

November 2010

Cokie Roberts to Narrate New LCWR Documentary

Cokie Roberts, National Public Radio senior news analyst and ABC News political commentator, will donate her services as the narrator of the *Women & Spirit* documentary being produced by LCWR.



Cokie Roberts at the 2009 LCWR assembly

Featuring interviews with historians, journalists, and women religious, the one-hour documentary will bring to life the personal and communal stories of Catholic sisters and their contributions to the American landscape. The goal is to complete the documentary in 2011 and to seek broadcast on PBS, entry to documentary festivals, and to offer online sales. Filming and interviews have been taking place since the summer and will continue over the next few months.

The documentary will be available on a DVD which will include special features such as a digital catalog featuring the artifacts, photographs, and label copy from the exhibit; a video walkthrough of the exhibit; several of the videos featured in the exhibit; and interviews and additional behind the scenes footage.

LCWR Participates in National Vocation Symposium

LCWR president Mary Hughes, OP represented the conference at a recent vocation symposium. With the assistance of a generous grant from the GHR Foundation, the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) sponsored the symposium from September 16-18 at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Titled the "Moving Forward in Hope Project," the event was organized in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the NRVC/CARA Study on Recent Vocations to Religious Life. The purpose of this gathering was to review the research results and to put together a concrete plan of action that would address the vocation question from the various disciplines represented.

The invited participants represented the various and diverse constituencies in the church. They included vocation directors, formators, major superiors, younger religious, USCCB personnel, Catholic educators, youth, young adult, and campus ministers, media and communications experts, and church researchers and statisticians. Women religious from both leadership conferences were present, including former LCWR presidents, Doris Gottemoeller, RSM, and Donna Markham, OP. Also in attendance, representing the

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Participants in the NRVC vocation symposium held in Chicago

From the LCWR Presidency
The Call to Creative Fidelity

by Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA — LCWR Past President

With the LCWR national board’s statement noting our “new, deep connection with one another and a sense of real communion as we live our way into new expressions of creative fidelity,” (www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/new.htm) I was drawn again to this call found in *Vita Consecrata* 37.

The words “creative fidelity” are used three times in three significant Vatican documents. In *Vita Consecrata* 37 is an invitation to respond to the ever-creating God of time and the universe. It reads:

Institutes of consecrated life are thus invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity and holiness of their founders and foundresses in response to the signs of the times emerging in today’s world. This invitation is first of

*Creative fidelity is a commitment
of the spiritual journey,
the goal being to uphold our accountability in ways
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all a call to perseverance on the path of holiness in the midst of the material and spiritual difficulties of daily life. But it is also a call to pursue competence in personal work and to develop a dynamic fidelity to their mission, adapting forms, if need be, to new situations and different needs, in complete openness to God’s inspiration and to the Church’s discernment.

Two years later, another document entitled the *Instruction on Inter-Institute Collaboration for Formation* issued by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) gave a more specific definition of creative fidelity signifying a *harmonious blending in the life and mission of the People of God. . . as well as taking care that religious not become part of the life of the Church in a vague and ambiguous way.* Emphasis



is given in the text to the Holy Spirit’s experience which is to be harmonized in the *Body of Christ continually in the process of growth.*

A second document from CICLSAL entitled *Starting Afresh from Christ* (15, 20), written to religious in 2002 took its points of departure from *Vita Consecrata*. Clear emphasis was given to “constant openness” to the Spirit’s action in responding to their times.

. . . consecrated life itself, of its nature, calls for the constant openness of those who are called to it. . . open to be taught by any fragment of truth and beauty found around them. . . formation must be attentive to the need to plant in the hearts of young consecrated persons those human, spiritual and charismatic values necessary to make them suitable to carry out a creative fidelity . . . an openness and docility to the Spirit’s action, which is always new and creative is required.

Starting Afresh from Christ echoed a pressing invitation of the pope at the beginning of the third millennium. The intention was to enliven new hope and awaken a desire for a more evangelical life that would further break open the horizons for dialogue and mission.

Creative fidelity is not a concept new to Pope John Paul II or to CICLSAL. Pope Athanasius of Alexandria, a

The key is to keep a watchful eye on what really matters – not that which requires blind allegiances or public approvals ...

Coptic Orthodox pope of the fourth century, in a recently discovered manuscript, likewise provides us with a breath of freshness. Athanasius is a saint who bluntly told the community’s most respected members that they crossed land and sea to gain one single convert only to make this convert twice as much a child of Hell

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LCWR Participates in National Vocation Symposium

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Maryann Seton Lopiccoco, SC and Mary Hughes, OP
at the vocation symposium

Congregation for Religious in Rome, was Hank Lemoncelli, OMI.

The first day was dedicated to placing the vocation question within the context of the study's findings, religious life as it is lived today in this country, and the faith and spirituality of young adult Catholics. Mary Gautier, PhD, from CARA presented the research. Sean Sammon, FMS, gave an address on the contemporary state of religious life in this country which was followed by responses from Doris Gottemoeller, RSM, and Shaun Vergauwen, FSE, mother general of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist and CMSWR board member. In the evening, Robin Ryan, CP, former director of Catholics on Call, treated the topic of young adult Catholics which was followed by a panel of younger religious.

The second day was a work day where, through a facilitated process guided by Joan Scanlon, OP, all participants gathered in seven interest groups: church leadership, religious life, communications and media, youth and young adults, parents and family, ethnic and cultural diversity, and Catholic education. The task of each group was to develop a plan from their given expertise to promote religious life. This was to be done through the lens of the study's findings of today's candidates, the characteristics of the communities who receive them, and the best practices of vocation promotion.

The final results of the strategic plan will be submitted to the foundation board in December, at which time

an executive summary will be posted on the NRVC website. Talks from the symposium are published in *Origins* has published the symposium presentations and NRVC will post them on its website as well.

As one participant wrote:

I met other religious with what I perceived to be a differing and even offsetting ecclesiology and approach to religious life from mine. I saw them as "other" and expected them to offer little that would be helpful or instructive. Instead, through speaking and listening, praying and altering my own narrow perspective, I found in that encounter other consecrated persons also committed to lives of ministry, prayer, and community in albeit very different lifestyles. In the course of the days at CTU, I realized that consecrated religious life is a large and amazing tent into which God invites a spiritual menagerie of charisms, communities, and characters. Who am I—who are any of us—to set ourselves up as ringmasters or ticket-takers at the door of that mysterious tent?

The Call to Creative Fidelity

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as they were themselves (Matt 23:15). He argues that creative fidelity must be centered on the faith shared by the Church from its origins. Any other argument about innovation is madness, he declares.

Gabriel Marcel understood creative fidelity as the solution for the problem of time and change in human relationships. In negotiating interpersonal relationships, he enumerates seven moral and intellectual qualities that are prerequisite for relational effectiveness: trust, respect, attentiveness, meditation on the other in silence, patience, suffering, and creative fidelity.

Creative fidelity is a commitment of the spiritual journey, the goal being to uphold our accountability in ways that really matter and in ways that honor the unpredictability of life. Life's mysteries tap directly into our intuitions and linger forever. Relationships within our church may bring forth a host of problems. They also serve as a never-ending source of mystery and spiritual awakening. The key is to keep a watchful eye on what really matters – not that which requires blind allegiances or public approvals, but the ones that flow from a wise and compassionate heart, the heart of the Christ who calls us daily into loving relationships and who is always on the way with us to the full creativity of Trinitarian life.

LCWR Collaborates in the Systematic Rebuilding of Haiti

LCWR president-elect Pat Farrell, OSF represented LCWR at a meeting in Miami in September 2010 aimed at further developing plans for systematic rebuilding and recovery efforts in Haiti. The meeting brought together key ecclesial collaborators --including bishops from Haiti and other Caribbean countries, Haitian religious, and leaders of the US Conference of Major Superiors of Men -- in order to build a common approach to financing and collaboration in the rebuilding work of the church and to strengthen partner relationships and solidarity, commitment, and collaboration in responding to the needs of the church in Haiti.

The following documents may be found on the LCWR website (www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/Haiti/haiti.htm):

- Commentary on the Meeting by Pat Farrell, OSF
- Message of the Haitian Episcopal Conference
- Guidelines for Solidarity and Twinning Relationships



Participants in the meeting on Haiti held in Miami

LCWR to Survey Members on Interest in Programs

This year LCWR has experienced a marked decrease in registration for both the Leading from Within Retreat and the Systemic Change Think Tank -- two events which usually interest a significant number of leaders.

In order to assess the reason for this decrease, the LCWR national office will be sending members a survey asking if there is interest in the programs currently being offered and any intention of participating in them in the future. This information will be essential for planning programs that meet the needs of the membership as the conference moves forward.

If there is not interest in the Leading from Within Retreat, it is possible that this opportunity will not be offered again. Any leaders who are interested in experiencing this retreat, but were waiting to do so at a later time, may want to consider making the retreat in 2011.

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank Franciscan Retreat Center Scottsdale, Arizona March 7 — 10, 2011 'Awakening the Dreamer'

The planning team will integrate resonating themes of specific interest for women religious throughout the flow of the basic Awakening the Dreamer Symposium framework. The design of the symposium provides natural points where themes may be expanded. Such topics may include:

- Identifying roles of women religious in the emerging global community (Sacred Earth Community)
- Addressing the pain of environmental despair (personally as well as within community and society)
- Recognizing and affirming congregational charisms as life-evoking energy and directive force in co-creating the future
- Judy Cannato's work, *Field of Compassion*

In addition, there will be video segments not included in the regular symposium, as well as additional reflection/visioning/sharing exercises. More information is available at www.lcwr.org/lcwr/socialjustice/tt2011.pdf.

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat Now Open to More Than One Member Per Leadership Team



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

January 16 - 21, 2011

San Pedro Spiritual Retreat Center
Winter Park, Florida

Directors:

María Elena Martínez, OSF and Regina Bechtle, SC

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.

Registration form is available at
www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/retreat2011.pdf

University of San Francisco to Award LCWR an Honorary Doctorate

Stephen A. Privett, SJ, president of the University of San Francisco, invited LCWR president Mary Hughes, OP to accept the degree of doctor of humane letters on behalf of LCWR and to deliver the commencement address to the graduating students from the College of Arts and Sciences. The ceremonies will take place on December 19 at the university.

In his letter, the president states. "The university would like to honor the membership of LCWR for the incalculable contributions women religious have made to the Church in the United States. Those contributions are admirably told in the exhibit *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, which I viewed at the Smithsonian and is now touring the country through 2012. It is a story of courage, leadership and heroic fidelity to the Gospel that the university wishes to honor, particularly at this moment in the life of the church in the United States. Our mantra at USF is educating minds and hearts to change the world. A superb mind and a compassionate heart are among the ideal hallmarks of a Jesuit educated individual, a person who recognizes and works for the common good. The women religious who comprise LCWR embody this message and are exceptional examples for our graduates. Often on the frontlines, the work of women religious has been fundamental in shaping the nation's cultural and social landscape. Their work is rooted in love for those who might otherwise have been forgotten."

On November 23 the university is also honoring Carol Keehan, DC, president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, for her work to ensure adequate healthcare access for all. The university has extended an invitation to this event to LCWR as another organization that "has raised a collective voice in calling for justice in health care."

LCWR Past President Delivers Addresses

LCWR past president Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA recently delivered two presentations. On September 30 she spoke at John Carroll University in Cleveland on "Women Religious in the United States Today" and on October 12 addressed the Canon Law Society of America on "A Renaissance of Creative Fidelity in a Time of Retrieval and Reconnoitering."

LCWR Annotated Bibliography

The LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee has added four recommended readings to the annotated bibliography on religious life. The bibliography can be found at www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/bibliography4-10.pdf.

A set of reflection questions accompany the recommended readings. LCWR members are encouraged to utilize the bibliography and share it with their community members as well.

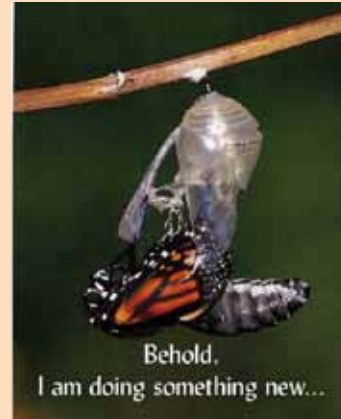
Strategic Operational Plan Committee Surveys Leadership Teams

The Strategic Operational Plan Committee of the LCWR (as established by the LCWR Call) has asked LCWR member leadership teams, as a follow-up to the committee's presentation at the 2010 assembly, to provide additional information. The committee has designed a survey to explore some of the issues in more depth and is making use of Survey Monkey to obtain this information electronically.

The committee continues to carry out its mandate to study:

- The current realities of the conference and its members
- The long-term needs of the conference and its members
- Possible reconfigurations of:
 - the governance structures of LCWR including the presidency, national board, committees, and regions
 - the LCWR national office
- Ways of enhancing utilization of the services offered by other entities serving religious life.

The committee sent an e-mail to major superiors in late September with a copy of the survey which each leadership team is to review and discuss. Following that conversation, each team is to designate (by October 20) one member to respond in the name of the leadership team. The committee will not be able to accept handwritten



The LCWR website now has a section dedicated to the contemplative process: "Behold, I am making something new" which can be found at: www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/new.htm

As regions submit their statement resulting from their communal contemplative experience at their fall meetings, the statements will be posted on the website, along with suggested questions for prayer and reflection. All LCWR members are encouraged to reflect on the statements as LCWR moves forward with the process. Leaders may also wish to encourage their members to pray with the statements and reflection questions.

Members have requested a copy of the contemplative process used at the regional meetings so that they can replicate the process in their own communities. The process is also on the website at www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/process.pdf.

responses to the survey. When the name of the respondent is received by LCWR the committee will send the link to the online survey to that person. The online survey should be completed by November 1 in order to give the committee time to review the material prior to their next meeting in the days just before Thanksgiving.

Members are encouraged to participate actively in this process. Any questions about it should be directed to Pat Cormack, SCSC at pcormack@lcwr.org or 301-588-4955.

LCWR Members Meet to Explore Common Issues

A group of LCWR members has been formed to explore possibilities and strategies around future leadership, alternative “membership,” and property/environmental issues. They plan to meet three times a year — twice via videoconferencing and once in-person prior to the LCWR assembly. The group includes LCWR members who:

- lead congregations that have decided not to reconfigure, merge, or form a union, but want to “re-found” or “revitalize.”
- are looking for other congregational leaders with whom to explore common issues that congregations face and creative responses to them.

Leaders wishing to join the conversation or who want more information may contact Jan Cebula, OSF at 563-242-7611 or president@clintonfranciscans.com.

NCCHCM Reviews US Church and International Healthcare

The contribution of the US church to international healthcare was the major topic discussed at the September 20 meeting of the National Coalition on Catholic Health Care Ministry. Doris Gottemoeller, RSM provided an overview of the mission and services of the major players: Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Medical Mission Board, Catholic Health Association, and major Catholic health systems. The distinctive contributions of each group were noted, as well as the lack of coordination. CHA has hired a staff person to work with CRS and CMMB to assist their work as well as to explore how efforts of health systems might be better coordinated.

Carol Keehan, SC provided an update on the status of healthcare reform and ongoing conversations with the USCCB. Discussion about governance in the ministry of leadership was facilitated by Celeste Trahan, CCVI who described the program provided for members of her community who currently serve on healthcare ministry boards or who may serve in the future.

Global Concerns Committee Prepares for 2011 LCWR Assembly

A significant portion of the LCWR Global Concerns Committee meeting, held October 12-14, focused on debriefing the resolution hearing at the August 2010 assembly, discussing accountability for implementation of the resolution, “Strengthen Bonds Among Women Religious Globally,” and development of a resolution for the 2011 assembly. Because the 2010 resolution calls for an extended period of process, LCWR members can anticipate a 2011 resolution designed to continue the efforts of listening to and learning from the experiences of sisters throughout the world.

Jubilee USA Decorates White House Fence with Paper Chains

Following their annual meeting on October 7-8, members of the Jubilee Network Council Meeting, of which LCWR is a member, carried thousands of colorful paper chains around the World Bank and IMF, through the streets of DC to the White House where they placed the chains on the wrought iron fence, chanting “Break the Chains of Debt.” The chains had been made over several months across the country in churches, schools, retirement facilities, and meeting halls as part of the Jubilee USA Break the Chains of Debt Campaign. Pictures can be found on the Jubilee website, www.jubileeusa.org.



Letter to G20 leaders expressing concern about the current growth economic model for overdeveloped countries.

Senior Counselor Addresses Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking

During the October 6 meeting of the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking, Alice Hill, senior counselor to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, provided a presentation on the department's Blue Education Program (blue being the color of the top tier countries in addressing trafficking). The campaign revolves around prevention, protection, and prosecution, the last being the most challenging. Although there has been a 40% increase in prosecutions globally, the numbers are small, with only 4,166 prosecutions of 49,105 traffickers identified. Partnerships are essential to the campaign and include government, NGOs, the general public, and the private sector. A tool kit can be found on www.dhs.gov/humantrafficking. The video "Bird Cage" is recommended for presentations on human trafficking.

MRS (Migration and Refugee Services) of the USCCB offered reflections on trafficking victims services presented at the 10-year anniversary of the TVPA (Trafficking Victims Protection Act), while coalition members provided updates on their activities. The work is impressive and public awareness is growing; however, the increase in both labor and sex trafficking, especially following major disasters as in Haiti and Pakistan, is disheartening.

Efforts are underway to have St. Josephine Bakhita, a Canossian Sister of Charity and the first African woman to be canonized, named Patron Saint of Human Trafficking. A prayer seeking her intercession will be circulated for a special day of prayer for trafficking victims on February 8, 2011, St. Bakhita's feastday.

LCWR Membership Renewals Due Before November 1

LCWR member and associate status renewal is underway. At the end of September, renewal information was sent about how to access the renewal forms and how to complete them.

Anyone who had not yet submitted membership renewal materials is asked to do so before **November 1**. Once the renewal forms and checks are processed at LCWR, the office will send a confirmation so that members will have a record of this transaction.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*San Pedro Spiritual Retreat Center
Winter Park, Florida*

January 16 — 21, 2011

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank

*Franciscan Retreat Center
Scottsdale, Arizona*

March 7 — 10, 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

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona*

January 15 — 20, 2012

LCWR Assembly

St. Louis, Missouri

August 7 — 11, 2012

LCWR Assembly

Orlando, Florida

August 13 — 17, 2013

LCWR Works for Senate Approval of New START Treaty

As a national organization, LCWR has joined a number of organizations, both interfaith and secular, including former military and state department officials, in urging senators to ratify the New START Treaty. Many LCWR members have also contacted their senators urging ratification. An initial victory was achieved when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, by bi-partisan vote, gave approval in committee. In the full Senate, 67 votes are needed. Recently, the White House asked the Friends Committee on National Legislation, a leader in the effort, to submit a list of organizations who urge ratification. LCWR, CMSM, and the USCCB are among those listed.

WOMEN & spirit

CATHOLIC SISTERS IN AMERICA

Women & Spirit Opens at Ellis Island Immigration Museum



Entrance to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum



Entrance to the Women & Spirit exhibit



The crew working on the Women & Spirit documentary filmed the ferry ride and opening ceremonies on September 22

Upcoming Showings

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

Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium
Dubuque, Iowa -- February 18 - May 22, 2011

Mount St. Mary's College
Los Angeles, California - June 19 - August 14, 2011

Center for History
South Bend, Indiana -- September 2 - December 31, 2011

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



Exhibit committee chair Helen Garvey, BVM with NY Archbishop Timothy Dolan who addressed the guests at the exhibit opening

WOMEN & spirit

CATHOLIC SISTERS IN AMERICA



Many women religious from the area have been visiting the exhibit



Helen Garvey, BVM gives an interview during the opening reception to Telecare, the Catholic television station operating out of the Diocese of Rockville Centre



Helen Garvey, BVM at the SIRIUS radio studio in Manhattan where she participated in a live program on the exhibit

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 office can properly transfer LCWR membership to new leaders. 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.

Update

Update is an official publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious published monthly and distributed to members nationally.

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