

Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America Opens in Cincinnati

After four years in the making, the LCWR history exhibit, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, opened on May 15 at the Cincinnati History Museum with approximately 200 donors and guests in attendance.

In her remarks at the opening reception, LCWR History Committee chair Helen Maher Garvey, BVM stated, "Why have we spent four years raising the funds, crafting the story, searching the artifacts, designing the exhibit, traveling this country?"

"We undertook this journey in order to share the untold story of Catholic sisters in America, women sometimes surrounded by mystery and obscured by stereotype.

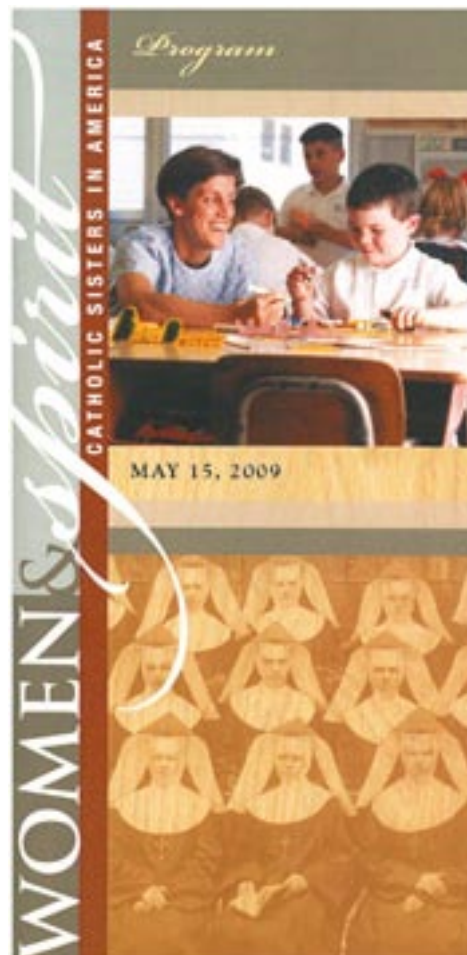
"We undertook his journey, not because Catholic sisters have achieved so much, but because Catholic sisters in community have received so much.

"We undertook this journey because Catholic sisters, with their failings and their grace, contribute to the history and culture of the United States. Catholic sisters help shape this country and Catholic sisters are shaped by the country.

"We undertook this journey because the story of the leadership of Catholic sisters in education, healthcare, social services, and justice advocacy compels a voice."

President and CEO of the Cincinnati Museum Center Douglass W. McDonald spoke at the opening and then later wrote an editorial in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. He wrote in part, "This past week, it was my honor to preside over the world premiere of an exhibit that recognizes women's leadership efforts in the Catholic tradition....

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Program for donor and guest reception at the May 15 opening at the Cincinnati History Museum

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From the LCWR Presidency In the Heart of Mystery and Mission

by Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA — LCWR President-Elect

The paradoxes of mission that Jesus presents in the Beatitudes as well as in the mystery of death and Resurrection could contextualize our perplexing situation in the church now. We might not fathom that the potential implications of an apostolic visitation and doctrinal assessment can also be meeting points of Cross, Resurrection, and mission.

It's easy to identify with St. Paul as he expressed his experience of living as an apostle of the Gospel message during such times: *We are treated as imposters and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying; and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything*" (2 Cor 6: 8-10).



Indeed, those who spend too much effort focusing on the current event without an eye to the future often languish, spending more time and psychic energy to get where they want to be – if they get there at all. We are not in a disaster. However, the current challenges before our leadership conference and our communities, if taken as such, could prevent us from emerging with the strength inherent in the compelling beatitude mission of Christ. It is easier to welcome transformation during difficult times than when times are tranquil. This is a time when the Resurrection will give fire to the transformation we seek. When a burning platform demands our attention, we can take advantage of

As we move into the next phases of the doctrinal assessment and apostolic visitation, we will choose to move gracefully in a way that honors the process and the perplexity of it.

The resurrection of Jesus brings peace to the whole world. Through the obedience of Christ in the heart of the Trinity, Jesus accepted suffering until he was released from it by the Father. We are comforted in knowing that God's reign is for all; it is universal, embracing all people and the whole universe. The whole of creation receives his word of promise. *Blessed are the humble* (who know their ground of truth) *for they shall inherit the earth* (Matthew 5: 5). Earth is a place for openness to God, a place where we are offered freedom from the dis-grace of those who scrutinize us.¹ *Peace be to you!* (Luke 24: 36). Peace is the gift of Jesus planted in our souls.

As we move into the next phases of the doctrinal assessment and apostolic visitation, we will choose to move gracefully in a way that honors the process and the perplexity of it. Like the courageous women of the Gospel and our forebears in LCWR, we will respond in the conviction that the journey before us will be filled with the lavishness of God's desire for our future.

Adversity recovery experts tell us that one of the most critical elements of an organization's survival after an adverse event is how quickly it anticipates recovery.

systemic initiatives with Gospel love. We are not strangers to transformation because we are grounded in Resurrection.

Hear the poet's urgency – may we claim its significance for our corporate life.

I want to know if you are prepared to live in the world with its harsh need to change you. . . .

I want to know if you know how to melt into that fierce heat of living –

falling toward the center of your longing.

I want to know if you are willing to live, day by day, with the consequence of love²

¹ See Pope Benedict XVI. *Jesus of Nazareth*. New York: Doubleday 2007, 72-84.

² From David Whyte. *Self Portrait*. http://www.panhala.net/Archive/Self_Portrait.html

Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America Opens in Cincinnati

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“In reading the stories of these women, indeed the Catholic sisters in America are one of the most impactful, organized groups of women in the history of our great country (if not the world). Certainly, we see their mark and legacy on the history of Cincinnati.

“These Catholic sisters corresponded with Thomas Jefferson; provided the nation’s first health insurance; established schools, hospitals, and colleges. The social service and social justice foundations they laid have been an important part of the fabric that has made this city vibrant, this country great, and improved the quality of life of every one of us.

“As amazing as this history is, equally amazing are today’s Catholic sisters. As a Quaker, I’ve been around many strong women, but never as many at one time as I was at the opening of the exhibit last Friday night.

“As these women gathered from almost every state in this country, they were joined by their sisters in Cincinnati who’ve made enormous contributions of their own. The evening was an honor and privilege to join to celebrate the contributions of this most influential group of innovative women in our history, who continue to shape and affect our lives.”

LCWR has received many messages from people who have visited the exhibit. One woman religious wrote, “Thank you is not strong enough to tell you how wonderful, tasteful, spiritual this experience is. I cried and sang for joy all in the same breath. I am so proud and happy to be counted among the pioneers and the continuing saga of us and beyond us.... For me it was being in the presence of such greatness and humility at the same time. God is so strong in that space. “

Visitors search the panel of names of all religious institutes of women listed in the 2008 Official Catholic Directory.



LCWR History Committee members in front of the introductory panel to the exhibit: Jane Burke, SSND; Mary Dacey, SSJ; Constance Phelps, SCL; Helen Garvey, BVM; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; Barbara Cervenka, OP; Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ; and Carole Shinnick, SSND. Missing: Karen Kennelly, CSJ.



Little Sisters of the Poor view one of the seven videos that are part of the exhibit.





Mary Caritas Geary, SP and former LCWR president Kathleen Popko, SP, represented Catholic Health East, one of the major donors



Items assembled include traveling trunks, journals of immigration experiences, pioneering healthcare devices, diaries, samplers, musical instruments, student work, and ephemera associated with a number of saints.

Women & Spirit Schedule

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

Statue of Liberty National Monument/Ellis Island Immigration Museum

New York City
September - December 2010

Mississippi River Museum

Dubuque, Iowa
February - April 2011

WOMEN & Spirit
CATHOLIC SISTERS IN AMERICA

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About the Exhibit

"Women & Spirit" offers history museums across the country an opportunity to display artifacts and images that have rarely been seen by the general public. With a balanced approach that draws upon first-hand narratives, visitors will discover an untold story in American history.

The educational marketing of the Catholic Sisters of Providence is featured.

Associated with me ever since I graduated from the St. Cyprian School in Washington, D.C. Each word I write is often, each well-disciplined action, and each demand for personal ethics, have the imprimatur of the Sisters. —Caroline Cooley

From the time the Ursulines arrived in New Orleans in 1727 up to today, women religious have made an invaluable contribution to the nation. Running schools, hospitals and orphanages from America's earliest days, these women helped foster a culture of social service that has permeated our society. Over the centuries these courageous women overcame many obstacles—both physical and cultural—in doing their educating and caring influence to every corner of the country. Understanding and celebrating the history of women religious is essential to understanding and celebrating the history of America. —Cokie Roberts, news analyst and author

Visit www.womenandspirit.org

*Women of Spirit:
Creating in Chaos*



Deadline for Early Registration Fee for LCWR Assembly: June 17

This year's LCWR assembly is a critical meeting which the LCWR officers hope that members will make a special effort to attend.

Religious life is paused on the brink of something new, and, in that space, faces questions that touch its deepest identity and purposes. In the midst of a rapidly changing world, women religious are asking themselves hard and challenging questions. What purpose does religious life have in light of today's realities and current needs? To which of the many needs of the world should women religious respond? What must we do so that our mission and charism continue to have relevance and meaning for this age?

The focus of this year's LCWR assembly will be on capturing the best of the legacy as women religious in order to faithfully and creatively live into these questions. How can women religious leaders find meaning in the chaos of these times and how can we let the chaos give rise to creativity?

It is not insignificant that this assembly is being held in New Orleans, a city that not only welcomed the first Catholic sisters to this nation, but one that knows well how to create in chaos. The assembly will draw upon the rich wisdom of this land and its people. LCWR's presence there also allows the participants to directly contribute to the struggling post-Katrina economy of the region.

Assembly Table Facilitators Needed

Because of the critical importance of the conversations that will take place this year in small groups, LCWR is seeking members who are willing to facilitate the conversation at their assigned table. The volunteers will receive a briefing from the assembly facilitators as to the purpose of each table conversation and suggestions for facilitating the discussions.

A substantial number of volunteers are needed. Anyone who would be willing to serve LCWR in this capacity is asked to indicate so on her registration form or to contact Carol Crowder at the LCWR national office at ccrowder@lcrw.org.

LCWR Honors Two Outstanding Leaders at Annual Assembly

At the assembly banquet on August 14, LCWR will honor Helen Maher Garvey, BVM and Sharon Holland, IHM with its 2009 Outstanding Leadership Award.

Helen, who is now serving as the chair of the LCWR History Committee which is responsible for the exhibit, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, is a former LCWR president and former leader of her congregation, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Sharon, a Sister, Servant of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Monroe, Michigan and a canon lawyer, is the bureau chief of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, a position she has held since 1988. She is one of the highest-ranking women in the Vatican.





Order LCWR Occasional Papers by June 8

The Summer 2009 issue of *Occasional Papers* will provide material for reflecting on 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.
- An interview with Dr. Carolyn Woo, dean of the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame
- Reflections from leaders and financial officers of congregations of women religious on finding meaning during difficult times
- Learning from our legacy: a reflection on the *Women & Spirit* exhibit

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

JFI Campaign Anticipates Colorado Convening

The Justice for Immigrants Campaign of the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services hopes that the success of the March convening in Ohio will be replicated in Colorado Springs on May 19-20, 2009. Other items addressed at a May 13 JFI meeting included a report from the Postville Anniversary Remembrance on May 12 and the public statement of Bishop John Wester, chair of the USCCB Committee on Migration. Bishop Wester also testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on April 30, 2009.

With hopes for introduction of comprehensive immigration legislation revived, members of a legislative subgroup of JFI, including LCWR, also met to strategize a second round of visits to legislators, this time visits to senate offices.

NETWORK Launches 'Capitol' Campaign

During the April 23-26, 2009 board meeting of NETWORK and NEP (Network Education Program), members were strongly encouraged to contribute to and promote the recently launched "Capitol Campaign 2009." The background image on the case study is the US Capitol which serves as an explanation of the title of the campaign. Some board members made campaign calls during the first day of the meeting. While education activities increased during 2008, and legislative opportunities opened up in the first months of the 111th Congress, NETWORK, like all non-profits, is in need of additional financial support. Some LCWR member congregations have already made pledges despite the difficult economic times.

Human Trafficking Coalition Notes Links to Immigration Raids and to Prostitution

The agenda for the May 7, 2009 meeting of the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking was a full one. Tanisha Bowens, from the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), described connections that are seen between immigration raids and trafficking, especially when parents are detained or deported and children are left vulnerable.

Brian Willis, director of Global Health Promise, guided the group through a presentation, "Trafficking in Persons and Combating Prostitution," with a focus on children of women trafficked for prostitution. It is estimated that there are 20 million children of prostitutes worldwide who are subject to abuse, physical illnesses, and mental problems. However, not all of those who have been trafficked are in prostitution and not all prostitutes have been trafficked. The message was that the church must take up the defense of the legitimate rights of women, involving both men and women in mutual transformation. It was suggested that a wide variety of services to victims of prostitution can be offered by the church.

Coalition members also reviewed the draft of a proposal on an education campaign and discussed how the activities of each participating organization might be better coordinated.

LCWR and CMSM Officers Meet with Vatican Officials in Rome

From April 20 - 24, LCWR officers met with officials of various Vatican offices as part of their annual consultation in Rome.

LCWR president J Lora Dambroski, OSF; president-elect Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; past president Mary Whited, CPPS; and Jane Burke, SSND met with representatives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, and the pontifical councils for Justice and Peace, Promoting Christian Unity, Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, and Inter-religious Dialogue. The LCWR officers visited some of these offices alone and others with the officers of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men.

The two delegations also met with representatives of the International Union of Superiors General and the Union of Superiors General. The LCWR officers held a separate meeting with women general superiors in Rome whose congregations have provinces in the United States.



The LCWR and CMSM officers meet with Cardinal Sandri of the Congregation for Oriental Churches



The LCWR and CMSM delegations with Cardinal Martino of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace



The delegations met with Cardinal Tauran of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue



The two delegations met with representatives from the UISG and USG

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LCWR Officers Travel to Rome

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The LCWR officers held a meeting at the SSND motherhouse for major superiors whose congregations have provinces in the United States



LCWR and CMSM met with the US charge d'affaires and staff in Rome

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 New Leader Workshop
The Retreat Center at St. John's
Plymouth, Michigan
March 24 — 27, 2011

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



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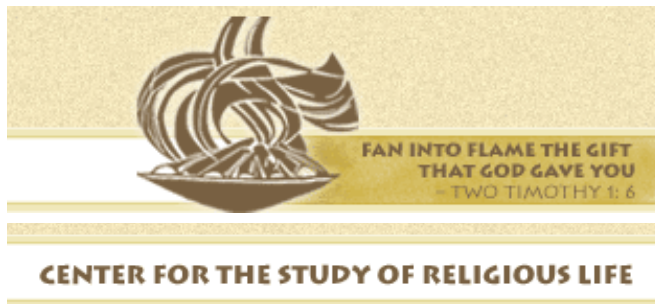
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Eucharistic Liturgy on August 14

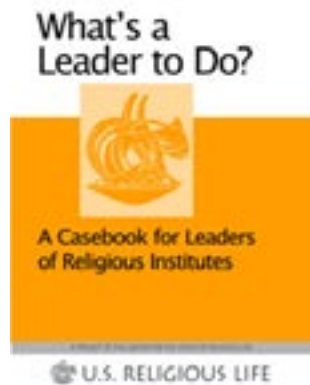
Some LCWR members have inquired as to whether the Eucharistic liturgy celebrated on August 14 at 3:00 PM during the LCWR assembly will be for the vigil of the Assumption. Since this liturgy is scheduled before 4 PM, it is not a celebration of the feast. According to a decree issued on December 13, 1991 by the members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States of America, "Whenever January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, or August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption, or November 1, the solemnity of All Saints, falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated."



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

New Casebook Sent to CSRL Members

CSRL's latest publication, *What's a Leader to Do?: A Casebook for Leaders of Religious Institutes*, was sent to center members in early May. Nine scenarios built on real situations are presented with reflections from religious with backgrounds in theology, psychology, canon law, sociology, church history, etc. For more information go to www.religious-life.org/pubs/What%20is%20a%20Leader%20to%20Do.html.



Scholars Roundtable Produces Third Essay

The Scholars Roundtable, an interdisciplinary group of scholars who gather twice a year at the Center for Religious Life to discuss the current experience of and studies on religious life in the United States, have produced their annual essay. "Finding a Way Forward III: Timely Thoughts on Religious Vocations" will be sent via e-mail to CSRL members as well as being posted on the CSRL website. The authors of this essay are Paul Philibert, OP; Kathleen Sprows Cummings; Katarina Schuth, OSF; and Patricia Wittberg, SC. www.religious-life.org/programs/index.html

Next KINDLING Arriving by E-mail

The next issue of KINDLING focuses on religious life collections and archives. This issue is of particular interest to leaders, archivists, and researchers. Resources for community archivists are listed. The importance of community archives is highlighted in the traveling museum exhibit, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* sponsored by LCWR. CSRL members will receive KINDLING by email. It will also be available on the CSRL website.

www.religious-life.org/newsletters/index.html



Called to the Mountain: Blessing and Hope

Religious Formation Conference Congress

November 12-15, 2009

Denver, CO

Are you:

- A new leader?
- A leader responsible for initial formation?
- A leader responsible for ongoing formation?

Do you have a sister/brother in your community who is responsible for ongoing formation?

Are you looking for ways to bridge the gap between new members and seasoned members?

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