

Faith & Resilience

Become Hallmarks of the New Orleans Recovery Project

Representatives of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and two charitable giving organizations, Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA) and SC Ministry Foundation, gathered in New Orleans this April to meet with the eight women religious congregations that have been the focus of the New Orleans Recovery Project. LCWR executive director Jane Burke, SSND; former executive director Carole Shinnick, SSND; and Suzanne Hall, SNDdeN, coordinator of the LCWR fundraising efforts for the New Orleans Recovery Project, represented the conference.

Leaders of the eight congregations and their ministries shared stories of how the project, which raised more than \$7 million, impacted their ability to bring back their ministries, which have been widely considered fundamental in rebuilding New Orleans.

Suzanne Hall reported to the group that they and their ministries were responsible for bringing families back to the city.

"Every person I talked to about the recovery of New Orleans said, 'If it weren't for the sisters here, there would be no New Orleans,'" Suzanne noted.



Leaders of some of the eight congregations involved in the New Orleans Recovery Project recently hosted a dinner of gratitude and celebration for the continued efforts to rebuild the city. Pictured left to right, top row: Suellen Tennyson, MSC; Gina Geraci, STJ; Isabel Ordone, STJ; Eva Regina Martin, SSF; Mary Reilly, SNDdeN; Suzanne Hall, SNDdeN. Bottom row: Angeline Magro, OP; Suzanne Brauer, OP; Maureen Maxfield (SC Ministry Foundation), and Sally Duffy, SC (SC Ministry Foundation).

The congregations have rebuilt high schools, childcare development centers, and motherhouses, in some cases starting from the scraps left behind after the storm. In other cases, they began new programs that respond to needs brought on by Hurricane Katrina such as increased depression. The Bywater Project of the Marianites of the Holy Cross helps neighbors in emergency financial situations, which are more common now. Members of another congregation, the Sisters of St. Teresa, are work-

ing with an increasing immigrant population in New Orleans.

Education, healthcare, and housing still remain concerns of the women religious. "Here in New Orleans one of our great disparities is housing for the elderly,"

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From the LCWR Presidency Let Our Stories Be Told

by Mary Whited, CPPS — LCWR Past President

These are unprecedented times for us, leaders and women religious, who strive to respond to recent Vatican initiatives that affect women religious across the United States. Many feelings well up and swirl around our attempts to find ways to respond to what has come as a surprise. Regional gatherings and circles of quiet prayer ground and center us. Together we create a safe context for discerning how best to respond to the events that unfold even as I write this column.



The agendas of the April visits of our presidency and executive director in Rome indicate that our conversations with Vatican officials are more than casual. They are significant as we seek to explore the “whys,” the “wherefores,” and the “what ifs” that rattle in our minds and hearts. In our preparation for these conversations, J Lora, Marlene, Jane, and I expressed a desire to listen carefully and non-defensively to concerns that are expressed. What can we learn? How can we, as

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leaders of our conference, speak from our integrity and the legitimate power entrusted to us? Can we probe the deeper questions that underlie concerns and can we highlight common ground? We bring to the conversations our collective wisdom, insights that have been gleaned from our members, and the experience of being vowed ecclesial women. Even more, we bring a deep caring for you, the members of our Leadership Conference.

Prayer and mutual encouragement are essential as we, leaders of LCWR, and you, leaders of your congrega-

tions, converse with those who will be conducting the apostolic visitation. How we approach this task can hopefully stir new understandings of and insights into what it means to be ecclesial women religious at a time when multiple expressions of apostolic religious life are so apparent.

In the coming weeks and months, as we engage in these initiatives, let us trust the maturity that has been growing within and among us. It is a maturity

reflected in our care for the poor, our sensitivity to creation, awareness of the global common good, and the hope of engaging with conflict in reconciling ways. It is a maturity that is evidenced in the ways we pray - together and alone. We have come to see that religious life is not a problem to be solved but rather a mystery to be lived - fully and wholeheartedly.

This May we will celebrate the opening of a history exhibit which depicts so beautifully the stories that have brought congregations of women religious of the United States to this point in time. Especially now, when the very meaning of our lives seems to be called into question, let us continue to trust the Spirit of God and the processes that have been unfolding in us throughout the years. *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* is more than a “history-on-display.” *Women & Spirit* is a reality in each of us who seeks to follow in the footsteps of those women religious who have paved

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the way before us. In the coming weeks and months, let our stories be told. Let the truth be known about who we have become and what brings us to this moment in time.



The sisters in New Orleans honored some of those involved with the fundraising effort that has helped raise \$7.2 million for their congregations and ministries. Pictured left to right: Loretta O'Donnell (SC Ministry Foundation), Maureen Maxfield (SC Ministry Foundation), Carole Schinnick, SSND (former LCWR executive director), Frank Butler (FADICA), Suzanne Hall, SNDdeN (LCWR recovery project coordinator), Sally Duffy (SC Ministry Foundation), and Jane Burke, SSND (LCWR executive director).

New Orleans Recovery Project

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explained Eva Regina Martin, SSF.

Suellen Tennyson, MSC also noted an increased need for more quality educators. "It is something we need to look at," she said, and other leaders, especially from the congregations' high schools, agreed.

Camille Ann Campbell, O. Carm is president at Mt. Carmel Academy. One of the things she and others see as vitally important is responding to the immigrant population. "We have a 5-year Spanish program at our school now," she says, "so there can be those who can welcome the Hispanic immigrants. This is especially important for healthcare."

Congregations also pointed out the need to be present in the community and to continue to be "a sign of presence, hope, and encouragement for others to get reestablished again."

The multi-million dollar fundraising effort is a collaborative project between the LCWR and FADICA and involved the support of organizations including Catholic Charities USA and SC Ministry Foundation.

*Women of Spirit:
Creating in Chaos*



Registration forms will be sent online

2009 LCWR Assembly

New Orleans, Louisiana

Pre-Assembly Tours of Sites Impacted by

Hurricane Katrina

August 11 — morning

Opening of Assembly

August 11 — 7:00 PM

Closing of Assembly

August 14 — 9:00 PM

Travel Home

August 15

Donations Sought for LCWR Assembly Scholarship Fund

Each year LCWR receives requests for scholarship assistance from communities who cannot afford to attend the assembly. The scholarship fund consists of donations made by member congregations as well as the money received from the LCWR cartridge recycling program (see article to right).

LCWR is seeking donations for this fund. Although the conference recognizes that this request comes in difficult economic times, there are critical issues facing all US women religious leaders, as well as the conference as a whole. It is particularly important this year that as many leaders as possible attend this assembly.

Donations may be sent to:
 LCWR Scholarship Fund
 8808 Cameron Street
 Silver Spring, MD 20910

Checks should be made payable to LCWR, with "Scholarship Fund" written on the memo line.

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change Launches Catholic Climate Covenant

On April 21, the eve of Earth Day, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, of which LCWR is a member, held a webcast to announce the covenant initiative which asks Catholics, "Who Is Under Your Carbon Footprint?" The covenant brings together calls for action to protect people who are poor and to care for God's creation by urging Catholic individuals, families, parishes, schools, hospitals, and others to take the *St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor*. As a coalition partner and endorser of the covenant, LCWR has signed the pledge and has urged member congregations to both take the pledge and to disseminate the information to associates, sponsored ministries, co-workers, and others. Many LCWR congregations have led the way on actions incorporated into the pledge and are now invited to be part of this covenant campaign. To view the mailer that was sent to every Catholic parish in the US see www.catholicsandclimatechange.org, right column.



Help Build the Assembly Scholarship Fund by Recycling Cartridges

LCWR works in conjunction with a national cartridge recycling program in an effort to protect the environment and support LCWR members who need financial assistance to attend the annual assembly.

Throughout the year, LCWR member congregations, their sponsored works, and many other organizations send their used ink cartridges to Empties4cash, a company that pays up to \$4.00 for each empty inkjet cartridge sent. The company provides free supplies and free shipping, and there is no cost to participate. Money received by LCWR from Empties4cash is placed in the LCWR scholarship fund.

Anyone interested in participating in this effort can receive directions and free supplies by contacting Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org or by calling 301-588-4955. Participants must provide a contact name, e-mail, phone number, and address.



Grand Opening of Exhibit Set for May 16

The long-anticipated opening of *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* will take place on Saturday, May 16 at the Cincinnati Museum Center. The exhibit will run at this first location until August 30.

The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati have offered hospitality at their motherhouse for women religious who plan to attend the exhibit throughout the summer months. Space is limited. More information can be obtained by contacting skathleen.murray@srcharitycinti.org. Additional information about directions to the Cincinnati Museum Center, admission costs, and more can be found on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/exfacts.doc.

LCWR recently secured a fourth venue for the exhibit in Dallas. Negotiations are underway with many other museums across the country with plans in place to run the exhibit through the end of 2012.

The exhibit website is growing rapidly with many more materials now available for marketing purposes, including a behind-the-scenes look at the exhibit, with interviews with members of the LCWR History Committee (www.womenandspirit.org/webOne/index.php?www=sp_detail&id=61&navigation_main_id=68).

Educational materials will also be made available soon on the website. The materials will be suitable for use in public as well as parochial K-12 schools and will be linked to national and state standards in history and social sciences. Materials will focus on the biographies of Catholic sisters and their many accomplishments as well as understanding the context of their contributions and their ongoing impact on our lives today.

Upcoming Showings

Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal in the Cincinnati History Museum

Cincinnati, Ohio
May 16 - August 30, 2009

The Women's Museum: An Institute for the Future

Dallas, Texas
September - December 2009

Smithsonian-International Gallery in the Dillon Ripley Center

Washington, DC
January - April 2010

Mississippi River Museum

Dubuque, Iowa
February - April 2011



Visit www.womenandspirit.org



Order LCWR Occasional Papers by June 8

US women religious are facing many critical challenges today, some of which will be addressed at the August LCWR assembly in New Orleans. The Summer 2009 issue of Occasional Papers will provide material for reflecting on some of these challenges as well as what is called for today as women religious navigate through the often chaotic and murky waters of these times. This issue, which focuses on the 2009 LCWR assembly theme, Women of Spirit: Creating in Chaos, will include:

An Interview with Donna M. Fyffe, founder of CommunityWorks, Inc.

A process consultant with expertise in community building, leadership development and cultural change, Donna M. Fyffe speaks of the challenges of religious life leadership at a time when much of what is known about the life is changing and while the new has not quite yet emerged.

An Interview with Dr. Carolyn Woo, Dean of the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame

Dr. Carolyn Woo helps US women religious situate the economic challenges their congregations currently face in the broader context of national and global economics. She addresses such matters as transforming our economic systems, examining our values, rethinking the institutions of society, and the possible roles US women religious can play as the world works through this difficult time.

Reflections from Leaders and Financial Officers of Congregations of Women Religious

Religious who have been working with congregational leadership as well as financial issues offer insights on living and praying through these times.

Learning from Our Legacy

As the exhibit *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* opens, what can women religious leaders today learn from the lives of the women religious who have gone

before them who faced challenges with passion and accomplished astounding deeds?

Questions for further personal and communal reflection are provided with these articles as well.

The order form (which must be submitted with a check by June 8) is available on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/OPordersSummer09.pdf

LCWR Participates in Healthcare Meetings

The National Coalition of Catholic Health Care Ministry (NCCHCM) meeting was held in Washington, DC on March 24 with all members present, representing CHA, USCCB, LCWR, CMSWR and Catholic Charities. The major agenda item was a review of the 1987 document, *Catholic Health Ministry: A New Vision for a New Century*, to assess the degree to which both the vision and proposed strategies have been achieved. Members also discussed what new vision elements and strategies are called for at this time. While most of the goals in the document are now the work of CHA, the NCCHCM will focus on the purpose of being a forum for building relationships among the members by means of engaging in conversations around significant topics impacting health care, especially to anticipate and explore emerging issues.

The spring meeting of the trustees of the Catholic Health Association (CHA) is traditionally held in Washington, DC in order to incorporate a legislative/advocacy workshop into the board meeting. Guests who addressed the trustees on April 3 regarding topics related to healthcare reform and the federal budget included John Podesta, Center for American Progress; Russ Sullivan, aide to Senator Max Baucus; John Ebelar, aide to Representative Henry Waxman; and Kerry Weens, former director of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), who addressed the potential impact on Medicare and Medicaid if healthcare reform is not enacted.

JFI Encourages Remembrance of Postville Raid on May 12

May 12, 2009 marks the first anniversary of the Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) raid at the Agriprocessors Inc. plant in the small town of Postville, Iowa, formerly known as “Home-town to the World.” Justice for Immigrants (JFI) joins the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) and the faith community of Postville in bringing to national attention the devastating effects of raids on communities across the US. Faith communities are encouraged to plan some remembrance event to act in solidarity with the nearly 400 workers who were detained as a result of the raid and with their families who continue to struggle.

The Archdiocese of Dubuque has set up a website to help people familiarize themselves with the raid, its impact on the community, and the church’s response: www.arch.pvt.k12.ia.us/PostvilleRelief/. The prayer service taking place in Postville can also be found on this site and can be modified for other local events. LCWR members are encouraged to remember Postville on May 12.

JFI also held a successful Ohio Convening from March 26 to 28 for 140 people from several states, and will hold a Colorado Convening on May 19 and 20. Information can be found on the JFI website: www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

LCWR/CMSM Justice Committees Meet in Washington, DC

Members of the LCWR Global Concerns Committee and the CMSM Justice & Peace Committee held their annual meeting on April 16 in Washington to share activities and explore areas of collaboration. A major item of discussion was the implementation of the 2009 joint resolution on climate change. CMSM members were impressed with the implementation responses received to date from LCWR regions and plan to canvass their members on ways they have acted on the joint resolution. Members considered how these doable activities might be shared with others.

The justice committees keep in touch with activities of Religious at the UN (RUN) and with the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission in Rome by means of their meeting minutes and reports. One current item of concern is the May 15-19, 2009 Study Week of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on “Transgenic Plants for Food Security in the Context of Development,” which features speakers who promote transgenic plants, i.e., genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Pro-GMO studies are often financed by the powerful lobby of agro-industries whose motivation is most likely control of food production rather than genuine concern for poor countries such as those found on the African continent where small farmers have had disastrous experience with GMO crops. Many letters have been written to the Pontifical Academy urging a diversity of speakers, including these small farmers, in order to come to more balanced conclusions and recommendations.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly
New Orleans, Louisiana
August 11 — 15, 2009

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

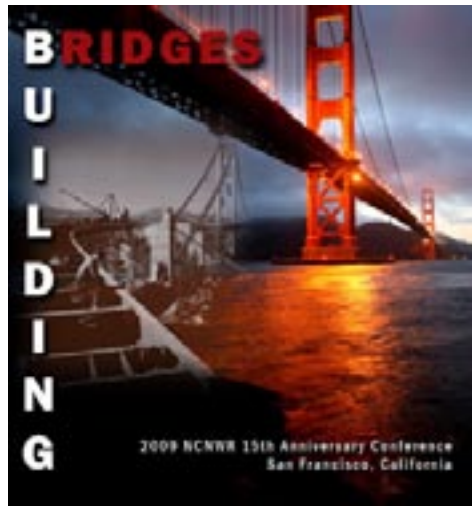
LCWR New Leader Workshop
The Retreat Center at St. John's
Plymouth, Michigan
March 11 — 14, 2010

LCWR Assembly
Dallas, Texas
August 10 — 14, 2010

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat
San Pedro Spiritual Retreat Center
Winter Park, FL
January 16 — 23, 2011

LCWR Assembly
Garden Grove, California
August 9 — 13, 2011

Leaders Invited to Annual Communications Conference



The National Communicators Network for Women Religious will host its 15th annual conference October 6–9 in San Francisco, California. Presentations and breakout sessions will focus on the theme “Building Bridges.”

Sandra Schneiders, IHM, professor of New Testament Studies and Christian Spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, will be the opening speaker at the conference. Joann Heinritz, CSJ, will speak on the spirituality of communications. Workshops will focus on managing digital photos, blogging, special event planning, and the practical use of emerging technologies such as online social networking. NCNWR members will also showcase exemplary communications projects (as judged by their peers) during the “Best Practices” session.

Congregational leaders are encouraged to attend. The conference schedule and registration form are available online at www.ncnwr.org “Conference.”

NCNWR is a professional organization of personnel responsible for communications within religious congregations of women. Their mission is to be a network of professional support and education for members who promote understanding of women religious, enhance their image and advance their mission. NCNWR is also a resource to organizations serving women religious. Congregational leaders are invited to join as associate members. More information can be found at www.ncnwr.org.

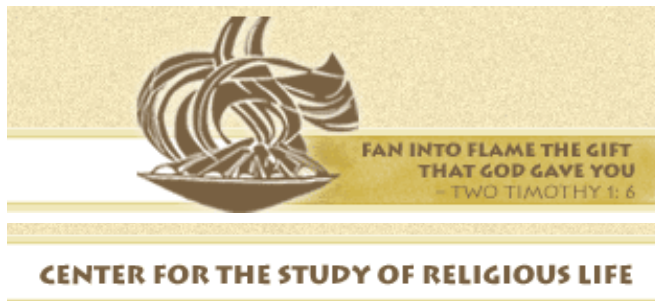


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Editor: Annmarie Sanders, IHM

8808 Cameron Street
Phone: 301-588-4955
asanders@lcwr.org

Silver Spring, MD 20910
Fax: 301-587-4575
www.lcwr.org



KINDLING Goes Electronic

KINDLING, CSRL's publication highlighting an aspect of religious life, has gone electronic.

The focus of the next issue is on special religious life library and archive collections. It will be distributed to CSRL members by e-mail just as the LCWR history exhibit, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, is opening in Cincinnati. The exhibit showcases well the importance and richness of congregational archives.

Past issues of KINDLING are available on CSRL's webpage at www.religious-life.org/newsletters/index.html.

Inventory Sale in May

Watch the CSRL webpage for its publication inventory sale in May. All CSRL members will get information on the sale by e-mail.