

November 2008

Women & Spirit Opens in Cincinnati in May 2009 Smithsonian Also Approves Exhibit

LCWR is proud to announce that the traveling exhibit, "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" will debut at the Cincinnati Museum Center. The exhibit will open on May 15, 2009 and will run through August 15, 2009 before moving to a new venue.

The Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, which serves more than 1.47 million visitors annually, is a nationally recognized educational and research resource and one of the top cultural attractions in the Midwest.

LCWR was also notified this month that the Smithsonian Institution approved its application to exhibit at the International Gallery in the S. Dillon Ripley Center, located on the National Mall in Washington, DC. The exhibit will be hosted there from November 2010 through January 2011.

LCWR thanks its History Committee whose members have been working since 2004 to bring to reality the dream of an exhibit telling the previously untold story of Catholic sisters. Helen Maher Garvey, BVM is chairing the committee whose members are: Jane Burke, SSND; Barbara Cervenka, OP; Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ; Mary Dacey, SSJ; Karen Kennelly, CSJ; Constance Phelps, SCL; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; and Carole Shinnick, SSND. The committee continues to work with the firm Seruto & Company on the construction of the exhibit and on the marketing and public relations plans.

The exhibit would not be possible without the work of the leaders, archivists, and others who have generously made their history, photographs, and artifacts available for use in this public exhibit.



The Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, originally Cincinnati Union Terminal, is a passenger railroad station in the Queensgate neighborhood of Cincinnati that now houses museums, a theatre, and a library.

Entered from a copper domed kiosk between the Smithsonian "Castle" and the Freer Gallery of Art, the S. Dillon Ripley Center houses the International Gallery.



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From the LCWR Presidency **Attending to the Good of the Whole**

by Mary Whited, CPPS — LCWR Past President

While attending a meeting in Pennsylvania, I had an opportunity to visit Gettysburg, a site of a Civil War that scarred our country and left hundreds of thousands of soldiers dead, wounded, or missing. There on the battlefield I grieved the loss of so many lives in a conflict that tore a union apart. Standing on the ground where Abraham Lincoln addressed a splintered nation, I glimpsed something of the impact of a courageous president's efforts to heal divisions, end the Civil War, free those enslaved, and redirect the attention of individual states toward the good of the whole.



On October 8, our LCWR presidency met with the executive committee of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR) to explore together our common ground. Simple, truthful conversation about what we care about most brought out the best in each of us. As we conversed about our personal calls to religious life, the charisms of our congregations, and the thrusts and values of each organization, we spoke sincerely and passionately about our understandings of religious life. A four-hour visit provided sufficient time to listen carefully, identify commonalities, and acknowledge different expressions of living religious life. We named the pain that has resulted from separation in the past, and we acknowledged the tensions that arise from different perspectives we hold. As I listened to stories that were similar or different from my own, I came to a greater appreciation of what we have in common.

As I anticipate the November US elections, I look to candidates who have a keen sense of the common good. I am convinced that, in a global society and universal

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Attending to the common good is so much a part of who we are as women who have chosen to live the life we call "religious." The common good is like the air we breathe. When differing perspectives arise in our congregations, we, as leaders, often find ourselves

church, there is little room for the politics of division. I am encouraged by NETWORK's creative efforts to convene groups across the US and in Pennsylvania to develop a "Platform for the Common Good." In the context of "We, the People" and the traditions of our faith, the common good is central to the choices we will make.

*When differing perspectives arise in our
 congregations, we, as leaders,
 often find ourselves leaning in the direction of
 what will benefit
 the life of the whole.*

Disregard for the common good has obviously led to an economy that is out of kilter. Even as I write this column, the effects of economic disparities between Wall Street and Main Street USA ripple across the globe. An increase in unemployment and homelessness will call for greater response from us and our congregations even as we, too, see the decline in the resources we hold. Yet, we must weigh our needs in light of the good of the whole.

leaning in the direction of what will benefit the life of the whole. These days we hold in prayer national priorities of war and peace, implications of a shifting global economy, the choice of leaders who will lead our nation and influence the world, and authentic ways of living religious life. In doing so, let us redirect attention toward the good of the whole.

Planning Underway for 2009 LCWR Assembly ‘Women of Spirit: Creating in Chaos’

Plans for an exciting 2009 LCWR assembly have been well underway and were concretized more fully when the LCWR Assembly Planning Committee met at the event site in New Orleans in September.

Lively conversation on religious life today led the committee to identify the following foundational ideas on which the assembly is being planned:

- The opportunities for religious to learn from the resilience of New Orleans residents, who despite the severe structural breakdowns of their city, are taking risks to rebuild and move forward.
- The need to embrace the political, economic, ecclesial, and religious life chaos of these times and explore the questions that are rising from these challenges.
- The unique opportunity provided by the opening of the “Women & Spirit” exhibit to remember and learn from the history and legacy of women religious, particularly since the first sisters to arrive in the US landed in New Orleans.

Based on these foundational ideas, the committee chose “**Women of Spirit: Creating in Chaos**” as the assembly theme.

Emmy Award-winning journalist and New Orleans native **Cokie Roberts** will be the keynote speaker for the assembly. She is a contributing senior news analyst for National Public Radio and a political commentator for ABC News. She is the author of the national bestseller *We Are Our Mother’s Daughters* as well as *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation*. The latter book, published in 2004, explores the lives of the women behind



*2009 LCWR Assembly
Keynote Cokie Roberts*

the men who wrote the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

The assembly will include other presentations and further exploration of the critical challenges facing religious life as LCWR continues its Shared Future process. Former LCWR board member Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM will serve as the assembly facilitator.

New Orleans was the original site of the 2007 LCWR assembly. Because the city was still recovering from the hurricanes, the conference postponed going to the city until 2009. LCWR chose to honor this commitment to New Orleans because of the strong desire members expressed to economically support the city and its people.

Additional information will be made available about the assembly. All LCWR members are encouraged to mark their calendars now for **August 11-14, 2009** and to plan on sending as many team members as possible to this important event.



The LCWR 2009 Assembly Planning Committee and staff met at the assembly site in New Orleans: Pat Cormack, SCSC (staff); Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM (facilitator); Laura Bufano, CSJ; Joy O’Grady, CSC; Priscilla Wood, OP; Jane Burke, SSND (LCWR executive director); Carol Artery, OP; Kimberly Ritter-Videmschek (Nix & Associates); Ellen Kron, DC; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM (staff)



The Leadership Conference of Women Religious
presents

The

New Leader Workshop

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

LCWR is pleased to announce the
2009 New Leader Workshop.

This annual event, tailored for women religious in
congregational leadership, is highly recommended not
only for those who may be new to leadership,
but also for those who are returning to leadership.

The program features an outstanding faculty
and presentations on issues of critical importance
to leaders today.

Participants will have multiple opportunities
to consider ways of employing their new insights
once they return home.

The program will draw its major themes from
the LCWR document, *The Dimensions of Leadership*,
and will incorporate prayer and ritual throughout.

Faculty:

Simone Campbell, SSS
Jean Dennison
Lynn Levo, CSJ
Christine Rody, SC
Grace Sbrissa, CSJ
Nancy Schreck, OSF

More information on the workshop, as well as the
registration form will be sent online to all members and will
be available on the LCWR website at
www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/NLWFlyer09.pdf.

Forms and payment are due by December 8.
Participation is limited.

LCWR

LCWR Membership Renewals Due by November 1

Dues for 2009 membership in LCWR must be sub-
mitted to the LCWR national office by November
1, 2008.

LCWR membership covers one calendar year, from Jan-
uary 1 to December 31. The dues structure for LCWR
membership consists of a base fee plus a per capita fee.
Each congregational unit will pay a base fee of \$500.00
plus a per capita fee of \$5 per sister based on the census
as of September 30, 2008.

Membership forms are available on the LCWR website
at: www.lcwr.org/members/. Members are asked to
submit only one form per congregational unit. With
payment of dues, each member of a council becomes a
national LCWR member.

Also available on the LCWR website is the form for
LCWR associate membership.

Systemic Change Think Tank Still Accepting Registrations

Registration for the February 23-26, 2009
Think Tank,

"Diving Deep for Effective Transformation,"
is near capacity with a registration deadline of
December 5.

The Think Tank is open to LCWR congregational
leadership teams and justice coordinators only.

LCWR to Survey Members to Assess Preparedness to Address Sexual Abuse

Within the next month, all LCWR major superiors will be receiving via US mail a survey to assess the preparedness of their congregations to address sexual abuse.

In January 2005 LCWR, in collaboration with CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate), designed, distributed, collected, and interpreted an inventory that looked at two questions:

1. What policies, practices and procedures do LCWR member congregations have in place to address allegations of past member sexual misconduct?
2. What policies, practices and procedures do LCWR member congregations have in place to prevent future sexual misconduct by members?

Although the inventory showed that the large majority of LCWR congregations were well-prepared to address allegations of member sexual misconduct, a review committee of LCWR members noted areas related to prevention that needed strengthening, in particular, the ongoing education of members.

After receiving the results of the CARA study and the review committee recommendations, the LCWR national board decided that members should be offered information about available opportunities and resources for ongoing education. This list has been available on the LCWR Members' Information section of the LCWR website (www.lcwr.org). These resources address issues of sexuality, sexual abuse, and appropriate professional boundaries and include written material, speakers, websites, and AV materials.

This same inventory will now be reissued in order to track the improvements made by LCWR congregations, particularly (but not exclusively) in the area of ongoing education of members. All congregations are urged to complete the inventory so an accurate assessment can take place assuring that women religious are taking all steps possible to prevent sexual misconduct and deal justly with any allegation that could arise.

LCWR Represented at Interfaith Meeting on World Hunger

LCWR president J. Lora Dambroski, OSF participated in a meeting of nearly 80 religious leaders and directors of religious relief and development organizations held in New York City. At the gathering, held the day before UN General Assembly met on the progress of the Millennium Development Goals, the leaders encouraged one another in efforts to engage their own members in working toward achieving the UN goals, especially ending world hunger.

Bread for the World president Rev. David Beckmann convened the meeting that included leaders from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faiths.

In an interview with Catholic News Service, J. Lora said in part, "It was good to meet with Catholics and other Christians and with our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters. Together, we made a statement about the issue of hunger being a critical human need.

"We seem to be able to find several hundred billions of dollars to address America's financial crises," she noted. "We should be able to raise some money to help solve the even worse human crises that affect our brothers and sisters domestically and internationally."

She added that she came away from the meeting "with a renewed energy," and a feeling the organizations represented there can do even more to alleviate hunger and poverty in a spirit of cooperation. She also was glad to see recognition for what Catholic men and women religious do to "help people who are hungry and alienated."

The Millennium Development Goals, established in 2000 and intended to be reached by 2015, address hunger, education, inequality, child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS, and the environment.

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change to Promote Covenant

The primary agenda item of the October 8 meeting of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change was review of the content and promotion of “A Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor.” The effort will be launched during the Easter Season in 2009 with a public event on Earth Day, April 22. Coalition partners include the USCCB (Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development; and Migration and Refugee Services), Catholic Charities USA, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, CHA, CMSM, LCWR, Franciscan Action Network, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the National Council of Catholic Women, and others. While there are many organizations addressing climate change, the unique contribution of the Catholic coalition is the connection between climate change and people made poor by unjust structures.

Justice for Immigrants Campaign to Use Focus Group Responses to Shape Messaging

A grant enabled the Justice for Immigrants Campaign (JFI) to employ a consultant group to conduct focus groups in Atlanta, Denver, Philadelphia, and Columbus to test messaging about immigration currently used with Catholic parishes and groups and to shape more effective messaging. Both similarities and differences surfaced in responses from different geographic areas. The message “welcome the stranger” did not resonate with any group given parents’ need today to warn their children not to speak to strangers. Consultants will develop an analysis for use in polling Catholics after the national elections. Given the reality that it is highly unlikely that immigration reform will be addressed in 2009 given the failing economy, the time will be used for outreach and education.

JFI core group members are encouraged to help increase the data base of those receiving monthly JFI action alerts from close to 19,000 to at least 20,000. Currently, about 10,500 are opening e-mails and responding. Persons can sign up to receive alerts by visiting www.justiceforimmigrants.org and clicking Join the Network.

LCWR Finance Committee Meets

The LCWR Finance Committee met at the LCWR national office on October 6 and 7. The committee welcomed two new members, Elizabeth Ney, CSJ from the general leadership team in St. Louis and Doretta Meier, OSF from the leadership team in Little Falls, Minnesota.

The agenda was packed with many follow-up items from the August board meetings as well as the preparation of the 2009 budget and the opportunity to meet with Eileen O’Connell and Julie Frank of Christian Brothers Investment Services. Given the current turmoil in the markets, the meeting with CBIS was timely and very informative. The committee also reviewed and prepared recommendations to amend the LCWR investment policy.

The finance committee will work to develop a three-year projection of revenue and expense with special attention to membership dues, assembly income and expense, and staff salary and benefits. The committee will also work to implement the recommendation to form an audit committee. The finance committee will meet again in Silver Spring, April 29-30, 2009.

CHA Board Addresses Health Reform Options That Advance Principles

The major goal of the September 25-26, 2008 Catholic Health Association (CHA) board meeting was to begin to find concrete positions that advance CHA principles and relate to the reality of health reform options. Board members heard a presentation by Health Policy Alternatives about the issues and consequences of a number of proposals being advanced. The board then discussed specific questions that CHA must answer in order to be effective in advancing their principles in the health reform arena. CHA is actively partnering with a number of groups which has reinvigorated the dialogue on the uninsured with a new and different, more focused agenda. Board conversation was sharpened by the financial crisis which was developing even as the board met. CHA has worked to have the members utilize pre-election time to obtain commitments and specifics from candidates relative to health reform.

Upcoming LCWR Dates **Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking: CRS & USCCB Trip to Bosnia and Moldova**

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

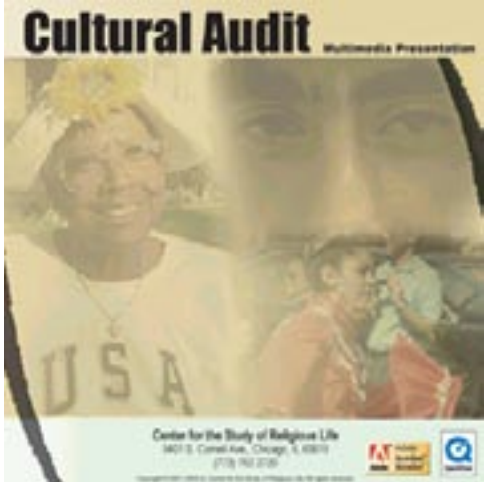
During the October 1 meeting of the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Trafficking, Mary DeLorey of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Virginia Farris of the USCCB Office of International Justice and Peace, described their recent visit to Bosnia and Moldova to assess the extent of human trafficking and how it is being addressed. Southeastern European countries have all undergone difficult transitions from communist systems resulting in greater poverty, unemployment, increased organized crime, discrimination against minorities, social exclusion, and the collapse of social and health networks. These conditions create a favorable environment for traffickers.

Other agenda items included a description of community responses to immigration raids in Iowa and Mississippi and an outline of a parish packet on trafficking being developed by USCCB/MRS (Migration and Refugee Services) Education Outreach. Increased awareness of the connection between immigration and trafficking is needed.

A major conference, "Responding to Trafficking in Persons in the Americas," will be convoked November 2-5 in Washington, DC by Catholic Charities USA, CRS, Migration and Refugee Services, and Catholic organizations from Latin America. The hoped-for outcome is to identify collective priorities for attention and planning as well as next steps for 2009. LCWR will describe some actions undertaken by women religious in the US as part of a panel providing input on church responses from the Americas.

During the member update portion of the agenda, a one-day education program for high school students was described by Toby Lardie, HM who is willing to share information about the program, "Modern Day Slavery: In *my* neighborhood? In *my* school? In the products *I* use?" Information can be obtained by contacting collaborativeinitiative@yahoo.com.

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



Cultural Audit Tool Available at Half Price

As part of its tenth anniversary celebration the Center for the Study of Religious Life is offering its Cultural Audit Tool for half price. Congregations have used the tool to prepare to welcome new members perhaps more diverse than professed members, to prepare for mergers of institutes with distinct cultures, or to examine their internal culture relative to the U.S. dominant culture.

More information on the tool is available at www.religious-life.org/pubs/cultural_audit.html

The Cultural Audit may be ordered through the National Coalition for Church Vocations at www.nccv-vocations.org/search.asp?keyword=cultural+audit&search=GO



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Editor: Annmarie Sanders, IHM

8808 Cameron Street Silver Spring, MD 20910
 Phone: 301-588-4955 Fax: 301-587-4575
asanders@lcwr.org www.lcwr.org

**Registration Still Possible for NATRI/
 LRCR 2008 Joint Conference**

There is still time to register for the 2008 NATRI/LRCR Joint Conference in Denver, Colorado, November 18-21. Registration materials are available at www.natri.org.

The program is varied to meet the needs of leaders and finance officers. In this time of crisis, leaders may be interested in Investment Expenses by Mary L. Tomanek of Smith Barney or Investment Allocation with Jim Modelski and Jim Jensen of DeMedio and Associates. Perhaps the market will lead participants to Managing Stress and Distress in the workplace lead by Michael Morton, executive director of Guest House Institute.

The conference will offer 45 sessions, as well as tours of Denver and the foothills of the Rockies.

**Orientation to the Management of
 Religious Institutes**

June 1-5, 2009

The Retreat Center at St. John's
 Plymouth, Michigan

The Resource Center for Religious Institutes (previously known as NATRI and LRCR) will be offering new elected leadership and financial personnel an overview of the stewardship responsibilities they will be assuming.

Sessions on accounting, investments, canon and civil law, risk management, property management, trends in eldercare, and understanding the government options open to members will be some of the topics covered.