

Update

A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

October 2008

LCWR

Shared Futures Process

LCWR is continuing the important process of naming the information and resources most needed by today's religious life leaders. At this summer's assembly, approximately 700 members engaged in conversations about what they believe is most needed to support women religious in leadership as their congregations move into the future.



- It may be possible for LCWR to model processes that could be helpful to congregations during this "in-between time" in US religious life. The processes could address questions such as: How do we manage complex change? How do we vision for our future?

The LCWR regions will be discussing at their fall meetings some of the issues that arose from the assembly conversations. These topics include:

Through a process facilitated by Mary Mollison, CSA, the assembly provided feedback that fell into five general categories. Members noted a desire for LCWR to focus on:

- 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

At its post-assembly meeting, the LCWR board reviewed all the ideas surfaced by members during the assembly. Some of the key points noted included the following:

- Further education on the services and resources currently provided by LCWR may be helpful to the membership.
- Two types of thinking seemed to be in play during the assembly discussions: operational thinking and strategic thinking. The strategic questions are where LCWR now needs to focus its energy.

ics include:

- Building relationships between bishops and religious
- Heightening public awareness of women religious through the LCWR history exhibit, "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America"
- Exploring possible reconfiguration of LCWR regions
- LCWR's relationship with CICLSAL

The national board charged the LCWR executive committee and the national office staff to develop further steps for the shared future process. These steps will be discussed at the February meeting of the LCWR board.

Inside this issue:

- 3 Highlights of the LCWR-CMSM Assembly
- 7 Iraqi Refugee Trauma Training
- 8 Did You Know? -- LCWR Online Resources

From the LCWR Presidency Transitions and Constants

by J. Lora Dambroski, OSF — LCWR President

Over the course of this summer many of us, as individuals or as congregations and organizations, have been through some major transitions. LCWR, too, has had major changes and this summer's assembly process has set the stage for more.

LCWR's annual change in leadership is the election of our national officers. We anticipate this with a preparatory national nomination process. This summer we elected Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA as president-elect and bid farewell to Mary Dacey, SSJ, past-president. Ellen Dauwer, SC was elected secretary as Jeanne Bessette, OSF completed three years of secretarial service for LCWR. The national board appointed Pam Chiesa, PBVM treasurer at the completion of the term of Maryann Summa, OP. Mary Whited, CPPS completed her year as president, and I moved ahead into that responsibility of leadership.

Of course, members of LCWR are very aware of the major transition of the executive director of our conference. Carole Shinnick, SSND kept the heart and the head of the conference integrated and moving with spirit, energy, and humor. With the completion of her two terms, the search was on for her successor. No easy task by any means! But, with the appointment of Jane Burke, SSND as the new executive director there is confidence of continued spirit and creativity.

We also cannot overlook the reality that half of the regional chairs have changed this year, reshaping the national board. WOW! This is more change and transition in leadership than LCWR has had for many years.

But, this is not all LCWR has on its *transition plate*. Our *Shared Futures Conversations* are moving to focus ways to carry out the mission of LCWR in this present



time. The process on both regional and national levels asks for deeper exploration of collaboration and partnerships, our relationships within the church, and the ministry of leadership as women religious who are part of a global and evolving world community.

Change and transition seem to be a more pronounced and evident part of all of our lives as committed women religious. (I state what may be the obvious!

But I do so for a reason.) While these

profound elements of change on levels of leadership and direction of our conference are upon us (and our own congregations) sometimes we may miss the other *faithful constants* who surround us. Those in our daily lives, operations, and ministry services who firmly take up the task of making these hoped for changes a reality. Those *faithful constants* for LCWR being our national office staff. (To see a photo of the staff, please go to

[August-September 2008 Update, p. 3.](#))

We can sometimes forget that the *systems theory* is at work as they *work* the

day-to-day of our *great vision, focus, and directions*. They put the "you" into *Theory U*. These women assist LCWR and keep our backbone strong with their support as we all discern leadership in the future and the present; in times of calm and in challenges of crisis. They are the hands, presence, and services that help us put shape to who we are.

As we begin this year, I want to acknowledge with gratitude our *faithful constants, our national staff*, who sometimes make more transitions in the day-to-day so that we (LCWR) can move with spirit, clarity, and love in this ministry of leadership.

(P.S. Who are the *faithful constants* in your ministry of leadership?)

Change and transition seem to be a more pronounced and evident part of all of our lives as committed women religious.

Highlights of the 2008 LCWR-CMSM Assembly



More than 800 members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) met in **Denver** from August 1-4 in an assembly that focused on the theme, "On This Holy Mountain."

Mark Padrez, OP and **Cathy Mueller, SL** welcomed the assembly on behalf of the local CMSM and LCWR regions.



CMSM president **Tom Picton, CSSR** and LCWR president **Mary Whited, CPPS** set the context for the assembly on the opening night.

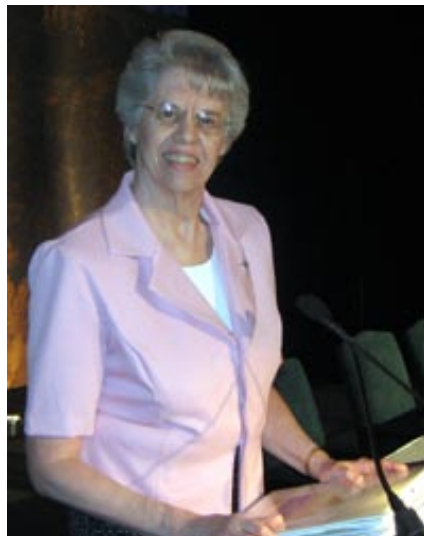
Denver's archbishop **Charles Chaput, OFM Cap** brought greetings to the assembly and noted, "Christ asks us to follow him – radically, with all we have, and without exceptions or reservations. What he deserves is our love – a love that is expressed in our worship, in our service to others, and in our obedience to the Church."





Keynoter **Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ**: "Aging, diminishment, and death raise hard questions about the shape of religious life in the future, while new experiences of God in the following of Jesus are setting loose new creative imagination and generative energies for mission and ministry."

The gift of religious to the world, observed keynoter **Richard Rohr, OFM**, is their capacity to understand the depths of objective truth and to live with an alternative consciousness that goes beyond all-or-nothing thinking.



2008 LCWR president **Mary Whited, CPPS**: "As a Leadership Conference of Women Religious, we hold a 'shared future,' a future that is not only beyond us but also resides within and among us... We cannot be silent with so much at stake – the future unfolding for women religious."

Hank Lemoncelli, SM and **Archbishop Gianfranco Gardin** from the CICALSAL staff presided at the main Eucharistic liturgy. Archbishop Gardin reflected, "The truest strength of religious life, that which is clearly evident in our founders and foundresses, is a passionate love for Christ, adherence to him, the ability — to use the words of St. Benedict — 'to put nothing before Him.'"





The LCWR participants engaged in conversations throughout the assembly on “LCWR’s Shared Future.” The conversations followed on the reflection done by LCWR members as individuals, congregations, and regions on the topics they believe most important for LCWR to address today.

During the assembly members of the national board anointed each participant.



Denise Ann Clifford, SL coordinated the planning of the liturgies, rituals, and the environment, with the assistance of many others including Karen Wuertz shown here directing musicians and a choir of vocalists from several parishes throughout the Denver archdiocese.



During the assembly, LCWR and CMSM issued a joint resolution calling for action on climate change. Recognizing that the increase in temperature on the earth will likely have widespread consequences from mass extinctions to devastating impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the poorest and most vulnerable human beings, the leaders called their members to concrete actions to protect the environment.





At the assembly LCWR members voted in **Marlene Weisenbeck**, (center) president of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in La Crosse, Wisconsin as the conference president-elect. At the same time, **J. Lora Dambroski**, OSF (left) assumed the position of president and **Mary Whited**, CPPS (right) became the past president.

LCWR members elected **Ellen Dauwer, SC** (left), a member of the leadership team of the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth, Convent Station, New Jersey, as the conference secretary, while the board appointed **Pam Chiesa**, president of the Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM in San Francisco, as its treasurer.



The assembly thanked and honored outgoing LCWR executive director **Carole Shinnick, SSND** (left) and welcomed and blessed the new executive director **Jane Burke, SSND**.

The assembly closed with an audio-visual tribute to all women religious serving in congregational leadership positions today.



Assembly Resources Available on the LCWR Website

www.lcwr.org/lcwrannualassembly/2008assembly.htm

- Keynote Address by Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ (in English and Spanish*)
- Presidential Address and Painting by Mary Whited, CPPS
- Address to CMSM by Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD
- Homily by Archbishop Gianfranco Agostino Gardin
- Remarks by Archbishop Charles Chaput
- LCWR-CMSM Resolution on Climate Change

- Press Release on the Assembly
- Information on Ordering CDs and DVDs of the Assembly Presentations

* The Spanish translation of the address by Elizabeth Johnson is provided through the generosity of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

LCWR National Board Meeting Highlights

The LCWR national board met for one day prior to and three days after the assembly. The agenda items included:

- LCWR Shared Futures Process
- Evaluation of the LCWR-CMSM assembly
- Re-issuing the CARA inventory of policies, procedures, and practices regarding sexual abuse of minors
- Iraqi refugee trauma training
- Reports from the presidents, treasurer, executive director and national office staff
- Preparation for the LCWR regional meetings

At the meeting the board elected Katie Clauss, IHM and Nancy Reynolds, SP to serve one-year terms as the at-large members of the executive committee.

Iraqi Refugee Trauma Training Project Begins

LCWR members and associates have received information about the Catholic Relief Services Iraqi Refugee Trauma Training project which was an outcome of the January 2008 delegation of women religious, including an LCWR representative, to the Middle East. Having witnessed the anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by so many refugees they met, delegates identified this program as one to be supported for financial assistance by constituents interested in assisting Iraqi refugees.

The project, which begins in the fall, will provide training in the United States for a core group of social workers in identifying the symptoms of trauma and appropriate interventions. The trainees will return to the Middle East to train other social workers in order to increase capacity. The goal of the project is to enhance ability to assist Iraqi refugees to address the impact of trauma on their lives, and to support their personal and communal well-being as well as their contributions to peacebuilding within their communities and nation.

The project contact is Doug Ryan, CRS/Middle East Sub Region Representative: dryan@eme.crs.org.



Members of the LCWR board learned more about the full capabilities of the LCWR website so that they can share this information with members at their regional meetings. Shown here are: (standing) Dorothy Scesny, PBVM; Tierney Trueman, OSF; Bernadine Reyes, OSB; Barbara Staropoli, SSJ; Marie McCarthy, SP; and Pat Homan, OSU with LCWR communications director Annmarie Sanders, IHM (seated).

New Video Released: *They Killed Sister Dorothy*

The new DVD traces the work of Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN that led to her shocking murder in February 2005, and follows the drama that unfolds at the trials of her killers. The 90-minute video has received awards at film festivals and is scheduled for an HBO release in February 2009, after which it will be available for showings in parishes, schools and universities, theaters, etc. Just Media worked in collaboration with Dorothy's family and religious community to produce this film about the sister whose life and work in the rainforests of Brazil inspired the filmmakers to tell a story they believe needs to be shared. See www.theykilledsisterdorothy.com.

Signatures Needed for the Platform for the Common Good

A number of sisters from LCWR congregations attended the Convention for the Common Good held in Philadelphia in July, and many more participated in the platform dialogue process. Those who attended are now working to have as many people as possible sign the *Platform for the Common Good*, and send it to congressional representatives. To sign the platform go to www.votethecommongood.com. For a summary of the platform, a chart of candidates' positions, and to contact Congress go to www.networklobby.org.

Did You Know?

Did you know that the online LCWR member directory allows you to search the directory for information in a number of helpful ways? Did you also know that you can check your own listing, verify that it is correct, and keep it updated yourself?

LCWR Members Information

Members Directory

Directory Information Policy

The contact information for LCWR members contained in this directory is ordinarily restricted to use within the national office or by the regions of LCWR. LCWR does not permit use of LCWR member data for fundraising purposes.

LCWR members are requested to treat the contact information in the LCWR directory with care as well. Please refer any requests for use of the contact information in this directory to the LCWR national office at 301-588-8320.

The online directory allows you to search for information using several different fields. Simply fill in the information that you know or are seeking to learn and hit "Submit."

The following are some sample searches you could perform:

You met someone named Grace at the LCWR assembly, but can't remember anything else about her. Type in "Grace" here and hit "Submit."

You would like to find out who are the PBVMs in California. Type in "PBVM" here and choose "CA" here and hit "Submit."

You want information on all of the major superiors in Illinois. Choose "Major Superior" here and choose "IL" here and hit "Submit."

You want the names of all LCWR members in Region 9. Choose "9" here and hit "Submit."

All LCWR members and associates are asked to check their own listings to verify their accuracy. If any change needs to be made to your listing, please utilize the "Update My Information" option.

Your action will cause the updated information to be sent to Carol Crowder, the LCWR membership coordinator, who will make the changes you indicated in the database.



LCWR Members Information

Membership Directory

Members: [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [All](#)

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[Update My Information](#)

Did You Know?

Did you know that when you are looking for ideas for a speaker, facilitator, meeting location, policies, or other resources that you could ask other LCWR members for assistance? The LCWR Resource Sharing Forum is a free service that allows you to post a question to other LCWR members and associates and ask for their ideas and feedback. This important resource allows members to benefit from one another's experience and expertise.

Here are some of the topics on which members have posted a question in recent months:

- Reconfiguration of religious institutes
- Personnel questions
- Environmental stewardship
- Associates
- Strategic planning
- Finances
- Policy on making public statements
- Guidelines for chapter steering committees
- Remuneration policies

Once members are registered as forum participants, they can access the archives of previously posted questions and responses back to the time the forum was started in October 2006.

LCWR members and associates must register themselves as forum participants. Information on the forum and how to register for it is available on the LCWR Members Information section of the LCWR website.

LCWR Represented at National Gathering of Hispanic Sisters

by Patsy Crowley, OSB
Member of the LCWR National Board

Over to the far left near the sound technicians at the LCWR-CMSM 2008 assembly was a table with an assortment of men and women. Our conversations were deep,



fun, and provocative. In the end most of us exchanged addresses with the hope of keeping in touch. One Hispanic sister from nearby Pueblo, Colorado, a first-time LCWR assembly attendee, made some very insightful comments. As we got to talking during one of the breaks, she told us that some representatives from her community were going to a meeting the following week sponsored by the Archdiocese of Chicago and called by Joan McGlinchey, MSC, the archdiocesan vicar for religious. Because I am from Chicago, I was curious. I had noted the absence of significant numbers of Hispanic sisters at the assembly, so I went to find Joan to get more details about the forthcoming meeting and asked if I could attend part of the meeting as an observer. When I mentioned this at the LCWR post-assembly board meeting, the board designated me to attend as LCWR's representative and to report back to the board about the experience.

The day after I returned to Chicago from the board meeting, I joined the Hispanic sisters at the Cabrini Retreat Center for their first meeting with Francis Cardinal George. Twenty-eight of the 38 communities who received an invitation to the meeting were in attendance. These communities were from all over the country. Most, though not all, have motherhouses outside of the US. Joan McGlinchey, the initiator of this meeting, applied for and received an education grant from the National Religious Retirement Office.

In an animated dialogue with one another, as well as with Cardinal George, Bishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller (auxiliary bishop of Chicago), and with representatives from LCWR, the Center for the Study of Religious Life, and NRRO, this group of women expressed a desire to continue to meet locally, regionally, and nationally. They want to invite other Hispanic Sisters into the conversation. Joan estimates that this meeting may have only reached half of the Hispanic communities in this country.

What was clear is that members of this group found their voice, expressed their feelings of being isolated, and shared their desires to be in connection with other groups, such as LCWR, within the church. Their designated representatives will meet to plan next steps in early 2009 in Los Angeles.

Nominations Begin for LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award

During the fall regional meetings members of LCWR will be discussing and nominating at least three persons per region for the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award. As members prepare for the regional meetings, they are asked to reflect on the following information and be prepared to propose potential recipients of the award.

Past recipients have been Mary Luke Tobin, SL; Theresa Kane, RSM; Mary Daniel Turner, SNDdeN; Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ; and Joan Chittister, OSB.

The Mission of LCWR

The purpose of the conference shall be to promote a developing understanding and living of religious life by:

- Assisting its members personally and communally to carry out more collaboratively their service of leadership in order to accomplish further the mission of Christ in today's world.
- Fostering dialogue and collaboration among religious congregations within the church and in the larger society.
- Developing models for initiating and strengthening relationships with groups concerned with the needs of society, thereby maximizing the potential of the conference for effecting change.

The Award

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

Nomination

National members of the Leadership Conference for Women Religious may nominate a person for consideration for the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award.

Criteria for the Award

The person must have significantly contributed to the

ministry of leadership in a manner that reflects the mission of LCWR. The nominee(s) evidence:

- Commitment and collaboration in the ministry of leadership
- Faithfulness to gospel values and mission
- Witnessing to creative and innovative leadership in one or more areas
- Making significant contribution, as a leader on the national and/or international level, particularly to women religious congregations in the United States

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

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona*
January 17 — 22, 2010

LCWR New Leader Workshop

*The Retreat Center at St. John's
Plymouth, Michigan*
March 11 — 14, 2010

LCWR Assembly

Dallas, Texas
August 10 — 14, 2010

LCWR Assembly

Garden Grove, California
August 9 — 13, 2011

LCWR Members Invited to Attend the NATRI-LRCR Conference

From November 18 to 21, 2008 NATRI and LRCR will be hosting a joint conference in Denver with the theme of "New Beginnings: Emerging Realities." One of the emerging realities that this conference heralds is the coming merger of these two service organizations into a single entity. The conference combines the educative work of these organizations. Members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious will find 47 presentations to choose from. The keynote address on November 18 will be given by Dean Carolyn Woo, PhD of the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame, who will focus on the preparation of lay leadership and the emerging social agenda of the private sector.

A second major address by Lynn Jarrell, OSU, JCD, president of the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, KY and Daniel Ward, OSB, executive director of the Legal Resource Center for Religious, will look at challenges in maintaining a balanced relationship between diocese and institutes/societies.

Other topics of interest range from alternate investments and advanced topics in accounting to Social Security and stress management.

There will be four pre-conference workshops on November 18. One is a legal conference presented by Christine Rody, SC, JCL and Simone Campbell, SSS, JD. The NATRI projection software TRENDS will be featured in a hands-on session for beginners led by Laura Reicks, RSM and another for experienced users presented by Hertha Longo, CSA. There will also be a free small group gathering from 1:00 to 3:00 PM that same day.

Further information on all conference activities, registration, and tours may be found on the NATRI website at www.natri.org. Most treasurers and major superiors will have received information by mail.

Religious Formation Conference Resource Manuals Available for Purchase

The Religious Formation Conference has made its resource manuals, an excellent reference for formation ministers or leaders with formation responsibilities, available for purchase. One copy of each volume was sent to RFC member congregations as a benefit of membership. Additional copies of Volumes I, II, III, and IV are available. The table of contents of each volume, costs, and an order form are at www.relforcon.org/7Resources/manualinfo.htm. Orders for additional copies will be filled as long as the supply lasts.

For information call 301-588-4938.



Update is an official publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious published monthly and distributed to members nationally.

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