

# Update

A Publication of the  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

June 2008



## LCWR Announces New Exhibit Title Plans for Spring 2009 Opening

Work on the exhibit on Catholic sisters is progressing, with an expectation of opening the exhibit in spring 2009 and taking it on tour throughout the country for three years.

The name of the exhibit has been changed to *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, a title that more closely captures the show's essence. The Pasadena-based firm Seruto & Company is now working with LCWR to design and construct the exhibit and to secure museum venues. This effort has included the launch of a website ([www.womenandspirit.org](http://www.womenandspirit.org)), which contains information for museums considering the show, including an exhibit brochure that can be downloaded. The website will be expanded to include information for the public and the media with many more details about the exhibit contents and schedule.

With applications to several premiere museums across the country almost complete, LCWR expects to begin scheduling the exhibit's tour soon.

The LCWR History Committee continues to work with Seruto to provide content information, research historic and current data on women religious, approve designs, plan for marketing, link the company to religious congregations and other organizations, and offer assistance in many other capacities as needs arise.

*(continued on page 3)*

**On This Holy Mountain**  
**LCWR-CMSM Assembly**  
*Denver, Colorado*  
*August 1-5, 2008*



**Register before  
June 18**  
**to receive the discounted rate**

### Inside this issue:

- 4 LCWR-CMSM Assembly Reminders
- 4 Cartridge Recycling Program Aids Scholarship Fund
- 5 LCWR Initiates New Messaging System

## From the LCWR Presidency What Really Matters?

by J. Lora Dambroski, OSF — LCWR President-Elect

In the May issue of *Update* you found coverage of the LCWR officers' meetings with Vatican officials in Rome. The written word gave an excellent overview of the sessions. The colorful photos included some of the women and men with whom we met and also shared informal time together.

These meetings, while fulfilling our formal obligation as the representatives of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, for me also called for a deep personal contemplation of who we are and what our mission is. It was a challenging time of interior reflection on what makes one (me) a woman religious. I am still plumbing the impact of it all, for me and for us.

It was and is good (if I may imply Genesis!). Having to articulate our perspective on religious commitment today, community life, recruitment, formation, and the vows, my own commitment was strengthened. God certainly was present. I find myself having flashbacks of some of the conversations and encounters at the strangest times!

Strangest times... that brings me to a recent experience. It was a day familiar to most of us. Early start, computer challenges, get things taken care of at the office, personal emergency with staff member (a fire!), and off to two back-to-back inter-congregational leadership meetings. One of which I was to chair. So, into the car and on the road! Construction, somewhat faulty directions, construction. Phone calls to alert the others that I was on my way... then to start without me... and, I am almost there!

Almost there. Within about a half mile of my destination I realized that beside me a large, oversized cement mixer vehicle was beginning to make a right turn from the left lane! I was in his "blind spot!" (I was almost part of his mix!) Slamming on the brakes I was able to stop as the truck passed within inches of the front of my car.



I made it to the meeting. We completed the agenda together. Only then did my hands begin to tremble. My life did not flash before me so, while I could have been killed, I was not. But, what kept coming into my heart and mind were the words of Paul to the Philippians. "My prayer is that your love may more and more abound, both in understanding and wealth of experience, so that with a clear conscience and blameless conduct you may learn to value the things that really matter, up to the very day of Christ." (Philippians 1:9-10, New American Bible)

A question has hung in my mind and heart since then. What are *the things that really matter*? I, we, do so much, but is it about *the things that really matter*? What have I given my life for? In light of the Gospel, is it about *the things that really matter*? Justice, compassion, service of others, peacemaking, right relationship... hope for a global family that is starved for more than food.

The truth is that in leadership ministry there is much to do. We need personal time with God every day to help us stay honest in our commitment and to choose what *really matters* (for the sake of the Gospel) and do it. Knowing who we are, the talents, resources, and personalities that are ours, our prayer asks for "the knowledge and full insight to help (us) determine what is best" to do and do it. (Philippians 1:10, New Revised Standard Version)

Some of our *doing* may be in the public forum (like the Vatican or the formal church) speaking about our *being and doing*, some of our *doing* is within our own congregations discerning vision and ministries, some of our *doing* is in collaborative justice efforts. Simply, we have a lot to do, let's hope it is about *the things that really matter*.

For me the question remains: *Do I value and do the things that really matter?*

Work on the Catholic sisters exhibit in recent weeks has included the following.



▲ Members of the LCWR History Committee and the exhibit design firm Seruto & Company visited Katherine Ott, curator of science, medicine, and society at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Shown here are Molly Miles of Seruto and Dr. Ott.



▲ Jen Bressler, a graphic designer working with Seruto, created the Women & Spirit logo and will work on the graphic elements of the exhibit.

▲ Members of the committee and Seruto & Company traveled to the offices of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) in Washington, DC to view some of the organization's materials on Catholic sisters and to discuss ideas on curriculum materials to be developed for the exhibit for elementary and secondary students. Shown here are Kathy Tally-Jones from Seruto and Dr. Karen Ristau and Brother Robert Bimonte, FSC of the NCEA.



▲ On May 5 and 6, the LCWR History Committee traveled to the offices of Seruto & Company to review the work finished thus far on the exhibit and to provide additional input and advice as the project progresses. Shown here are Heather Lindquist and Molly Miles of Seruto.





## LCWR-CMSM Assembly Reminders

### Staying at the Hotel Keeps Assembly Costs Down

The LCWR-CMSM assembly will be held this year at the Sheraton Denver Hotel. When the assembly participants stay at the hotel, the costs of the assembly are lower. LCWR and CMSM receive a discounted rate on the meeting rooms when a sufficient number of hotel rooms are booked by participants. If this room quota is not met, the full cost of the meeting room rental must be paid by the two conferences.

### LCWR Assembly Scholarship Funds

Because of the generosity of LCWR members, each year some members are able to attend the assembly who might not participate without financial help. In 2002 LCWR initiated a scholarship fund, and since that time more than 150 leaders have received an assembly scholarship. Many have gone out of their way to express their gratitude, and some have even contributed back to the fund when they were later able to do so.

LCWR is again offering partial scholarships to members who may find it difficult to manage the full cost of the assembly. The scholarship may be applied to the costs of registration and hotel expenses. Anyone interested in more information on scholarship assistance may contact LCWR executive director Carole Shinnick, SSND or associate director for business and finance Pat Cormack, SCSC at 301-588-4955.

LCWR welcomes any financial donations to the LCWR scholarship fund. Donations should be sent to Pat Cormack, SCSC at 8808 Cameron Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910.



## 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](mailto:cglidden@lcwr.org) or by calling 301-588-4955. Participants must provide a contact name, e-mail, phone number, and address.

More information on Empties4cash can be found at [www.empties4cash.com](http://www.empties4cash.com).



**Reflections in the  
2008 LCWR book,  
At the Edge of  
Tomorrow, begin on  
May 31**



## LCWR Changes System for Communicating with Members

LCWR switched its broadcast messaging system from World Merge software to Constant Contact. Messages sent to all members and associates will now come in a new format that allows for more possibilities to vary text and include images. The new software also enables the LCWR national office to track messages to assure that members and associates are receiving the conference communications.

Please note that Constant Contact requires the inclusion of a box at the bottom of each message that allows recipients to unsubscribe. LCWR members are advised NOT to do this or they will no longer receive any communications from the national office. LCWR plans to continue sending nearly all of its communications online since this has proven a more timely and cost-efficient means of providing information to members.

## NETWORK and NEP Boards Grapple with Hard Issues

During the April 24-27 meeting of NETWORK and Network Education Program boards, members carved out time to discuss several important issues including the relationship of the organizations and their respective functions and roles, as well as areas and manner of collaboration. Increasing diversity on both boards and the need for obtaining grants were also on the table.

### Convention for the Common Good

Staff and boards are also enthusiastic about the July 11-13 Convention for the Common Good in Philadelphia. Alexia Kelley, executive director of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, came to the meeting to provide an update on the convention, respond to questions, and listen to suggestions. (For information and registration see [www.commongoodconvention.org](http://www.commongoodconvention.org). Early bird registration must be before June 10.) Members of LCWR congregations have initiated or participated in a dynamic dialogue process to contribute to the development of a platform which will be ratified at the convention. Those who plan to attend are encouraged to stay at the hotel, room-sharing if needed, in order to meet the required room registration to obtain free meeting rooms.

## CMF Determines Site for 2010 Mission Congress

During the May 1 meeting of the Catholic Mission Forum, after weighing the pros and cons of several possible sites, a decision was made to hold the October 2010 Mission Congress in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The theme, "God's Mission, Many Faces," will be explored by means of keynote speakers, dialogue sessions, and workshops. An experienced development coordinator for the congress is being sought to serve part-time for two years to assist with grant writing. The sole purpose of CMF is to plan for and help to implement the mission congress held every five years.

The annual mission conference of the US Catholic Mission Association is planned for October 24-26, 2008 in Baltimore, Maryland. Information about the conference, titled "Mission, A Journey of Hope," can be found at [www.uscatholicmission.org](http://www.uscatholicmission.org).

## Work on Immigration Continues in the ‘Spaces’

While legislative work on immigration reform presents few opportunities in this Congress, reports on activity in the field during the May Justice for Immigrants (JFI) Core Group meeting were encouraging. Legislatively, people in target states have visited and called Catholic senators and representatives to urge them not to sign the Discharge Petition to bring the SAVE Act to a vote, or to thank them for not signing. Some congressional offices indicated that they are under a lot of pressure to sign the petition, so they are helped by calls to the contrary.

Training and educational sessions continue to take place in several states and in some colleges. A few core members spoke to addressing detention issues, including prayer vigils outside detention centers. Members were appalled by conditions reported in *The Washington Post* in a series beginning on May 11, yet welcomed the coverage that was given to shameful treatment of immigrants in a number of these centers.

When people in Central American countries were unable to bring about direct change by oppressive governments, they worked in the “spaces,” however small, that were open to them. While comprehensive immigration reform languishes for now, increasing capacity by way of education and regional trainings are spaces in which JFI can work to mobilize Catholics for action when there is opportunity. Reworking the website and fundraising are also on the staff agenda.

## Research on Trafficked Children is Topic of Coalition Meeting

Members of the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking, meeting on May 7, 2008, heard a report from two members of the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University which conducted research on trafficked children in collaboration with the USCCB Migration and Refugee Services (MRS). This is the only empirical study to date in the United States. Due to some tension between the institute’s focus on hard data and MRS’ focus on narratives based on their experience in the field, negotiations resulted in a decision that researchers would interview youth only after they turned 18, even though they were trafficked as children.

Each reported story was different, as were ways of resolving situations, but there was a pattern of children coming into contact with several systems (e.g. law enforcement agencies and schools) none of which recognized a trafficking situation or asked a child questions. Most pro bono attorneys have an immigration focus and aim for a temporary visa without exploring the possibility of trafficking. In every interview of a child, the case started with smuggling rather than organized crime, and many involved child fostering which is common in many cultures.

There was also a report on the Vienna Conference attended by four members of the coalition, an update on the Trafficking Victims Protection Act reauthorization, a report on a parish kit on trafficking by MRS staff, and member updates. Rather than taking place at the USCCB offices in Washington, the January 2008 meeting of the coalition was held in New York, which broadened participation beyond current members. Due to the success of the NY meeting it was decided to have the January 2009 meeting out in the field. (Note: a packet on the demand side of trafficking has been developed by UNANIMA International, an NGO of 16 congregations of women religious with 17,000 members in 67 countries. Information about the packet and training sessions can be found at [www.unanima-international.org](http://www.unanima-international.org).)

## LCWR Signs On

**Stop Funding RRW:** LCWR was one of 27 national organizations to sign a letter to the Senate Armed Services Committee urging a denial of funding to the National Nuclear Security Administration request of \$88.8 million and Defense Department request of \$30 million in FY 2008 for the Reliable Replacement Warhead.

**Urge UN Global Compact to Help End Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan:** Organizations from 17 countries signed a letter to George Kell, executive director of UN Global Compact (UNGC), calling on UNGC to use its influence with PetroChina, an arm of China National Petroleum Corporation, to help bring an end to the crisis in Sudan. PetroChina is Sudan’s largest oil industry partner and is linked to the regime. Organizations signing the letter include human rights, corporate accountability, religious, and anti-genocide groups.

*From the LCWR Executive Director*

## A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Museum

The amazing evolution of the LCWR history exhibit project reflects so much of the very story it will tell and it suggests a way forward for all of us. The idea for an exhibit was born on February 2, 2004 in the lobby of the motherhouse of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in St. Louis. An ad hoc committee had been formed to recommend ways to celebrate the LCWR 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006. The committee members (Sherri Coleman, FSM; Ann Margaret O'Hara, SP; and Beth Taylor, CSJP) had met in St. Louis to review suggestions from the LCWR regions. During a coffee break, the committee visited the lobby where the SSNDs were working with personnel from the Missouri Historical Society to help them portray the history of their province in the context of the history of the area. (Scientific studies have shown that most great ideas happen during coffee breaks.) Standing in the lobby, coffee cups in hand, committee members began to say things like, "We could do an exhibit. We could go to the Smithsonian."

In retrospect the suggestion was blessedly naïve. But what a vision it was. If anyone at that point had said, "We don't have the money," or "We don't have the time," or "We don't have the personnel," the idea would have died on the spot. But no one raised such obvious concerns. So the committee recommended the idea to the national board. And LCWR asked Helen Maher Garvey, BVM to lead the project. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Another LCWR committee had been at work the year before in 2003. It had also met in St. Louis. That committee's task had been to draft goals and objectives for the conference for 2004 to 2009. The members of that committee included Marcelline Koch, OP; Rosemary Moynihan, SC; and Kathy Schmittgens, SSND. As this committee reviewed the multiple suggestions for a future direction from the regions, they decided to forget about the old "goals and objectives" model, and to instead write what we refer to today as *The LCWR Call for 2004-2009*. In the prologue of the document, the



**Carole Shinnick, SSND**

*As useful as such demographic and financial forecasts can be, they can also burden the heart and crush the spirit.*

committee wrote: "Our foremothers and founders stepped into the chaos and the unknown of their day, trusting in God's good guidance and great providence. In our time, we are called to do the same."

Needless to say, the LCWR history exhibit project — now known as "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" — will honor those foremothers and founders who stepped into the chaos of their day. And it will evidence what can happen

when a vision calls a group to find a way forward, aware of - but not limited by - available resources. The exhibit itself, as well as the story it tells, will show what can happen if a vision is so compelling that practicalities are perceived as challenges, but not as obstacles.

Futurists tell us that there are two ways to approach the future — as weather forecasters or as rainmakers. The weather forecasters look at current conditions and pertinent data, and based on what is, they predict the weather. The rainmakers on the other hand look at the future and say, "What is our preferred weather and how can we make that happen?" The rainmaker does not ignore current conditions, but rather lets the vision determine how to use and how to overcome them.

Today's leaders of religious life are flooded with information about predictable futures. As useful as such demographic and financial forecasts can be, they can also burden the heart and crush the spirit. Data minus the dream can suggest very gloomy weather ahead. And envisioning a preferred future might seem like an impractical waste of time.

In 2009 the improbable vision of the 2004 jubilee committee will become a reality. "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America," will open and will begin its national tour. May the exhibit's powerful story touch the hearts of all who see it and remind those of us who live religious life that "without a vision, the people perish."



## Upcoming LCWR Dates

**LCWR-CMSM Joint Assembly**  
*Denver, Colorado*  
 August 1 — 5, 2008

**LCWR Leading from Within Retreat**  
*Franciscan Center*  
*Tampa, Florida*  
 January 11 — 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

**LCWR New Leader Workshop**  
*The Retreat Center at St. John's*  
*Plymouth, Michigan*  
 March 11 — 14, 2009

**LCWR Assembly**  
*Dallas, Texas*  
 August 10-14, 2010

## CSRL Celebrates Ten Years

On June 21, 1998, LCWR, CMSM, and Catholic Theological Union (CTU) formally inaugurated the Center for the Study of Religious Life at CTU.

The presidents of the three sponsoring organizations – Mary Waskowiak, RSM (LCWR); John Klein, FMS (CMSM); and Donald Senior, CP (CTU) – addressed the crowd gathered for the foundation day event, expressing great hope for the new Center. CSRL was to be a place of reflection, synthesis, integration, and serious dialogue on studies and experience of contemporary religious life.

In her opening remarks, the founding director, Barbara Kraemer, OSF, explained that the center was to facilitate and support “those who want to fan the gift of religious life into a flame.”

The means for carrying out this mission over the last 10 years have been diverse and creative including:

- Interdisciplinary reflection and dialogue sessions on mission, community, and incorporation;
- The cultural audit tool and workshops in its use;
- KINDLING, a semi-annual publication highlighting current trends and topics;
- Religious leadership forums;
- Presentations on “The Future of Religious Life in Context” at regional and national meetings;
- Interdisciplinary forums on the common good;
- Reflections from the center’s scholars roundtable;
- Resources on generational cultures (coming soon).

The generosity of religious congregations around the country and select foundations has provided the financial base for the center. CSRL expresses its gratitude to them.

## RFC Program Offered for Leaders with Formation Responsibilities

The Orientation to Formation Program of the Religious Formation Conference is designed to help leaders with formation responsibilities, as well as new or returning formation ministers, and members of formation communities. The presenters are well-qualified and their material extensive. Information is on the RFC website: [www.relforcon.org/4\\_programs/Orientation.htm](http://www.relforcon.org/4_programs/Orientation.htm)



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

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