

March 2012



**Mystery Unfolding:
Leading in the Evolutionary Now**
LCWR Assembly
August 7 - 10 (evening)
(Travel home recommended for August 11)
St. Louis, Missouri

The 2012 LCWR assembly will explore concepts of conscious evolution, particularly as it relates to religious life and leadership today. What is the invitation to religious life as humanity pays closer attention to how all life on the home planet is unfolding, emerging, and developing? What is the responsibility of women religious as the world's awareness increases of how the environment, social systems, relationships, and thought processes are shifting and evolving?

To guide the conversation on these topics, LCWR has engaged **Barbara Marx Hubbard**, an author, educator, and social innovator. Barbara will serve as a presenter and reflector throughout the assembly as participants examine key concepts of conscious evolution which

Barbara describes as a meta-discipline. "The purpose of this metadiscipline," she says, "is to learn how to be responsible for the ethical guidance of our evolution. It is a quest to understand the processes of developmental change, to identify inherent values for the purpose of learning how to cooperate with these processes towards chosen and positive futures, both near-term and long-range." (*Conscious Evolution*)



Barbara Marx Hubbard

Three additional presenters will be participate in the assembly on a panel: Thomas C. Fox; Jennifer Gordon, SCL; and Jamie Manson. The panelists will address the assembly on their own perspectives of religious life as it moves into the future: Tom from his experience as publisher of the *National Catholic Reporter*; Jennifer from her vantage point of a religious in her thirties; and Jamie as a young Catholic lay minister, author, and speaker.

The assembly will again be set in a contemplative context. Mary Jo Nelson, OLVN will serve as facilitator and Jan Novotka as the liturgist. More details on the assembly will follow. Registration materials will be sent online to all LCWR members and associates.



Thomas C. Fox



Jennifer Gordon,
SCL



Jamie Manson

From the LCWR Presidency

Walking Together in Service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

by Florence Deacon, OSF — LCWR President-Elect

A few weeks ago I attended the opening of the final stop of the *Women & Spirit* traveling museum exhibit in Sacramento. It was a glorious occasion, a bittersweet celebration, knowing that this excellent exhibit would not continue past June, but that more than a million people have learned about the contributions women religious have made to the growth of the United States.

Over the past three years we have had other bittersweet experiences. While LCWR was in the midst of a doctrinal assessment and religious congregations were involved in a multi-phased apostolic visitation, the *Women & Spirit* exhibit was traversing the United States. When it seemed our fidelity and commitment to the Gospel was being questioned, we received much needed affirmation from our religious colleagues and others.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley, chair of the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations wrote a letter of appreciation, as did the Spiritual Directors International Coordinating Council. Several groups either honored or expressed particular appreciation for

*I invite you to reach out
to our brother clergy*

women religious, such as the US Catholic Historical Society and the National Federation of Priests' Councils who gave awards for service to Catholic studies and for service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ respectively; the University of San Francisco who conferred an honorary doctorate on women religious; and the US House of Representatives and the California Legislature who passed resolutions which highlighted the contributions of women religious.

Just as we received support and encouragement when we felt our commitment to our way of life was being challenged, I invite you to reach out to our brother



clergy who feel demoralized and under siege from a variety of sources. Some have shared with me that they are tired and disillusioned by the "reform of the reforms" diluting the changes of Vatican Council II, by the erosion of parishioners' trust in them, by having to implement policies they question, and by the reduction of the role of the laity which makes their ministry more burdensome at a time they thought it would be shared. While some priests are returning to clerical garb that stress distinctions of rank, others are uncomfortable even wearing a Roman collar in public because they fear negative comments.

I invite you into a conversation about how, just as we received much needed support and affirmation when we were dispirited, we can support our brothers during their difficult time. Perhaps there are ways that LCWR regions might affirm the priests in their area. A few simple ideas come to mind:

- Invite local priests to a social during LCWR regional meetings
- View parts of the *Women & Spirit* DVD with clergy, then discuss what a companion *Men & Spirit* exhibit might highlight
- Express gratitude for clergy during annual meetings of women and men religious with bishops
- Thank leaders of men's communities in the region for the ministry and witness of their members. Send letters of support or affirmation to the diocesan priests' council, deans, etc.

A clergy member identified part of the difficulty for priests is that, unlike sisters, they have no forum where they can respectfully and seriously express their concerns, and noted that sisters have been better able to articulate their positions because they have gifted leaders and scholars to help them. He wondered what priests could learn from us. Perhaps we can consciously use these gifts to support our priest brothers as we walk together in service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Contemporary Religious Life Committee Explores Critical Questions

Meeting at Washington Theological Union from February 6 to 8 the LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee worked through a full agenda that looked at some of the critical matters facing US religious life today.

The work of the committee included:

- Reflection on the insights of the LCWR regions in the fall on the “Behold, I am Doing Something New” process
- Planning the contemplative process for the LCWR spring regional meetings
- Planning the 2012 LCWR assembly
- The LCWR annotated bibliography

Theologian Sandra Schneiders, IHM also joined the committee by conference call for discussion of some of the trends and movements she is observing in religious life.



LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee: Annmarie Sanders, IHM (staff); Susan Schorsten, HM; Marie McCarthy, SP; Patricia Rayburn, OSF; Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP; Rosemary Smith, SC; Catherine Bertrand, SSND (facilitator); Janet Mock, CSJ (executive director)

All Members Invited to Submit Suggestions for Annotated Bibliography

An important resource for LCWR members has been the annotated bibliography compiled by the Contemporary Religious Life Committee. Located on the LCWR website (www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/bibliography.htm), the bibliography recommends resources that may shed light on the mystery and meaning of religious life as it is lived today and into the future. The materials are intended to help women religious reimagine their life in relation to the present realities in the world and church.

The committee invites all LCWR members to stay alert to good resources that may be considered for the bibliography. These resources may be works of non-fiction, fiction, or poetry and may include:

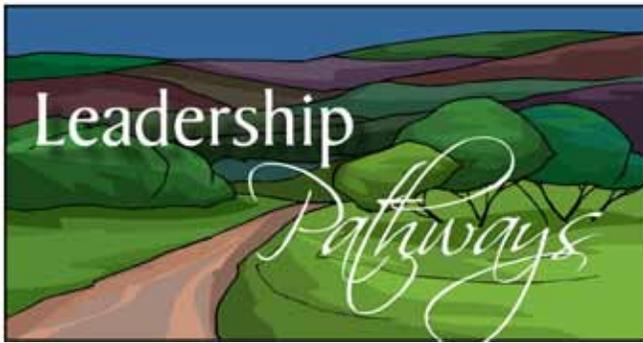
- Books
- Articles
- Videos
- Websites

Anyone who would like to share a possible resource is asked to submit the title, author, and publication information to the national office with one or two sentences about the piece’s importance to religious life at this time. Suggestions should be sent to Annmarie Sanders, IHM at asanders@lcwr.org. Suggestions will be reviewed by the committee.

Additional Copies of Winter 2012 Occasional Papers Available

Due to a printer overrun, the LCWR national office has additional copies of the Winter 2012 issue of *Occasional Papers*. Copies may be purchased for \$4.00 each, using the order form on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/OPordersWinter12.pdf.





LCWR and Women Religious in the News

LCWR Continues Development of Leadership Formation Resources

LCWR convened an ad hoc committee on curriculum to further its work on developing education and formation resources for women religious serving in leadership.

The project has adopted a working title for the project: Leadership Pathways. The vision for the project includes the formation of peer mentoring groups among leaders and the offering of online learning modules. Particular emphasis will be on the theology and spirituality of religious life leadership in these shifting and complex times.

The curriculum review committee met from February 8 to 9 at Washington Theological Union. As work develops on this project, more information will be made available.

Revised contraceptive mandate prompts reaction from Catholic groups

Catholic News Service

Carol Zimmerman

February 16, 2012

www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1200643.htm

Obama Shift on Providing Contraception Splits Catholics

New York Times

Laurie Goodstein

February 15, 2012

www.nytimes.com/2012/02/15/us/obama-shift-on-contraception-splits-catholics.html?_r=2&src=rechp

Catholic Offensive on Capitol Hill

America Magazine

Kevin Clarke

February 14, 2012

www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?blog_id=2&entry_id=4931

Not siding with bishops on conscience exemption is foolish

February 1, 2012

Phyllis Zagano

National Catholic Reporter

ncronline.org/blogs/just-catholic/not-siding-bishops-conscience-exemption-foolish



Meeting to review the Leadership Pathways curriculum were: Annmarie Sanders, IHM (staff); Grace Hartzog, SC; Janet Mock, CSJ (executive director); Carol Zinn, SSJ; Helen Maher Garvey, BVM; Sheila Megley, RSM; and Larry Lenoir (WTU faculty member)

Controversy Continues around Health and Human Services (HHS) Rule

Controversy continues despite attempts by the Obama administration and the faith community to find common ground on difficult questions surrounding the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

People of faith, including LCWR, have been engaged in efforts to persuade the administration to revise the interim rule handed down by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in August. The rule, which was finalized on January 20, would have required employers to cover the full range of women's preventive health services, including contraception, in their health insurance policies. While it offered an exemption to religious employers, it was so narrow that it failed to cover Catholic hospitals, educational institutions, and social service agencies. Objections from the Catholic community intensified in late January and early February.

President Obama addressed those concerns directly in his statement of February 10 (www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/02/10/remarks-president-preventive-care). His proposed accommodations to concerns about conscience protection and the right of Catholic institutions to serve all of God's people without violating the basic tenets of their faith satisfied some, but not all who objected to the original HHS mandate.

Shortly after the President's remarks, LCWR issued a statement (www.lcwr.org/whatsnew) thanking President Obama for responding to the concerns the conference and others had raised about religious liberty and conscience protection and welcoming the President's promise that his administration will work with all stakeholders to develop revised rules (www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2012-03547_PI.pdf). This will guarantee that group health plans sponsored by religiously-affiliated employers will be allowed to exclude contraceptive services from coverage under their plans and that no objecting religiously-affiliated employer will be made to pay or refer for contraceptive services. The new regulations also promise that policies will be developed to achieve the same goals for self-insured group health plans of non-profit religious organizations.

While the devil is always in the details and the next months of consultation and rule-writing will require continued vigilance, LCWR trusts that the President will continue to respond to the concerns of people of faith and engage them in dialogue that will provide a way forward that respects religious liberty and provides affordable healthcare for all.

LCWR President Joins other Catholic Leaders in Calling for an End to Divisive Campaign Rhetoric

LCWR joined 40 national Catholic leaders and prominent theologians at universities across the country in releasing an open letter urging "our fellow Catholics Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum to stop perpetuating ugly racial stereotypes on the campaign trail."

The letter, authored by John Gehring of Faith in Public Life, was posted January 19 on the organization's website and reminded Gingrich and Santorum that "Catholic bishops describe racism as an 'intrinsic evil' and consistently defend vital government programs such as food stamps and unemployment benefits that help struggling Americans. At a time when nearly 1 in 6 Americans live in poverty, charities and the free market alone can't address the urgent needs of our most vulnerable neighbors."

The letter concluded by urging Gingrich, Santorum, and all presidential candidates "to reject the politics of racial division, refrain from offensive rhetoric and unite behind an agenda that promotes racial and economic justice."



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WOMEN & spirit

CATHOLIC SISTERS IN AMERICA

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

Women & Spirit Exhibit Opens in Sacramento, its Final Venue



Women religious from throughout the state arrive by bus for the exhibit opening on January 24



LCWR president Pat Farrell, OSF welcomes the more than 200 guests at the opening



The California Museum of History, Women & the Arts is located in downtown Sacramento



Guests tour the exhibit on opening night



The local committee working with the museum also coordinated a section of the exhibit dedicated to women religious who ministered in California

LCWR Prepares for Exhibit Deconstruction

by Helen Maher Garvey, BVM
Director of the *Women & Spirit* Exhibit

Scripture tells us that there is a time for everything, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to tear down, and a time to build. So it is with the exhibit, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*. LCWR projected a timeline for the exhibit of three years with nine venues. That goal will be completed in Sacramento, California in June 2012. Following the closing of the exhibit in Sacramento, the exhibit will be deconstructed. Usable parts of the exhibit will be donated to appropriate groups, and every effort will be made to deconstruct in a green way.

In addition to completing LCWR's goal, other factors contributed to this decision. There is no money in the LCWR budget for continuing the exhibit, and fundraising sources have been exhausted. If LCWR were to transfer the exhibit to another entity, LCWR would no longer have control over the content of the exhibit. Another issue is the fact that LCWR promised the religious congregations that their artifacts would be returned after the three-year run.

These are the facts, but the facts do not express the affections. It is hard to say goodbye to the exhibit. It is harder to uproot than to plant. Understanding these feelings, the LCWR History Committee decided several years ago that the legacy of *Women & Spirit* would live through a documentary of the same name. It was a time to plant. Using rare archival photographs, video, film, and new history unearthed through the research process, the documentary is a vibrant journey from the arrival of the first sisters in 1727 to sisters working in surprising ways today. It includes a film study guide, a digital exhibit, and videos from the exhibit. Completing the vision imagined in 2004, the documentary *Women & Spirit* embraces the fullness of the life of Catholic sisters in America.

LCWR is deeply grateful to so many people who made this historic endeavor possible: the LCWR History Committee and its advisors, development consultants, donors, Design Island, Seruto & Company, Hunt Design, archivists, the National Communicators Network for Women Religious, and the Smithsonian curators. In

closing we recognize the unsung heroes of the exhibit, the local committees who planted, bringing the exhibit to life in the soil of their own land.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Patricia Homan, OSU
Barbara Hagedorn, SC
Miriam Kaeser, OSF

Dallas, Texas

Mary Brian Bole, SSND

Washington, DC

Mary Waskowiak, RSM
Susan Schorsten, HM
Marge Perron, RJM

Cleveland, Ohio

Lynn Berner
Maureen Grady, OSU
Carol Ziegler, SND

Ellis Island, New York / New Jersey

Carol A. Barnes, SC
Rosamond Blanchet, RSHM
Angela Gannon, CSJ
Nancy Richter, OP
Maureen Shaughnessy, SC

Dubuque, Iowa

Mira Mosle, BVM
Hilary Mullany, OSF
Beth Driscoll, PBVM

Los Angeles, California

Jody Baral
Stephanie Cubba
Jackie Doud
Debbie Ream
Anncarla Costello, SND
Kathy Stein, CSJ

South Bend, Indiana

Kathleen Cummings
Kathleen Dolphin, PBVM
Ruth Marie Nickerson, CSC
Mary Donnelly, OP

Sacramento, California

Gladys Guenther, SHF
Janet Gwinn, OSF
Chris Doan

Upcoming LCWR Dates

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

California State Assembly Honors Women Religious

On January 23, California Assemblyman Jim Beall introduced a resolution into the California State Assembly honoring women religious. The ceremony took place at the state capitol building in Sacramento the day before the *Women & Spirit* exhibit opened at the California History Museum, located just blocks from the capitol.

A copy of the resolution can be found on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/CAresolution.pdf.



Mary Katherine Doyle, RSM, docent coordinator for the exhibit in Sacramento; and Helen Maher Garvey, BVM; accept a copy of the resolution from Assemblyman Jim Beall during a ceremony at the California state capitol building.

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.

Advocacy Efforts Pay Off

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." -- Margaret Mead

While the Congress has been practically paralyzed by grid lock, concerned citizens have enjoyed some success in drawing a circle of protection around programs and policies focused on the most vulnerable -- those living in poverty and those threatened by the global economic crisis.

Domestic Programs

Although Congress failed to put together a long-term plan for debt reduction, advocates were able to protect programs designed to help the most vulnerable. Medicare and Medicaid, supplemental nutrition assistance, children's health insurance, and temporary assistance for needy families will be spared cuts in the anticipated budget sequestration process.

Poverty Focused International Development Assistance

The persistent efforts of many also served to protect the most vulnerable abroad. The House of Representatives originally proposed cutting poverty-focused international humanitarian and development programs by 28% for FY11. Thanks to the advocacy of many the final bill only cut the programs by 8%. Then for the FY12 budget, the House tried to cut these life-saving programs by 13% on top of the 8% cut. Advocacy efforts helped to prevent the additional cuts and succeeded in restoring 3% of the funds previously cut, an amazing turn around. Poverty-focused international assistance, just 0.6% of the federal budget, supports programs including agricultural assistance that puts food on people's tables, water programs that improve the quality of drinking water, and basic education and literacy training.

Extending the Payroll Tax-Credit and Unemployment Benefits

It was a tough fight, but after weeks of rancorous debate in late 2011 Congress agreed to a two-month extension of unemployment benefits. Thanks to continued citizen pressure that short-term fix became a year-long deal. On February 18 Congress voted to extend the temporary payroll tax cut and long-term unemployment benefits through 2012. In addition they passed the Medicare "doc fix," which heads off a scheduled drop in payments to doctors who treat seniors.

Protecting Children's Health by Reducing Toxic Air Pollution

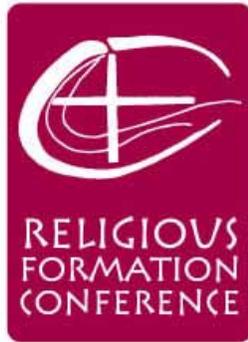
It was the persistence of activists and concerned citizens that encouraged the Administration to adopt Mercury and Air Toxics Standards that will reduce the emission of dangerous air pollutants from power plants. This is a major victory for public health and especially for unborn babies and young children who are uniquely vulnerable to exposure to toxic pollutants such as mercury in the environment.

Opportunities

The Partnership for Global Justice (www.partnershipforglobaljustice.com) will hold leadership seminars March 27 and May 23 at the United Nations. The workshop for congregational leadership teams will include an overview of the United Nations and the work of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), a presentation on the Millennium Development Goals, a meeting with a UN ambassador, and discussions with religious who represent their congregations at the UN. Registration information and letter of invitation are available on the Partnership for Global Justice website (www.partnershipforglobaljustice.com).

One Table Many Partners (onetable.crs.org), a national solidarity conference, will bring together more than 300 participants, representing dioceses, parishes, and religious congregations throughout the United States and partnership organizations, Catholic institutions, and representatives from Haitian dioceses and parishes. The conference is scheduled for June 1-3, 2012 at Catholic University in Washington DC. LCWR members and their communities are encouraged to invite their Haitian colleagues to join them at this conference which will include a special session for religious institutes on Saturday, June 2 from 4:00-5:15. Details are available on the conference website (onetable.crs.org).

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20) (www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.html) will take place June 13-22, 2012. The United Nations has released a draft document for the meeting in Rio de Janeiro. It is the first document known as the "Zero Document" entitled "The Future We Want" (www.minambiente.it/export/sites/default/archivio/allegati/rio_20/the_future_we_want.pdf). Governments and NGOs are invited to make comments and suggestions.



ForMission Program

This two-year formation program offered by the Religious Formation Conference is intended for:

- Formation ministers currently accompanying new members at any stage of initial formation
- Those preparing themselves for formation ministry
- Those in elected and informal leadership who want to support and strengthen the inseparable reality of leadership and formation.

The goal of the program is personal and communal transformation for the sake of communal life and mission in the 21st century context of religious life, church, and world.

The program is designed to:

- assist participants in personal and communal transformation
- assist those women and men responsible for formation to be agents of personal and communal transformation
- assist participants in developing aptitudes and skills required in the formation of and for a prophetic way of religious life in the 21st century
- assist participants to transfer learnings, skills, and processes to the situation in their home countries.

More information may be found on the RFC website www.relforcon.org, or obtained by calling the RFC national office at 301-588-4938.

Transformation of Religious Life in North America: An Action-Oriented Initiative

The Religious Formation Conference's 2012 national convenings will address the challenge of engaging religious life in service to the church and world of the 21st century. Topics include:

- Mission,
- Theology and spirituality of religious life,
- Congregational life and discernment,
- Skills for life and mission.

The program's objective is to assist congregational members in various roles to assume responsibility for animating communal openness and movement towards transformation - in the service of shaping prophetic religious life for the future.

Dates and Locations

April 14-15, 2012

San Antonio, Texas – Oblate School of Theology

April 28-29, 2012

West Hartford, Connecticut – Passionist Retreat House

May 5-6, 2012

Renton, Washington – Providence Health & Services

May 12-13, 2012

Villa Maria, Pennsylvania
Villa Maria Spirituality Center

May 19-20, 2012

St. Louis, Missouri – Pallottine Renewal Center

More information in both English and Spanish and registration may be found at www.relforcon.org, or obtained by calling the RFC national office at 301-588-4938.



Study on Student Debt and Vocations

NRVC will release in late February the results of its Study on Educational Debt and Religious Vocations. This study was conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University. The study confirms that educational debt is a major barrier for those who seek admission to religious life. Assuming debt is also becoming a financial strain on some communities.

NRVC hopes to gather in the future key stakeholders to investigate ways to ameliorate this problem. In addition, it will also publish a book of guidelines for major superiors, treasurers, and vocation directors in how to deal with candidates with educational loans. The complete study will be posted on the NRVC website at www.nrvc.net.

Moving Forward in Hope

The two projects generously funded for NRVC by the GHR Foundation are well underway in planning. These projects are in fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the Moving Forward in Hope National Vocation Plan.

Keys to the Future

This training workshop will be held from June 4-6, 2012 at the Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio, Texas. Facilitated by Lynn Levo, CSJ, this three-day program will provide participating religious with a deeper understanding of the NRVC/CARA study and with training and skills in how to facilitate discussions in their congregations around the significant issues of community life, communal prayer, celebration of Eucharist, and visibility. A DVD with eight finally professed religious reflecting on these critical issues is presently being produced by New Media in South Bend, Indiana.

NRVC received 171 applications for this program that were representative of the three leadership conferences. The foundation grant limited acceptance to 75 participants. The final roster of participants is composed of 19 male religious (25%) and 56 female religious (75%). Fifty

nine percent of the participants are vocation ministers; 23% are in religious leadership; and 18% are formation/ or other ministers. The youngest participant is 30 years old and the oldest participant is 84.

Due to the high number of applicants, NRVC sincerely regrets that it was unable to accept everyone. Although it was not always possible, at least one participant was selected from each institute/province/region. A wait list has been created.

A “conversational tool” which will result from this gathering will be made available to all major superiors. This will also include a copy of the DVD.

Regional Gatherings of Women Religious

NRVC will convene three gatherings for women religious in the eastern, middle, and western regions of the United States. The purpose of these gatherings is to explore generational and ethnic information as it pertains to Catholic women and its implications for vowed membership in woman’s religious institutes in the United States. Through prayer, reflection, and dialogue, participants will identify strategies for inviting new generations of Catholic women to consecrated religious life. Because of the grant limitations, community participation will be by invitation only.

The first planning meeting for these gatherings was held on February 10 at the Cenacle Retreat and Conference Center in Chicago, IL. A second planning meeting is scheduled for March. More information on these gatherings will be forthcoming in the near future.

2012 Workshops and NRVC Convocation

The brochure for the 2012 NRVC workshops and programs may be accessed online at www.nrvc.net. Opportunities are offered for new vocation directors as well as for further ongoing education in vocation ministry. The next NRVC convocation will be held at the Marriott Hotel at Legacy Center in Plano, Texas from November 1-5, 2012. Gathering under the theme, Vocation Ministers as Ambassadors of Christ: a Reconciling Presence, the keynote speakers include Archbishop Joseph Tobin, CSsR, secretary to the Congregation of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and Kathryn James Hermes, FSP, author and retreat director. Leadership, vocation ministers, and formation personnel are welcome to attend. A more detailed convocation brochure will be available when registration opens.