

February 2011

University of San Francisco Honors US Catholic Women Religious

The University of San Francisco invited LCWR president Mary Hughes, OP to accept the degree doctor of humane letters on behalf of US women religious, and to deliver the commencement address to the graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences on December 19 at the university.

The citation read at the commencement ceremonies said in part, "USF is proud to illuminate the hearts set into blaze of Catholic women religious and to celebrate and honor their contributions to

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Mary Hughes, OP stands for the reading of the citation to US women religious at the commencement exercises of the University of San Francisco

American Catholic Historical Association Confers Award on LCWR

The American Catholic Historical Association honored the Leadership Conference of Women Religious with its Service to Catholic Studies Award, given for the *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* traveling exhibit.

LCWR president Mary Hughes, OP and exhibit coordinator Helen Maher Garvey, BVM traveled to Boston to attend a January 8 meeting of the association where they received the award. The citation reads in part:

"The American Catholic Historical Association's Award for Service to Catholic Studies acknowledges the exceptional contributions of those who 'promote study and research of the history of Catholicism broadly conceived' apart from teaching and publication.... The

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Mary Hughes, OP and Helen Maher Garvey, BVM accept ACHA award in Boston

From the LCWR Presidency

A Transforming Journey

by Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA — LCWR Past President

The feast of the Incarnation is quickly followed by a plentitude of liturgical celebrations during Ordinary Time. God's overflowing love became human with us in the person of Christ. Christ took on every aspect of our ordinary lives beginning with his birth in a humble environment, his journey as an immigrant, his baptism calling him into a ministry of beatitude, and the fulfillment of his divine mission on the cross. The life of Jesus calls us likewise into that same transforming journey.



compose realities in which we are called to be faithful.

These concepts move us to desire and engage in dialogue. Contemplation or discernment about faithfulness to the Gospel and to the formation of conscience move us to options and a plan of action in responding to situations of injustice. An evaluative measure of the process will provide evidence of how it has strengthened us in the formative elements of reverencing the other, fidelity to the Gospel, and the common good.

In my last column I reflected that "creative fidelity" is our commitment to the journey and that our accountability will be witnessed in ways that honor the unpredictability of life's mysteries. We are constantly aware that relationships within our church and world serve as a never-ending awakening to the transformation to which the Gospel calls us. Biblical history gives us countless examples of the urgency of joining God in the ongoing work of acknowledging the emergence of the Kingdom as it exists today. It encourages its further coming which will hold the powers and principalities of our contemporary world to God's vision of peace and justice.

My own Franciscan tradition offers insights for understanding creative fidelity. Duns Scotus speaks of justice and prudence as a way to mediate relationships. He helps us understand the relationship between creativity and fidelity. The virtue of prudence, as moral excellence, is a type of moral artistic beauty. It functions in an artistic manner by identifying what elements ought to be present, by judging actions according to a whole of beauty or completeness, and then adjusting human response in light of specific conditions present in a given reality. Fidelity is insufficient. It has to be coupled with creativity for the reign of God to be realized.

The notion of prudence appears four times in Clare of Assisi's writing. In her Second Letter to Agnes she speaks of traveling the path of prudent happiness, inferring the necessity of learning how to compose and re-

God will not be silent as world and ecclesial tensions are negotiated. Rather than a static or servile obedience, creative fidelity can evidence itself by resisting caricatures and demonizing violence, by unyielding integrity and by wrestling with our own transformation. In this way the diversity of a religious institute's gifts to the

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mission will assume its proper role; it will be a public communal testimony to the responsibilities of all Christians to be the Word among complex social situations which cry for the beatitude life of God's reign.

Creating this beatitude life is inscribed on the heart of fidelity to be in communion with the church and to follow Christ who is always on the way with us. God's return to the world is an ongoing process: it reflects a nonviolent advent of peace and hope whenever injustice does not have its way.

¹ Richard R. Gaillardetz. Contemporary Religious Life's Creative Fidelity to the Vision of Vatican II. Address to LCWR General Assembly, August 12, 2010. Manuscript.

University of San Francisco Honors US Catholic Women Religious

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the country and the Church over centuries..."

Noting many of the historic and contemporary works of Catholic sisters, as well as some of the recent honors bestowed upon LCWR and US women religious, the award states, "The University of San Francisco joins in this chorus of voices to honor the women religious who serve on the frontlines of our nation and the Church and whose contributions and investments in American society are incalculable and who have remained uncompromising in their commitment to serve those most vulnerable with a love and concern for all whom God had created."



Mary Hughes, OP (third from left) with University of San Francisco officials at the commencement exercises

Members Asked to Complete Outstanding Leadership Award Survey

Each year at its assembly, LCWR presents the Outstanding Leadership Award. The conference sought nominations for this award during the fall regional meetings and is now soliciting further input from LCWR members on who should be the recipient for 2011. The feedback will be forwarded to the LCWR executive committee which will make the final decision based on the input received. The deadline for submitting advice via Survey Monkey is **February 11**.

There are two steps to the process:

1. Members are asked to go to: www.lcwr.org/members/OLA/ola.htm. This link leads to the names of the 20 nominees surfaced by the LCWR regions and the background material about them that was also provided by the regions.
2. After reviewing the material, members are invited to participate in an online survey at Survey Monkey to indicate the person they would recommend as recipient of the 2011 Outstanding Leadership Award. A link to the Survey Monkey survey will be found on the LCWR website.

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ACHA is proud to confer this first Service to Catholic Studies Award on the Leadership Conference of Women Religious for their superb traveling exhibit.

"This marvelous mélange of artifacts, personal testimonies, archival materials, and recorded interviews with women religious not only accentuate the pivotal role of these congregations in shaping the Catholic church in the United States, but even more the importance of religious sisters in shaping our nation's history. Relying on the skills of respected ACHA members such as Sister Karen Kennelly, CSJ and Dr. Carol Coburn, the elements of the display reflect the best of the abundant research and scholarship that has been done on women religious in the past generation. The display not only informs and entertains, it also challenges its viewers to look again at the role and place of these religious communities. It urges them to transcend stereotypes of sisters and to develop a better understanding of the practical effect of the vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience taken by the sisters.

"We honor not only this superb exhibit, but also the many women religious who have enriched the American Catholic Historical Association by their scholarship, collegiality, and love for historical truth. Through them we express our support and best wishes to all women religious in America."

Orders Being Accepted for 2011 LCWR Reflection Book



LCWR presents a new book, *Behold, I am Doing Something New*, a resource for further reflection on living in a posture of openness to what the future may be asking and responding to that call with creativity and imagination.

Using the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, as well as insights from some of the great thinkers of our day, 53 LCWR members offer a daily reflection from May 31 (Feast of the Visitation) through July 22 (Feast of Mary Magdalen). The writers offer insights and wisdom on living responsively to the changing realities of the world.

All LCWR members, associates, and subscribers will receive a copy of the book at no charge. However, many congregations provide their members, associates, co-workers, and those who serve on their boards copies of the LCWR reflection books, finding them a valuable resource for personal and communal reflection and prayer.

LCWR will print only the amount of copies that are pre-ordered. Special rates are available for ordering in bulk. Orders must be received with payment by **February 24**. Order form: www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/2011reflectionorder.pdf

Spiritual Directors International Expresses Gratitude to Women Religious

LCWR president Mary Hughes, OP recently received a letter from the coordinating council of Spiritual Directors International thanking women religious for their significant role in the practice of spiritual direction.

The letter, written by the council chair Terrence J. Moran, CSSR, states, "We especially want to express our support and solidarity during this time of the Apostolic Visitation of communities of apostolic religious women in the United States as well as the doctrinal assessment of the LCWR."

He continues, "A Jewish woman who was a former member of the Coordinating Council once said, 'I am amazed and very grateful at how sisters have been a vessel for holding the gift of spiritual direction for the world.' At a time when the exhibit *Women & Spirit* has focused attention on the extraordinary impact the educational and social ministries of women religious have had, we would like to highlight the less easily measurable but equally significant contribution of women religious to companionship others in the ways of the Spirit. As spiritual directors, trainers, and supervisors of fledgling spiritual directors, as researchers and writers in the discipline, as poets and artists of the Spirit — the contribution of women religious has been outstanding in diversity and depth...."

He added, "In recent years Spiritual Directors International has reflected frequently on how the practice of spiritual direction and contemplative practice can contribute to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. We note with gratitude the insistence of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious that spiritual practice must express itself in working toward the flourishing of life for Earth and all its inhabitants."

LCWR and Women Religious in the News

“The Apostolic Visitation of Women Religious, 780 Days Later”

Column by Tom Fox
National Catholic Reporter
 January 14, 2011
nconline.org/news/apostolic-visitation-women-religious-780-days-later

“How is it Going? - An update on challenges to the apostolic visitation of sisters”

Article by Ann Carey
The Catholic World Report
 January 17, 2011
catholicworldreport.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=233:how-is-it-going&catid=54:catholic-world-report-2011&Itemid=72

Work on Behalf of Immigrants Continues in Negative Climate

Although the DREAM Act was defeated in the lame-duck Congress, and efforts will be even more challenging in the 112th Congress, Justice for Immigrants and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition will continue to promote immigration reform. Some immigration groups are focusing on voter registration of “new Americans” for 2012. Given the new chairs of the House Judiciary Committee and Homeland Security, a push for more worksite raids is anticipated, and perhaps picking up the “dreamers” who came out of the shadows on behalf of the DREAM Act. Initial work will be to mitigate anticipated negative legislation. (LCWR’s most recent Resolutions to Action, “Immigration Enforcement and Family Separation,” can be found at www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/resolutionstoaction/RTA1-11.pdf.)

Members of JFI will begin Capitol Hill lobby visits to Catholic freshmen lawmakers in the House, 33 or 34 out of 96 freshmen. Work in the states will be important, so local visits will be encouraged during the next recess. JFI will also continue education efforts in parishes and training of diocesan communication directors. For additional updates and to see new icons on the JFI web, visit www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Maryknoll Sisters Celebrate 100 Years and Honor Bill Ford

On January 6, the date of the founding of the Maryknoll Sisters, an event was held at the Rayburn House Office building in DC to celebrate the anniversary, remember the 1980 deaths of the North American churchwomen in El Salvador, and honor Bill Ford, brother of Ita Ford who died last year. It was Bill, a lawyer, who persisted for many years to bring the murderers to justice and to keep alive the memory of the women.

Several US Representatives attended and spoke, including Jim McGovern, Marcy Kaptur and Nita Lowey, as well as former Senator Chris Dodd. Members of the Ford family were present as well as Maryknoll community members and many friends and supporters. Bill Ford’s wife, Mary Ann, spoke with moving eloquence about how the murder of Ita transformed their family. Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director for social mission, represented LCWR at the celebration.



A joint statement on the tragedy in Tucson issued by the presidents of LCWR and CMSM may be found on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org/what'snew/tucson.html.

LCWR also signed onto the following during the past month:

- Resolution for National Migration Week initiated by the Columban Fathers advocacy office and signed by 49 additional interfaith groups
- International Statement on Financial Speculation on Food Commodities
- Faith in Public Life letter to Congress urging greater civility in discourse
- Faith leaders petition in support of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care law of 2010

LCWR Holds Leading from Within Retreat in Winter Park, Florida



Twenty-five LCWR members participated in the seventh annual LCWR Leading from Within Retreat from January 16-21 at San Pedro Retreat Center in Winter Park, Florida.

Led by Regina Bechtle, SC; Maria Elena Martinez, OSF; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM, the retreatants had opportunities to hear input, experience prayer and rituals, and avail themselves of individual and group spiritual direction.

The 2012 retreat will be held at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson, Arizona from January 15 - 20.





Upcoming Showings

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

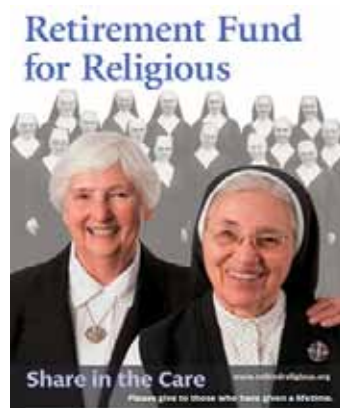
The California Museum of History, Women & the Arts
Sacramento, California
January 24 - June 3, 2012

Housing Options in Dubuque

While the *Women & Spirit* exhibit is on display at the Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa, a number of local congregations are making housing available for women religious and associates. A listing of the options is available on the password-protected area of the LCWR website at: www.lcwr.org/members/dbqhousing.pdf. LCWR members are encouraged to make the listing available to those in their communities.

National Religious Retirement Office Offers Workshops

On February 9-10, 2011 the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) will present a workshop, "Through Grief to New Life" in Baltimore, Maryland. A limited number of spaces still are available. Brochures were sent by email in late 2010. Copies of brochure may be obtained by contacting the NRRO at 202-541-3000 or retirement@usccb.org.



NRRO is now accepting applications for its planning and implementation workshops for 2012. Information, workshop dates, and application forms can be found at: www.usccb.org/nrro/planning.shtml (The workshops for 2011 are filled.)

Resources Available for World Day for Consecrated Life

The website of the US Catholic Bishops Conference offers resources for commemorating World Day for Consecrated Life (February 2, but celebrated in US parishes on February 6).

Available at www.usccb.org/cl/, the resources are: prayers of the faithful, a prayer card, and a suggested parish bulletin announcement.

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 can 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.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

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 New Leader Workshop

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



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