

Update

*A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

October 2007

LCWR

Reflecting on Our Shared Future

LCWR Invites its Members into a Critical Reflection Process

At their recent meetings, the LCWR national board members have discussed the changing realities impacting US religious life, leaders, and LCWR as a conference. To help in planning for future LCWR programs and services, the board decided to initiate a process to explore how LCWR can best serve its members during these times.

The board recognizes that although leaders spend most of their time facilitating the transformation of their own institutes, they also carry a responsibility for the refounding of religious life for a new time. To this end, the board asks each member to spend some time considering what are the matters of critical importance for religious life leaders today and what the leadership conference can provide its members in light of those matters.

In August, all LCWR members received online a reflection guide that they were asked to use prior to their fall regional meetings. (This document is available on the LCWR Members Information section of the LCWR website -- www.lcwr.org.)

Members are encouraged to give personal reflection time to the three questions provided and, if possible, discuss them with other team members prior to the fall regional meetings. The questions are:

- In the context of changing realities, what are the two or three most significant issues, concerns, or questions that we as leaders need to be exploring at this time?

- How can we as leaders (LCWR members and conference leadership) focus our collective energies to respond to these issues, concerns, and questions?
- How do we insure ongoing leadership for LCWR (presidency/national board/national office/regional leadership)?

Time will be provided at all fall regional meetings for conversation on these questions. Because the insights of all LCWR members are critical to this process, members who cannot be present at their fall meeting are asked to submit their ideas in writing to their regional chair.

The LCWR Shared Future Process is being coordinated by national board members Kathryn Clauss, IHM; Raya Hanlon, OP; and Mary Jo Nelson, OLVN. This committee will coordinate the feedback received from the regions and prepare a summary for consideration by the national board at its February 2008 meeting. Based on the feedback received, the board will plan next steps for this multi-phase reflection and planning process.

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From the LCWR Presidency
Waking Up to Environmental Concerns

by Mary Whited, CPPS — LCWR President

Recently Carmen, Mary, Judy, and I moved into a new house. When we were informed that we needed to move from our comfortable convent home, we wanted to stay together. The timing of the move was inconvenient given our combined responsibilities of leadership, caregiving for an aging parent, and the busy activities of parish life. Yet, a determination to stay together, as well as a lot of help from many generous people, enabled us to find a house and move.



this planet, we are, in fact, encountering the mystery of God's personal engagement in our world.

This past August, at our national assembly, we agreed to promote federal and local legislation that is directed toward preserving the renewing wetlands and coastal regions in the United States. As we work to influence legislation toward greater balance within ecosystems, perhaps we are also waking ourselves up to the sacred dimension of the earth.

Contemplating nature can lead to responsible action. As leaders who are concerned about the balance of living

Waking to the graceful pine tree outside my bedroom window has replaced a view of the asphalt and concrete that surrounds our former home. Each day the woods at the edge of our back yard, humming birds at the feeder hung above a flowerbed, and the red fox that occasionally darts across the lawn awaken me to my connection with the earth. The morning chirp of birds and the evening hum of cicadas stir my soul. What a difference it makes when I remember I am part of nature! Prayer seems deeper. The Sacred flows more freely throughout the experiences of my day.

Recently I attended a showing of *The 11th Hour*, a powerful documentary that examines the current global environment and offers possible solutions for restoring the planet's ecosystem. The moving testimony of many environmental experts and concerned scientists reawakened me from a numbness that had crept into my daily

*What a difference it makes
 when I remember I am part of nature!*

life. Today I am much more aware of how choices I make affect other life on this planet Earth.

I am encouraged that, among many members of my community and other congregations of women religious, there is a growing consciousness that blends our love for nature into committed efforts to preserve the integrity of creation. I treasure my connections with others who also believe that, when we cherish life on

*With regard to issues connected with
 global warming, climate change,
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 It is time to wake up.*

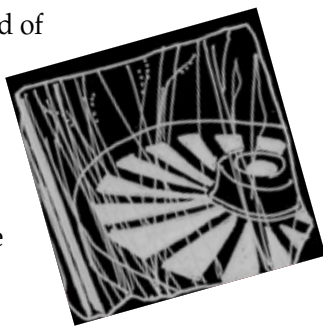
systems, I wonder what will enable us to stay awake and stave off that creeping numbness. How do we awaken those who seem to be asleep to the multiplicity of environmental concerns?

Waking up is a natural response when one has had enough sleep. With regard to issues connected with global warming, climate change, deforestation, unsustainable patterns of consumption, etc., we have had enough sleep. It is time to wake up. Although these lines from a poem by Christopher Fry in *A Sleep of Prisoners* were not written in light of ecological sensitivity, they remind me of critical realities we hold in our relationship to all that is living, including the earth.

*Affairs are now soul size.
 The enterprise
 Is exploration into God.
 Where are you making for? It takes
 So many thousand years to wake,
 But will you wake for pity's sake!*

LCWR Assembly Explores the Next Frontiers for US Religious Life

Gathered in the heartland of the United States, approximately 750 LCWR members and associates spent four days exploring what it means to be standing at the edge of the next frontier of US religious life.



The days opened with prayer and ritual centered on exploring uncharted lands, with participants frequently singing the mantra written by LCWR member Amy McFrederick, OP; “We’ll walk Your Way, we’ll talk Your Truth, we’ll live Your Life.”

Speakers called the assembly to speak boldly and courageously about the state of religious life and its mission in the Catholic church and world. Keynoter Laurie Brink, OP spoke about “the elephant in the living room” which she names “indecision” and noted three challenges that she sees facing religious today:

- Recognizing the various directions religious as individuals and as communities are moving toward
- Evaluating which of these will foster the life and charism of women religious, and finally,
- Abandoning the other possibilities, sailing headlong into the direction religious choose.

LCWR president Mary Dacey, SSJ also spoke of new frontiers, saying, “As consecrated religious we do not seek frontiers for their own sake. We go to and beyond frontiers because we are in search of the beloved who calls us where we need to go to further Christ’s mission in our world today. It is in our individual and collective DNA.” Mary addressed three frontiers that religious are called to face today: global spirituality, dialogue, and those who are poor.

Further exploration of the next frontiers took place through a panel presentation and breakout sessions with journalist John L. Allen; attorney and director of NETWORK Simone Campbell, SSS; psychologist Fran Ferder, FSPA; and psychologist Lynn Levo, CSJ.

The assembly participants gave public witness in Kansas City at an outdoor prayer service for peace

held at the World War I Memorial. They also approved a resolution to preserve and renew US wetlands and coastlands and strengthen Louisiana levees, and another resolution calling all LCWR members to participate in a rolling fast and advocacy for debt cancellation for impoverished countries.

LCWR presented its 2007 Outstanding Leadership Award to Joan Chittister, OSB, well-known author, speaker, and advocate for human rights and peace and a former LCWR president.

The members also elected J. Lora Dambroski, OSF, provincial minister of the US province of the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Providence of God as the conference president-elect, and reelected Jeanne Bessette, OSF as the conference secretary.

The addresses of Laurie Brink, Mary Dacey, and Joan Chittister, the resolutions, and photos from this assembly, as well as information or order DVDs or CDs of the assembly events, are available at www.lcwr.org/lcwrannualassembly/2007assembly.htm.



Highlights of the 2007 LCWR Assembly



"I recognize four different general 'directions' in which religious congregations seem to be moving. Not one of these four is better or worse than the others. The difficulty lies not in the directions themselves but in getting the congregation as a whole to discern together the best approach and to commit together to that end." -- Keynoter Laurie Brink, OP

"Before we can speculate on those frontiers we must ask ourselves why we face them. I believe that seeking frontiers, now or in the past is integral to religious life."
-- 2007 LCWR President Mary Dacey, SSJ



Panel moderator Mary Waskowiak, RSM with panelists: John L. Allen; Fran Ferder, FSPA; Lynn Levo, CSJ; and Simone Campbell, SSS



The assembly participants prayed for peace at the World War I Memorial in Kansas City



"We may be failing to realize that we ourselves are now the new small groups of women leaders who must come from one kind of religious life to begin another kind in a new and different world. Indeed, this is not a dying time. This is a seeding time."

--2007 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Recipient
Joan Chittister, OSB

Highlights of the 2007 LCWR Assembly



Through the New Member Orientation, LCWR national board members and staff shared important information about the conference and its services.

Several past LCWR presidents and executive directors participated in the assembly and joined those currently in office for a luncheon.

*(Standing) Carole Shinnick, SSND; Mary Chris Fellerhoff, CSA; Donna Markham, OP; J. Lora Dambroski, OSF; Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM; Mary Mollison, CSA; Nancy Sylvester, IHM; Helen Maher Garvey, BVM; Camille D'Arienzo, RSM; Constance Phelps, SCL
(Seated) Mary Whited, CPPS; Theresa Kane, RSM; Joan Chittister, OSB; Mary Dacey, SSJ; and Bea Eichten, OSF*



LCWR Board Meeting Highlights

The LCWR national board met at the Marillac Center in Leavenworth, Kansas for three days following the LCWR assembly. Included in the agenda were the following:

- A report by Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ and Paula Damiano, SP on the Center for the Study of Religious Life
- Evaluation of the LCWR assembly
- LCWR leadership and the officer nomination process
- The FADICA-LCWR response to the women religious in New Orleans
- The search process for the new LCWR executive director
- The LCWR Shared Future process
- The LCWR dues structure
- The 2008 LCWR-CMSM joint assembly
- Reports from the presidents, treasurer, and national office staff

At the meeting, the national board elected Barbara Hagedorn, SC and Kathryn Clauss, IHM to serve one-year terms as the at-large members of the executive committee

Search Begins for New LCWR Executive Director

In August 2008, Carole Shinnick, SSND will complete her term as LCWR executive director. Because this is such a key position for the conference, the national board initiated the search for a new executive director in mid-September. The search committee sent all LCWR members a copy of the role description, an informational flyer, and an application form and asked members to circulate them within their congregations and beyond. In addition, the committee placed advertisements in *America*, the *National Catholic Reporter*, and *Crux of the News*.

The application deadline is November 9, 2007. The board hopes to engage an executive director by February 2008, with the new person beginning in this position in mid-July 2008.

LCWR past president Mary Dacey, SSJ is chairing the search committee whose members are: Catherine Bertrand, SSND; Helen Maher Garvey, BVM; Mary Mollison, CSA; and Janet Roesener, CSJ.

The application materials are available on the [LCWR website at: www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/ED.htm](http://www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/ED.htm).

NGO-DPI Conference Focuses on Climate Change

The annual NGO-DPI conference held at the United Nations building in New York was attended by 1,762 NGO (non-governmental organization) representatives from 62 countries. Many scientific and environmental experts addressed the alarming facts of climate change and urged immediate and concrete actions by both governments and members of civil society to halt global warming. Reiterated frequently was the fact that those countries which contribute the least to global warming suffer the most, and that the industrialized wealthier nations bear the greater responsibility to assist poor nations in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Some of the breakout sessions addressed the role of faith communities in addressing climate change. Several members of LCWR congregations attended the conference, as well as staff members of the LCWR and CMSM offices. LCWR and CMSM hold joint DPI (Department of Public Information) NGO status.



LCWR associate director for social mission Marie Lucey, OSF represented LCWR at a town hall meeting in Burke, Virginia where she spoke against the war. The meeting was broadcast on C-Span.

Catholics for an End to the War in Iraq Gather throughout the US

LCWR is one of a number of Catholic organizations in Washington, DC who have met monthly since last November to dialogue and strategize about Catholic involvement in efforts to bring about an end to the war in Iraq. Recent activities include the following:

- August 20: Thirteen Catholic representatives met with the papal nuncio, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, to present their concerns. From his extensive experience in the Middle East, especially in Jerusalem-Palestine, the archbishop offered his insights and thanked the group for their efforts. He stressed that the Vatican opposed this war before it started, that resolution of the conflict must involve the region, especially Syria and Iran, but cautioned against an immediate and quick withdrawal of US troops.
- August 28: Catholics United, the media arm of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, worked to have Catholics on panels of a series of town hall meetings to call for an end to the war. Several members of LCWR congregations participated on panels in Virginia, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Columbus, and Cincinnati. Several others held prayer vigils on this date.
- September 11: A mass for peace was celebrated at St. Peter's Church on Capitol Hill, sponsored by this group and co-sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington, DC.

Printing the LCWR Directory

All LCWR members and associates have access to the LCWR directory online via the LCWR website. The online directory provides many features, including the capacity to search for members according to first or last name, city, state, region, congregation, or office.

The online directory can also be printed by following these steps:

1. Go to the Members Directory, available in the LCWR Members' Information section, accessible at www.lcwr.org.
2. Under "Search for Persons" choose "All" for either all members or all associates.
3. Select the entire listing (Control + A) and copy (Control + C)
4. Open a new Word document and paste (Control + V) the copied information.



Members Respond to 2007 Sabbath Year Rolling Fast

Implementing the 2007 assembly resolution to fast and advocate for debt cancellation for impoverished countries, 130 LCWR congregations registered to participate in the rolling fast initiated by Jubilee USA on a date between September 6 and October 15. On the day of their fast, sisters join in spirit with Rev. David Duncombe who began an open-ended fast on September 6, walking the halls of Congress each day urging lawmakers to support the Jubilee Act. All participating in the fast are encouraged to make calls to their legislators urging support for the Jubilee Act for Expanded Debt Cancellation and Responsible Lending of 2007 (HR

2634). Another activity is to participate in the "Collection of Plates" by writing on an empty plate "I'm hungry for debt justice," followed by one's name, address, and phone number; asking one's member of Congress to support the Jubilee Act; and sending the plates to the Jubilee office for delivery to Congress: Jubilee USA Network, 222 East Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC 20003.

(Note: Due to problems in the registration and reporting process at the Jubilee office, the list recently forwarded to LCWR members was not complete.) The fast will conclude with a prayer breakfast in DC on October 16, followed by a lobby day on October 17.

LCWR Engages New Cartridge Recycling Company

LCWR recently switched to working with Inkjet Collect for its cartridge recycling program. Anyone with supplies left over from EnviroSMART is asked not to use these materials since the company is no longer able to receive most of the cartridges that it had previously accepted.

New supplies may be ordered from Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org or by calling 301-588-4955.



Support the LCWR Scholarship Fund by Recycling Ink Cartridges

Participants in Program

LCWR, CMSM, RFC, NATRI, LRCR
LCWR Member Congregations
Washington Theological Union
Catholic Theological Union

Amount of Money Received into LCWR Scholarship Fund

(From May 1, 2007 -- August 31, 2007)
\$339.00

Congregations are asked to consider participating in this program and inviting other entities to do so as well.

Other possibilities are health systems, universities, schools, and other works.

Participation in the program is easy and has no costs.

Recyclable items include: ink jet cartridges, laser cartridges, and cell phones.

More information is on the LCWR website at: www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/recycling.htm.

pioneers *Poets* & PROPHETS

CATHOLIC SISTERS IN AMERICA

Progress continues on the LCWR exhibit, *Pioneers, Poets & Prophets: Catholic Sisters in America*.

The LCWR History Committee has been actively engaged in exhibit development, venue searches, and fundraising toward the \$3.2 million goal to cover the costs of designing, constructing, and traveling the exhibit.



In August Helen Maher Garvey, BVM, chair of the LCWR History Committee; Jeanne Bessette, OSF, LCWR secretary; and Carole Shinnick, SSND, LCWR executive director toured "CSI: The Experience," an interactive traveling exhibit now at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. The tour was led by Bob Weis, who designed the exhibit, and who is serving as a consultant to the LCWR project.

In September the LCWR History Committee members met in St. Louis and were joined by Mellissa Berry and Nancy Seruto who are overseeing the design and construction of the exhibit. Here, Mellissa reviews the exhibit floor plan. *Pioneers, Poets & Prophets* is slated to open in 2009.



From the LCWR Executive Director
May I Have Your Attention, Please?

No doubt about it – the agrarian calendar rules. Although January is the first month, for most of us in the northern hemisphere, fall is when the year really begins. September is back-to-business time. Yellow school buses dot the roads and I-pod wearing kids clump on the corners sharing homework and gossip.

Every meeting I have been at lately includes “calendar” – that take-your-breath-away exercise when you feel as if every living minute of the coming months has been sucked into a

October is a glorious month, bursting with astonishing colors, brilliant days, and navy blue nights. The people around us are glorious, too — in their diversity and in the very miracle of their presence.

big black hole. And these are the days of subtle seasonal decisions — long-sleeved or short-sleeved, cotton or corduroy? Shut off the air conditioning (and toast) or leave it on (and freeze)? This is the season of the equinox when the nights quietly nibble away at the days.

Wise ones tell us that the only time we truly have is now, and that energy invested in regrets or worries is wasted energy. In fact, they tell us that time itself is a seductive illusion that drains our capacity to be attentive to the only thing that is real — the present. Personally I like time-markers. I like turning the page of the calendar and noting the change of season. Well, I like MOST time markers. Recently my usually gracious staff celebrated a certain birthday of mine by presenting me with a cake frosted with a facsimile of my Medicare card! Oh, yeah - thanks, Gang.

On a Metro trip this week an attractive young couple boarded the train at the stop for Gallaudet University, the premier school for the deaf here in Washington. As they entered the car, they were already engaged in an animated conversation in sign language. I was struck by how focused each was on the other, closely watching



Carole Shinnick, SSND

hands, eyes, mouth, and body language. It seemed to me that they were much more attentive to each other as they signed than hearing people are when they speak. Perhaps that’s the nature of sign language. Or perhaps they were in love. Or, both. One thing is for sure — they were totally present to each other and to the moment.

You and I live in a culture of multi-tasking. We pride ourselves on our ability to juggle many things at a time. If you interview someone for a job, they will likely say, “I am good at multi-tasking.” But there’s a downside to this skill — its power to scatter and distract. Each morning I sit in traffic — very, very slow traffic — and I am stunned at the foolish multi-tasking around me. Women apply mascara in the rear-view mirrors. Men shave with cordless razors. Some read newspapers propped on their steering wheels. Many check Blackberries or chatter on cell phones. Then there are the meals on wheels — Starbucks, Egg McMuffins, and yogurt smoothies. I know it’s a matter of time until I am rear-ended by someone who spills hot coffee on an electric shaver while text-messaging.

October is a glorious month, bursting with astonishing colors, brilliant days, and navy blue nights. The people around us are glorious, too – in their diversity

Despite our over-flowing calendars and multiple demands, it seems essential to our own health and the health of our various communities that we attend to the present, to the person right in front of us, to doing one thing at a time.

and in the very miracle of their presence. Despite our over-flowing calendars and multiple demands, it seems essential to our own health and the health of our various communities that we attend to the present, to the person right in front of us, to doing one thing at a time.

The couple on the train spoke to me as they spoke to each other. They modeled contemplative living – taking a long, loving look at the now. So, focus, Carole -- focus.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Renewal Center

Tucson, Arizona

January 20 — 25, 2008

Systemic Change Think Tank

Franciscan Renewal Center

Scottsdale Arizona

February 4 — 7, 2008

LCWR New Leader Workshop

The Retreat Center at St. John's

Plymouth, Michigan

March 13 — 16, 2008

LCWR-CMSM Joint Assembly

Denver, Colorado

August 1 — 4, 2008

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

Franciscan Center

Tampa, Florida

January 12 — 16, 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



Religious Formation Conference to Provide Congress Take-Home Packets for Use with Congregation Leaders and Members

The Religious Formation Conference will be sending home with the participants of its National Congress November 8-11, 2008 “fuel” for continued conversations about being “compelled by the spirit to be fire in the world, Church and religious life.” A take-home packet will include questions for participants to bring back to their communities in order to engage members in conversation about the role of religious life in today’s global context. Congress participants will be asked to meet with their institute leadership for a discussion about ways to engage members in a process of reflection and assessment that assists members in having meaningful conversations that stir the embers of vocation and the call to be religious in these times. These processes could be inserted into structures that already exist for chapter preparation or conversation groups implementing chapter mandates.

The take-home packets also will include order forms for videotapes of the congress presentations and for *Proceedings*, a booklet containing the congress presentations written in English and Spanish. These materials will allow more community members to gain from the excitement of the congress days.

Registration is still open for the congress to be held in Pittsburgh. More information and the registration form are available at www.relforcon.org.



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From the
**Center for the Study of
Religious Life**

Sign Up for Third Introductory Archives Workshop

The Catholic Library Association and the Center for the Study of Religious Life are sponsoring the second session of the Introductory Archives Workshop for Religious Communities on October 7-12, 2007 at Malvern Retreat House, Malvern, Pennsylvania for those new to the archival field and those interested in updating their knowledge of archival theory and practice.

Directed by Malachy McCarthy, province archivist for the Claretian Missionaries Archives of Chicago, and Ellen Pierce, director of Maryknoll Mission Archives, the first session in April was fully subscribed as is the second session, The third session will be held in July 2009 in Belleville, Illinois,

Anyone interested in attending in July 2009 is asked to complete and return the registration form at www.cathla.org/preservation.php without fees, as soon as possible. Those who do so will receive advance notice of the 2009 workshop so they can register before it is announced elsewhere.

CSRL Is On the Move

As the Center begins its tenth year, it moved its offices across Cornell Street to the original Catholic Theological Union building and is located on the second floor with a number of other organizations serving religious life in the United States. The Center's mailing address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses remain the same.

2007 NATRI Conference Focuses on Transformation: In Business and On Mission

**Hyatt Regency Hotel, Miami Florida
November 6-9, 2007**

Following the theme of transformation, the 2007 NATRI conference will address topics of reconfiguration, dissolution/exit strategy, strategic planning, new times require new strategies in investing, lay formation and mission effectiveness. In addition to these workshops, the conference will offer updates on government programs, accounting SOP, retirement, non-profit/community 501(C)(3) benefits.

The keynote speakers for the conference will be Louis DeThomasis, FSC, who will develop the topic of business ethics as they pertain to the religious institutes. Patricia Wittberg, SC will address the need for a new theology of institutional administration/institutional apostolates and the kinds of questions or issues this theology would have to address.

Pre-conference workshops for new and advanced TRENDS users will be offered on Tuesday, November 5, 2007. There will also be a free workshop for members of small communities on Tuesday afternoon.

Registration materials and additional information are available on the NATRI website at www.natri.org.

Upcoming LRCR Workshop San Antonio, Texas

More details available at www.lrcr.org

RECONFIGURATION BEST PRACTICES: Civily, Canonically, Culturally

February 11-13, 2008
Hilton San Antonio Airport

Faculty:

Janet Fleischhacker, CSJ
Stephen Glodek, SM
Lynn Jarrell, OSU, JCD
Mark MacDougall, JD
Mary Reichert, JD
Daniel Ward, OSB, JD, JCL

Hilton San Antonio Airport
Rate \$99 plus tax

Subscriber Registration Fee: \$450

Group Rate:

Three or more from same institute/firm \$400

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