

July 2010



Miriam Therese Larkin, CSJ

LCWR Grieves Death of Former President

Former LCWR president Miriam Therese Larkin, CSJ died on May 21 at the Carondelet Center in Los Angeles.

A Sister of St. Joseph since 1949, she ministered in higher education and in various leadership roles. Fol-

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Photo taken by LCWR member Susan Hadzima, IHM in May of the remains of the seminary in Port-au-Prince that was destroyed during the January 12 earthquake.

LCWR Serves on Planning Group to Assist Haitian Religious

A meeting convened by the Raskob Foundation and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was held June 1-2 at the CRS offices in Baltimore for the purpose of exploring how the foundation might assist women and men religious in Haiti struggling to rebuild their lives and ministries. Representatives of the Catholic Medical Mission Board, CMSM, LCWR, and the Conference of Haitian Religious (CHR) joined members of the Raskob Foundation and CRS to determine, as a first step, what are the current conditions and needs in Haiti.

LCWR drew upon the information forwarded to the national office from LCWR members who have sisters in Haiti, as well as phone conversations with three members who had recently returned from visiting several congregations in the country. Visitors were shaken by what they experienced. In addition to extreme historical poverty, worsened by the earthquake, the destruction of convents, schools, and clinics, as well as churches, seminaries, and the offices of CHR, makes working in ministries almost impossible. Yet members reported

that in a number of places sisters live in tents while teaching children outdoors with no resources. All wait for rebuilding. Trauma and stress are evident.

Another meeting is anticipated, dependent on the willingness of the groups represented, especially the Raskob Foundation, to move forward with this collaborative effort. The daunting task will be to identify more specifically what needs beyond disaster relief, both long-term and more immediate, can realistically be met to offer hope to suffering and struggling religious trying to carry on their mission under very trying circumstances.

From the LCWR Presidency

'The Word of God is Not Chained'

by Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA — LCWR President

We arrived at the shores of the ocean in Harvey Cedars, New Jersey where we held our most recent meeting of the LCWR executive committee. It was not an easy arrival; rather one that took us through a storm with fierce lightning. Traffic slowed. Drivers were more careful than usual. The evening was humid and warm with little movement of air.

A window in my cabin would not stay open, so I found a book to prop it up. The next day was a contrast. The humidity moved out and the sun shone in great beauty. The day ended with a coolness wafting in from the ocean. We wanted to rise early the following morning go to the dunes, and view a glorious sunrise so well known in the area. Not so! Soon a fog rolled in that engulfed our reality for the remainder of the day. We couldn't see even 50 feet to the water's edge. Our good sense prompted us to close all the windows of our cabins and to keep as dry as possible throughout the night. Sleep came and the fog clung to the morning – no hint of the sun anywhere, but mild breezes begged right of entry. We trudged along the boardwalk to our meeting at an adjacent building. Our spirits felt foggy but we, as usual, completed our work with unflinching attention.

On the final day I arose and packed for the trip home. In removing the book from beneath the window pane, I first noticed that it was a hard-backed copy of the New American Bible. I was surprised that I hadn't noticed this when I used the book to hold open a window for fresh breezes of moving air.

At morning liturgy we heard Paul's words to Timothy: *The word of God is not chained.* (2 Tm 2:9) As I pondered, I began to think that this was an apt image for our experiences of tumult in our church and world now.



God's Word cannot be chained. It cannot be imprisoned even under duress. It is always open for inspiration and wisdom in times of trial.

Speakers at the UISG meeting in Rome emphasized the mystical and prophetic voice to which we are called as women religious. Though we are confounded by the cry of the poor and the darkness of our own ecclesial situations around the world, we have a right not to despair of the impasse. Our response is one of evangelical openness, knowing that

God will complete what we are not able to do. We are called to a cycle of repetitive movements of conversion in mutual accompaniment of one another. We found ourselves strengthened and emboldened at UISG . . . *though it is night.*

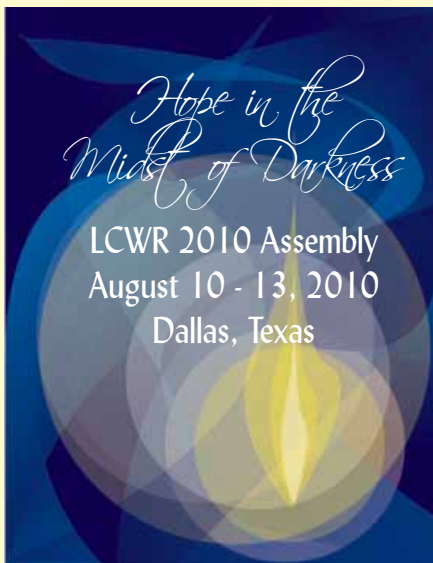
At the heart of our lives is an experience of union with God and one another that forms our compassion and enables us to hear the silent music of the Spirit about what God wants for the world.

At the heart of our lives is an experience of union with God and one another that forms our compassion and enables us to hear the silent music of the Spirit about what God wants for the world. As mystics we own that primal place of relationship with our Creator, entering into an evolutionary process of receiving the Word as it is formed in us through Christ. We wait for the

seasons of the Word just as we wait the sun that follows the fog. The poetry of Leonard Bernstein's Mass insists:

*You can lock up the bold ones and hold them in tow.
You can stifle all adventure for a century or so,
Stop dissent before it's risen.
Hope, it wizens like a gourd --
but you cannot imprison the Word of the Lord.*

The celebrant's ultimate song asserts -- *in the end, I think the Word will be winning.* God's energy, light, passion, and Spirit comes and refuses any stifling of hope. Just when things look foggy and impossible, God bewilders the powers that be and fills us with liberty of spirit.



**Registration for the
2010 LCWR Assembly**
Hope in the Midst of Darkness
Exploring the Ecclesial Role of Women Religious

www.lcwr.org/members/LCWRassembly10.pdf

- For those who have not yet registered for the LCWR assembly, registration fees increase after July 7. The fee increases to \$435 per person beginning on July 8. **The envelope with the registration form and payment must be postmarked no later than July 7.**
- Hotel registrations must be made online through Nix & Associates. The direct link to that reservation system is found in the assembly brochure, available in the member information section of the LCWR website. The cut-off date for the LCWR assembly guaranteed rate is July 19, 2010. LCWR cannot guarantee the rate for reservations made after that date.
- The conference strongly encourages participants to stay at the assembly hotel since LCWR's ability to avoid rental fees for the individual meeting rooms is dependent

upon having a certain number of hotel sleeping room reservations.

- Finally, a number of communities have been very generous in donating to the assembly scholarship fund. Scholarships are still available for those who may be in need of assistance to attend the assembly. Because of the generosity of members, LCWR can assist with assembly registration and with hotel accommodations based on need. More information may be obtained from Pat Cormack, SCSC at pcormack@lcwr.org or 301-588-4955, ext. 228.

Bring a Picture or Symbol

Each assembly participant is asked to bring a picture or symbol that represents hope in the midst of darkness. These symbols will be used in the ritual that opens the assembly.



Not-to-Be Missed on the LCWR Website

LCWR continues to receive letters of support from around the world as US women religious participate in the apostolic visitation.
www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/av.htm

The prayer for the apostolic visitation and listing of congregations requesting prayer during their visitation
www.lcwr.org -- Under LCWR Members Information.

The LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee is compiling an ongoing annotated bibliography of articles and books on religious life that leaders and their institute members may find useful. The bibliography is accompanied by reflection questions.
www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/bibliography.htm

LCWR Executive Committee Meets Around Critical Conference Issues

by Jane Burke, SSND -- LCWR Executive Director

The first of June brought the LCWR executive committee together in Harvey Cedars, New Jersey. In attendance were: Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; Mary Hughes, OP; J Lora Dambroski, OSF; Ellen Dauwer, SC; Sheila Megley, RSM; Patricia Crowley, OSB; Nancy Reynolds, SP; and Jane Burke, SSND.

While it would have been nice to have some spare time to enjoy the sunshine and the very close-by ocean, we were occupied with a variety of topics that kept us at the table rather than the seashore. At one point the comment was made that the meeting actually began at dinner the first night we met and during the next two days the discussions were so full of energy that it was hard to get a “word in edgewise.”

Agenda topics included updates on the UISG plenary, the InterAmerican committee meeting, the 2010 national assembly agenda, and finance reports for both LCWR and the office building. We also discussed:

- The progress being made on the Contemporary Religious Life Project through the work of the Strategic Operational Plan Committee and the Contemporary Religious Life Committee. Both of these committees will be meeting again during the next few weeks and will have reports to give at the national assembly.
- The Transformative Elements document from 1989 that will be brought to the fall regional meetings.
- Copyright issues that have come up at the national office.
- A possible joint meeting between the Religious Formation Conference executive committee and its LCWR counterpart.
- LCWR collaboration with two national foundations and Catholic Relief Services on Haiti.
- The agenda and topics to be brought forth for discussion at the upcoming national assembly.
- LCWR participation in the SHARE delegation marking the 30th anniversary of the death of the women in El Salvador. It was decided that LCWR communications director Annmarie Sanders, IHM will participate in the delegation representing the LCWR national office staff.

The committee had the opportunity to learn about the experiences of two congregations that had completed their apostolic visitation and receive a brief update on the progress of the doctrinal assessment of LCWR. Both these topics as well as the usual business concerns of LCWR will be brought to the membership in attendance at the national meeting.

As it worked out the best time to grab a few rays of sunshine was the lunch break so we made do with the evening breezes and listening to the water lapping up on the shore as nighttime fell.

LCWR Grieves Death of Former President

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Following graduate studies at Regina Mundi in Rome, University of Notre Dame, and the University of California at Los Angeles, she taught philosophy at Mount St. Mary's College between 1965 and 1982. During six of those years she was also director of novices for the Los Angeles province of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

While general superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet from 1982 to 1990, she served in the LCWR presidency from 1984 to 1987. In that capacity, she was on the writing committee for the revision of LCWR bylaws and facilitated the response of a group of congregational leaders to the controversial *New York Times* ad of October 7, 1984. Her words of acceptance of the presidency of LCWR are prophetic: “In the Conference we have often identified dialog as a means to communion. This dialog is not simply a means to be used until we achieve our ends. Dialog is as Paul VI has said, of the essence of the Church: relationships within the Church must have the character of a dialog. To engage in dialog, as we have committed ourselves, is to engage primarily in the process of changing relationships.”

Miriam Therese also served as president of the US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph from 1984 to 1988 and as a member of the UISG, she was a councilor for the North American region from 1986 to 1989.

She spent the last 20 years in various capacities related to theological education and spiritual development.

Leadership Conferences of the Americas Meet in Canada

by Jane Burke, SSND -- LCWR Executive Director

The 2010 InterAmerican committee held its annual meeting this year May 24-25, 2010 in Montreal hosted by the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC). The committee is made up of the presidents and executive directors of CRC, CMSM, the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR), and LCWR. J Lora Dambroski, OSF and Jane Burke, SSND represented LCWR at the meeting. The topics discussed were wide-ranging and offered new insights into the realities faced by the various conferences.

During the first full day of meetings each organization gave an update on its work. The leaders of CLAR, who represent 22 conferences across Latin America, are in the process of implementing a strategic plan to guide the confederation into the future. Their report provided new perspective and insight about the types of challenges they face given the various cultures and languages represented in CLAR. The CRC leaders spoke of their reorganization process and their efforts to establish relationships with new congregations being formed around the country. The CMSM representatives spoke of their upcoming assembly, as well as the challenges faced by leaders whose religious institutes have members coming into the United States and need guidance on issues such as immigration status. Of course, of great

concern to all the other conferences were the doctrinal assessment of LCWR and the apostolic visitation of its member congregations.

The second day was given over to discussion about Haiti and what has been happening since the earthquake. Kesta Occident, superior general of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, shared her experience of being in Haiti soon after the earthquake. She hopes that over time the religious congregations who are in the country will work toward not only reconstruction but also re-visioning the services they can provide for the entire country, and not only in Port-au-Prince. Her assessment of the situation was both sobering and yet full of hope for a new future for the entire country. Bede Hubbard, associate general secretary of the Canadian Bishops Conference, shared the work being done by the bishops on behalf of the Haitian people.

Lest anyone think the days were all work and no play, the group also had the opportunity to visit the Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel which was constructed in 1655. Marguerite Bourgeoys, founder of the Congregation of Notre Dame envisioned the chapel as a place of welcome for pilgrims and travelers who were coming to Montreal in its earliest days. She worked tirelessly to establish the chapel which still exists today. Marguerite was canonized in October 1982. This visit was followed up by a boat ride and dinner down the waterways of Montreal.

And so what did we learn about one another during this time together? In brief, it became clear that there is much convergence across the conferences on the importance of assessing and articulating both the mystical and prophetic dimensions of religious life and that we must take up these challenges and respond as the Spirit leads us so that the Gospel remains the focus of our life and mission.



CMSM president Thomas P. Cassidy, SCJ; J Lora Dambroski, OSF; Jane Burke, SSND; and CMSM executive director Paul Lininger, OFMConv

Women Religious in the News

“Exhibit at Beachwood’s Maltz Museum highlights contributions, sacrifices of Catholic sisters”

Cleveland Plain Dealer

Article by Michael O’Malley

June 20, 2010

blog.cleveland.com/metro/2010/06/exhibit_at_beachwoods_maltz_mu.html

“Elephants in the room of the Catholic health care debate”

National Catholic Reporter

Analysis by John Allen

June 18, 2010

ncronline.org/news/elephants-room-catholic-health-care-debate

“35 religious communities visited; 80 to go

National Catholic Reporter

Article Dennis Sadowski

June 16, 2010

ncronline.org/news/women/35-religious-communities-visited-80-go

“Minding the gap between bishops and Catholic health care”

National Catholic Reporter

Article by John Allen

June 16, 2010

ncronline.org/news/politics/minding-gap-between-bishops-and-catholic-health-care

“Will Sisters Save the Catholic Church?”

Religion Dispatches

Essay by Mary Hunt

May 23, 2010

www.religiondispatches.org/archive/sexandgender/2634/will_sisters_save_the_catholic_church

“Global women religious: the new Catholic leadership”

National Catholic Reporter

Editorial

May 24, 2010

ncronline.org/news/women-religious/global-women-religious-new-catholic-leadership

“Female Troubles”

Newsweek

Article by Lisa Miller

May 27, 2010

www.newsweek.com/2010/05/27/female-troubles.html

‘Awakening the Dreamer’ LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank XIII

The worldwide symposium, “Awakening the Dreamer,” will be offered March 7-10, 2011 at the Franciscan Retreat Center in Scottsdale, Arizona. As the LCWR think tank brochure indicates, “the symposium explores the current state of our planet and connects participants to a powerful global movement to reclaim our future” and has been “designed with the collaboration of some of the finest scientific, indigenous, and activist minds in the world.” Led by Mary Elizabeth Lawrence, SC; Joan Brown, OSF; and Joan Spatti, the inquiry will look at how women religious can be a part of what is emerging.

Open to LCWR members and justice/peace coordinators, the think tank is further described in the flyer on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org/lcwr/socialjustice/tt2011.pdf.



Is Your Leadership Term Nearing its End?

All members are reminded that when their term is ending, they must submit a change of leadership form so that the LCWR national office can properly transfer LCWR membership to the new leaders.

The replacement designation on the assembly registration form does not supply sufficient information for this transfer. The change of leadership form is found in the LCWR Members Information section (password-protected) of the website.



Upcoming Showings

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

**Statue of Liberty National Monument/Ellis Island
Immigration Museum**
New York
September 24, 2010 - January 22, 2011

Mississippi River Museum
Dubuque, Iowa
February - April 2011

Mount St. Mary College
Los Angeles, California
June 17 - August 14, 2011

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

One additional venue is still in process for 2012

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

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

January 16 - 21, 2011

San Pedro Spiritual Retreat Center

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.

Retreat Directors



Regina Bechtle, SC



María Elena
Martínez, OSF

LCWR Represented at Papal Nunciature



LCWR staff members Patricia Cormack, SCSC, associate director for business and finance, and Annmarie Sanders, IHM, director of communications, represented LCWR at a recent event hosted by papal nuncio Archbishop Pietro Sambi and held at the nunciature in Washington, DC.

Registration forms will be sent online at a later time. Participation will be limited to the first 25 members to submit their form and check.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly

Dallas, Texas
August 10 — 13, 2010
Travel date: August 14

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 Assembly

St. Louis, Missouri
August 7 — 11, 2012



- Letter from Faith in Public Life to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sibelius regarding implementation of the Pregnancy Assistance Fund, a critical new program in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (healthcare legislation)
- Statement by Oxfam America, Louisiana Recovery Foundation et al., "Ensuring Accountability and Protecting Livelihoods, Ecosystems and Communities after the BP Horizon Disaster," a detailed document delivered to federal officials
- Letter to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, urging them to immediately take up H. Res. 278, the Global Securities Priorities Resolution calling for reduction of nuclear arsenals of both the US and the Russian Federation

Mission Congress 2010: October 28-31 in Albuquerque

LCWR, as a sponsor of Catholic Mission Forum's Mission Congress, encourages participation in what promises to be an exciting event. The theme, "God's Mission, Many Faces: A Portrait of US Catholics in Mission," will be carried out through keynotes by Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD; Janice McLaughlin, MM; and Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, as well as through workshops and dialogue sessions, a visit to Native American communities, liturgies, and celebrations. Additional information and registration material are available at www.missioncongress.org.

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

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CHA 'Forges the Future in Turbulent Times'

The Catholic Health Association's assembly, held in Denver from June 13 to 15 with the theme, "Forging the Future in Turbulent Times," offered realism, vision, hope, and enthusiasm by means of keynote speakers, innovative forums, panels, liturgies, celebrations, and exchange among the more than 800 participants.

Author Thomas Friedman (*Hot, Flat and Crowded* among other books), J. Bryan Hehir, SJ, Uwe Reinhardt (a leading authority on healthcare economics), Rosabeth Moss Kanter (Harvard Business School professor and author), and T. R. Reid (global affairs correspondent and author), provided relevant and interesting food for thought and possible action. CHA's Vision 2020, developed with input from hundreds of healthcare workers from all levels of the ministry, was rolled out and celebrated.

During the CHA board meeting preceding the assembly, as well as during the assembly, the highs and lows of CHA's role in moving healthcare reform legislation into reality were acknowledged, as well as the realization that passage of legislation was only a first, though monumental step. The demanding work of assuring the fulfillment of what the law promises is now the challenge before the ministry.



Religious Formation Conference

"Biblical Foundations for Consecrated Life: A Prophetic Vision"

Presenter: vanThanh Nguyen, SVD, STD
Assistant Professor of New Testament Studies and
Chair of Biblical Languages
Catholic Theological Union

September 25, 2010
Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, Maryland

October 16, 2010
Savior Pastoral Center, Kansas City, Kansas

November 13, 2010
Maria Center, SSND Motherhouse, St. Louis, Missouri

November 20, 2010
Xavier Retreat & Conference Center
Convent Station, New Jersey

December 11, 2010
Moye Center, San Antonio, Texas

For further information contact
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ydebruin@relforcon.org or 301-588-4938