/Commissions	\$ 5,086	3,480
Liaison Relations	\$ 6,704	6,044
Publications	\$ 32,508	35,339
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES</b>	<b>\$ 2,417,094</b>	<b>657,215</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT &amp; GENERAL</b>		
National Office	\$ 574,722	558,622
National Board	\$ 47,150	37,411
Standing Committees	\$ 17,937	13,682
Officers' Activities	\$ 16,440	15,271
<b>TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES</b>	<b>\$ 656,249</b>	<b>624,986</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 3,073,343</b>	<b>1,282,201</b>

## Collaborating for the Mission of Religious Life

The directors of six organizations working with women and men religious reflect on midwiving new life in their conferences since summer 2008.

### Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Paul Lininger, OFM Conv. – Executive Director

*“The one who is filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in different languages. These different languages are different ways of witnessing to Christ, such as humility, poverty, patience, and obedience; we speak in those languages when we reveal in ourselves these virtues to others.... Our humble and sincere request to the Spirit for ourselves should be that we may bring the day of Pentecost to fulfillment, insofar as the Spirit infuses us with grace....”* (Sermons of St. Anthony of Padua)

Though spoken almost 800 years ago, Anthony’s words ring true through today and in a sense capture well the faith challenge to human growth and maturation in the Spirit. Historically, all those who choose to listen, be attentive, and respond as witnesses of the Spirit will face many hurdles encompassing a vast array of emotion as well as potential. And this past year, like the thousands that have preceded it, has been no small moment of challenge, complete with opportunity for witnessing to the enormity of God’s grace-filled presence in the lives of women and men religious throughout the world. Yet it is in the language one chooses for response that gives rise to the Gospel message heard.

Not knowing what the future holds and yet desiring not to let the wealth of its heritage pass unnoticed by this generation, the members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious began an initiative which would do just that, namely, sponsorship of an invitational exhibit to come and see – *Women of Spirit*. And though the exhibit which opened in Cincinnati, Ohio in May 2009 was years in the making with planning and preparation, it is well worth it. LCWR can take pride in knowing that this exhibit captures a language which goes beyond the pictures, documents, and assorted memorabilia contained in the exhibit, and that it mouths the language of witness of the tens of thousands of dedicated women religious from the past who listened to the Spirit and moved outward speaking a language of love to a world in need. Simultaneously the exhibit invites a new audience of listeners and

responders to become companions on the journey from what has been to what might yet be calling for the language of the Spirit to be spoken anew to today’s ever-changing and challenging world.

As the members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious together with the members of their various communities, venture into the unknown like those multitudes who have gone before them, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men wishes them the blessing of Godspeed. But we also want to thank them for their individual and collective gifts in speaking the language of dedication and service to the Word of God as servants of Christ and the Church these many years. And to say that we are grateful for their persistent willingness to forsake all, that God’s lifegiving word might be enfleshed again. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to enliven what it means to be faithful and hope-filled people in a world which often needs reminding.

### Center for the Study of Religious Life

Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ — Director

CSRL is a midwife of sorts for institutes of religious life. We are not the ones giving birth to what is to be; rather, we support those who are giving birth. Our newest resources include PowerPoint presentations on “Generational Cultures,” a casebook for leaders of religious institutes, a *KINDLING* issue on “Archives and Special Religious Life Collections,” and a scholars roundtable essay, “Timely Thoughts on Religious Vocations.”

Two of the births at which I had the honor of being present this year were the first gathering of members of Hispanic communities in the United States held in Chicago and a gathering of Franciscan sisters from congregations with US and Brazilian members using CSRL’s Cultural Audit translated into Portuguese. It is a joy and a gift to share in dreams and hopes coming to birth.

## Religious Formation Conference

Violet Grennan, MFIC – Executive Director

The history of the Religious Formation Conference (1954-2004) by Karen M. Kennelly, CSJ has recently been published and will be made available this year to membership, partnering organizations, dioceses, and relevant institutions. The well-documented history captures with lucidity and brilliance the story of the Sister Formation/Religious Formation Conference and its immense contribution to the church and world through the professional education of religious ministering in education, healthcare, pastoral ministries, and in formation within and beyond their own congregations.

The conference continues to restructure for the sake of its mission which is "... rooted in the Gospel, called by God's prophetic Spirit, and responsive to the signs of the times." National office staff now includes a director of development and the search continues for a program director. This position is posted on our redesigned website at [www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org). In addition to redesigning the website, RFC now publishes its quarterly *INFORMATION* and *TRANSFORMATION* electronically.

As a service organization, the conference continues to respond to congregations' expressed needs through its programs. During 2008 planning began for Congress 2009 which will be held in Denver, Colorado November 12-15. Pre-congress workshops, congress keynote presentations, and seminars will hold particular interest for congregational leaders, those in initial and ongoing formation, and vocation ministers.

## Resource Center for Religious Institutes

Donna Sauer – Associate Director

The Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) is the product of midwifery – we are the "offspring" of LRCR and NATRI. Our official birthdate was January 1, 2009. Although RCRI is a new entity, we will continue to provide dependable, comprehensive services to our members.

Our joint LRCR/NATRI national conference in November of 2008 was a huge success in Denver. This year we will gather in Atlanta in October for our national conference, where we once again will offer workshops on both financial and legal topics. We have launched our new website at [www.trcri.org](http://www.trcri.org). Our staff members have traveled to locations across the country to present talks on a variety of topics. Reconfiguration continues to be an important topic. We constantly are giving birth to new ideas as we strive to meet our members' needs.

## National Religious Vocation Conference

Charlene Diorka, SSJ – Associate Director

NRVC chose to spend this past year taking a closer look at our future with the hope of bringing forth new life in vocation ministry. In being well-informed about what lies ahead, we can better direct our vision toward new membership, the heart of religious life. NRVC and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) have been collaborating as midwives to produce a major research project on religious vocations in the United States. No research of this magnitude has been done before, and so we hope that it will separate fact from fiction regarding vocations to religious life today. Likewise we hope that the results of the study will serve as a guide for religious institutes to develop their future vocation strategies. Midwiving this study from its beginning as a seed of possibility to its full growth in insight and information has been a tremendous journey as well as a labor of love on behalf of the next generation who will hopefully follow their hearts by choosing to follow Jesus as religious sisters, brothers, and priests.

Complementing this project, the annual VISION survey from VocationMatch.com for a third year in a row continues to reflect a rise in the number of inquiries about religious life. These signs of new life remind us that the hope of the harvest is in the seed and all our efforts toward new membership are priceless.

## National Religious Retirement Office

Janice Bader, CPPS — Executive Director

The year 2008 marked the beginning of the third 10-year cycle of the Retirement Fund for Religious. Despite the economic downturn, donors generously contributed \$28.2 million. Please remember them in prayer.

In 2009, NRRO implemented some changes in the way funds are distributed. These changes were explained in our August 2008 publication, *Bread for the Journey*. Please visit our website, [www.usccb.org/nrro](http://www.usccb.org/nrro), to view this publication and to read the most current information about NRRO's planning and implementation assistance. If your institute has a significant retirement funding need, we encourage you to apply for this assistance.

We appreciate the sponsorship and prayerful support of LCWR, and we look forward to continuing to be of service to you.

# Generous Service to the Leadership Conference

LCWR thanks all who have contributed their time and talent to the conference through service on its national board and committees.

## LCWR National Board

### Officers

J. Lora Dambroski, OSF\* -- President  
 Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA\* --  
 President-Elect  
 Mary Whited, CPPS\* -- Past President  
 Ellen Dauwer, SC\* -- Secretary  
 Pam Chiesa, PBVM\* -- Treasurer

### Regional Chairpersons

Dorothy Scesny, PBVM -- Region 1  
 Barbara Staropoli, SSJ -- Region 2  
 Kathryn Clauss, IHM\* -- Region 3  
 Susan Schorsten, HM -- Region 4  
 Nancy Reynolds, SP\* -- Region 5  
 Patricia Homan, OSU -- Region 6  
 Marie McCarthy, SP -- Region 7  
 Patricia Crowley, OSB -- Region 8  
 Theresa Sandok, OSM -- Region 9  
 Connie Probst, OSF -- Region 10  
 Tierney Trueman, OSF -- Region 11  
 Bernadine Reyes, OSB -- Region 12  
 Catherine Mueller, SL -- Region 13  
 Gladys Guenther, SHF -- Region 14  
 Beth Taylor, CSJP -- Region 15

### Executive Director

Jane Burke, SSND\*

\*Members of the Executive Committee

## Committees

### 2009 LCWR Assembly Planning Committee

Laura Bufano, CSJ  
 Mary Anne Hebert, CSJ (Environment)  
 Ellen Kron, DC  
 Mary Ann Mulzet, SSJ (Liturgist)  
 Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM (Facilitator)  
 Joy O'Grady, CSC  
 Adelaide Williamson, CSJ (Environment)  
 Jane Burke, SSND (LCWR Staff)

### Assembly Resolutions Committee

Michele Morek, OSU  
 Susan Jordan, SSND  
 Marie Lucey, OSF (LCWR Staff)

### Finance Committee

Alice Coté RJM  
 Geraldine Hoyler CSC  
 Doretta Meier OSF  
 Elizabeth Ney CSJ  
 Mary Persico IHM  
 Pam Chiesa, PBVM (Treasurer)  
 Pat Cormack, SCSC (LCWR Staff)

### Global Concerns Committee

Jacquelyn Doepker, OSF  
 Janet Lehmann, SC  
 Miriam Mitchell, SHSp  
 Andrea Nenzel, CSJP  
 Susan Schorsten, HM  
 Kathleen Storms, SSND  
 Marie Lucey, OSF (LCWR Staff)

### History Exhibit Committee

Barbara Cervenka, OP  
 Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ  
 Mary Dacey, SSJ  
 Helen Maher Garvey, BVM (Chair)  
 Karen Kennelly, CSJ  
 Constance Phelps, SCL  
 Jane Burke, SSND (LCWR Staff)  
 Annmarie Sanders, IHM (LCWR Staff)

### Nominations and Elections Committee

Ann Rehrauer, OSF (Chair)  
 Mary Lou Barba, MCDP  
 Rosemary Crowley, SNDdeN  
 Vivien Linkhauer, SC  
 Margaret O'Brien, SC  
 Marianne Benson (LCWR Staff)

## Liaisons to Other Organizations

### Center for the Study of Religious Life

Paula Damiano, SP

### Resource Center for Religious Institutes

Jane Burke, SSND

### National Coalition on Catholic Health Care Ministry

Marianna Bauder, SCL  
 Mary Lou Mitchell, SSJ  
 Celeste Trahan, CCVI  
 Marie Lucey, OSF (LCWR Staff)

### National Religious Retirement Office Grant Review Board

Imelda González, CDP

### USCCB Accounting Practices Committee

Diane Cooke, OSB  
 Frances Mlocek, IHM

### USCCB National Advisory Council

Lynn Jarrell, OSU  
 Yolanda Tarango, CCVI



## LCWR National Office Staff



Jane Burke, SSND  
Executive Director



Marie Lucey, OSF  
Associate Director for  
Social Mission



Pat Cormack, SCSC  
Associate Director for  
Business and Finance



Annmarie Sanders, IHM  
Communications Director



Marianne Benson  
Executive Assistant



Carol Glidden  
Administrative Assistant



Carol Crowder  
Membership Coordinator



Christabel Lartey  
Receptionist



Honora Precourt  
Development Coordinator  
for LCWR History Project