

# Update

A Publication of the  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

August - September 2008

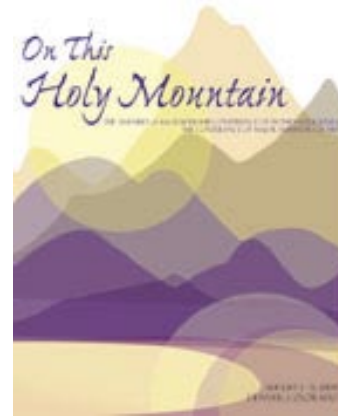
## A Checklist to Prepare for the LCWR-CMSM Assembly

The LCWR-CMSM assembly will provide important opportunities for all participants to explore some of the critical topics facing religious today. In order to prepare fully for this experience, all members are encouraged to do the following:



- Read the 2007-2008 annual report
- Read the Summer 2008 issue of *Occasional Papers*
- Review the assembly resolution on climate change (sent online to all LCWR members)
- Read the "Summary Document: Reflection on Our Shared Future— March 2008" that was distributed at the LCWR spring regional meetings. (Members who are new to LCWR will receive a summary of this document in their assembly folder and are encouraged to read it in preparation for the shared future discussions.)
- Review the information on the candidates for LCWR president and secretary (see LCWR Members' Information section of the LCWR website — [www.lcwr.org](http://www.lcwr.org))

*Be sure you also have registered for the assembly (your cancelled check is your confirmation) and made hotel reservations.*



## Online Survey to be Sent to All LCWR Members

Immediately following the LCWR-CMSM assembly, all LCWR members will receive an online survey. This survey will replace the written evaluation that members have been asked to fill out at the end of an assembly.

All LCWR members are asked to complete this questionnaire, whether or not they attended the assembly. Questions will be asked on the survey that will be useful in future planning for LCWR. Although the survey will take just a few minutes to complete, the input will be invaluable for the conference.

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*From the LCWR Presidency*

# 'Gratitude is the Memory of the Heart'

by Mary Dacey, SSJ — LCWR Past President

**A**lmost three years ago I was "elected into" one of the most remarkable experiences of my life—the Presidency of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. From my perspective, the only appropriate theme for my last letter is "thank you."

In my former life as an English teacher, I regularly taught the construction for a basic essay: choose a theme, identify three points to develop the theme, include an appropriate introduction. So — here is my theme, borrowed from Jean Baptiste Massieu — "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." Point one — memories. Point two — the heart of the matter. Point three — gratitude.

**Point One**

The memories are extraordinarily rich and varied. A schedule of meetings with a list of acronyms that were totally mysterious to me morphed into rich and sometimes challenging exchanges with bishops (CRLM), members of the other conferences (CMSM and CMSWR), and various groups such as NATRI, NRRO, and LRCR. Yearly visits to the Vatican offices afforded not only an opportunity to represent our conference to the Congregation for Religious (CICLSAL), but it also offered an experience of deep faith sharing and community with our CMSM brothers.

The journey to post-Katrina New Orleans with Carole was soul searing. Witnessing the fidelity and dogged determination of the women religious in the face of the chaos and terrible devastation of the city was a privilege the likes of which will not be repeated for me. The History Exhibit Committee taught me about charrettes, a brainstorming of creativity and collaboration with amazing artists who now know more about



the contributions of women religious to our country's fabric than many of us! Representing the conference at the Pope's Mass in Washington was an unexpected thrill. Being in the company of conference legends like Mary Daniel Turner, Theresa Kane, Margaret Brennan, Catherine Pinkerton, Joan Chittister, Helen Garvey, and others gave me a deeper appreciation for the conference's rich legacy of leadership, as did attending the funerals of Mary Luke Tobin, Bea Jeffries, and Andrée Fries.

**Point Two**

At the heart of the conference are several groups with whom I had the privilege to work. The National Board and the Executive Committee members were the two-way communicators who represented the views of the members even as they kept their regions informed of conference business — and this along side their "day jobs." Sharing the presidency with extraordinary women like Christine and Bea, Mary and Lora inspired me to "change the face of the mountain," "realize that

*There can be only one response for the privilege of being part of this leadership conference with its energy, its vitality, its hope and its faithfulness. It is my great gratitude.*

everything is in bud," and "dare to turn hopeless situations into life-giving realities." And ...there are not enough words to describe the dedicated, hard working and multi-talented staff—Marie, Annma-

rie, Pat and Eleanor—so wonderfully coordinated by Carole's dynamic leadership. And of course, there is all of you, the lifeblood of the conference who "embrace this time as holy, our leadership as gift, and our challenges as blessings."

**Point Three**

There can be only one response for the privilege of being part of this leadership conference with its energy, its vitality, its hope, and its faithfulness. It is my great gratitude. As a former English teacher, as a member, I give it A+.

## Watch for LCWR Retreat Registration Forms in September

LCWR will be offering for the fifth year its Leading from Within Retreat, a five-day experience designed for women religious serving in elected leadership. The retreat will be led by Kaye Ashe, OP and María Elena Martínez, OSF and will be held from January 11 - 16, 2009 at the Franciscan Center in Tampa, Florida.

This retreat is open to the first 25 LCWR members who register. Only one person per leadership team may attend. Registration forms will be sent online in early September.



### LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

Franciscan Center  
Tampa, Florida  
January 11 — 16, 2009

## Farewell to Carole Shinnick, SSND



The LCWR national office staff paid tribute to Carole Shinnick, SSND, the LCWR executive director from 2002-2008, with a farewell celebration on July 16. Carole will complete her service at LCWR following the August 1-4 assembly. Shown here are: Marianne Benson, executive assistant; Annmarie Sanders, IHM, director of communications; Carol Crowder, membership coordinator; Christabel Lartey, receptionist; Carole Shinnick; Honora Precourt, development coordinator for the history project; Carol Glidden, administrative assistant; Marie Lucey, associate director for social mission; and Pat Cormack, SCSC, associate director for business and finance.



## Convention for the Common Good Exceeds Expectations

So many people, so much work, so much energy all came together in Philadelphia on July 11-13, 2008 in what one speaker called a “daring” gathering of nearly 800 delegates to the Convention for the Common Good. While it is impossible to convey in print the spirit of the event, several highlights may help to give some flavor of the Convention in which many members of LCWR congregations participated actually and/or by way of pre-convention dialogues:

- Setting the context of the common good by theologian Dr. Shawn Copeland on Friday night following a welcome to Philadelphia from Senator Bob Casey and a representative from Mayor Michael Nutter’s office
- Breakout sessions on Saturday morning with expert panels on ecology, immigration, war/peace, economy, and health care
- Statements and questions from each breakout addressed to Representative Marcy Kaptur (OH) and staff from two additional congressional offices
- Affirmation of the Platform for the Common Good
- A participative, energetic Eucharistic liturgy followed by a reception and celebrative banquet on Saturday evening
- Video messages to the convention during the banquet from Senator Barack Obama, Senator Arlen Specter (PA), and Bono
- An interview with Democrat John Podesta (chair of the DNC) and Republican Rep. Charles Dougherty (former congressional representative from Philadelphia), both Catholics, conducted by Washington Post columnist, E.J. Dionne, also a Catholic
- A Sunday morning session on next steps, Organizing for the Common Good, followed by a call to action by AFL-CIO President, John Sweeney, and a children’s presentation, “Little Friends for Peace”
- A rousing send off by Helen Prejean, CSJ prior to the closing blessing by Bishop Walter Sullivan and commissioning of delegates

Delegates committed themselves to sending the affirmed Platform for the Common Good to elected officials and candidates for election as well as to eight other people asking them to do the same and then send

to eight others in an “8 for ‘08” action. The platform, as well as additional information from the Convention is posted on the website: [www.commongoodconvention.org](http://www.commongoodconvention.org).

## Systemic Change Think Tank 2009: Post-Election Deep Dive Conversations

LCWR Think Tank XI is scheduled for February 23-26, 2009 at the Redemptorist Retreat Center in Picture Rocks, Arizona. Barbara Stanbridge, IHM, an experienced change consultant, will lead participants in using the process of “U Theory” to explore how women religious can better effect change in the post-2008 election national and global context. Popularized by Peter Senge and further developed by Otto Scharmer, the U Theory offers a deeply reflective way of looking at the future, a way that is, therefore, compatible with the spirituality of women religious. A flyer with a registration form will be available to LCWR members and justice coordinators by the end of August.

## Committee Issues a Catholic Study Guide on Torture

A Catholic sub-committee of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture released in June, National Torture Awareness Month, a study guide written mainly by David Gibson and published by the USCCB. The four chapters, solidly grounded in Catholic social teaching, are designed for use by discussion groups and classes in parishes and educational settings, as well as by individuals, families, religious communities, and others. Each chapter includes prayer and suggestions for concrete action. A thoughtful and practical follow-up to the 2006 assembly resolution on torture, the guide is easily available for downloading and printing at [www.usccb.org/sdwp/TortureIsAMoralIssue-CatholicStudyGuide.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/TortureIsAMoralIssue-CatholicStudyGuide.pdf).

*From the LCWR Executive Director*  
**Kiss Today Good-Bye**

Countless plays and novels have used the metaphor of a group of travelers journeying together, from a known to an unknown place, to portray the great human adventure. The Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt, the pilgrimage of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the flight from London to the Never-Never Land of Peter Pan – all portray the transition and the transformation that happen when a group of people move from here to there. And sometimes the “here” and “there” are not places on a map but places within.

The travelers are always diverse, and the normal rub-and-polish of personal interactions reshapes them and their relationships. None arrive at the end of the trip quite the same as they were at the outset. And when the journey is over, despite challenges and hardships there is a sense of accomplishment — and always an undeniable feeling of loss.

In the long-running Broadway hit, *A Chorus Line*, seventeen singer-dancers arrive as strangers and competitors to try out for roles in – what else – a chorus line. Some are young and ambitious. Some are older and desperate. Some are eager. Some are frightened. All

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*I cannot imagine working in a more meaningful ministry, with finer people, or a better staff, or having such wonderful adventures.*

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know that only eight will be chosen to be members of the cast. In the course of the play each character tells her or his story so that by the time of the final cut, we don't want to see any of them go. We have come to care for them and they have come to care for each other.

Traveling together, learning each other's stories, and then coming to the inevitable splits in the road – this is the unmistakable course of the human journey. There is no getting around it. Every ending is a little death. And



**Carole Shinnick, SSND**

the busyness that often surrounds these transitional moments does little to numb their deep, dull ache. Some of you reading this may be in your last year of leadership and you know this ache. Or you may have left a treasured ministry to accept the call to leadership, and you know this ache. Or perhaps you have recently lost a dear one, or have drifted apart in a significant relationship, and you know this ache.

I have been blessed to have been the LCWR executive director for six and a half amazing years. I always knew that I had a term, but I didn't know it would go so fast. Yet here it is and I am finding it hard to believe that I will ever have as much fun again. I cannot imagine working in a more meaningful

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*But I can't forget what I did for love.*

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ministry, with finer people, or a better staff, or having such wonderful adventures. This is a costly good-bye for me, as it should be.

Towards the end of *A Chorus Line*, one of the characters falls while dancing and is carried off to the hospital. The event confronts the remaining dancers with the reality that at some point they will no longer be able dance. “Will the hurt of losing the ability to dance be worth it?” someone asks. Will they regret having invested themselves so fully in something that was always going to end?

The cast's response is my own as I prepare to leave LCWR. They sing: “Kiss today goodbye, the sweetness and the sorrow. Wish me luck – the same to you. But I can't regret what I did for love, what I did for love. See my eyes are dry. The gift was ours to borrow. It's as if we always knew. But I can't forget what I did for love. What I did for love.”

My own heart is filled with gratitude. Thanks for the honor of letting me work with you, dear sisters of LCWR. And now, the curtain, please...

## 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 Systemic Change Think Tank**  
*Redemptorist Renewal Center*  
*Tucson, Arizona*  
February 23 — 26, 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, 2010

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

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

## Religious Formation Conference Workshop: Orientation to Formation

Presenters:

Don Bisson, FMS; MaryAnn Seton Lopiccolo, SC

October 31 - November 2, 2008

Passionist Spiritual Center of  
Riverdale, New York

This two-day workshop welcomes and  
is designed to be of assistance to:

Ministers of Initial Formation  
Leaders with Formation Responsibilities  
Formative Community Members

For further information and registration contact:

Religious Formation Conference  
8820 Cameron Street  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4152  
Phone: 301-588-4938  
Fax: 301-585-7649  
rfc@relforcon.org  
[www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org)



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## Position Opening: FLRCR Executive Director

The Financial and Legal Resource Center for Religious (FLRCR), a newly formed nonprofit corporation (formerly NATRI and LRCR) located in Silver Spring, Maryland, seeks an exceptional individual to lead the programs, services, and activities of the organization.

**Responsibilities:** membership services, acting as the public representative for the association, integrating all legal and financial activities and oversight of the human resource and financial management of the national office. The position is accountable to the board of directors.

**Qualifications:** belief in and support of the mission of FLRCR. Graduate degree in related field preferred. Minimum of five years experience in legal, finance, management, administration, or related fields; three to five years' relevant managerial experience. General knowledge of religious life and of the financial management and legal requirements of religious institutes required.

The executive director must work collaboratively with staff, board, related organizations, and members. PC literacy required: MS Office.

Résumés with cover letter and salary expectations should be sent by July 30:

Search Committee: [flrcrsearch1@cox.net](mailto:flrcrsearch1@cox.net) or fax 810-592-7695.

## LRCR Renewal Time

This is the time to renew subscriptions to the Legal Resource Center for Religious for 2008/2009. Renewals and new subscriptions are being accepted. Subscriptions for 2007/2008 expired on June 30, 2008. Additional information is available at [www.lrcr.org](http://www.lrcr.org).



## NRVC Hosts Convocation: Called by One, Invited by Many

The 2008 biennial NRVC convocation will take place from October 9-13 in Louisville, KY, at the historical Galt House Hotel. Participants will gather under the theme Called by One, Invited by Many, highlighting the responsibilities of all baptized Christians to build a vocation culture within the church. Participation is open to all NRVC members as well as those who share an interest in vocation promotion.

Keynote speakers will be Donald Senior, CP, president of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago; Maria Cimperman, OSU, assistant professor of moral theology at Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas; and James Martin, SJ, associate editor of America and award-winning author.

Further information on Convocation 2008 and online registration may be found at [www.nrvc.net](http://www.nrvc.net). Please note that registrations for the convocation and the three pre-convocation workshops can only be made online.

## NRVC Newsletter to Feature World Youth Day Events

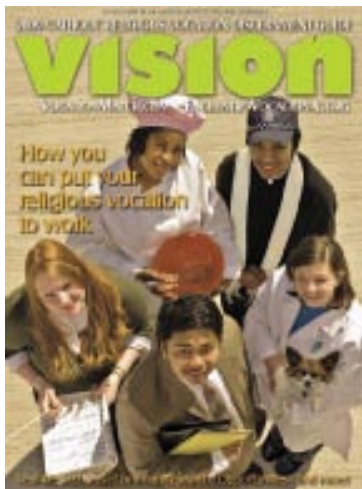
As the Catholic youth of the world are gathering in Sydney, Australia to celebrate World Youth Day with Pope Benedict XVI, so too are several NRVC members who are hosting youth groups or sponsoring tables at the WYD Vocation Expo. NRVC hopes to feature some of these events and happenings in future online newsletters.



## NRVC/CARA Study on Religious Vocations Receiving Excellent Response

CARA reports that it has received an excellent response to the religious vocation survey sent to major superiors of all religious institutes in the US. As of July 2 there is a 58% total response rate, which reflects 76% of the LCWR member congregations. This survey was also sent to members of CMSWR, CMSM, all contemplative communities, and those emerging communities aspiring for canonical status.

Those congregations that have not completed this important survey are asked to do so as soon as possible. Anyone in need of additional information or surveys may contact CARA at 202-687-8086 or by emailing [CARA@georgetown.edu](mailto:CARA@georgetown.edu).



## Vision 2009 Available on August 1

**V**ision 2009, the annual Catholic Religious Vocation Guide published by NRVC, will be available on August 1. This publication is mailed to all parishes, Catholic colleges, universities, high schools, and retreat centers in the US and Canada.

Also on August 1 Vision will premiere its newly upgraded and redesigned English and Spanish websites, [www.vocation-network.org](http://www.vocation-network.org) and [www.vocacioncatolica.org](http://www.vocacioncatolica.org). These popular and highly interactive sites are the home of [VocationMatch.com](http://VocationMatch.com), which was recently featured on the CBS Evening News. This year there is also an increase in the number of French-translated online articles.

## Metzger Assumes Position at NRRO

**T**he National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) has announced that Br. Robert Metzger, SM will be joining the NRRO staff as the assistant director of planning and education. Bob is a member of the Society of Mary (Marianists), province of the United States. He has served his community both as director of finance and as a member of the council. He also has volunteered as a consultant for NRRO and NATRI since 1987. He will begin his service at NRRO on August 25.



## NRVC Hosts Summer Institute

**T**his summer NRVC hosted five workshops with 134 participants at its annual Summer Institute at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. The institute included the following programs:

- Vocation Minister as Spiritual Guide, with David Couturier, OFM Cap, PhD, DMin
- Recognizing and Responding to “Yellow Flags” in Vocation Ministry, with Mary M. Lindsay, SSJ, PhD
- Behavioral Assessment I and Ethics in Vocation Ministry, with Rev. Ray Carey, PhD
- Orientation Program for New Vocation Directors, with Paul Bednarczyk, CSC and Charlene Diorka, SSJ

NRVC strives to offer fresh programming for its members, so it is always open to any suggestions about topics for future workshops.