

LCWR Call – 2010 - 2015

Prologue

We, the members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, believe that God's call is written in the signs of our time. Our foremothers and founders stepped into the chaos and the unknown of their day, trusting in God's good guidance and great providence. In our time, we are called to do the same. Inspired by the radical call of the Gospel, led by God's Spirit and companioned by one another, we embrace our time as holy, our leadership as gift, and our challenges as blessings.

In this time of God's favor, we live in a world where

- Major social and global changes create fear, anxiety, confusion, and polarization
- Technology, communication, and information shrink time and distances among peoples
- Inaccessibility to basic resources breeds suffering, oppression and violence
- Increasingly, violence, military force and terrorist activity are used to settle disputes
- Multinational corporations exert control over legitimate governments
- Religion is used to justify political and personal aggression
- Environmental degradation threatens all of God's creation

And where people

- Long for justice, peace and communion
- Work to achieve the common good
- Hunger for spirituality and meaning
- Claim personal and communal power for change
- Awaken to the wonder of the universe, and the place of humans within it

In this time of God's favor, we belong to a church

Whose members

- Struggle to love the Church as both graced and sinful
- Strive to balance traditional teachings with changing realities
- Seek to be a more inclusive, welcoming community
- Hunger for spirituality and the full expression of their baptismal call

And whose leaders

- Experience the pressing impact of a rapidly evolving world and universe
- Struggle with growing diversity in members' views, cultures, and religious practices
- Are confronted with their own humanity and sinfulness
- Bear the call to create structures that free the Church for the ways of God's Spirit
- Carry the responsibility of being welcoming, accountable, and inclusive pastors to all

God's People

In this time of God's favor, we lead congregations experiencing

- An evolving Church, world and universe
- Major shifts in identity, resources, members, and traditional ministries
- Diversity of cultures, worldviews, and theologies
- Restructuring within and among congregational units
- A growing desire for contemplation, balance, and simplicity

- Need and hope for dialogue with Church's leaders and inclusion in its processes
- Emerging forms of religious commitment
- Growing collaboration with the laity
- Deepened appreciation of and commitment to the created world as holy

The LCWR assembly is asked to consider affirming the section below.

In response to these realities, we, the members of LCWR, hear God's call and commit ourselves for the next five years to two major undertakings:

Contemporary Religious Life

Commission the LCWR national board and national office to actively read the signs of the times from a gospel perspective, assume an anticipatory role in understanding the implications for religious life, and bring the emerging questions, issues, and trends to the attention of the members. These questions will inform the planning of the programs, services, and resources offered to LCWR members to assist them in their ministry of leadership.

Each year LCWR will develop and implement a 12-month process that focuses on in-depth study and theological reflection on one of the emerging questions facing religious life. Particular emphasis will be placed on examining the question from the perspective of its ramifications for leadership development. The year-long process will include:

- Developing agendas for LCWR regional meetings that make the topic a focal point.
- Seeking responses to the topic from diverse populations – i.e., newer and younger women religious, women religious from various ethnic, racial and immigrant communities.
- Weaving the topic into LCWR leadership programs for that year – i.e., the Leading from Within Retreat and the New Leader Workshop, as well as into the dialogue sessions among LCWR members and church leaders.
- Collaborating with the LCWR Standing Committee for Assembly Planning on the development of the topic as a focal point for the assembly.
- Assisting leaders to engage their own institutes in study of and contemplative reflection and dialogue on the topic.

In order to implement this process, the following steps will be taken:

- The LCWR presidency will appoint a committee to plan and oversee the process. The committee will be chaired by the LCWR executive director, have representation from the board, membership-at-large and the national office staff.
- The committee will collaborate with the LCWR Finance Committee to find outside funding to enhance LCWR's study of and reflection on the emerging questions and issues as religious life moves into the future.

Effectiveness of the Conference

Commission the LCWR national board and national office to develop a strategic operational plan for the conference in order to maximize its life and effectiveness in light of its demographic and financial realities. This plan would include studies of:

- a possible reconfiguration of the governance structures of LCWR, including the presidency, national board, committees, and regions.
- a possible reconfiguration of the national office staff.
- enhancement of services with other entities serving religious life.

In order to implement this plan, the following step will be taken:

- The LCWR presidency will appoint a committee to plan and oversee the process. The committee will be chaired by the LCWR executive director, have representation from the board, the LCWR Finance Committee, membership-at-large, and the national office staff. The committee will draw upon the expertise of outside consultants.