

April 2008

Religious Life Leaders of the Americas Pledge Continued Solidarity

The InterAmerican Committee, representing the women and men religious of the Americas, held its annual meeting in Washington, DC from March 3 - 7. The committee is comprised of the presidents and executive directors/general secretaries of the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR), the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), and LCWR.

The InterAmerican Committee was begun in 1971 in response to a call from the bishops of the Americas. The committee has met each year and periodically has planned InterAmerican Conferences which are larger gatherings of religious, the most recent being in Itaici, Brazil in 2005.

At the 2005 gathering the conference identified five areas of focus for continued collaboration: the church, communications, religious life, speaking with one voice, and the organization of the InterAmerican. Various objectives were set under each area of focus.

At this year's meeting, the committee agreed to continue the relationships and conversation that have taken

(continued on page 3)



Top: Hugo Londoño (translator); Maria del Socorro Henao Velasquez, CTSJ; Paul Lininger, OFM Conv; Donna Geernaert, SC; Tom Picton, CSSR; and Carole Shinnick, SSND
(Left) Mary Whited, CPPS; Annette Noël, SP; and Ignacio Antonio Madera Vargas, SDS

On This Holy Mountain LCWR-CMSM Assembly Denver, Colorado



All LCWR members and associates will soon be receiving by e-mail the registration brochure for the 2008 LCWR-CMSM assembly. Please note that brochures will not be sent by US mail. The last page of the brochure is the registration form. This page must be printed out and sent by US mail with a check to register for the assembly. Hotel registrations should be made online using the link in the brochure. The registration brochure will also be available on the members' information section of the LCWR website (www.lcwr.org).

Inside this issue:

- 3 Leaders Urged to Participate in NRVC Research Study
- 4 More Than 90 Leaders Attend LCWR Workshop
- 5 LCWR Officers Travel to Rome

From the LCWR Presidency

Finding Our Way

by Mary Whited, CPPS — LCWR President

This is an exciting time for my community as we partner with a developer to renovate our motherhouse and to develop our land into the *Village of St. Mary's*. Having explored a variety of alternatives for our future, historic designation of our buildings and senior housing tax credits will enable us to remain on our property and open up our space to others. We are well on the way to creating a master plan for the use of our land.



springtime that is just beginning to bud. In helping my community let go of what is not essential to our mission, I am learning that I cannot rescue people from the fears and insecurities that naturally accompany change. I am aware of how important it is, but also how difficult it is, to stay with uncertainty until new insights emerge and different perspectives are gained.

In changing times such as these, finding the way is really about walking a sacred

When I said “yes” to leadership in my community, no one told me that the legal and financial aspects of planning for the future would be so complex. Our

A prime task of leadership is finding the way through.

leadership team and many others with whom we network are finding a way to build on the past and create something that will increase the value of our land and provide for our members and ministries into the future. Eagerly our sisters anticipate changes that will stir new life in our buildings and promote a sense of community on the land. Land and buildings are becoming an unforeseen way of ministering to others.

We can't go it alone. We are strengthened when we work together. We rely on the connections we have made with partners and consultants who have our best interests at heart. To our meetings and deliberations they bring creativity, imagination, knowledge, skills, experience, capacity, daring, and the caring enough to make this project work. Finding the way is never easy. Finding the way together is key to bringing about desired results.

A prime task of leadership is finding the way through. How often I seem to be finding my way! Dealing with dilemmas such as underused space. Juggling more meetings than I can comfortably handle. Paving the way for what we cannot yet envision. Trusting the

path that does not begin or end anywhere other than where we really are. Asking our sisters to step back to see the larger picture can promote a sense of solidarity with so many others in our world who are finding their way: the 4.4 million Iraqis who have been displaced as a result of the war in Iraq, millions of Palestinian refugees who have never lived in their own homes or occupied their own land, thousands who are trafficked across borders each day, a good portion of the world's population that is ever on the move. Displaced persons finding their way!

The *Village of St. Mary's* will continue to develop. Thousands of people will immigrate across borders today in an effort to find ways to better their lives.

Drawing from the deepest sense of who we are together, women religious who are about the mission of Jesus, provides the courage for finding our way.

We, leaders, will put one foot in front of the other trusting that the Spirit of God accompanies us in the unfolding of the future of our congregations and the transformation of our lives as women religious. Building on the past grounds us for the future. Drawing from the deepest sense of who we are together, women religious who are about the mission of Jesus, provides the courage for finding our way.

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(continued from page 1)

place annually on these focus areas. They also agreed to explore global ecological issues, particularly the issue of water. To assist with the conversation on water, the committee invited LCWR associate director for social mission Marie Lucey, OSF; CMSM associate director Michael McNulty, SJ; USCCB executive director-designate of the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development John Carr; and USCCB environmental justice program coordinator Cecilia Calvo to share some of the efforts being made in each of their organizations to address climate change.

In addition to taking up the issues of critical importance for religious in the Americas, each meeting of the InterAmerican Committee includes touring significant historic and cultural sites of the host country. This year the committee toured the Museum of the American Indian, the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, and the original Baltimore basilica.

Representing the four conferences this year were: LCWR -- Mary Whited, CPPS, president; Carole Shinnick, SSND, executive director; CMSM -- Tom Picton, CSSR, president; Paul Lininger, OFM Conv, executive director; CLAR -- Ignacio Antonio Madera Vargas, SDS, president; Maria del Socorro Henao Velasquez, CTSJ, general secretary; CRC -- Donna Geernaert, SC, president, and Annette Noël, SP, executive director.



USCCB representatives Cecilia Calvo and John Carr addressed the InterAmerican Committee on climate change and water

Leaders Urged to Participate in Major NRVC Research Study on Vocations to Religious Life

As previously announced, the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) recently obtained a \$64,300 grant to conduct a major study on contemporary vocation trends to religious life in the United States. NRVC has contracted with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to conduct this research.

The first component of this project is to survey all leaders of both men's and women's religious institutes in the United States. This will also include those emerging communities that are aspiring for canonical recognition as a religious institute. This survey will focus on the characteristics of the religious institute, the lifestyle of its members, the characteristics of its vocation and formation programs, including the number of women and men who entered in the last 15 years, including those who left in the same time frame.

Congregational leaders will be receiving this survey in April. Given that much of what is heard regarding vocations in the United States is anecdotal, NRVC hopes that this research will present the needed data so as to assist religious institutes in their vocation and formation programs. The other three components include surveying newer members, onsite visits to those institutes that successfully attract and retain candidates, and focus groups of newer religious.

For the results of this study to be both reliable and valid, it is important that NRVC has the full participation of all religious institutes. NRVC thanks leaders in advance for assisting the conference in making this project a success.

More Than 90 Leaders Participate in LCWR Workshop

More than 90 leaders participated in this year's LCWR New Leader Workshop held from March 13 - 16 at the Retreat Center at St. John's in Plymouth, Michigan.

This annual workshop provides invaluable information on topics of critical importance for religious life leaders in the areas of spiritual leadership, finance, canon and civil law, leading in times of transition, team-building, and communications. Each day is set in the context of prayer and ritual and includes integration sessions where teams can work together to process the information received that day.

The content of the workshop is based on the three dimensions of leadership (symbolic/meaning-making, relational, structural/organizational) that are further developed in the LCWR *Leading from Within Manual*. (Information on ordering the manual is on page 5.)

Nancy Schreck, OSF served as a presenter and facilitator for the workshop while Mira Mosle, BVM; Hertha Longo, CSA; Lynn Levo, CSJ; Lynn Jarrell, OSU; and Simone Campbell, SSS served as faculty. Carole Shinnick, SSND; Pat Cormack, SCSC; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM staffed the workshop.

The workshop is highly recommended not only for those who are new to leadership, but also for those returning to leadership. The event will be offered again at the same location from March 19 -22, 2009.



Nancy Schreck, OSF

Mira Mosle, BVM



Hertha Longo, CSA

Lynn Levo, CSJ



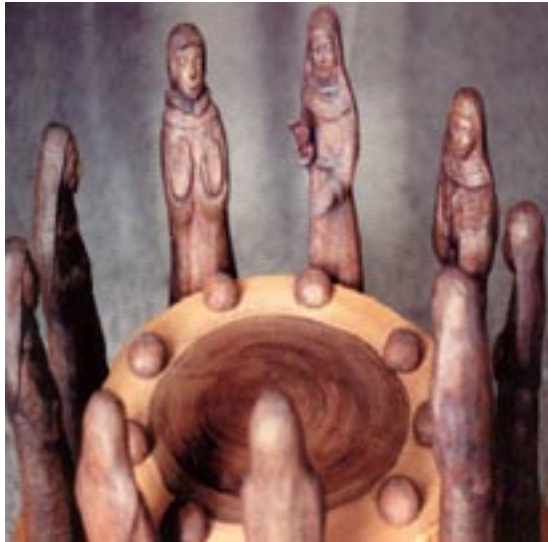
Lynn Jarrell, OSU and Simone Campbell, SSS



Participants in the LCWR New Leader Workshop had many opportunities to share their insights in a spirit of mutual learning.



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



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 already 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.

The manual is in a three-ring binder for easy removal and addition of pages, as users find material to expand what is in the book. Information on ordering can be found on the LCWR website at: www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/mentoringleadership.htm.

LCWR Officers to Visit Dicasteries in Rome



From March 30 -- April 4, the LCWR presidency -- Mary Whited, CPPS; J Lora Dambroski, OSF; and Mary Dacey, SSJ -- and executive director -- Carole Shinnick, SSND will represent the conference at meetings in several Vatican offices. More details about the meetings will be in the May issue of *Update*.

LCWR Represented at Iraq War Rally



On the fifth anniversary of the war in Iraq, Marie Lucey, OSF represented LCWR at a rally held across from the White House in Lafayette Park. Marie said, in part, "This week, as we contemplate the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we pray with people of other faiths for all men, women and children who are paying the price of this war, and we pray for the elected leaders of our country that they may have the courage to recognize the consequences of their actions and bring the war in Iraq to an end. "Enough with the slaughters. Enough with the violence. Enough with the hatred (and war) in Iraq!" (Quote from Pope Benedict XVI)

The full text of her statement is available at: www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/iraq.doc

Justice for Immigrants Campaign Welcomes New Director and Battles SAVE Act

Members of the Justice for Immigrants (JFI) campaign who participated in the March 12 meeting welcomed Tony Cube, recently hired as new JFI National Campaign Manager, who will relocate from Seattle, Washington. Tony arrives in the middle of a battle protesting the SAVE (Save American through Verification and Employment) Act which is an enforcement-only proposal that would increase monies for border protection and detention, and would mandate a nationwide employer verification system

On February 25 a letter was sent to all Representatives expressing opposition to HR 4088, the SAVE Act, a letter signed by the USCCB, CHA, Catholic Charities, CMSM, LCWR, and others. On March 11, Representative Thelma Drake (R-NC) filed a discharge petition in the House of Representatives to bypass the regular committee process for bringing a bill to a vote. The petition needs 218 signatures. As of March 14, the discharge petition had 169 signatures, including eight Democrats.

JFI engaged in a “deep drill” of contacting Catholic co-sponsors of HR 4088, urging them not to support the discharge petition. A number of justice and peace coordinators for LCWR congregations in key congressional districts were contacted and agreed to make calls.

In addition, the Congressional Hispanic caucus will propose a five-year temporary visa for undocumented persons in the country. JFI supports legal status for the undocumented, provided that Congress returns to consideration of comprehensive immigration reform, including a path to citizenship.

NCCHCM Decides for the Future

The main agenda item during the March 4 meeting of the National Catholic Coalition on Catholic Health Care Ministry was a discussion about the future of the coalition: whether to continue as is, to restructure, or to sunset. Members considered whether or not the coalition had fulfilled its purpose, whether or not it is a duplication of the advisory council to the USCCB Task Force on Health Care, or whether or not its purposes can be addressed by the Catholic Health Association (CHA).

Bishops who serve on the coalition, who are members of the task force, argued for the continuation of NCCHCM because it serves a different role from the advisory council which is consulted on an ad hoc basis. Also, the USCCB restructuring is not yet completed. The bishops value the dialogic process on significant health care issues that occurs between themselves and practitioners. Members of the coalition include representatives from the USCCB, LCWR, CMSWR, CHA, and Catholic Charities.

Agreement was reached to continue the coalition for the next three years, with another evaluation at that time. The purpose will be to promote collaboration in the promotion of the church’s overall mission in healthcare as well as to build trust between bishops and practitioners. The agenda will be developed in light of the 1988 vision, updated to address topics of special current interest, and a plan of communication both internal to coalition members and external to the USCCB will be developed.

Members are asked to commit to NCCHCM for three years. LCWR members currently serving are Kit Gray, CSJ; Jacquelyn Motzel, FSM; Marianna Bauder, SCL; Marlene Wiesenbeck, FSPA; Celeste Trahan, CCVI, and Marie Lucey, OSF (staff).

Plans for a Convention for the Common Good Move Forward

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and NETWORK, conveners of the Convention for the Common Good, held a strategizing meeting from February 29 – March 2. With the convention steering committee and endorsers, they developed a plan to engage people across the country in a process to identify key issues to be incorporated into a Platform for the Common Good to be ratified at the convention. LCWR is an endorser of the convention, to be held July 11-13 in Philadelphia, but declined serving on the steering committee due to limited resources of money and staff.

During the meeting, LCWR representative, Marie Lucey, OSF and others expressed concerns about the short time line for publicizing and promoting the convention, but committed to promoting it among their members and agreed to contact other Catholic organizations. LCWR region chairs, as well as justice and peace coordinators, received information about the convention itself and a dialogue process for engaging others in a conversation to identify four key issues for the 2008 elections to be submitted to NETWORK. It is hoped that regions, and/or religious congregations, and/or other groupings would consider sending a delegate, or delegates to the convention to participate in the ratification process. For further information see www.networklobby.org. -- Important Notices -- Convention.

LCWR Represented at Public Witness Against Torture

On March 10, two days after President Bush vetoed the Intelligence Authorization bill passed by both houses of Congress, a bill that would put an end to US sponsored torture, a public witness event was held in Washington, DC sponsored by NRCAT (National Religious Coalition Against Torture), Pax Christi USA, TASSC, Rabbis for Human Rights, and other anti-torture groups. Representative Jim Moran, and five other speakers deplored the President's veto and condemned use of torture tactics on moral, legal, and practical grounds.

LCWR associate director Marie Lucey, OSF, spoke to opposition to torture from the perspective of the taproot

principle of Catholic social tradition, God-given human dignity, and proposed that a primary reason why one person tortures another is deep-seated fear. Marie quoted Pope John Paul II: "Christ's disciple refuses every recourse to such methods, which nothing could justify and in which (human dignity) is as much debased in the torturer as in the torturer's victim."

The full text of Marie's statement can be found at: www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/torture.doc

Faithful Security Encourages Participation in Complex Transformation Hearings

LCWR is a member of Faithful Security: The National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger, which met in Washington, DC on March 7. Attention was given to opposing the Bush administration's plan to rebuild the nation's nuclear weapons production capabilities. The plan includes constructing a bomb plant that would mass-produce nuclear weapons for the first time in two decades. This facility, the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement plant (CMRR) would be constructed at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, and would have the annual capacity to build 80 plutonium pits, or "triggers," for new nuclear warheads.

The administration, via the Department of Energy, is seeking \$100 million for the new plant in the FY 2009 budget, with the total cost estimated to be greater than \$2 billion. In 2006, a number of LCWR congregations submitted statements to the DOE opposing plan "Complex 2030," which eventually received zero dollars in funding from Congress. The administration is back with a scaled-down version and a new name, "Complex Transformation." Information about submitting statements to the DOE were sent to LCWR region chairs and justice and peace contacts for dissemination (www.fcnl.org/nuclear). Statements must be sent by April 10. LCWR was also represented by Marie Lucey, OSF at the last public hearing on March 25 in Washington, DC. The text of Marie's statement at the hearing can be found at: www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/nucweap.doc

From the LCWR Executive Director

A Borrowed Treat for Easter

Although the calendar read “Easter Sunday” on March 23, I could hardly believe it. The last time Easter was so early was 1913. But don’t worry. Easter will not fall on the same date until – and this is not a typo – 2160. I’m sure that some of you are reading this in places where the snow is all too evident and there’s not a bunny in sight. Have hope. But don’t put your boots away yet.

Not only did Easter come early, but the deadline for this newsletter snuck up on me as well. I often have a pretty good idea what I want to write about – but not this month. To be honest right now I have one foot on the plane to Rome and the other on a banana peel. So rather than write something just for the sake of filling up this page, I hope you don’t mind if I offer you a little calorie-free Easter candy.

This is a delightful (and hopefully authentic) piece I came across years ago. Perhaps you have seen it, too. It is a wise and witty prayer with some timeless reminders. I hope you enjoy it. Here is the “Prayer of a 17th Century Nun.”

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself, that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody’s affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others’ pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint - some of them are so hard to live with - but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Amen.

See you again in the May issue of Update!



Upcoming LCWR Dates

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

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

Orientation to Formation for Ministers and Leaders

Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 2008

Passionist Spiritual Center
Riverdale (Bronx), NY

Sponsored by the
Religious Formation Conference

This short program:

- is an excellent preparation for congregational leaders who have responsibility in the area of formation and incorporation.
- can provide vocation personnel for religious congregations with an overview of the developmental process into which they are inviting prospective candidates and useful criteria for the suitability of prospective candidates
- welcomes new initial formation directors and those who experience themselves as “new” in these roles. Seasoned directors may find the program a useful ‘refresher’ as they carry out their ministry.
- is an opportunity to share ideas and gain encouragement from others who are involved in this ministry. An emphasis will be placed on the practical concerns of the participants.
- encourages discussion and sharing on such topics as a philosophy of formation; the focus of each particular stage of formation; skills for mentoring persons in initial formation; relationships - director and person in formation, director and leadership; spiritual direction; therapy; role of formation director; dynamics of formation community, leadership demands, etc.

Presenters:

Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC
Donald Bisson, FMS

For more information contact RFC at 301-588-4938 or visit www.relforcon.org/4_programs/Orientation.htm



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

Annual April Half-Price Publication Sale

Each April the center offers its publications at half price -- a little gift for leaders. www.religious-life.org/pubs/index.html

Research Link-of-the-Month

Glenmary Research Center www.glenmary.org/GRC/

This site is a wonderful resource for mission planning in the United States. There are PowerPoint slides, maps, and "fun facts" on Catholics in the United States including projections of mission needs. Also available are data on the wide spectrum of religious bodies found in the US.

New Education Benefit for Vision Advertisers

In partnership with the University of Notre Dame's Satellite Theological Education Program (STEP), VISION 2009 Vocation Network advertisers will be able to enroll in STEP online courses at a 20 percent discount. Since 1999 STEP has offered high quality, low-cost, flexible theological education and faith formation via the internet. STEP provides online certification courses designed by Notre Dame faculty and facilitated by a STEP staff facilitator. These courses offer five basic areas:

- Catholic Doctrine
- Christian Life
- Church History
- Liturgy
- Scripture

For communities that are VISION 2009 Vocation Network advertisers, the community's discerners, candidates, novices, members, associates, oblates, and others will be able to enroll in scheduled STEP courses, taking advantage of a special 20 percent discount at the time of registration.

In addition, STEP can deliver many courses in a customized fashion, creating a unique version of most courses to meet the varying educational needs of individual communities.

For a list of Notre Dame's current STEP courses, please visit <https://marketplace.nd.edu/step/images/calendar.pdf> or go to the STEP website, <http://step.nd.edu>. More information about the STEP discount or how to begin enrolling in STEP classes is available through Joel Schorn at 800-942-2811; jschorn@truequest.biz.

VISION Vocation Network, an annual religious vocation discernment guide, is a publication of the National Religious Vocation Conference.