



July 2009

LCWR Members Propose Plan for Conference's Next Five Years

For the past two years, LCWR has been engaged in a Shared Futures process that looked at the members' needs and expectations for the conference. Members were asked to respond to these questions:

- Considering your experience as an elected leader, what do you most need from LCWR at this time?
- What are the two or three most significant issues, concerns, or questions that elected leaders need to be exploring at this time?

The answers to these questions have been reviewed and refined over the course of these two years by the members at LCWR regional meetings and assemblies as well as by the national board.

At its February 2009 meeting, the board again reviewed the Shared Futures findings as well as the LCWR Call for 2004-2009. The board found great correspondence between what is in the LCWR Call and what had been raised in the Shared Futures work. It was clear to the board that the realities named in the Call regarding the world, the church, and religious life continue to be very much operative today. What was clear as well is that the commitments named in the Call were undertaken seriously by the members during these last five years and have brought the conference to where it is today.

At that time the board voted unanimously to reaffirm the LCWR Call for the next five years and to allow it, as well as the expectations named by the members for the conference's shared future, to form the basis for its direction-setting for the next five years. The board appointed a committee to incorporate into the Call document the vision articulated by the members for LCWR's future.

All members received an e-mail message from the national office asking them to review this new document. Members were asked to respond via an online survey to let the conference know whether the new plan meets their expectation. The plan is not meant to be an all-inclusive strategy for the conference for the next five years, but rather it gives direction to the LCWR officers, members, committees, and staff as to where to place the conference's resources and energies as it moves into the future.

A one-hour timeframe has been allotted for discussion at the assembly of this vision for LCWR's future. It is hoped that the document can be approved then and that the board can begin its implementation immediately following the assembly. The expectation is that any suggestions related to clarity and style will be offered via the online survey, and not on the assembly floor. In this way the time at the assembly can be dedicated to discussion of the implementation of this vision for LCWR.

LCWR Call
2010 - 2015

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From the LCWR Presidency Truth and Integrity, The Virtues of This Time

by J Lora Dambroski, OSF — LCWR President

The work of leadership these past six months has had a unique and historical challenge with the announcement of the Apostolic Visitation of women's congregations by The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) and the Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).



Conversations in the media and individual circles of those concerned for women religious have set forth their evaluations of the situation as to whether these are "visitations" and "assessments" or "meddling" and "investigations." Some say possibly a little of each. The view from the outside and the experience from the inside may be radically varied. (Just read the blogs.)

While we look at the Apostolic Visitation as a procedure

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without precedent in religious life in a particular nation and the Doctrinal Assessment of a leadership conference an unusual approach to evaluation of adherence to Church teaching, similar experiences are not new or unique in the history of religious women.

What is challenging and possibly even "grace full" in such times is the call to clarity and articulations about the core of our life commitment and mission, relationship with the Church, and how we live out the

values that we use to challenge others. There is history and precedent for this as evidenced in the lives of the women who have carved the path of religious life before us. To be a woman (women) committed to the Gospel, in relationship with Jesus Christ, living the charisms of our founders and trusting in the Spirit of God that directs a reaching out to others, stretching boundaries to go where it may not be comfortable because we believe and we love... this is not new. The grace to be in the truth and integrity that God asks is not new, and it is in this place that we respond to assessments and visitations. It is in this place that we have chosen to live our lives even without them.

Using the new LCWR reflection book for prayer, I was again awakened to another grace in our lives as leaders of congregations of women religious... the relationship and support of each other. But, what caught my eye and my heart today as I prayed... prayed for all of my brothers and sisters in God's family, prayed for the Church, prayed for my sisters and our discernment of God's present call for us, prayed for us as LCWR, it was the words on the back cover of the book that spoke... because of the truth and integrity it poses for me/us now:

"We, the members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, believe that God's call is written in the signs of our time. 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. Inspired by the radical call of the Gospel, led by God's Spirit, and companioned by one another, we embrace our time as holy, our leadership as gift, and our challenges as blessings." — LCWR Call 2004-2009

Truth and integrity, the virtues of this time for us.

We've done it before... we'll continue to do it now.

LCWR Executive Committee Meets in June

The LCWR executive committee met in LaCrosse, Wisconsin on June 15 and 16 and discussed many of the matters on the conference's agenda.

Agenda items included:

- *Women & Spirit* Exhibit
- Shared Futures Process
- CARA Study on Sexual Abuse Policies
- New Orleans Recovery Project
- CDF Doctrinal Assessment
- Assembly Planning
- Procedures for Nominations and Elections of LCWR Officers
- Policy on Making Public Statements
- Updating the History of LCWR

During the meeting, the committee also approved the appointments of the following LCWR members to serve on conference standing committees:

Nominations and Elections Committee

- Rosemary Crowley, SNDdeN (chair)
- Marcia Allen, CSJ
- Grace Hartzog, SC

Global Concerns Committee

- Kathleen Bryant, RSC
- Judith Justinger, SSJ

Finance Committee

- Beatrice Hernandez, OSF
- Helen Ingles, IHM
- Sheila Megley, RSM

The executive committee is also recommending the appointment of Elizabeth Ney, CSJ as treasurer. The national board will review and take action on this recommendation at its August 10 meeting.

*Women of Spirit:
Creating in Chaos*



More than 700 persons have now registered for the August LCWR national assembly, promising important exchange among the members on the critical questions facing women religious leaders today. Additional registrations are welcome. The fee is \$400 through July 8, and \$425 after that date.

All members and associates are reminded that they must register online for hotel accommodations through Nix & Associates. The direct link to that reservation system is found in the assembly brochure, available in the member information section of the LCWR website.

The conference strongly encourages participants to stay at the assembly hotel since the ability to avoid rental fees for the individual meeting rooms is dependent upon having a certain number of hotel sleeping room reservations.

A number of communities have been very generous in donating to the assembly scholarship fund. LCWR reminds those who may be in need that scholarships are available to assist with assembly registration and with hotel accommodations. Those interested in applying may contact Pat Cormack, SCSC at pcormack@lcwr.org or 301-588-4955 Ext 228.

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

A retreat for LCWR members and
LCWR associates who are serving in
congregation leadership

January 17 - 22, 2010

Redemptorist Renewal Center at Picture Rocks

Tucson, Arizona
www.desertrenewal.org

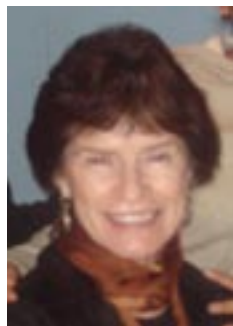


Join with other women religious leaders for a five-day retreat that will provide opportunities to reflect on the blessings and challenges of religious life leadership today. The days will include input, quiet contemplative space, a variety of ritual experiences, and some opportunity for individual and group spiritual direction for those who so choose.

Retreat Directors



Regina Bechtle, SC



María Elena
Martínez, OSF

Registration forms will be sent online at a later time.
Participation will be limited to the first 25 members
to send in their form and check.

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

Visit www.womenandspirit.org

Two Women Religious Honored for Promotion of Catholic Health Care

During CHA's annual Ecclesiology and Spiritual Renewal Program in Rome, Carol Keehan, DC, and Lloyd Dean, chair of CHA's board, presented an award from CHA to Sharon Holland, IHM, in gratitude for Sharon's invaluable assistance to US Catholic health systems, particularly to those seeking public juridic person status. Sharon is retiring from her position with the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Vatican office that oversees the activities of religious congregations, where she has served since 1988.

Carol Keehan herself will be honored on June 26 when she receives the Annual Cardinal Bernardin Award at the Philip J. Murnion Lecture of the Catholic Common Ground Initiative at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director, will attend on behalf of LCWR.

Congressional Sponsors Still Needed for US House of Representatives Resolution on Women Religious

In mid-May Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur introduced a resolution in the US House of Representatives to draw attention to the impact of the contributions of Catholic sisters on the history of our nation. She has received support from many of her colleagues in Congress, but she would like to call further attention to what she feels is an important message by bringing it to a vote in the House of Representatives.

In order to do this, she must collect at least 50 cosponsors. Women religious are being asked to reach out to their local Representatives and urge them to become cosponsors of HRes441, honoring the historical contributions of Catholic sisters in the United States. At the time of publishing this newsletter, 25 Representatives had already signed on.

A copy of Congresswomen Kaptur's letter to her colleagues is available on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/HRres.doc.

Any questions may be directed to Representative Kaptur's legislative assistant, Kate Byrne, at kate.byrne@mail.house.gov or 202-225-4146.



Expressions of Gratitude for LCWR Work

More than 21,000 copies of the LCWR reflection book, *Midwiving a Vibrant Future*, are in circulation. The LCWR national office has received numerous phone calls, cards, and e-mail messages from persons throughout the country and beyond expressing gratitude for the publication. Many ask that their thanks be extended to all the writers and artists.

The following excerpts from letters are representative of the comments made by readers.

"The book is a beautiful reflective text, it stirs the very dormant potential for the mystery of the risk of the unknown."

"I have been using the book for morning prayer and have found the quotes, reflections, and the art very enriching and thought-provoking. We truly are in an age of bringing to birth in faith a new vision of religious life. It is quite a challenge to hope in that which we cannot see. I find the booklet such a companion during this time of waiting and watching."

CHA Assembles in New Orleans

Prior to the opening of the annual assembly of the Catholic Health Association, held June 7-9 in New Orleans, the board held a meeting in which the main agenda item was healthcare reform legislation. As anticipated, the key struggle will be about financing health reform. Carol Keehan, DC, CHA president and CEO, continues to attend multiple meetings with House and Senate committees to keep CHA's goals and concerns before legislators. Providing healthcare to people in poverty, the uninsured, underinsured, and other vulnerable groups, as well as maintaining the ability of Catholic hospitals to care for those who cannot pay are the core issues pressed by CHA as they grapple with complex legislative and administrative issues. Two of three new members of the board are members of LCWR congregations: Teresa Maltby, RSM and Jane Iannucelli, SC.

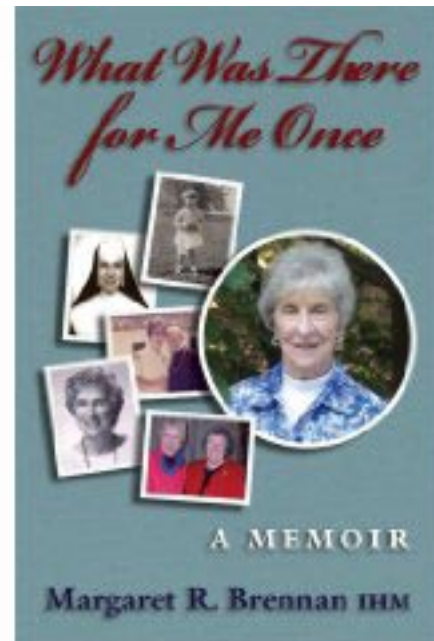
Both Carol and incoming CHA board chair Colleen Scanlon (CHI) spoke about their experiences at the opening of the *Women & Spirit* history exhibit in Cincinnati, and how moved and inspired they were by the very professional presentation.

The theme of the assembly, "In Our Hands: Changing Ourselves, Our Communities, Our Nation," was carried through the keynote presentations and innovative forums. Speakers included Nancy Brinker, founder of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in honor of her sister who died from breast cancer; Daniel Sulmasy, OFM, MD; Stan Brock, founder of the Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps; and Bob Schieffer, CBS News chief Washington correspondent.

CHA also debuted a video to promote the urgent need for healthcare reform. Titled "I Can't Wait," the video features a diverse group of caregivers, religious, families, children and others expressing their hopes for a health caresystem that serves everyone. All were encouraged to view the video on YouTube and share it with others: www.youtube.com/catholichealthassoc.

Before the assembly opened, 44 members of CHA health systems participated in a service day, "Operation Helping Hands," hosted by Catholic Charities New Orleans.

Former LCWR President Publishes Memoir



Margaret Brennan, IHM, the 1972 LCWR president, has published a memoir, *What Was There for Me Once*.

In her introduction, Margaret notes, "The central two parts of the book detail the changes to religious life after the epoch-making experience of the Second Vatican Council. At the time, I was involved in the leadership of my own community (the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe, Michigan) and in the newly formed Leadership Conference of Women Religious. It was during this period that I saw up close the repainting of religious life, for better or for worse."

She goes on to say, "The book is neither an autobiography nor a detailed history of religious life in the United States. It is a collection of memories, partial but true. Memories serve us well when they present us with the possibility of making choices and making promises that will make a difference in the future."



With a flurry of congressional activity before the August recess, several justice organizations have issued letters and requested signatures from the faith community. LCWR has signed several letters:

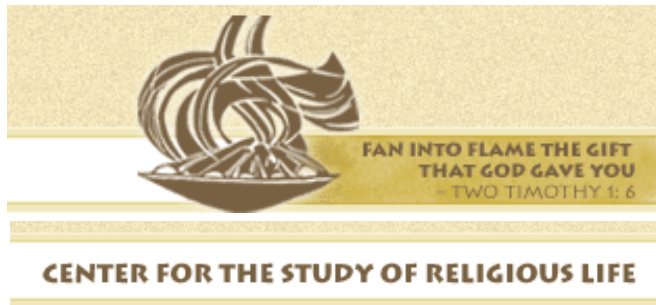
- A letter to members of the House of Representatives urging support for the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (H.R.2139) which is a step toward comprehensive reform of US foreign assistance programs to better meet the global challenges of the 21st century
- A letter from Churches for Middle East Peace signed by J Lora Dambroski, OSF, related to President Obama's speech in Cairo on June 4, encouraging continuation of the President's strong leadership on behalf of peace in the Holy Land
- A statement of support for the Gulf Coast Civic Works Act (HR 226) to all members of the House of Representatives
- A letter to congressional Representatives from Jubilee USA requesting the maximum possible funding for IDA (International Development Association) because meeting the US financial commitment to IDA and catching up on our outstanding arrears is essential to meeting our financial obligations under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI)
- Also, at the request of Columban Missionaries, LCWR drafted a letter to Ambassador Luis Valdivieso Montano expressing concern about the attacks of the Peruvian police against indigenous people protesting peacefully in Bagua. The protests were in opposition to government attempts to open the Amazon rainforest to increased extraction of natural resources by multinational corporations. These activities are in contravention of international laws and conventions, including those ratified by Peru, that guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples.

LCWR Supports Torture Awareness Month Activities

At a June 11 event organized by NRCAT (National Religious Campaign Against Torture), approximately 150 people gathered near the White House to call on President Obama to appoint a non-partisan Commission of Inquiry to investigate past torture practices by the United States. Eight religious leaders who came from across the country participated in a press conference before the event, and led the interfaith prayer service in Lafayette Park. Following the gathering, a delegation of 33 faith leaders, including Dianna Ortiz, OSU of The Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC), met with White House officials and delivered a letter signed by 51 senior religious officials in support of a commission of inquiry.

The LCWR presidency was invited by NRCAT to be one of the major religious leaders, but due to commitments in their congregations, no president was able to attend. Since J Lora Dambroski, OSF, had signed a letter calling for a commission of inquiry, LCWR was represented at the event by Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director. The faith community is divided on establishing a "truth commission," with some supporting President Obama's preference to look forward, not backward, and others, represented at the June 11 event, believing that "the only way forward is through our past," as reflected in the words of Rev. William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. "Only by knowing the truth will the American people have the opportunity to develop a strong conviction that torture must never be justified," stated Ingrid Mattson, president of the Islamic Society of North America. Other leaders included representatives of the Jewish, Protestant, and Islamic faiths; the Armenian and Old Catholic Church; and Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International.

TASSC organized a Survivors' Week in Washington, DC, culminating on June 27 in a 24-hour vigil commemorating the UN International Day in Support of Torture Victims and Survivors.



A Message from CSRL Director Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ

LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRISES

There have been two big surprises here at CSRL.

I AM MOVING TO ST LOUIS

I have been called to leadership in my congregation, the Religious of the Sacred Heart, and will be moving to St. Louis. I begin my three-year term on the US provincial team August 2. After six years of working with so many wonderful leaders of religious institutes, it is now my turn to carry out this service for my congregation. I pray that I will have the grace, wisdom, vision, patience and deep trust in God that this ministry requires.

I will miss the ministry of the Center very much. It has been a joy to keep a bird's eye view on religious life in this country, to track trends and to share what I see and learn with those in leadership. I have loved being with so many religious learning from their experiences.

I will get to see many of you at the LCWR Assembly in New Orleans.

THE CENTER BIDS ADIEU

The other big surprise was that in February the joint boards of CMSM and LCWR, sponsors of the Center with Catholic Theological Union decided to recommend to the CSRL Board of Trustees that, from their perspective, the Center had accomplished its mission and it was time for it to close. My call to leadership came soon after they came to this conclusion.

Little did I know when we first started working on the last issue of KINDLING on archives and religious life collections (www.religious-life.org/newsletters/index.html) that I would be in the midst of archiving CSRL as I was proofreading the final drafts. We close June 30. It

is our hope that our website will continue for several months so that issues of KINDLING and Scholars Roundtable essays will continue to be available, and so you can find answers to questions that might come up, such as the availability of publications.

I am convinced that ongoing interdisciplinary reflection on religious life in the US — in all of its diversity — is an asset for those called to lead religious into the future. Each congregation, order and monastery has its own history, charism and experiences, but these need to be juxtaposed and viewed through various lenses to understand the big picture. It is my hope that this basic mission of CSRL will be carried out by other organizations and individuals.

Closing the Center down adds to my sadness in saying good-bye. But I leave very grateful for all of the people who have made the Center possible these past eleven years. Some of you are:

- The founding group of religious who had the dream and vision for the Center.
- LCWR and CMSM who agreed to create the Center and partnered with CTU to bring it about.
- CTU who not only sponsored the Center with LCWR and CMSM but also provided the office space and utilities, and welcomed me as a colleague.
- All the religious institutes that supported us financially through initial set-up contributions and annual membership donations.
- Our board and corporation members over the years with special thanks the chairs, Steven Henrich, OSC; Mary Christine Fellerhoff, CSA; Ted Keating, SM and Stephen Glodek, SM.
- The other staff members—Barbara Kraemer, OSF, founding director; Virginia Piecuch, program coordinator; and Maria Alamillo, administrative assistant. Together we created 11 years of programming and resources.

Thank you and Good-bye! — *Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ*

A Special Note from LCWR Executive Director Jane Burke, SSND

LCWR expresses its appreciation to Mary Charlotte and Stephen Glodek, the current CSRL board chair, for their extraordinary commitment to the CSRL mission

and for undertaking the work now to bring it to a close. The process and final decision to close the center was painful and not without its missteps. We, in the leadership of LCWR and CMSM, acknowledge those missteps and express our deepest regrets over them.

Women religious have benefited greatly from the work of CSRL over the years and LCWR thanks all the individuals and groups who gave of their time, energy, and expertise to this endeavor. We are certain that this good work will continue to bear fruit within our congregations for many years to come.

New Limits Set for Alienation/Adverse Business Transactions

Effective immediately: the amount requiring the approval of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated life and Societies of Apostolic Life in cases of alienation of stable patrimony or business transactions which could have an adverse effect on the patrimonial condition of an institute/society is raised to \$5,705,000.

This amount applies only to alienation or a business transaction within the United States. Alienation and business transactions in other countries must follow the amount set for institutes and societies in each particular country or region. [See canons 638.3 and 1292.]

See www.usccb.org/norms/1292-1.htm



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Upcoming LCWR Dates

