

Update

*A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

January 2010

Organizations and Individuals Express Public Support of US Women Religious and LCWR in Light of Vatican Studies

The officers and national office of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious have received many letters from organizations and individuals expressing support as both the apostolic visitation of US women religious and the doctrinal assessment of LCWR continue.

Correspondence from the groups and individuals who have given permission for their letters to be posted on the LCWR website is available on the public side of the site at www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/av.htm. Members and associates of LCWR are encouraged to continue visiting this section of the website since letters are posted as they are received.

Watch for LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Survey

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious established an Outstanding Leadership Award to recognize and honor persons who have significantly contributed to the ministry of leadership and who reflect the LCWR mission.

In the fall, regions were asked to submit nominations for persons to be considered for this award. The Outstanding Leadership Award Committee met in mid-December to review these nominations and to prepare a process to allow members to recommend recipients to the executive committee. In mid-January information will go to members of LCWR about those who have been nominated and about using Survey Monkey to make recommendations.

Members of the leadership award committee are Marcia Allen CSJ; Mary Dacey SSJ; Patricia McDermott, RSM; Marsha Speth, SP; and Pat Cormack, SCSC (staff).



2010 LCWR Assembly

Hope in the Midst of Darkness

August 10 - 14, 2010

Dallas, Texas

*Watch for more information on what promises
to be an outstanding assembly*

Inside this issue:

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From the LCWR Presidency
Thirsting for an Epiphany

by Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA — LCWR President

In the winter hours of our waiting for revelation, we have been gifted with the Sun of Justice. Just like the Magi, we yearn for a manifestation of meaning. Welcome travelers! The journey of the Wise Ones reveals a slow trek over hot sands in search of stars that brighten hopes, of sharpest thorns on sweet stalk, of cries in the wilderness. They cannot tell their camels about need and want. Camels have a clear sense of their place in the world. Their last great hope is an oasis that brings forth milk under a deadly sky.



Mary stands inside of us, asking what God is forming in our being in this season of our lives.

Epiphanies do not just write "Peace on earth." They break in upon scenes in Afghanistan where bombs drop; they paint "peace?" above people without homes, and knock on the politician's door and demand it. They seek an experience of peace wherever on earth it stands, with whomever it encounters. They suggest a transformation like Rainer Maria Rilke writes of in a love poem to God: "Be the ground lying under that sky. . . like a thing ripened until it is real, so that the One who began it all can feel you when she reaches for you." These kinds of epiphanies receive the words of Scripture, grasp them fully, and reflect them in flesh.

Ancient journeyers reveal that what we discover is both more and less than what we expect, that a world of communion is more expansive than any surface reality, and that life is for communication of the spirit. Such are the ways our hearts are made known, and the way in which the spirit risks itself in substantiation.

We begin a new year with the feast of Mary, the Mother of God. Mothering is not a passive role. It is essen-

It is the same with the Wise Ones from the East and with us. We seek an entry into the mystery of Christ that gives us wisdom for finding our way. We are willing to traverse the deserts of oblivion, of suffering, of unknowing, of persecution, to find the revelation of the All Holy.

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*We are willing to traverse the deserts of oblivion,
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Thirsting for an epiphany is that hope
which tenaciously clings to our faithful hearts
and announces
in the face of any Herod the world can produce
and all the inn doors slammed in our faces
and all the dark nights of our souls
that with God
all things are still possible
and that even now God is born anew.¹

tially a role of being actively engaged in manifesting the profound mysteries of life, of conveying blessing. This requires receptivity to grace, acceptance of new dimensions of life, and creativity in proclaiming what is revealed. Mary teaches us the way of the spirit through care for humanity in all its varieties of wants and needs. She is present on the journeys to Egypt and Jerusalem, in the temple, at weddings, at the final Supper, in the last hours of Christ's life. Her simple message is "follow Him; do what He tells you".

Epiphanies awaken us. One kind is concerned with reverencing the birth of one of the great Lights in the world. Another concerns the divinity we carry within us. Whatever we hold our focus upon, we manifest to the world. This can be daunting because we may find ourselves standing inside the person of the Mother of God, feeling what it means to be alive with God. Or

Drawn into the Mystery of God, we have been gifted with the Sun of Justice. Happy the eyes that see the Sun of Justice and proclaim Christ's peace!

¹ Adapted from "The Christmas Spirit" by Ann Weems

LCWR and US Women Religious in the News

The following are links to some of the articles about US women religious and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious that have been in the news since the publication of the December 2009 LCWR newsletter.

“Entered into evidence: Vatican investigates women religious”

US Catholic

November 24, 2009

Heather Grennan Gary

www.uscatholic.org/church/2009/11/entered-evidence

“Religious women resisting...”

US Catholic

November 24, 2009

Commentary by Bryan Cones

www.uscatholic.org/blog/2009/11/super-sisters

“Character witnesses: Readers defend the sisters”

US Catholic

November 24, 2009

Article by Heidi Schlumpf

www.uscatholic.org/church/2009/11/character-witnesses

“The Sisters of Mercy aren’t McDonald’s”

US Catholic

November 24, 2009

Essay by Sandra Schneiders

www.uscatholic.org/church/2009/11/sisters-mercy-arent-mcdonalds

“Women religious not complying with Vatican study”

National Catholic Reporter

November 24, 2009

Article by Thomas C. Fox

ncronline.org/news/women/women-religious-not-complying-vatican-study

“Catholic sisters challenge Vatican investigation”

Associated Press

December 4, 2009

Article by Eric Gorski

hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_REL_CATHOLIC_SISTERS?SITE=VAROA&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

“Apostolic Visitation is moving forward despite ‘boycott’ reports”

Catholic News Service

December 4, 2009

www.catholicnewsagency.com/new.php?n=17948

“‘Women & Spirit’ exhibit set to move to Smithsonian”

National Catholic Reporter

December 8, 2009

Article by Thomas C. Fox

ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/women-spirit-exhibit-set-move-smithsonian

“Apostolic visitation of US women religious moves toward 2010 visits”

Catholic News Service

December 11, 2009

Dennis Sadowski

www.uscatholic.org/node/5240

“Internet aims to bond women religious visitation supporters”

National Catholic Reporter

December 9, 2009

Article by Thomas C. Fox

ncronline.org/node/16165

“Under the watchful eye: LCWR investigated”

US Catholic

December 14, 2009

Article by Heather Grennan Gary

www.uscatholic.org/node/5071

LCWR Global Concerns Committee Looks Toward Assembly

Members of LCWR's Global Concerns Committee (GCC) devoted significant time during the November 30 - December 2 meeting discussing and beginning to formulate an assembly resolution which will be sent to the regions for review at their spring meetings. In response to the 2009 resolution on carbon footprint, members had agreed to calculate their footprints and share them at the meeting. Learnings from this exercise led the committee to plan a spring 2010 Resolution to Action (RTA) which provides tools to use for offsets and abatements that can help to compensate for what may be unavoidable use of energy relying on carbon emissions.

In addition, the GCC discussed how to assist Region 12 in planning a public witness during the assembly, projected topics for summer and fall RTAs, and projected a visit to the *Women & Spirit* exhibit during the spring joint meeting with the CMSM Justice and Peace Committee.

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change Expands Outreach

In addition to legislative updates and updates from member organizations at the December 4 meeting, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change staff reported on fall activities at universities and youth organizations where they received an enthusiastic response. A half-time staff person has been hired to develop social networking for the website. In November, at the invitation of Prince Philip, executive director Dan Misleh participated in an event at Windsor Castle with the theme, "Many Heavens, One Earth." Many religions were represented at the conference which addressed both challenges and hopes. Speakers emphasized that global warming will not be adequately addressed without involvement of the religious community.

Also, the USCCB and CRS, coalition members, developed a resource for reflection on Pope Benedict's World Peace Day message, "If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation."

CHA Board Meets as Congress Struggles with Healthcare Reform

Although an update on healthcare reform was provided during the December 10-11 meeting, it was acknowledged that the situation changes by the day, and even by the hour. At the time of the meeting there was still hope that some form of legislation would be passed, although it would probably disappoint many. Both CHA and the USCCB have been active participants in meetings with legislators and the White House.

Following the USCCB revision to Directive 58 of the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (on artificial nutrition and hydration) in order to distinguish between care of patients in a persistent vegetative state and patients facing end of life, CHA issued a statement of explanation of the language used in the revision. A Q&A was developed by the CHA ethics staff to assist providers in understanding the revision.

The 2010 CHA assembly is set for June 13-15 in Denver, Colorado, with the theme, "Forging Our Future: Strengthening the Ministry Through Turbulent Times." Featured speakers will be *New York Times* columnist and author Thomas Friedman (*The World is Flat; Hot, Flat and Crowded*) and Catholic theologian Bryan J. Hehir, SJ, who will reflect on Friedman's survey of the times.

LCWR Staff Attends Reception on Faith and Politics

Jane Burke, SSND, LCWR executive director, and Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director for social mission, attended a December 15 evening reception on faith and politics in the life of our nation's most prominent Catholic family, the Kennedy family, at the invitation of Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Maureen Fiedler, SL, host of *Interfaith Voices* radio program. Held at the home of Ambassador Elizabeth Bagley (now with the State Department), remarks were offered by Victoria Kennedy (widow of Ted) and Kathleen, whose mother, Ethel Kennedy, also attended.



Given pending legislation and the climate summit in Copenhagen, there was a flurry of requests for LCWR to sign messages to government officials. LCWR responded to the following:

- Endorsed a Climate Justice and Migration Position Statement at the invitation of the Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach.
- Signed Faith-Based Recommendations for Participation in the Copenhagen Summit, "Developing a Just and Equitable Post-Kyoto Framework."
- Signed a December 10, Human Rights Day, letter to HUD and DHS Secretaries urging the Obama Administration, and specifically the Inter-Agency Long Term Disaster Recovery Working Group, to bring human rights home for our nation's disaster survivors. (Also responded to a questionnaire from the above group due to LCWR's engagement with Katrina recovery.)
- Signed a letter to the Ugandan Parliament expressing strong opposition to their "Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2009," at the invitation of Catholics in Alliance who worked with Faith in Public Life to draft the statement. The first signature was Thomas Melady, former Ambassador to Uganda and to the Holy See.
- Supported Recommendations to Governments from the CoNGO (Conference of NGOs) on Sustainable Development.
- Signed letter to Speaker Pelosi and House leadership opposing HR 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act (IRPSA) in its current form, which would harm the Iranian people rather than deter the government and hamper President Obama's diplomatic efforts. (Subsequently, IRPSA passed, but new legislation was introduced, Stand With the Iranian People Act and the Iranian Digital Empowerment Act, to help mitigate IRPSA impact on the people.)

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona*

January 17 — 22, 2010

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank

*Bethany Center
Lutz, Florida*

March 1 — 4, 2010

LCWR New Leader Workshop

*Conference Center - University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois*

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

*Conference Center - University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois*

March 24 — 27, 2011

LCWR Assembly

Garden Grove, California

August 9 — 13, 2011



Upcoming Showings

**Smithsonian-International Gallery
in the Dillon Ripley Center**
Washington, DC
January 15 - April 25, 2010

Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage
Beachwood, Ohio (outside of Cleveland)
May 9 - August 28, 2010

**Statue of Liberty National Monument/Ellis Island
Immigration Museum**
New York
September 24 - January 22, 2011

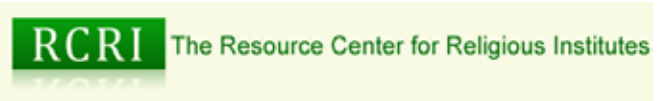
Mississippi River Museum
Dubuque, Iowa
February - April 2011

Permanent Housing for Exhibit

Written proposals are still being accepted for permanent housing for the Women & Spirit exhibit after it completes its travels. Motherhouses, universities or other settings may be possibilities.

The requirements for the venue would be: 3500 square feet, 10-foot height, assumption of the cost of transporting the content of the exhibit to the site, and maintenance of the exhibit. (Original artifacts would be returned to their owners and facsimiles would be created.)

Written proposals should be sent to Helen Garvey, BVM at hmgarvey@aol.com.



New seminar presented by
**The Resource Center for Religious
Institutes**

**Planning for the Future:
Alternatives to Reconfiguration**

**March 1-3, 2010
Washington, DC**

In planning for the care of its members and its continuing legacy, some institutes want to consider options other than reconfiguration. This seminar will help those communities to plan for the future. It is appropriate for all types of institutes: large, small, US- or internationally-based. Topics include: financial planning; real property; civil and canon law; the future of ministries; providing for leadership and management; covenant and management agreements and other legal documents; associates; and preparing a legacy.

Presenters will be Daniel Ward, OSB, JD, JCL, MA • Donna Sauer Miller, JD, JCL • Clare Lorenzatti, DBA, MBA • Mark MacDougall, JD • and Kelly Connors, PM, JCD candidate. The seminar, held at the Washington Retreat House in Washington, DC, begins Monday, March 1 at noon and concludes Wednesday, March 3 at noon.

The registration form and information on tuition, housing, and commuter fees are available on the Resource Center for Religious Institutes website: www.trcri.org.

The Eighth North American Conference
on Critical Personnel Issues
for Bishops and Major Superiors

Sponsored by St. Luke Institute, Inc.
& The Southdown Institute

Washington, DC Area
March 21-23, 2010

Toronto, Ontario Area
April 11-13, 2010
US\$550.00

This conference will enable episcopal and congregational leaders to explore complex mental health, placement, and organizational concerns as well as strategies to maintain their own personal health and spirituality.

More information can be obtained by contacting St. Luke Institute at education@slu.org or 301-422-5499.



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