

June 2006

LCWR and CMSM Delegations Dialogue with Vatican Officials

Each spring, delegations from the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious travel to Rome to visit several Vatican offices (also known as “dicasteries”). This year the group scheduled their visits during the week of April 24.

The CMSM delegation of five included Dominic Izzo, OP (president); Michael Higgins, SP (vice-president); Robert Schieler, FSC (secretary-treasurer); Brad Schaeffer, SJ (member-at-large) and Paul Lininger, OFM Conv. (executive director.) In the LCWR delegation were Bea Eichten, OSF (president); Christine Vladimiroff, OSB (past-president); Mary Dacey, SSJ (president-elect) and Carole Shinnick, SSND (executive director.).

The groups visited two dicasteries together: the Congregation for Bishops and the Pontifical Council on the Laity. They also met jointly with the newly appointed US ambassador to the Vatican, the Honorable Francis Rooney. Lastly, they met with the executive committees and the general secretaries of the Union of Superiors General (USG) and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG.).

Since both CMSM and LCWR are celebrating their 50th anniversaries as conferences, they hosted a joint reception on the evening of April 26 at the Jesuit Curia in



Mary Dacey, SSJ; Carole Shinnick, SSND; US Ambassador to the Vatican Honorable Francis Rooney; Bea Eichten, OSF; and Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

Rome. They also enjoyed an informal dinner with the executive committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) also visiting the Vatican at the time, including Bishop William Skylstad of Spokane (president); Cardinal Francis George of Chicago (vice-president) and Monsignor David Malloy (general secretary).

The LCWR delegation visited several offices including: the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Pontifical Councils on Evangelization and for the Laity.

On April 26, the LCWR delegation met with Cardinal Franc Rodé, prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and five members of the staff. Because LCWR is a canonically established organization recog-

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From the LCWR Presidency **Staying at the Table**

by Mary Dacey, SSJ -- LCWR President-Elect

A nine-hour plane trip. A time difference of six hours from home. I am not sure how many miles. I do know that our journey to Rome to visit the Vatican offices was a long journey to "be at the table."

What I did not realize at first was what an incredibly opportune time we had chosen for the visit. Of course, I knew that it was the Easter season, but I did not realize how appropriate, how timely, how rich the liturgical readings of the week would be. Like the early disciples in the Acts of the Apostles, Chris, Bea, Carole and I, along with the executive committee of CMSM, were companions on a journey that would yield individual and collective moments of grace. Modern disciples, we were fully aware of the implications of Paschal mystery in our own lives, in the lives of our communities and in



rary ministries rooted in our collective charisms, as well as examples of the selfless dedication of our sisters. We offered statistics about hospital, social service and educational ministries; we gave examples of service in soup kitchens, with migrant workers and in anti-trafficking movements. We were also able to collect some positive information about vocations, thanks to many of you who responded to our survey. We were far from certain, however, that our words would elicit wonder.

We found a listening audience, not one without questions, other perspectives and strong points of view, but definitely listening. Even with headsets and microphones and simultaneous translations, for the most part, a language of honesty and reverence prevailed.

Much has been written lately about the need to address the tensions in the church--not just to talk about them, but also to talk through them in order to find our common ground. We can use those tensions to bring us to conversation and communion, or we can allow them to pull us apart. This is hardly a new challenge. The readings in this Easter season are filled with stories of tensions in a fledgling church. How foolish we would be to think that our own times would be exempt.

As Timothy Radcliffe, OP says, "One hangs on to the tiniest glimpse of the mystery of God by going on talk-

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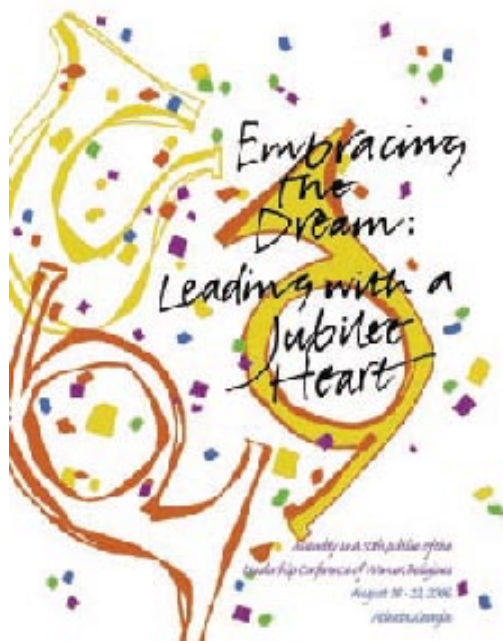
the life of our church. We too gathered in prayer each day, broke bread together and shared a number of common office visits. It was communion on many levels.

One of the first readings that week reminded us "to speak your word with all boldness while you stretch out your hand to heal...and wonders are performed." A later Scripture passage was equally compelling. "Go to the temple, and tell your story; tell the whole message about your life."

As many of you know, there had been comments about the ministries of American women religious that were cause for deep concern. As a group, we had prepared an overview of the dynamic traditional and contempo-

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ing." For me the essence of his message is the "going on." Even the glimpse is worth the time and the travel to "stay at the table."



LCWR Assembly 2006 Updates

Staying at the Hotel Keeps Assembly Costs Down

The LCWR assembly will be held this year at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. When the assembly participants stay at the hotel, the costs of the assembly are lower. LCWR receives a discounted rate on the meeting rooms if a sufficient number of hotel rooms are booked by participants. If this room quota is not met, the full cost of the meeting room rental must be paid by LCWR.

Scholarship Funds

LCWR is again offering partial scholarships to members who may find it difficult to manage the full cost of the assembly. The scholarship may be applied to the costs of registration and hotel expenses, as well as to assistance with additional LCWR membership. Anyone interested in more information on scholarship assistance may contact LCWR executive director Carole Shinnick, SSND at 301-588-4955.

The scholarships are made possible through the generosity of LCWR members who donate to the fund. Donations may be directed to Eleanor Granger, OSF, associate director for finance and planning, at 301-588-4955.

LCWR Offers Leading from Within Retreat in January 2007

LCWR will again offer the Leading from Within Retreat which is open to the first 25 national members who register and send a deposit.

The retreat will be offered from January 14 – 19, 2007 at the Franciscan Center in Tampa, Florida.

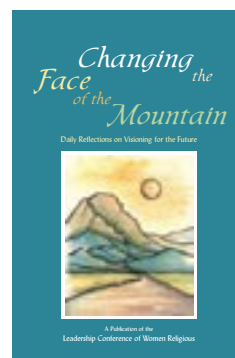


Maria Elena Martinez, OSF and Margaret O'Brien, OSU will facilitate the retreat which will include input, quiet, contemplative space, a variety of ritual experiences, and some opportunity for group and individual spiritual direction.

LCWR members who have made this retreat in the past have found it highly beneficial to be with other leaders as they prayerfully reflect on the blessings and challenges of religious life leadership during these times.

Registration forms for the retreat will be sent online to all members at a later time.

Changing the Face of the Mountain



The daily reflections in the LCWR book, *Changing the Face of the Mountain*, begin on June 4, the feast of Pentecost.

Some additional copies are still available for purchase. Forms for ordering books can be found on the LCWR website under Publications at <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/2006reflectionorder2.pdf>.

LCWR and CMSM Delegations Dialogue with Vatican Officials

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nized by the Vatican, the visit to this congregation is always a very high priority. The 90-minute visit with Cardinal Rodé and his staff was wide-ranging, honest, and very productive. Topics included:

- Updates on ministries and new expressions of traditional ministries of US women religious
- Updates on new membership in LCWR congregations
- Varieties of reconfiguration and community mergers as well as some of the learnings related to the process

The visit with Cardinal Rodé concluded with mutual expressions of appreciation for the visit and with an invitation from LCWR for him to come to the United States to meet LCWR members first-hand. The Cardinal said he would like to do that very much.

On the last day in Rome, Mary Dacey and Carole Shinnick met with about 30 members of general councils in Rome to share the week's events and to update them on LCWR activities in the United States.

The week was a very positive experience of true collaboration with the men from CMSM of sharing prayer, liturgy, meals and social times. The visits of the week provided multiple opportunities for genuine dialogue and increased understanding.



The LCWR delegation met with members of the CICLSAL staff: Henry Lemoncelli, OMI; Mary Dacey, SSJ; Bea Eichten, OSF; Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; and Sharon Holland, IHM



The CMSM delegation: Robert Schieler, FSC; Michael Higgins, SP; Paul Lininger, OFM Conv; the Honorable Francis Rooney; Dominic Izzo, OP; and Brad Schaeffer, SJ

Think Tank 2007 Planned for West Coast

When participants in the February 2006 LCWR Think Tank offered evaluations of the program, they made a recommendation that the next think tank be held on the west coast and that the program be extended from 1 1/2 days to 2 1/2 days. Since 2000, the LCWR think tank has been held at the Franciscan Center in Tampa, Florida, a very conducive setting, but not as convenient for LCWR members and justice coordinators from the western half of the country.

Taking these recommendations to heart, the committee planned the following:

LCWR Think Tank 2007

February 26 - March 1, 2007

Villa Maria del Mar

Santa Cruz, California

Presenter: Linda Haydock, SNJM

Director of the Intercommunity

Peace and Justice Center -- Seattle, Washington

Further details will be announced in subsequent issues of *Update*.

LCWR Finance Committee Update

The LCWR Finance Committee met at the LCWR national office in Silver Spring, Maryland from April 26-27.

Present for the meeting were: Maryann Summa, OP, chair; Alice Cote, RJM; Jean Keniry, OSF; Mary Persico, IHM; and Eleanor Granger, OSF, staff. Rose Jochmann, OSF was not able to be present.

The major agenda items included the following:

Financial Position:

The committee carefully reviewed the financial position and activity of LCWR for the first three months of 2006. The recovery in interest and dividends continues to slowly increase. Expenses continue to increase and the national office and committees are attempting to do more with conference calls and electronic mailing in order to decrease LCWR expenses.

Membership:

The membership numbers are beginning to reflect the decrease as member congregations and provinces merge and form new congregations. As was reported at the regional meetings, the new dues structure will be implemented with the renewal of membership for 2007. LCWR thanks the members for their input in regard to the dues structure.

Audit:

In February, a full audit was performed for LCWR and the Cameron Five building by the firm of Linton, Shafer, Warfield and Garrett, PA who stated the following: "In our opinion, the financial statements referred to (in the Audit) present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the LCWR of the United States of America, Inc, as of December 31, 2005, and the changes in its assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the USA."

Investments:

Christian Brothers Investment Services manager, Eileen O'Connell, met with the Finance Committee via a conference call. The update included a report on the

stocks held in the CBIS balanced fund, which holds the LCWR investments, the investment program review for the fourth quarter and a historical risk/return chart from March 2001 -- March 2006. The committee feels confident that the Christian Brothers balanced fund is serving the conference well.

Assembly:

During the 2006 assembly Maryann Summa will give a full presentation of the LCWR financial picture. There will be time after the presentation for questions and answers.

Future Dates:

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be October 25-26 at the national office.



LCWR Finance Committee members meet at the LCWR offices: Mary Persico, IHM; Maryann Summa, OP; Eleanor Granger, OSF; Alice Cote, RJM; and Jean Keniry, OSF

LCWR 2006 Assembly
Atlanta Georgia

Embracing the Dream:
Leading with a Jubilee Heart

Register by
JUNE 30
for the discounted rate

NETWORK Board Faces Financial Challenges, Celebrates 35th Anniversary

During their April 27-30 meeting, members of the NETWORK board reviewed the report submitted by the strategic planning committee, approved directional statements to implement the vision and mission statement of the organization for the next five years, and approved the revised bylaws of NEP (NETWORK Education Project). Standing committees of the board also met and reported to the whole board: governance and administration, finance, advocacy, and development.

The report of the finance committee, as anticipated, was sobering, and the development committee reported that contributions have not met expectations, despite steps that were taken since the fall 2005 board meeting. Like most other smaller non-profits, NETWORK is experiencing a serious diminishment in funding. The board grappled long and hard with the financial picture before giving direction to staff to take cost-cutting steps and committing themselves to take greater responsibility for fund raising.

Considering NETWORK's historical connection with LCWR since its beginnings 35 years ago, LCWR members and associates are invited to ask themselves if they, and members of their congregations, have maintained membership in NETWORK. Are members aware of the benefits of membership, e.g. the bi-monthly publication *Connection*, analysis of critical justice issues through the lens of Catholic social teaching, a respected presence on the Hill (activity in which LCWR as a conference cannot engage), weekly legislative alerts, constituency building and education?

While LCWR commemorates a 50th jubilee this year, NETWORK celebrates its 35th anniversary. The selection of Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, renowned NETWORK lobbyist, to receive the 2006 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award, highlights the relationship between the two organizations. This is an opportune time for LCWR members to give special attention to an organization of which it has been so proud-- to renew membership, to invite others to become members, or to become re-acquainted with this unique justice organization founded by sisters, and sustained by sisters for so many years,

even as membership has broadened and diversified. To learn more about NETWORK, visit www.networklobby.org.

LCWR Expresses Solidarity with Japanese Conference of Major Superiors of Women

Filo Hirota, MMB, president of the Japanese Conference of Major Superiors of Women, invited LCWR president Bea Eichten, OSF to send a message to be shared at the conference's annual assembly held in May. The theme of the Japanese assembly was "To be consecrated women in a globalized world."

Bea's message reads in part:

As you gather in your assembly, I have a strong sense of our connection, as you in Japan and we in the United States together seek ways to live our lives as consecrated women in our globalized world....

We are strengthened by our common resolve to develop and provide services that enable people to live with integrity and dignity, free of all the ideologies that separate people one from another. Certainly, your work with dialog and diversity and your efforts countering racism are evidence of your commitment to spread the message of God's love given freely to each and every person without discrimination....

We commit to join with you in your efforts "To be consecrated women in a globalized world" and to be "community rooted in the Word of God." As we live our lives of religious consecration in and among our brothers and sisters, we bring the best of our personal and professional gifts to help effect transformation in our world. Most profoundly, from the depths of our lives, we bring strong love for all people and all of creation, deep faith in the constant presence of God-with-us, and abiding hope that God's goodness will help make all things new.

God has given us this world, this time, these challenges and these graces. In the name of LCWR, I send you our love and support for your faithfulness in being actively and effectively involved in the events of the church and society of Japan.

From the LCWR Executive Director **Blundering Towards Pentecost**

Carole Shinnick, SSND

As we come to the end of the Easter Season, I am finding it harder and harder to get into the scripture readings from the last discourse of Jesus. John's summary of Jesus' final instructions holds power and import, but I miss the stories and the miracles and the characters. That's why I so enjoy the readings from Acts. This amazing account of the pristine new Church is chock full of great stories, miracles and characters.

I am especially fascinated with the transformation in Peter whose mistakes and blunders in the Gospels were Olympian and right out there for all to see. Peter must have been a flaming "E" on the Myers-Briggs who acted first and thought about it later. I love the scene on the seashore when the resurrected Jesus is cooking a fish breakfast. We read that Peter, who had stripped while he was fishing, put his clothes back on and then jumped into the water. Poor Peter. And how he must have wanted to take back his last words to Jesus, "Even though others deny you, I will never deny you." (Off-stage sound effect: "Cock-a-doodle-doo.")

Peter was big and booming and public with his mistakes and failures. It is this Peter who makes me want to give his bronze toe an extra rub when I'm in the basilica in Rome. That's why the post-Pentecost Peter we meet in Acts is so amazing – still larger than life, but now remarkable for his courage and leadership rather than for his bloopers.

Like Peter, my errors are often very public and hard to hide. Sometimes it is because I am trying to do too many things at once while not paying attention: I might unpack groceries, putting the detergent in the fridge and the chicken under the sink. Eventually someone will open the fridge, grab the bottle of Whisk and say, "Who put THIS in here?"

Friends, family, and staff are to be commended for their patience with me for the multiple incorrect telephone numbers, glaring typos, and confused calendar dates. Because I'm pretty sure that I'm an undiagnosed dyslexic, my driving directions have been known to send people to Pennsylvania who were trying to get to Washington. Whoops – sorry.



I envy the quiet, reflective person in a group who holds her thoughts until after everyone else has spoken. This individual always sounds so wise, so deep, so thoughtful. In the meantime I have gone galumphing into the discussion, my words far outrunning my brain. More often than not others' subsequent comments begin with, "Now, I have to disagree with Carole..." Regularly - I tell myself that I won't speak, that I'll just study my fingernails in quiet contemplation until everyone else has spoken. But my poor little half-baked ideas just push

*And, with you I pray,
"Come Holy Ghost, Creator Blest, and in our hearts
– our hungry, humbled hearts - take up your rest.
Please. Amen."*

and push until they come tumbling out like a bunch of circus clowns from one of those little Volkswagen-sized circus cars.

How I wish I were one of those people whose foibles are private, whose mistakes are downright dainty. Each Pentecost when I am sure that the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit will come tumbling out of heaven like a sacred shower, I pray for prudence. And patience. And wisdom. I'll take a touch of fortitude, too, while you're at it. Thank you very much.

Pentecost comes upon us soon, with cleansing wind and sacred fire. And, with you I pray, "Come Holy Ghost, Creator Blest, and in our hearts – our hungry, humbled hearts - take up your rest. Please. Amen."

LCWR National Office Staff News

Executive Assistant

Suzanne Delaney, IHM Leaves LCWR

Suzanne Delaney, IHM will be leaving her position on May 25 as executive assistant on the LCWR national office staff.

Having come to the conference in 1992, Suzanne worked closely with three LCWR executive directors and two interim directors, as well as with the boards, the LCWR members and associates, and the many other organizations with whom LCWR collaborates. Her networking capacities, her responsiveness to members' needs, and her outstanding organizational skills at the office, the annual assembly and other LCWR events gained her a reputation for excellent service and quality work.

Suzanne wishes to express her thanks for the many letters, cards, e-mails and phone calls of gratitude that she received as she leaves for Hawkstone Hall in England for a sabbatical on May 28.



Carol Glidden Assumes Role of LCWR Administrative Assistant

Carol Glidden will begin a new role on the LCWR national office staff on May 30 as administrative assistant. Carol came to the staff in May 2005 and has been working for both LCWR and CMSM as a receptionist/secretary.



In her new position, Carol will provide secretarial assistance to members of the administrative staff.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly
Atlanta, Georgia
August 18 -- 22, 2006

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat
Franciscan Center
Tampa, Florida
January 14 -- 19, 2007

LCWR Think Tank
Villa Maria del Mar
Santa Cruz, California
February 26 -- March 1, 2007

LCWR New Leader Workshop
The Retreat Center at St. John's
Plymouth, Michigan
March 15 -- 18, 2007

LCWR Assembly
Kansas City, Missouri
August 1 -- 5, 2007

LCWR-CMSM Joint Assembly
Denver, Colorado
August 1 -- 4, 2008

LCWR Assembly
New Orleans, Louisiana
August 11 -- 15, 2009



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FROM THE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS LIFE

Coming Soon to LCWR Member Mailboxes: CSRL Membership Invitations and Renewals

This month membership renewals and invitations to become a member are being mailed to the leadership teams of US congregations, provinces and regions.

Cases Focus September Forum on 'The Individual and the Common Good'

For the September 24-27, 2006 CSRL Interdisciplinary Forum at the Passionist Bishop Malloy Retreat House in Jamaica, NY, the general case topics used to focus reflection will be: older religious in small local communities; congregational members with adult children; and more diverse newer members.

As in all the interdisciplinary forums, leaders and scholars representing various academic disciplines will use the cases to discuss the tensions between the good of the individual and the good of the whole group.

The scholars for the New York forum are: John Coleman, SJ, sociology; Faustino Cruz, SM, education, theology; Shawnee Daniels-Sykes, SSND, health care, ethics; Anita deLuna, MCDP, spirituality; Jeffrey Gros, FSC, ecumenism, theology, church history; and Donna Markham, OP, psychology.

Information and the registration form are available at <http://www.religious-life.org/programs/index.html>.

The third interdisciplinary forum will be held April 15-18, 2007 at El Retiro San Inigo Retreat House in Los Altos, California in the San Francisco area. Registration forms for this program are also available at <http://www.religious-life.org/programs/index.html>.

Taking Time to Look at the Future of One's Community: The RFC Orientation Program

For leaders of today's congregations, one of their most important responsibilities is seeing to the future of the congregation. One of the aspects of this is formation, both initial and ongoing – and one of the most important "right relationships" is that between leaders and formators. Leaders need to be in the know about what formators are learning, and about their role vis-à-vis the directors and new candidates. Often there is not a lot of time to do that. That is the purpose of RFC's orientation program – one weekend, full of information, interaction and time to ask questions.

Orientation 2006, for formators and leaders (and even members of formative communities) will take place at Xavier Center, Convent Station, NJ - November 10-12, 2006. Presenters will be Maryann Seton Lopiccolo, SC and Donald Bisson, FMS. Those who have experienced these presenters will attest to both the quality and quantity of the learning they offer.

Some information is available on the public side of the RFC website (www.relforcon.org) but details and an application form are available on the private side of the site. The username and password needed to access the private side is found in every issue of the RFC newsletter, *InFormation*, or from phyllis@relforcon.org. A weekend's investment with bountiful returns!