

January 2009

## LCWR Participates in Meeting of Catholics in Alliance with the Obama Transition Team

**O**n December 16, representatives of 11 organizations of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, plus two staff members, participated in a meeting with several members of the Obama-Biden transition team to provide information on key issues of concern to alliance partners: poverty reduction/economic justice, healthcare reform, immigration reform, international development/diplomacy, and environment, the top five issues in the Platform for the Common Good.

Each representative had the opportunity to introduce her or his organization and its focus, followed by brief presentations on the five key issues. Representing LCWR, Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director and LCWR liaison to the Catholic Health Association (CHA), gave the presentation on healthcare reform. Marie identified the long history of women religious in healthcare which continues to the present, and the collaboration of members engaged in health ministry today with the CHA to promote healthcare reform in this country.

LCWR and CHA are encouraged by the commitment of President-elect Obama to much needed healthcare reform, making it one of his top three issues, along with economic stimulus and energy/environment. While

*(continued on page 4)*



### Watch for LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Survey

**T**he Leadership Conference of Women Religious established an Outstanding Leadership Award to recognize and honor persons who have significantly contributed to the ministry of leadership and who reflect the LCWR mission.

In the fall, regions were asked to submit nominations for persons to be considered for this award. The Outstanding Leadership Award Committee met in mid-December to review these nominations and to prepare a process to allow members to recommend recipients to the executive committee. In mid-January information will go to members of LCWR about those who have been nominated and about using Survey Monkey to make recommendations.

Members of the leadership award committee are Patricia McDermott, RSM; Joan Sue Miller, SCL; Jane Ann Slater, CDP; Marsha Speth, SP; and Pat Cormack, SCSC (staff).

### Inside this issue:

- 3** Are You are Receiving All LCWR Communications?
- 3** Have You Joined the LCWR Listserv?
- 5** Have You Marked Your Calendar for Upcoming LCWR Events?

## *From the LCWR Presidency* The Promise of Change

by J. Lora Dambroski, OSF — LCWR President

This month marks a major change for those of us who live here in the United States. We have the completion of the term of one President and the inauguration of another. For about two years we have been immersed in the pre-nomination, nomination, convention, and election process for this new national administration.

Sounds like congregational preparations and processes for chapters and elections! While we are in the midst of all the focus on what will happen in the future we also are called to live in the present. There is the daily challenge of fulfilling the directives of previous chapters and making more



and more peaceful world rid of violence on our streets and an end to a war it seems none of us wanted.

The excitement around the talk of change and hope was not simply that things would be different but that things, life, and relationships, would be better than they are now. The common good of all was stirring a new flame within the gut of many.

This hope is less a sense of infatuated fantasy but rather more of what William Lynch, SJ called "the virtue of imagination." This hope allows for a clearing of our vision not only to see things differently for the good of all, but rather the energized conviction to give our personal efforts to make a creative life-giving change happen.

As women religious grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we, too, are among those who hope for change and new life. The promise that we truly count on, however, is not found in the national political arena but in the challenge and grace of this Gospel. The mission

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immediate decisions regarding unforeseen crisis (like we can foresee a crisis!) and still looking to how we are impacting the future by what we do and how we do it now.

During the days of this national election process we heard much about change and hope. There was held before us the promise that things would be different and things would be better. Sound bites told us that there would be better health care, a better more stable economy, better and more secure jobs, better efforts toward international policy, better and greater focus on human rights, and of course, there would be a better

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and vision of each of our congregations challenge us to make creative, life-giving change happen for all of God's people. (No matter who is in the national or world leadership!)

Happy *New* New Year!



The primary means of communicating information to LCWR members is through the online messaging system provided through the program Constant Contact. Over the last few weeks, a number of members have notified the LCWR staff that they are not receiving any messages from the conference.

In order to assure that messages do get through, members are asked to note the following.

1. Messages from the LCWR national office will come from the address: [nationaloffice@lcwr.org](mailto:nationaloffice@lcwr.org).
2. The same banner will be used for all messages. Receipt of a message with the LCWR banner indicates that LCWR is contacting members about an issue, event, publication, or other LCWR service. (The banner is pictured above.)
3. As the volume of spam increases on the internet, spam blockers have been employed to screen
4. Members who are using an e-mail program on their PC or laptop, are encouraged to find out if there is a junk mail or spam setting and to be sure to add [nationaloffice@lcwr.org](mailto:nationaloffice@lcwr.org) to the safe sender list of the e-mail program. Finally, some e-mail programs (such as Outlook) allow users to color code the message header so as to alert them to an incoming valued e-mail contact. Members may wish to do this for [nationaloffice@lcwr.org](mailto:nationaloffice@lcwr.org).

## LCWR Listserv Provides Forum for Raising Questions and Sharing Information

LCWR provides free access to a listserv created for raising questions and sharing information among LCWR members and associates. Persons interested in participating in this valuable service need to register themselves. Information for joining the LCWR Resource Sharing Forum can be found in the LCWR Members Information section of the LCWR website ([www.lcwr.org](http://www.lcwr.org)).

Forum participants also have access to archived messages through the Yahoo Groups website. Archived message topics include:

- Chapter Steering Committees
- Chapter Facilitators
- Reconfiguration Issues
- Data Base Programs
- Congregation Infirmaries and Sisters' Family Members
- Safety Plan Models
- Guidelines for Older Drivers
- Self-Directed Ministries
- Translators
- Associate Policies
- Meeting Sites
- Making Corporate Public Statements
- International Congregation Questions
- Sponsorship Issues

Those who have registered for the LCWR Forum may view these messages by going to [groups.yahoo.com](http://groups.yahoo.com), clicking on the "LCWR Forum," and clicking on "Messages."

## LCWR Participates in Meeting with Obama Transition Team

*(continued from page 1)*

reforming the current health system is urgent, Marie noted that due to the need of the Obama administration to first provide economic stimulus in a bleak economic situation, the hope is that in the first year the administration will at least assure expanded reauthorization of SCHIP and a health IT program.

In his response, Michael Strautmanis, director of the Office of Public Liaison/Intergovernmental Affairs, offered assurance of the Obama administration's commitment to a health system that is available and accessible to everyone, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable, and encourages participation of alliance members in town halls across the country. (Information is on the CHA website: [www.chausa.org](http://www.chausa.org), Announcements, Obama Transition Requests for Health Care Dialogues.)

## Jubilee USA Launches "What's On Your Heart?" Campaign

Anticipating openness on the part of a new Treasury Secretary, Jubilee USA announced a new campaign during its annual Network Council Meeting, November 17-19, 2008.

As shared with LCWR justice and peace contacts, the campaign is designed to remind Secretary Timothy Geithner that "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." LCWR members are encouraged to participate by sending heart messages to Jubilee USA who will deliver them to Secretary Geithner after the inauguration on January 20. (Information on how to participate can be found on [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org).)

During the annual meeting, council members also reviewed the highlights of 2008, including the Stop Vultures (Funds) Act, efforts on behalf of Liberia and Haiti, meetings with the World Bank on odious and illegitimate debt, and growth of Jubilee congregations. Members also approved the strategic plan for 2009-2012 which begins with outreach to the new administration regarding the future of the Jubilee Act. The hope is that the act will again pass the House quickly in 2009 so Jubilee can focus on the Senate, in particular on Senator Tom Coburn who held up passage this year.

## CHA Envisions Opportunity and Challenge in 2009

Members of the board of the Catholic Health Association (CHA) looked toward both challenges and opportunities provided by the new administration in Washington. Both were addressed during the December 4-5, 2008 board meeting. Because the Obama administration has named economic stimulus, energy independence, and health care reform as the top three priorities, CHA anticipates working with the new administration to bring about true healthcare reform that resonates with CHA's identified values of human dignity, the common good, concern for poor and vulnerable people, stewardship, justice, and pluralism. CHA leadership has been, and will continue to be, at the table with congressional leaders in the Senate (Kennedy and Baucus) and in the House (Pete Stark). Following the CHA board meeting, Colleen Scanlon, vice chairperson/chair-elect, met with Tom Daschle, who will be appointed Health and Human Services Secretary.

Realizing that comprehensive healthcare reform will take some time, CHA foresees that in the first year there will be at least extended SCHIP reauthorization and, possibly, a health IT program.

One of the challenges for CHA is President-elect Obama's statement that he would sign the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) into law. FOCA would declare a legislative fundamental right to abortion and would nullify laws restricting abortion access. While passage of this legislation by Congress is highly unlikely, CHA will continue to monitor the bill, analyze its implications, prepare talking points for the ministry, and dialog with the US Bishops' Conference on strategy and messaging.

CHA has also been engaged in a labor dialogue with representatives of the USCCB and labor. Although CHA maintains opposition to card check, which is the union goal in the Employee Free Choice Act, it seems very likely that card check will pass under the Obama administration. Given this reality, CHA could agree to card check as an option (to secret ballot) if both parties (management and labor) agree. Catholic health systems oppose card check on the basis of Catholic social teaching which upholds the right of workers to a free and secret election on union representation.

## Catholic Coalition on Climate Change Announces Climate Covenant

**B**uilt on the themes of covenant, creation, and poverty, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, of which LCWR is a member, is launching an initiative to encourage greater personal and shared engagement by the Catholic community to respond to the impacts of climate change. Catholic institutions, organizations, parishes, and individuals will be invited to join a new climate covenant by taking the St. Francis Pledge, which links climate change and people living in poverty.

This effort will be launched during the 2009 Easter season with a public event on Earth Day, April 22. The coalition hopes to have dozens of national Catholic organizations already committed to the pledge before the public event. When it is launched, individuals and organizations will be asked to commit themselves to all five elements of the pledge: pray, learn, assess, act, advocate.

Many LCWR member congregations are already engaged in all or some of these activities. Information about joining this effort can be found on the website: [www.catholicsandclimatechange.org](http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org). As a coalition member, LCWR encourages its members to learn about the climate covenant when it is posted on the web in January.



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## Upcoming LCWR Dates

### LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Franciscan Center  
Tampa, Florida  
January 11 — 16, 2009*

### LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank

*Redemptorist Renewal Center  
Tucson, Arizona  
February 23 — 26, 2009*

### LCWR New Leader Workshop

*The Retreat Center at St. John's  
Plymouth, Michigan  
March 19 — 22, 2009*

### LCWR Assembly

*New Orleans, Louisiana  
August 11 — 15, 2009*

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March 11 — 14, 2010*

### LCWR Assembly

*Dallas, Texas  
August 10 — 14, 2010*

### LCWR Assembly

*Garden Grove, California  
August 9 — 13, 2011*



## Second Phase of the NRVC/CARA Study Begins

NRVC continues to move forward with its major study on contemporary vocations to religious life. The first phase of this research consisted of a survey mailed to every major superior in the US. CARA received a more than a 60% response from this survey, which is an extraordinary representative sample.

In the middle of November, the second phase of this research project was begun with approximately 4000 surveys mailed to those women and men religious who entered religious life within the past 15 years. Names of these newer religious were obtained from the first major superior survey.

NRVC asks for the cooperation of all leaders in encouraging the eligible members of their religious institutes to participate in this study so as to ensure the accuracy of the final data. From the surveys received from this second phase, two or three focus groups of newer religious will then be conducted by the CARA research team. The anticipated date for completion of this study is spring 2009.

## Keynote Addresses of the 2008 NRVC Convocation Will be Available

All of the texts of the major addresses of the recent NRVC convocation will be published in the 2009 Winter edition of *Horizon*. This will include the talks of keynote speakers Donald Senior, CP; Maria Cimperman, OSU; James Martin, SJ, and NRVC executive director Paul Bednarczyk, CSC.

## NRVC Revises Code of Ethics for Vocation Ministry

NRVC recently completed a revision of its Code of Ethics for Vocation Ministry. This document, which was more than a year in the making, was the result of a committee of ethicists, vocation directors, and professionals in the field of child protection. The revised code treats the responsibilities of the vocation director, major superior, and the general membership regarding vocation ministry. All leaders are encouraged to review this document with their vocation directors. It may be accessed online under the "Public Documents" section of the NRVC website at [www.nrvc.net](http://www.nrvc.net).

## NRVC Membership Renewals Begin

The new NRVC membership year begins January 1, 2009. NRVC is the only service organization in the US that provides professional training, in-service and resources for religious vocation directors. The online registration process has been streamlined for members' convenience and is now available for both renewing and first time members at [www.nrvc.net](http://www.nrvc.net).

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## Memberships Being Accepted in New National Organization for Religious

The National Association for Treasurers of Religious Institutes and The Legal Resource Center for Religious are merging into one new structure, and as of December 31, 2008 will no longer exist as separate entities. On January 1, 2009 the new organization — The Resource Center for Religious Institutes — will take effect.

Membership forms/invoices and a letter from RCRI executive director, Daniel Ward, OSB, inviting membership into the new organization were sent by e-mail attachment in December. Anyone who did not receive an invitation and invoice/membership form, is asked to contact Rita Waters, RSM at [rwaters@natri.org](mailto:rwaters@natri.org) or 301-587-7776.