

# Update

*A Publication of the  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

January 2012



## *Live the Questions Now*

Watch for the order forms for the LCWR 2012 reflection book,  
*Live the Questions Now*.  
Forms will be sent online to all  
LCWR members, associates and subscribers in January.

## LCWR Members to Receive Online Survey on Outstanding Leadership Award

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 late-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; Feliciana Mejia, CCVI; Teresa Donohue, CSJP; and Pat Cormack, SCSC (staff).

## *Christmas Greetings from LCWR*

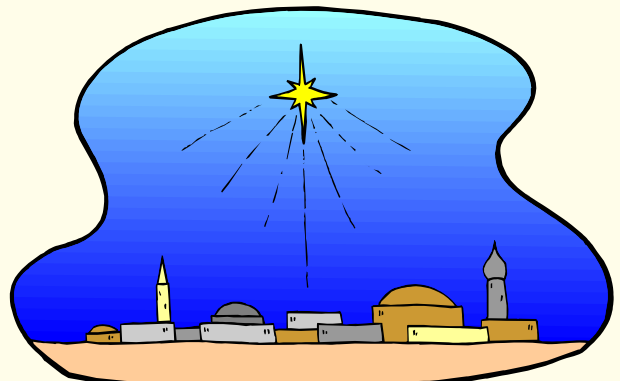
I think God might be a little prejudiced  
For once God asked me to join in a walk  
through the world,

and we gazed into every heart on this earth,  
and I noticed that God lingered a bit longer  
before any face that was weeping,  
and before any eyes that were laughing.

And sometimes when we passed a soul in worship  
God too would kneel down.

I have come to learn: God adores creation.  
(A reflection on the words of St. Francis of Assisi  
by Daniel Ladinsky)

*We, the presidents, board, and staff of LCWR,  
grateful that God so loves the world,  
wish you a most blessed Christmas Season.*



*From the LCWR Presidency*

## Praying from the Dark and Silent Places

by Pat Farrell, OSF — LCWR President

**W**e begin the New Year still savoring Advent and Christmas. It is just slightly past the winter solstice, the days still short and the mornings dark. I'm particularly aware of the darkness of the day's beginning. During Advent I sat every morning in that pre-dawn obscurity as a way to pray the season, finding my fascination with the darkness only deepening. I learned from Judy Cannato's writings<sup>1</sup> that about 96 percent of the universe is either dark matter or dark energy, invisible because it is not able to interact with light. Yet the gravitational pull of dark matter holds the galaxies in place and keeps them from flying apart, while dark energy, a sort of antigravity, makes the universe expand in all directions. The forces invisible to us in the darkness literally hold the universe together. Wow!

The awareness of the mystery and power guiding a basically dark universe leads me to affirm over and over again LCWR's pursuit of the contemplative path as a way into our emerging future. If the universe offers



not yet clear. LCWR's call to a contemplative way forward resonates deeply in me.

We lead in dark times. The well-lit paths of the past are falling away all too quickly. Many of the women who have been pillars of strength and leadership, our companions and guides, have died or face increasing diminishment. We find ourselves maneuvering the minefields of a polarized world and church, not always certain what it means to be faithful in that context. Our congregational demographics call us to carve out new paths, to plan now for a future that we will not see. When the way forward is not clear, all the administrative ability, strategizing, and organizational skill to get there are simply inadequate. But in the darkness, God's way unfolds.

New information about our universe tells us that powerful, unseen forces guide the direction of an unfolding cosmos. Our faith tells us that God's Spirit is no less powerfully at work in us than in Mary, even as she asks, "How can this be?" The poet Rilke gives voice to our prayer:

You, darkness, of whom I am born—

I love you more than the flame  
that limits the world  
to the circle it illumines  
and excludes all the rest.

But the dark embraces everything:  
shapes and shadows, creatures and me,  
people, nations—just as they are.

It lets me imagine  
a great presence stirring beside me.

I believe in the night.

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*I feel an increasing urgency to pray  
from the dark and silent spaces within,  
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God's Spirit and of being carried by it in directions  
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us any clues about other levels of reality, the implications are awesome! In the uncertainty of these times, are we not being drawn into the future by divine forces invisible to us? As with a dark universe, could it be that 96 percent of the energy of God's luring us in future directions might be unable to be perceived by our rational minds? We'll never know, of course. But I feel an increasing urgency to pray from the dark and silent spaces within, in the hope of tuning in to the movement of God's Spirit and of being carried by it in directions

<sup>1</sup>The Universe Story and Spiritual Direction," from *Presence, An International Journal of Spiritual Direction*, Vol. 14, No. 2, June, 2008

# The New Leader Workshop

Presented by the  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

March 15 - 18, 2012  
University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois

Space is limited  
Registration forms are due by **January 6, 2012**  
Forms are available at  
<http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/NLWreg12.pdf>

The program features an outstanding faculty and presentations  
that are tailored to the particular challenges of  
religious life leadership today

Nancy Schreck, OSF  
Dimensions of Spiritual Leadership

Simone Campbell, SSS and Lynn Jarrell, OSU  
Leaders and Canon and Civil Law

Lynn M. Levo, CSJ  
Survival Guide for Leading in a Time of Change and Transition  
Working Together in Teams

Judy Carey, RSM  
Leadership and Collaboration

Janice Bader, CPPS  
NRRO Resources for Leaders



## LCWR and Women Religious in the News

“Archbishop Offers Window Into the Visitation of Women Religious”

Interview with Archbishop Joseph Tobin, CSSR

December 8, 2011

*National Catholic Register*

[www.ncregister.com/daily-news/archbishop-offers-window-into-the-visitation-of-women-religious/](http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/archbishop-offers-window-into-the-visitation-of-women-religious/)

“‘Women & Spirit’ now available in DVD form”

By Tom Fox

*National Catholic Reporter*

December 8, 2011

[ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/women-spirit-now-available-dvd-form](http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/women-spirit-now-available-dvd-form)

“The battle: Catholics vs. Catholics

December 3, 2012

*CBS Sunday Morning Show*

[www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7390530n&tag=contentMain;contentBody](http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7390530n&tag=contentMain;contentBody)

## LCWR Sends Letters to President Obama

At the invitation of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, the president of LCWR, Pat Farrell, OSF sent a letter of concern to President Obama about current immigration policy and practice. In it she called on the administration to engage in the difficult task of comprehensive immigration reform and encouraged the president to make the issue a cornerstone of his upcoming re-election campaign.

LCWR and NETWORK sent a joint letter to President Obama urging him to direct Health and Human Services to broaden the definition of “religious employer” contained in proposed implementing regulations for the Affordable Health Care Act (AHCA).

The proposed regulations would require all employer health plans to include coverage for contraceptives and sterilization. While the proposed regulations include an exception for religious employers, the definition of “religious employer” is so narrowly written that it would exclude most of the organizations and institutions sponsored by LCWR members’ congregations.

## Immigration: Sisters Engage Citizens on Critical Concern

Ten communities of women religious of the Upper Mississippi River Valley have joined together to call upon President Obama and Congress to work together to enact comprehensive immigration reform. The sisters who have issued a statement “Immigrant Welcoming Communities,” have placed billboards and posters in the Quad Cities, Des Moines, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Sioux City, and Clinton, Iowa, in advance of the Iowa caucuses and have held prayer services across the state.

Billboards with the message: “I was a stranger an immigrant and you welcomed me” were posted on December 12 and will remain through early January.

The communities declared themselves “Immigrant Welcoming Communities” and invited other communities and people of faith to join them in becoming welcoming communities through prayer, reflection, education, and action. Their welcoming communities’ stance is a direct response to the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Secure Communities program.

Additional information is available on the group’s Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/catholicsisters](http://www.facebook.com/catholicsisters)) and in an article published by the *National Catholic Reporter*, “Iowa Billboards Show sisters’ Support of Immigration Reform” ([ncronline.org/news/immigration-and-church/iowa-billboards-show-sisters-support-immigration-reform](http://ncronline.org/news/immigration-and-church/iowa-billboards-show-sisters-support-immigration-reform)) which details efforts of the 10 communities.

## LCWR Think Tank: Not too Late to Register

Registration has been extended to February 1 for the annual LCWR Think Tank scheduled for March 5-8 at the Bethany Center in Lutz, Florida. Jan Novotka and Simone Campbell, SSS will facilitate the group’s consideration of “Consciousness and Campaigns: Spirituality and Politics beyond Dualism.” LCWR members and their justice and peace coordinators are most welcome. Space is limited.

## Human Trafficking Awareness Day: January 11, 2012

In 2007 the US Senate designated January 11 as a National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness in an effort to raise consciousness about this global, national, and local issue. Plans are underway for a number of activities and events around the country.

“What I Have Been Through is Not Who I Am,” ([ecpatusa.org/what-we-do/helping-children-in-america/witness-video-project/](http://ecpatusa.org/what-we-do/helping-children-in-america/witness-video-project/)) a documentary exploring “the life” through the eyes of one of child prostitution’s many victims will be released January 11, 2012. The film brings together a diverse set of experts from juvenile justice, law enforcement, advocates, and service providers to speak about the traumatic effects of commercial sexual exploitation of children. ECPAT ([ecpatusa.org/](http://ecpatusa.org/)) will be releasing the documentary online as well as on DVD.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act ([www.ijm.org/justice-campaigns/tvpra](http://www.ijm.org/justice-campaigns/tvpra)) of 2011 would authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2012 through 2015 and enhance measures to combat trafficking in persons. Both the Senate bill S. 1301 and House bill H.R. 2830 have been reported out of committee. Unfortunately, neither has been scheduled for debate in either chamber. LCWR asks its members to encourage congressional leaders to bring both bills to the floor for action.

The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility ([www.iccr.org/news/press\\_releases/2011/pr\\_wyndhamcode120811.php](http://www.iccr.org/news/press_releases/2011/pr_wyndhamcode120811.php)) and ECPAT USA ([ecpatusa.org/](http://ecpatusa.org/)) announced that Wyndham Worldwide has become the latest major hospitality company to take a stand against the commercial sexual exploitation of children by signing the Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct ([www.thecode.org/](http://www.thecode.org/)). As a subscriber to the code, Wyndham will implement policies that condemn child trafficking and provide training to help their employees and hotel franchisees identify and report trafficking activities. Wyndham has also pledged to distribute information about the issue and the code to its business partners, franchisees, and customers through its website and meetings, and by annually reporting on its progress.



## LCWR Welcomes New Executive Assistant

Chris Costello joined the LCWR national office staff in December as the executive assistant. A resident of Silver Spring, Maryland, Chris had been working at Washington Theological Union immediately prior to coming to LCWR.



## Upcoming Showing

**The California Museum of History, Women & the Arts**  
Sacramento, California  
January 24 - June 3, 2012



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## Upcoming LCWR Dates

### LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Redemptorist Renewal Center  
Tucson, Arizona*

January 15 — 20, 2012

### Systemic Change Think Tank

*Bethany Center  
Lutz, Florida*

March 5 — 8, 2012

### LCWR New Leader Workshop

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

March 15 — 18, 2012

### LCWR Assembly

*St. Louis, Missouri*  
August 7 — 11, 2012

### LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Holy Spirit Retreat Center  
Encino, California*

January 20 — 25, 2013

### LCWR New Leader Workshop

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

March 21 — 24, 2013

### LCWR Assembly

*Orlando, Florida*  
August 13 — 17, 2013

### LCWR Assembly

*Nashville, Tennessee*  
August 12 — 16, 2014

## Upcoming National Solidarity Conference on Haiti

Since the 2008 earthquake in Haiti the LCWR leadership has been in dialogue with a variety of sources, continuing to explore how to best be in solidarity with the people of Haiti. During the August assembly LCWR held a luncheon with congregational leaders with sisters in Haiti, or with interest in sending sisters. Because of the great interest in coordinating solidarity efforts, LCWR includes here an announcement of a national solidarity conference on Haiti co-sponsored by the USCCB and CRS.

Join with Catholic parishes and others for a more impactful partnership with Haiti.

- Listen to Haitian perspectives on what works
- See what is being done for Church reconstruction
- Learn to improve projects
- Network and coordinate with others
- Advocate for U.S. Policies that promote development



**JUNE 1-3, 2012**

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

REGISTRATION  
Coming Soon!

#### ACCOMMODATIONS

Special conference rate at Phoenix Park Hotel  
[phoenixparkhotel.com](http://phoenixparkhotel.com)

Opus Hall Suites at The Catholic University  
<http://conferences.cua.edu/plan/suiteworking.cfm>

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

[onetable.crs.org](http://onetable.crs.org)  
[Haitipartnership@crs.org](mailto:Haitipartnership@crs.org) or 410.951.7245

## Climate Change: What Really Happened in Durban

The United Nations Climate Change Conference ([unfccc.int/2860.php](http://unfccc.int/2860.php)) offered both hope for future international efforts to combat climate change and laid bare the challenges that remain ahead. The pact, hammered out over two-weeks in Durban, South Africa, exceeded the expectations of many and could lead to a major climate treaty by the end of the decade.

The “Durban Platform” extends commitments made under the Kyoto Protocol (never ratified by the United States), creates the Green Climate Fund to offset climate impacts on the poorest nations, lays the ground work for a future legally binding agreement on cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, and begins the implementation of the agreements reached last year in Cancun. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol, this pact includes all of the world’s biggest polluters.

The UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) ([www.unep.org/](http://www.unep.org/)) welcomed the agreement. “The outcomes of Durban provide a welcome boost for global climate action. They reflect the growing, and in some quarters unexpected, determination of countries to act collectively,” said UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner. However, UNEP also said the conference still left the world with serious and urgent challenges if a global temperature rise is to be kept under two degrees Celsius in the 21st century. “The big question many will ask is how this will translate into actual emission reductions and by when?” said Mr. Steiner.

## Is Your Leadership Term About to End?

If your leadership term is ending this month, you must submit a change of leadership form so that the LCWR membership may be properly transferred to the new leaders. This will ensure that there will be no gap in communications from the national office. Please use the change of leadership form found in the LCWR Members Information section (password-protected) of the website at [www.lcwr.org/members/index.html](http://www.lcwr.org/members/index.html).



## Moving Forward in Hope: Keys to the Future

June 4-6, 2012

San Antonio, Texas

Application Deadline: January 15, 2012

The National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) is sponsoring a three-day training workshop, *Moving Forward in Hope: Keys to the Future*, at the Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio, Texas, from June 4-6, 2012. Facilitated by Lynn Levo, CSJ, this workshop is designed to provide religious institutes with a “conversational tool” to allow members to engage in a deeper exchange about the results of the NRVC/CARA Study on Recent Vocations to Religious Life and the implications for apostolic religious life, specifically around the areas of community, visibility, communal prayer, and the celebration of Eucharist as they are experienced in individual congregations.

The program materials, housing, and meals will be funded by the GHR Foundation; therefore, individuals will only be responsible for their travel to and from San Antonio. NRVC welcomes applications ([nrvc.net/member/download?id=390](http://nrvc.net/member/download?id=390)). Multiple applicants from the same institute are encouraged to apply. Participation, however, will be limited. The application deadline is January 15, 2012. All applicants will be notified of a final decision by February 1, 2012. More information can be found at the NRVC website [www.nrvc.net](http://www.nrvc.net) under the workshops tab.