

February 2009

## LCWR Members Reflect on Religious Life Leadership in a Week of Prayer



Wrapped in Mexican shawls, 24 LCWR members participate in a retreat in Tampa, Florida.

**T**wenty-four LCWR members gathered at the Franciscan Retreat Center in Tampa, Florida from January 11 to 16 for the fifth annual LCWR Leading from Within Retreat.

Led by Kaye Ashe, OP and Maria Elena Martinez, OSF, the retreatants reflected on religious life leadership via

several spiritual life themes. Each received a *rebozo* (a woven shawl) made by women in Chiapas, Mexico which she used throughout the retreat.

The days included input from Kaye and Maria Elena, opportunities for group and individual spiritual direction, communal prayer and rituals, and time for quiet reflection. Said one retreatant, "I return to leadership ministry transformed and enriched by the graces given me."

"I highly recommend this retreat to elected leaders," stated another. "I was re-energized and filled with hope."

Jane Burke, SSND and Annmarie Sanders, IHM staffed the retreat. Additional photos and information on next year's retreat are on page 4.

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*From the LCWR Presidency*

# The Art and Science of Bridge-Building

by Mary Whited, CPPS — LCWR Past President

**B**old headlines, scrawled across the top of this morning's newspaper, highlight a fragile economic climate around the globe. Many leaders of religious communities wonder how our assets can be stretched to care for members and to support ministry to those most affected by poverty. A new president promises to boost the economy by shoring up bridges and roads. If his strategy is effective, bridge-building may sustain many during this economic roller-coaster ride.



Hard manual labor and intellectual acumen are required for bridge-building as well as the willingness and determination to stay with the task, even through apparent hardships. A complex task, bridge-building relies on the knowledge and skills of others as well as our own wisdom and life experience. Our efforts to build bridges call forth passion and a purpose that stirs from that deep spiritual sense of who we are as women religious and disciples of Jesus. From a broader perspective,

bridge-building is a gift from God that allows us to draw from the wisdom of the past, to be at peace in the present, and to envision a future in which it is possible for gaps to be spanned.

I have to admit that when I heard that the General Assembly of the United Nations had designated 2009 as an International Year of Reconciliation, or

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Ultimately, if we stay with the task, building bridges will bear fruit. Though, perhaps, in our lifetime we will not see the results of our labor. Meanwhile, let us work toward eliminating the disparities between those who have more wealth and those who live in poverty. In this new year, let us risk the insecurities of entering into something new to deepen our awareness of the connections that, in fact, are already present. As leaders, let us hold lightly, but doggedly, our

bridge-building between nations, I was a bit skeptical. Hasn't the current economic crumbling across the globe widened the gaps between those who have an abundance of material resources and those who know only poverty? What kinds of bridges can possibly span these widening gaps? And who will build such bridges?

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Bridge-building presents a challenge on an international scale as well as in the relationships that touch our daily lives. We who lead are familiar with the challenge of building bridges in church and society. We know what it takes to create links between our congregations and other congregations of men and women religious. We know how to balance the needs of individual members of our congregation and the larger whole. When we encourage our members to make choices that support the evolution of religious life into the future, rather than resisting or stopping the natural flow of life, we are actually building bridges into the future.

responsibilities to work together to bridge the gaps. After all, bridge-building is an art as well as a science. As an art, it requires creativity, focus, and the endurance that comes from envisioning what is possible with the resources entrusted to us.

## Orders Due for LCWR Reflection Book by February 18



LCWR presents a new book, *Midwiving a Vibrant Future*, a resource for further reflection on living with imagination and hope in these challenging times.

Using the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, as well as insights from some of the great thinkers of our day, 53 LCWR members offer a reflection for every day from May 31 (Feast of the Visitation) through July 22 (Feast of Mary Magdalene). The writers offer insights and wisdom on creatively bringing forth new life at this critical time in the world and in religious life.

Many congregations provide their members, associates, and co-workers copies of the LCWR reflection books, finding them a valuable resource for personal and communal reflection and prayer.

LCWR will print only the amount of copies that are pre-ordered. Special rates are available for ordering in bulk. Orders must be received with payment by **FEBRUARY 18**. Purchase of the LCWR reflection books also aid the conference financially.

Please direct any questions to Carol Glidden at [cglidden@lcwr.org](mailto:cglidden@lcwr.org) or 301-588-4955. Order forms are available at: <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/2009reflectionorder.pdf>

## THE Occasional Papers

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious Winter 2009

*Tending to the*



*Stirrings of New Life*

Addressing the Transformative Questions of Women Religious Today

## Additional Copies of LCWR Occasional Papers Available for Purchase

Some additional copies of the Winter 2009 issue of LCWR's *Occasional Papers* are available for purchase through the LCWR national office. The cost is \$4.00 per copy (which includes shipping and handling).

Order forms are available on the LCWR website at: <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/OPordersWinter09.pdf>.

Some copies are also available of the Summer 2008 issue. Contact Carol Glidden at [cglidden@lcwr.org](mailto:cglidden@lcwr.org) or at 301-588-4955 to order.

## Save the Date

Women of Spirit: Creating in Chaos

LCWR Assembly

New Orleans, Louisiana  
August 11 — 15, 2009

## LCWR Retreat Offers Unique Opportunities to Reflect on Religious Life Leadership

### Plan for a Retreat in 2010

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat  
Redemptorist Renewal Center  
Tucson, Arizona  
January 17 — 22, 2010

Registrations accepted in Fall 2009



*2009 Leading from Within retreatants enjoyed quiet moments for individual reflection, as well as communal prayer and rituals twice a day.*

## Justice Organizations Anticipate Change in Washington DC

Groups with whom LCWR partners to address justice issues have been preparing for a new day in the nation's capital. Strategies have been developed in meetings and letters have been sent on several key issues. For example, members of the legislative sub-committee of Justice for Immigrants plan meetings with Catholic freshmen in the House of Representatives and Heads of Washington Offices (HOWO) of faith organizations held meetings with the Obama transition team. Meanwhile, the Catholic Leadership Council of the National Religious Coalition Against Torture (NRCAT) has planned a conference on "Torture, Conscience, and the Catholic Moral Tradition" to be held on March 19, 2009 at the Law School of The Catholic University in DC.

## Catholic Mission Forum Announces Mission Congress 2010

LCWR participates in the Catholic Mission Forum whose task it is to plan the mission congress that occurs every five years. A save-the-date announcement has been made for the 2010 Congress: "God's Mission, Many Faces: A Portrait of US Catholics in Mission" which will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico October 28-31, 2010. Planners are asked to inform their members to save the date. The congress will invite participants to: DISCERN the movement of the Spirit within the US church in mission, DISCOVER the varied colors and brushstrokes of US Catholics in mission, INVIGORATE mission identity and leadership in the US church, and CELEBRATE the faces and creativity of US Catholics in mission.

## US Catholic Coalition for the Protection of Iraqi Refugees Hears from an Iraqi Dominican Sister

Members of the US Catholic Coalition for the Protection of Iraqi Refugees welcomed Diana Momeka, OP to their January 15 meeting and were moved by both the images she showed of Mosul and Baghdad and her depiction of what has come to be viewed as “ordinary life” in Iraq. Diana, a member of the St. Catherine Congregation in Mosul, is currently living with the Adrian, MI Dominicans while she completes her studies. The Adrian Dominican sisters have welcomed several Iraqi Dominicans after the destructive bombings in Mosul made it impossible for them to pursue their studies.

Diana contrasted life in Iraq before and after what she consistently called the “US invasion.” She showed images of dead and injured children, as well as destruction of buildings, including churches and her congregation’s motherhouse, images that stand in contrast to what is portrayed in US mainstream media promoting the concept that life in Iraq has almost returned to life as it was. Diana is in close communication with family and friends in Iraq who tell her that while in the west of Mosul there are fewer killings, the north is still terrible, with 40 killings just a month ago, and destroyed buildings are now part of the “normal” landscape. As for Baghdad, Diana’s brother’s assessment is that there is 2% improvement.

Updates were provided to the coalition about the current status of legislation to assist Iraqi refugees and displaced persons inside Iraq. Senator Kennedy’s bill is off the table since proponents will now work directly with the White House. The Hastings bill (HR 6196) was to be reintroduced on the day of the coalition meeting, and no word had been received about the Casey-Cardin bill. Coalition members acknowledged that requests for greater funding will be a challenge given current economic restraints.

## Catholic Coalition on Climate Change Hears Reports from Various Organizations

The agenda of the January 16 meeting of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change was very full. In addition to continued efforts to promote “A Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor,” (January 2009 Update), participants heard from four speakers, plus brief accounts of projects addressing climate change by seven recipients of coalition grants.

Martha Coven, senior legislative associate at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, provided an informative overview of current policy landscape and domestic concerns before announcing that she will be leaving the center to work for the new administration. This appointment sends an encouraging message about the priority that will be placed on climate change and environmental initiatives. The coalition also heard from Bill O’Keefe of Catholic Relief Services who gave a CRS perspective on climate change impacts in the developing world; David Waskow of Oxfam America on international policy concerns and options to address adaptation and mitigation in the world’s poorest countries; and Walt Grazer, special advisor to the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, with whom the Catholic coalition collaborates.

LCWR member congregations may wish to learn more about a resource being developed by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC), with the support of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change. The resource is a web-based, searchable database of Catholic institutions (parishes, colleges, schools, hospitals, religious communities, etc.) that are educating Catholics about the impact of climate change on poor and vulnerable people and/or practicing stewardship that helps mitigate climate change. NCRLC has already developed a database of nearly 80 religious communities who have implemented innovations. (See [http://www.ncrlc.com/communities\\_database01.html](http://www.ncrlc.com/communities_database01.html)) Information on how additional communities can participate in this expanding initiative can be obtained from Tim Kautza at [tim@ncrlc.com](mailto:tim@ncrlc.com).



During January, LCWR sent or signed a number of letters and statements including the following:

- At the request of religious NGOs at the UN, a letter to Ambassador-Elect Susan Rice and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad urged working beyond a ceasefire to permanent peace in Gaza by developing two sets of strategies: protection and empowerment. The letter also expressed dismay at the Israeli attack on the UN building and yet another hospital.
- An economic stimulus letter to President Obama from faith communities called for a package that works for the common good, especially “the most vulnerable among us.”
- The Campaign for a New American Policy on Iran issued a statement calling for a policy that “signals a willingness to engage with the current government in mutually respectful negotiations.”
- A letter from the National Congress of American Indians urged the President and Congress to “incorporate Native American communities explicitly in the economic stimulus.”
- A letter from Jubilee USA to Secretary Timothy Geithner requested a meeting early in the second week of February to “share thoughts on the importance of protecting the world’s poor in the context of the current financial crisis.”

## Upcoming LCWR Dates

**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



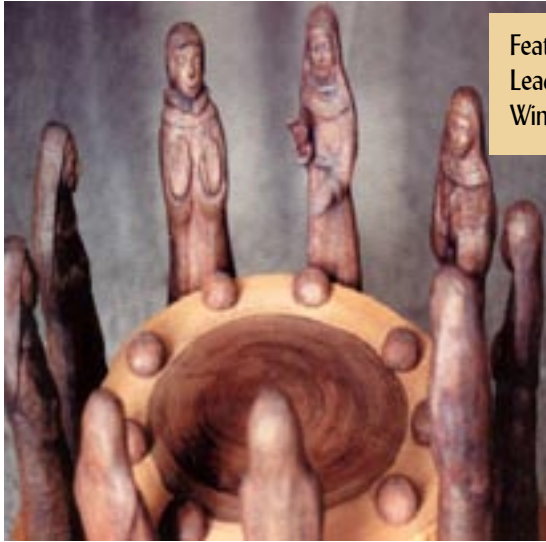
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## Leading from Within Manual A Leadership Program Designed for Use at Home



Featured in the article, "Growing a Culture of Leadership Among Congregation Members" in the Winter 2009 issue of *Occasional Papers*

LCWR offers a leadership mentoring program that can be pursued from home. The conference developed *Leading from Within: A Mentoring Leadership Manual* that is based on the three dimensions of leadership (symbolic/meaning-making, relational, structural/organizational). Many leaders have used this manual and have found it extremely helpful in their ministry.

The program

- is especially helpful to those relatively new to leadership but is a valuable reflection tool for any leader.
- involves a period of reflection, study and exploration on the part of the leader. The process usually takes about one year.
- involves partnering with an experienced leader or former leader who serves as a mentor, or forming a peer mentoring group.
- is flexible. Participants can do as many or as few of the units as works well for them.
- offers a variety of experiences that will accommodate different styles of adult learning.

Information on ordering can be found on the LCWR website at: [www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/mentoringleadership.htm](http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/mentoringleadership.htm).

## Consider Recycling Ink Cartridges and Contributing to LCWR's Scholarship Fund

LCWR and many of its member congregations have been participating in an ink cartridge recycling program that helps protect the environment and conserve non-renewable resources.

LCWR works with a recycling company, Empties-4-Cash, an organization that rewards those who recycle by paying for each usable empty ink jet cartridge and or laser cartridge. LCWR applies the earnings received to the scholarship fund that assists LCWR members who wish to attend the LCWR national assembly but cannot afford to do so.

LCWR congregations are invited to assist in building the scholarship fund by sending their cartridges directly to Empties-4-Cash and having their earnings applied to the scholarship fund. Congregations are encouraged to invite companies and other organizations to participate in this effort as well.

To participate in the program:

1. Contact Carol Glidden at 301-588-4955 or [cglidden@lcwr.org](mailto:cglidden@lcwr.org)
2. Provide a contact person and address, phone number and email where boxes and labels can be sent

Empties-4-Cash will send the labels and boxes to all participants after the contact with Carol is made. These labels are prepaid Federal Express labels and can be adhered to any box to be shipped directly to Empties-4-Cash at no cost to you. Once a shipment of cartridges is processed, LCWR will receive a check from Empties-4-Cash that will go to the scholarship fund.