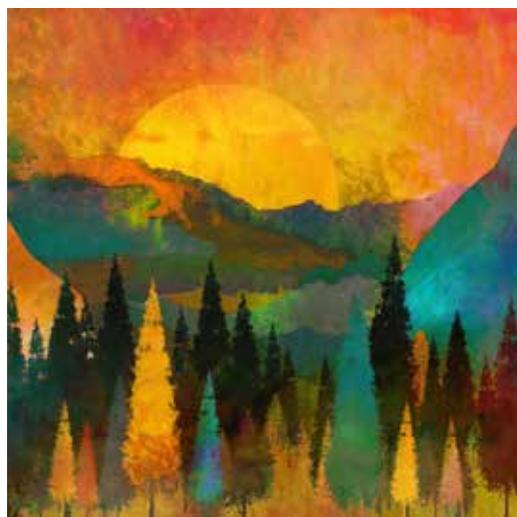


Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion

2018 - 2019 Annual Report
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Annual Report of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious *2018 – 2019*



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Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion

The 2018 LCWR assembly gave us a theme rich in layers of meaning: Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion. We felt that power of communion as we processed in silence together and stood on the steps of St. Louis' Old Courthouse, witnessing against the evils of racism. Our assembly theme would continue to unfold for us throughout the year ahead. As our country and world grew seemingly ever more divided, we women religious witnessed to and were witnesses of the power of communion.

From the experience of communion at the assembly we returned to our communities and witnessed the power of communion as we responded to needs at the border with volunteers, donations, marches, and petitions. We witnessed the power of communion as the sexual abuse crisis and #MeToo movement continued to unfold and survivors came forth and found strength in one another. We felt the power of communion as we raised our voices with people of all faiths to condemn attacks on a synagogue in Pittsburgh, on a mosque in New Zealand, and on churches in Sri Lanka. And most

recently we witnessed the power of communion when the world grieved with the people of Paris and thousands donated to the restoration of Notre Dame Cathedral.

At our 2019 assembly in Scottsdale, Arizona we will continue this journey in communion and expand our horizons as we explore together the theme "Imagining Leadership in a Global Community." Communion empowers. We feel this. We know this. Communion gathers us around the one table and sends us forth in action. Our ability to connect with one another, draw strength from one another, and weave together the separate strands of our being is part of the genius, grace, and gift of religious life. May you see in the pages of this accountability report the presence of love and the power of communion lived out in myriad ways over the past year.

Sharlet Wagner, CSC -- LCWR President
Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ -- LCWR President-Elect
Teresa Maya, CCVI -- LCWR Past President

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one another,
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*Teresa Maya, CCVI; Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ; Carol Zinn, SSJ;
and Sharlet Wagner, CSC in Rome in March 2019*

The Power of Being One Body

We returned from the 2018 LCWR assembly in St. Louis filled with a myriad of experiences from the theme, "Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion." From the opening ritual to the presentations on the theology of Trinitarian communion, the relationship of communion, the experience of communion, the scope of connections that fostered and deepened communion among us, through to the celebration at the closing banquet, assembly 2018 captured our collective minds and hearts and missioned us to "Be the Presence of Love through the Power of Communion."



As I reflect on my near-year of ministry as LCWR executive director, it is this image that remains with me. We have moved as One Body this past year as we do every year. This year has felt different though. Perhaps it is the depth of the awareness of the power of our movement as One Body that is slowly emerging into a vibrant clarity. Perhaps it is the awakening of the power of our movement as One Body as we responded to the call for presence at the southern border that is slowly energizing us into a vibrant clarity. Perhaps it is the acknowledgment of the power of our movement as One Body as we realize the dynamics of emergence that is within each of our institutes regardless of our demographics that are slowly engaging us into a vibrant clarity. Or perhaps it is the affirmation of the power of our movement as One Body as we discern the future path of LCWR that is clearly emerging among us into a vibrant clarity.

I am deeply grateful for the privilege to serve in this ministry with a company of women religious who are faithful, committed, hopeful, creative, courageous, compassionate, diverse, gifted, joyful, and loving. Yes, as we step into assembly 2019, I feel confident and enthusiastic that we are on the precipice of "Imagining Leadership in a Global Community" because of what I have seen unfold since St. Louis: we have moved as One Body awakened to the power of communion and it is all for the life of the world and the future of religious life.

Carol Zinn, SSJ -- LCWR Executive Director

Of all the moments in St. Louis, the one that galvanized the profound capacity for communion among and beyond us as LCWR was the visceral experience of participating in the justice action. The cognitive aspect of the input on the painful reality of racism within/ among and around us that prepared our bodies, hearts, minds and spirits to move, literally, as One Body, melded into the prayer and mantra that sent us out of that ballroom as One Body in silent two-by-two procession to the steps of the courthouse to stand in solidarity.

I feel confident and enthusiastic that we are on the precipice of

'Imagining Leadership in a Global Community'



LCWR assembly participants stand in solidarity against racism on the steps of St. Louis' Old Courthouse

Deepening Communion Among LCWR Members

LCWR Assembly 2018

The annual LCWR assembly remains one of the most significant venues for providing members with inspirational input, new ideas, resources, and opportunities to network and deepen communion among themselves. The 2018 assembly, held in St. Louis, drew together nearly 800 participants to explore the assembly theme, “Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion.”

The assembly focused on the urgent need to foster communion and connection in a world plagued by polarization, division, and fractures of communion. Speakers Gloria Schaab, SSJ; Heidi Russell; and Simón Pedro Arnold, OSB explored insights from new understandings of Trinitarian theology and how those insights might help in the creation of new and more effective ways of strengthening and supporting the global community. In her presidential address, Teresa Maya, CCVI also spoke of the need to be prepared for this unique time in religious life and what may be the new call to Catholic sisters.

Participants practiced contemplative dialogue in small groups twice during the assembly, asking the questions: What ignites a spark in you about the power of communion as it relates to your life and ministry? What matters most for the future of our communities, religious life, and the world we serve? Throughout the assembly participants were also invited to commit to spending time each day in personal and communal contemplation that placed them in deeper communion with the world, especially the places of great suffering and pain.

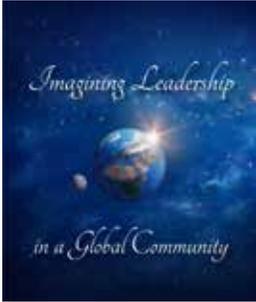
The assembly unanimously recommitted to its 2016 assembly resolution which states: “In the presence of constant and painful reminders of the deep roots of racism in our country, we, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, reaffirm the 2016 assembly resolution and pledge to go deeper into the critical work of creating communion, examining the root causes of injustice and our own complicity, and purging ourselves, our communities, and our country of the sin of racism and its destructive effects.

Following the passage of the resolution, the participants demonstrated their commitment by leaving the meeting area and walking outside to the steps of St. Louis’ Old Courthouse where Dred Scott sued for his freedom in 1846. There, the members stood in silent prayer to remember victims of racism and to pray for the systemic elimination of racism throughout the country and the world.

During the assembly, LCWR bestowed the 2018 Outstanding Leadership Award on Anita Baird, DHM who has made significant contributions to eradicating racism and promoting racial justice.



LCWR Assembly 2019



LCWR is preparing for the 2019 assembly on **Imagining Leadership in a Global Community**. With the presence of keynoter Pat Murray, IBVM, the assembly will explore important movements occurring within religious life globally and locally through the lens of leadership.

An important part of this assembly will be the opportunity to examine what LCWR is learning through its emergent planning process. The assembly will provide opportunities for participants to engage in conversations about: How are these insights calling women religious to reshape the way they lead their own religious institutes? How is LCWR being called to re-envision how it can be as supportive as possible of religious life as it moves into the future?

Resources to Nurture Communion and Empower for Leadership



Leadership Pathways Advisory Committee

The “power of communion” has been tangible in both the online **Leadership Pathways** offerings and also in the various in-person workshops that have been held. There are three online groups that are currently in process, one focuses on Becoming the Leaders We Hope To Be and two focused on The Foundations of Transformational Leadership. Participants point to the online videoconference meetings with the learning cohort as particularly grounding and strengthening.

In March of this year, LCWR offered the workshop **Practicing Leadership: How To Embrace a Vital and Vibrant Future** for the first time. The aim of the workshop was to assist leaders to consciously practice making the connection between the big vision of religious life and the daily realities facing leaders. While the input and processes were greatly appreciated, the most welcome aspect of the workshop was the opportunity to engage deeply with other participants and to share challenges, wisdom, and insights with one another.



The annual **Leading From Within Retreat** provided space and time for 31 LCWR members from 15 different congregations to reflect on the deep meaning of their call to elected leadership and to say a renewed “Yes” to the activity of God in their lives and in their congregations.

The invitation to be the presence of love and deepen communion among leaders also came in the form of a series of reflections entitled, **The Many Face of Contemplative Engagement**. These four-page reflections, which were sent out approximately every six to eight weeks, contain some exploration of a theme related to contemplative engagement, along with inspiration related to the theme, an invitation into communal, contemplative dialogue and some form of practice. Members have been encouraged to use the reflections to deepen their own sense of contemplative engagement and also to participate in communal contemplative dialogue with team members and congregation members. Anecdotal feedback suggests that members are finding these offerings a rich resource for deepening contemplative engagement.



Resources to Nurture Communion and Empower for Leadership

The **New Leaders Workshop** brought together 82 LCWR members from 19 congregations. Throughout the workshop participants experienced the power of communion as they reflected on the spiritual dimensions of leadership, garnered wisdom from the resource persons present, explored some of the concrete realities of serving in elected leadership, and deepened their relationships with one another.



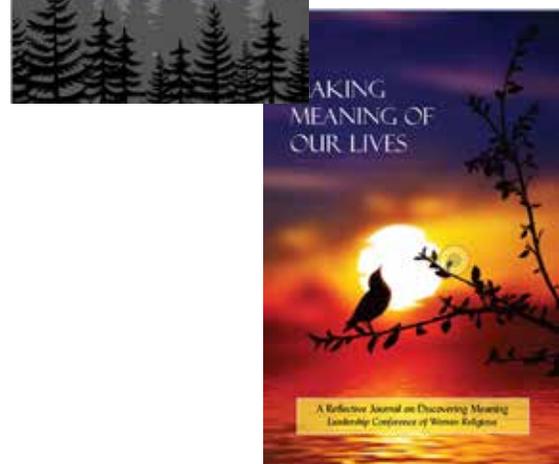
Communications Vehicles

LCWR provides several publications that are utilized by its members, other women and men religious, and the wider public throughout the United States and in other countries.

These include:

- a monthly newsletter, *Update*
- a quarterly theological reflection on global concerns, *Resolutions to Action*
- a biannual journal, *Occasional Papers*
- a yearly reflection journal

In addition, LCWR communicates with its members through an online messaging system, provides a listserv for its members to communicate with one another (LCWR Resource Sharing Forum), maintains a Facebook presence and holds two Twitter accounts, and has a website with numerous resources for its members and the public.



Nurturing Communion Through Advocacy for Justice

LCWR's commitment to social justice is grounded in its 2015-2022 call which claims the moral imperative of the Gospel and pledges its collective voice in solidarity with others to establish economic justice, abolish modern-day slavery, ensure immigrant rights, promote nonviolence, and protect Earth.

Educating for Justice

The associate director for social mission (ADSM) regularly writes on justice issues for LCWR's *Update* newsletter. She also publishes the monthly, *News and Notes from the Social Mission Office* to share information, resources, and opportunities with those involved in the ministry of social justice.

The Global Concerns Committee published four *Resolutions to Action* in 2018-19 examining the opportunities before us, the importance of the 2016 election, the Pope's World Day of Peace message, and white privilege. The committee also published monthly resources to help members implement the conference recommitment to "purge ourselves of the sin of racism and its destructive effects."

Organizing for Justice

The social mission office also seeks to help members and their JPIC promoters take common action on justice concerns before the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of federal government. The ADSM manages three affinity groups and a comprehensive database which can be used to organize and mobilize constituents.

Acting for Justice

LCWR used its collective voice to highlight priority concerns in 10 public statements and four press releases; three amicus briefs; four comments on administrative rules; and dozens of joint letters to the Trump administration and Congress.

The ADSM took leadership in partnering with:

- SHARE Foundation; Sisters of Mercy, and Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity to organize the Root Causes Pilgrimage to Honduras, March 18-25.
- Steering Committee of the Justice Conference of Women Religious (JCWR) to host the anti-racism workshop, Racism through the Lens of Social Justice, March 25-27, 2019.
- Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI) to plan Path of Nonviolence towards a Culture of Peace, hosted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Vatican City, April 4-5.
- Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) to publish prayer resources for Advent, Lent, and Pentecost;
- LCWR Global Concerns Committee to organize the six-week Stand Against Racism social media campaign;
- US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking to advocate for an end to modern day slavery.

Working with Partners

The ADSM serves on the core group of several USCCB staff committees including: Justice for Immigrants; Catholic Climate Covenant; and Coalition of Catholic Organizations against Trafficking. The ADSM also sits on the steering committees of the Justice Conference of Women Religious and the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and on the boards of NETWORK and US Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking. In addition, she serves on the Coalition of DC-Based Catholic Organizations and is the LCWR liaison to the Catholic Health Association and the United Nations Department of Public Information.



LCWR's commitment to social justice is grounded in its 2015-2022 call which claims

the moral imperative of the Gospel

Planning to Best Serve Religious Life into the Future

The changes occurring in religious life in the coming decades require careful discernment about how to prepare for a very different future. In anticipation of how the conference may best serve religious life in this critical period, LCWR has engaged in various planning processes that began in 2018 and will continue through the 2019 assembly and beyond.

The planning began with a comprehensive assessment of LCWR's current services which was conducted at the spring 2018 LCWR regional meetings. Members responded to the following questions:

- What learnings/insights have significantly impacted your service of leadership?
- What key LCWR experiences, services, or resources are most valuable for your ministry of elected leadership?
- What questions, if explored by LCWR, could make a difference in how we create the future of the conference?
- What are your concrete wishes for the future of LCWR?

Next, an online survey was sent to all LCWR members asking for feedback on specific resources and services. Highlights of the results of this two-part assessment were shared at the 2018 assembly, with time for members to process them and their implications.

Building on this qualitative research, the LCWR national board appointed a design team to work with facilitator Donna Fyffe to create an emergent plan for the conference. During December 2018 and January 2019, the team conducted 32 consultation sessions with approximately 150 people to garner a sense of how religious life and LCWR are perceived by those within and outside of LCWR.

In February, the members of the LCWR national board and staff joined the planning process design team as well as 15 guests representing many of the organizations serving religious life for a day-and-a-half charrette to reflect on the input from the consultations. The process generated ideas for how best to support religious life and what LCWR's role might be as religious life experiences significant shifts and changes.

While information from all the focus groups was shared at the charrette, the design team gave attention to the ideas coming forth from non-dominant ethnic religious and from younger religious.

LCWR members discussed several questions developed from the result of the charrette at the spring 2019 regional meetings. Further work with the emerging ideas will take place at the August assembly.



The February charrette explored LCWR's possible role as religious life experiences significant shifts and changes

What questions, if explored by LCWR, could make a difference in how we create the future of the conference?

Assisting Members to Plan for the Future

LCWR member communities are raising questions about how they can best administer and govern themselves amid the significant demographic shifts occurring today. LCWR is working closely with other organizations serving religious life, particularly the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) and the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) to help communities understand options. To that end, Sharon Euart, RSM, the executive director of RCRI, addressed the LCWR board, regional chairs, and staff in August on the commissary option for canonical governance of religious institutes. Discussion took place about how women religious willing to be commissaries might receive training, and how LCWR may be of service to those serving as commissaries.

LCWR's Contemporary Religious Life Committee is also initiating a process that helps to name the essential dimensions of religious life leadership most needed for this time in US religious life.



Contemporary Religious Life Committee is exploring the essential dimensions of religious life leadership for these times



Sharon Euart, RSM, executive director of RCRI, addresses a meeting of the LCWR board, regional chairs, and staff on commissaries



Supporting Communities in Transition

Throughout the year invitations to the LCWR director of transitional services to accompany communities arrive regularly. They arrive from LCWR member congregations, from monasteries of various charism families, as well as from communities and provinces that do not have membership in any conference. Some communities are at the final stages of their journey as they complete relationship agreements and welcome a commissary. Newly freed from the worry of finding leadership and of many internal governance responsibilities, they are able to focus energy on the living of religious life, on charism, mission, and on deepening their relationships with one another. Some communities are in movement toward such agreements and are prayerfully and thoughtfully meeting to articulate what is most important, what is needed, and engaging in the shaping of life-giving covenant statements. Some communities are passing chapter direction statements

that will support their new leaders in making choices about new governance forms and about legacy. Still other communities are in early stages of awareness and are wondering how to begin. At the same time, there are initiatives bringing younger members together to prepare them to carry religious life into the future.

Institutes that have moved toward a new form of governance have been generous in sharing their processes and their learnings with seeking communities. This generosity of time and experience has enabled members of inquiring institutes to ask their own questions, a factor that is helpful to their discernment. One learning that has been shared frequently is that each wishes they had not waited so long to come to a decision.

(continued on page 11)

Supporting Communities in Transition

(continued on page 10)

Collaboration with the offerings of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes and the National Religious Retirement Office continues to be invaluable. The programs and consultants available through NRRO and the legal resources and assembly offered by RCRI are complements to the work of the LCWR staff.

The very generous grant from the GHR Foundation, called the Sister Support Initiative, is scheduled to come to completion at the end of September 2019. In January, with the assistance of GHR, key partners were invited to a think-tank meeting held in Washington, DC. Around the table were LCWR members and staff, a CMSWR representative, a representative of the Association of Latin Missionaries in America (AHLMA), leaders of congregations who were doing new things, and the president of the National Conference of Vicars for Religious. It was a wonderful opportunity to speak about what has been done and our learnings. It was also an opportunity to name what is yet to be done or what might be missing. Key elements of this rich conversation will find their way into a grant application seeking renewal and continuation of the grant. GHR staff members are working closely with us in this application process.

Noting how institutes of women religious are responding to the restructuring called for by these times, LCWR director of transitional services Mary Hughes, OP, said, "They are doing so with courage, with imagination, with grace, and with one another. The activity and power of the Holy Spirit are manifested in multiple ways in the activities of these amazing women."



Think-tank to discuss what has been learned thus far through LCWR's transitional services that have been funded by the GHR Foundation

LCWR Relocates National Office

In December, LCWR, CMSM, RCRI, and Friends in Solidarity (FIS) left the office building that LCWR and CMSM co-owned for 36 years on Cameron Street in Silver Spring, Maryland. Prior to the move, the organizations held a celebration for all that had been accomplished in the building over the years that was attended by several LCWR board members and former employees.

The new office suite, located at 8737 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, is just two blocks from the former building. In January approximately 70 attended an open house at the new headquarters to welcome the three organizations now sharing a suite of offices -- LCWR, RCRI, and FIS. In March, Cardinal Joseph Tobin, CSSR celebrated a Eucharistic liturgy at the suite and then blessed each office and meeting space.



Open house at the new office suite



Fostering Communion Internationally

As religious life becomes more deeply connected globally, the LCWR officers have participated in several events held outside of the United States for religious. These have included:

- A meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) and the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR) in Medellin, Colombia to reflect on the last 50 years since the groundbreaking conference of Latin American bishops held there.
- A meeting of the InterAmerican conference held in San Cristóbal de Las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico that focused on the experiences and faith of the local indigenous people and the desire to help protect and integrate refugees and migrants who find themselves in crises throughout the world.
- The assembly of the Conference of Religious of Mexico (CIRM) in Colima, Mexico that included a presentation on LCWR's leadership formation resources.



Teresa Maya, CCVI and LCWR member Imna Cuesta, CMS in Medellin



The InterAmerican Conference in Chiapas



LCWR board member Yesenia Fernandez, MGSpS presents at the CIRM assembly in Colima

Fostering Communion Internationally

Events in Rome

This year found the LCWR officers in Rome for several events. In March they made their annual visit to the Vatican where they had meetings at several dicasteries at the Vatican to dialogue about the presence and role of religious life in the church of the United States and within the global church. Topics included the work on nonviolence, environmental sustainability, humanitarian crises, Catholic identity, emerging religious life, and the impact of the abuse crisis.

During a visit with women religious leaders based in Rome, the LCWR officers took part in a panel presentation entitled, “Sharing the Vision: A Dialogue on Religious Life Today Now and into the Future” that was recorded and made available online.

In May, the LCWR officers, as well as many LCWR members, were among the 820 participants from 80 countries attending the plenary assembly of the International Union of Superiors General in Rome in May. LCWR past president Teresa Maya, CCVI was one of the keynoters.



Promoting Intercultural Relations

LCWR sent a 16-member delegation to the national V Encuentro in Grapevine, Texas, a gathering of more than 3000 invited delegates from dioceses and Catholic organizations throughout the United States. The goal of the Encuentro process was to provide an opportunity for Hispanics to organize, assess their needs, and assume leadership. The delegation also held a meeting with the Association of Latin Missionaries in America (AHLMA) to hear some of their own hopes for their ministries here in the United States. The LCWR delegates shared their reflections on the experience at regional gatherings as well as through the LCWR website.



LCWR delegation to the V Encuentro

LCWR received a grant to explore how to respond to the growing need for leadership formation for persons working in Catholic Church ministry to the Hispanic population. As an initial step, the conference held a brainstorming session with representatives from AHLMA,



the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC), (Conference of Major Superiors of Men) (CMSM), the Religious Brothers Conference (RBC), and the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR).

Collaboration Among US Religious Conferences

LCWR, CMSM, and CMSWR have traditionally collaborated annually in a variety of forms, including on the Commission on Religious Life and Ministry. This commission is the official link of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) with the conferences of religious life and it convenes each year in November. The three conferences also meet annually with the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. This year's meeting focused on a dialogue on the impact of science/technology on the development of faith among young people.

For a number of years, the executive committees of LCWR and CMSM have met twice a year. For the first time, the executive committee of CMSWR joined the meeting held in November. Theological reflection on a number of matters impacting society and the Catholic Church took place among the participants at their one-day meeting.

In April CMSWR and LCWR co-sponsored a day of reflection on aspects of the ministry of religious leaders. Approximately 100 leaders participated in the day which was guided by three canon lawyers.



LCWR National Board Continues its Experimentation

The LCWR national board met in August, November, February, and May to conduct its work. Mindful that LCWR is in the middle of a three-year governance experimentation, the board spent time deepening its sense of how it can best serve. Its work this year has included:

- Evaluating the 2018 assembly and setting direction for the 2019 and 2020 assemblies
- Finding ways for the board, regional chairs, and staff to create relationships and effectively work together
- Participating in the LCWR emerging planning process
- A board development session with David J. Nygren, a consultant who specializes in board effectiveness, organizational strategy, and executive leadership
- Discussion of the survey responses from the 15 LCWR region chairs regarding how LCWR can best be of service in the future
- Ongoing reflection and discernment on where religious life and LCWR are moving over the next 10 to 20 years

The board also initiated an annual one-day meeting to be held the day before the August LCWR assembly opens where it will meet with the regional chairs and national office staff to share information and hear the ideas, questions, and concerns of the LCWR members. The meeting is part of the effort to keep communications flowing among all who serve LCWR.

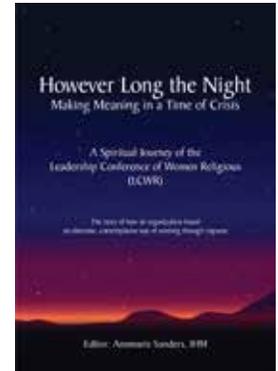
LCWR started a new nomination and election process this year. The new process calls for nominations for the president and board members to be submitted by individuals or leadership teams, provides more discernment time for those nominated, and increases the opportunities for members to become acquainted with the nominees. The election of the board members and the president-elect now takes place at the assemblies.



LCWR national board

Reading and Studying LCWR's However Long the Night Book

Organizations and individuals interested in learning how to navigate situations of conflict and polarization continue to read and discuss the LCWR publication, *However Long the Night: Finding Meaning in a Time of Crisis*. The book chronicles what LCWR learned as it worked through the years of the doctrinal assessment by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The LCWR presidents and staff who authored chapters continue to be invited to speak at events on this experience, and have been invited to appear on Salt + Light television, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), and other venues. The Leadership Collaborative is conducting book groups with the publication and created a study guide for it available on its website.



Former LCWR president Marcia Allen, CSJ (right) at a book-signing event

Addressing the Crisis of Abuse in the Church

The issue of sexual abuse committed by clergy and members of religious communities, as well as the abuse of Catholic sisters by members of the clergy has remained a great concern of LCWR.

Abuse by Women Religious

LCWR issued a public statement acknowledging the horrific actions of some Catholic sisters who perpetrated sexual abuse of persons entrusted to their care and noting how the conference has encouraged its members to both prepare to respond to an allegation and to assure that abuse does not occur in the future. All congregations were encouraged to review their own policies for responding to an allegation and assure that their members know how to protect children and vulnerable adults in their care.

Since the early 1990s most congregations of women religious have invested time and resources into developing policies and procedures to respond to allegations of abuse that are made, to deal appropriately with persons bringing allegations as well as with those accused, and to take preventative measures.

Sexual Abuse of Catholic Sisters

LCWR issued a statement after Pope Francis' public acknowledgement of the sexual abuse of Catholic sisters by members of the clergy. The LCWR statement voiced its hope that the pope's gesture was "some comfort for those who have survived abuse and that it hastens the much-needed repair of the systems within the Catholic Church that have allowed abuse to remain unaddressed for years." LCWR noted that women religious have not always reported sexual abuse for the same reasons as other abuse victims: a sense of shame, a tendency to blame themselves, fear they will not be believed, anxiety over possible retaliation, a sense of powerlessness, and other factors. Numerous media outlets covered this issue and some included interviews with LCWR officers and members.

Sexual Abuse Perpetrated by Clergy

LCWR was among many other organizations calling for stronger measures to be undertaken to rectify the issue of sexual abuse by clergy. Among the recommendations LCWR has advocated include:

- The creation of mechanisms for the reporting of abuse in an atmosphere where victims are met with compassion and are offered safety.
- Refashion the leadership structures of the church to address the issue of clericalism and ensure that power and authority are shared with members of the laity. The revelations of the extent of abuse indicate clearly that the current structures must change if the church is to regain its moral credibility and have a viable future.

The USCCB invited LCWR past president Teresa Maya, CCVI to address the entire body of bishops at its spiritual discernment day held in November on the abuse crisis. The day provided opportunities for the bishops to listen to the tradition of the church as well as to the people, including Teresa's 15-minute address.

In addition, LCWR was invited in February to participate in the Catholic Partnership Summit, coordinated by the Leadership Roundtable, and organized to make concrete recommendations to the church about the sexual abuse crisis. The USCCB invited LCWR as an observer to its June meeting to look at the mechanisms for accountability of bishops in response to the scandals of sexual abuse and the abuse of power. The Institute on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University also invited LCWR to be among the 40 national organizations/individuals gathered to find ways to repair, renew, and revitalize the church's mission in the wake of the abuse crisis.



Carol Zimm, SSJ appears on a Canadian news program to discuss the sexual abuse of women religious by clergy



Teresa Maya, CCVI addresses the body of US bishops on the crisis of abuse

Life in the LCWR Regions

Region 1

The 15 LCWR regions were asked to address the following questions in a brief report:

- What important issues did you address this year?
- What are some of the interests/concerns of your region members that surfaced consistently this past year?
- Is there something unique that your region has done that you think other LCWR members might find beneficial to hear?

Our communities continue to pass through major transitions. Our spring meeting dialogue around assessment for the future was deep, honest, and hope-filled. The dynamics and shape of welcome, formation, accommodation, authority, and responsibility among seasoned and newer sisters is a consistent area of interest. Male clericalism and its effects felt both locally and worldwide is an area of real and urgent concern.

Our regional meetings helped us to weave our commitment to stand against racism with our commitment to fight climate change. At the fall meeting, Josita Colbert, SNDdeN shared on racism as experienced by African-American US women religious. Her presentation, "Prevailing Against All Odds," was accompanied by rich stories of her journey and best practices for welcoming and supporting vocations. During the spring meeting Patty Chappell, SNDdeN and Anne Louise Nadeau, SNDdeN led a lively, personalized workshop on systemic racism, religious life, the Beloved Community, and the call to a life-long process of living the truth with love.

Among the efforts we are making to build communion are: providing grants to women for educational assistance; working for affordable housing; participating in LCWR's anti-racism social media campaign; sponsoring and participating in inter-religious dialogue, interfaith networks, freedom Seders, and other prayer services; and engaging within political spheres for the flourishing of all humanity and all creation.



Connecticut | Maine | Massachusetts | New Hampshire | Vermont

Region 2

As members of Region 2, committed to the LCWR Call 2015-2022, we include in our meetings a specific focus on examining the root causes of injustice, particularly racism and explore issues we face as leaders today.

October 2018

- JPIC representatives joined us via a Zoom conversation. All spoke of their efforts and dedication to examine the root uses of racism through study, education, and action. This new way of coming together strengthened Region 2 through collaboration and unity in our promotion of justice.
- Mary Hughes, OP shared with us on Leadership in a Time of Profound Transformation – calling us to the awareness and recognition that in our aging we are being called to new forms of teaching, healing, and missioning.

March 2019

- Mary Ann Collins, OP shared her experience as a chaplain at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in Bedford, New York through reflections of the women she serves. It was a moving and enlightening experience
- Mary Gene Kinney, BVM, program consultant for Guest House, Inc. led us in deepening our understanding of substance and process addictions. During a question and answer session, she continued to provide insight and practical advice that was helpful to our members.

Our regional gatherings foster networking and discussions (formal and informal) regarding LCWR initiatives and issues facing leaders today.



New York

Region 3

We are numerous and not too distant from one another in Region 3, and we relish our gatherings to share challenges and hopes, initiatives and changes that impact our ministry of leadership. The inspiring talk by Teresa Maya, CCVI at the August assembly touched us deeply as did the experience of our witness in St. Louis to our commitment to acknowledge and repent our complicity in racism. Donna Fyffe responded to our request for help in dealing with the polarizations we face in our church and country (and sometimes in families and communities) and taught us some tools to use to move toward healing, reconciliation, and forgiveness. Donna urged us, with Pope Francis, to be “women of communion . . . to have the courage to be present in the midst of conflict and tension, as a credible sign of the presence of the Spirit who inspires in human hearts a passion for all to be one.”

At our spring meeting, we welcomed Theresa Sandok, OMS, whose experience with the Region 9 Wisconsin Collaborative we found exciting and ripe with potential for many of our own congregations. We leave our meetings hungry for more time to share prayer, ideas, fears, hopes, good news, and fun with one another!



New Jersey | Pennsylvania (East)

Region 4

Annually, Region 4 gathers twice, once with emphasis on a presentation offering a challenge and once with a reflective focus. In the fall Gail Worcelo, CP drew us into her presentation titled “The Footprints of God.” The room was hung with huge banners, each bearing a painted animal, insect, flower, etc. Looking in any direction we were reminded of our place and role in the universe, and of the need to heal the universe and ourselves. Through slides, storytelling, dance, and energy exercises, Gail engaged us to commit to action for the life of the world. In spring, Annmarie Sanders, IHM, led us through reflection on the questions that we face, in a day of “Living and Loving the Questions Through Mystery, Beauty and Awe.” It offered space and time for pondering, integrating, and articulating insights to carry home and into our ordinary and demanding ministry.

Region 4 also welcomed a new team with Toby Lardie as our chair; received reports from Encuentro participants Ana Lydia Sonera Matos, CDP and Donna M. Gribshaw, CDP; addressed the sexual abuse crisis in light of the UISG and USG paper; noted member communities whose sisters volunteered at the border to welcome the tide of refugees and migrants; and, following Shannen Dee Williams’ presentation, affirmed the extension of LCWR’s commitment to work against racism.



Delaware | Maryland | North Carolina | Pennsylvania (West) | South Carolina, Virginia, DC, West Virginia

Region 5

Region 5 has concentrated on the social justice issues as presented in the LCWR resolution. Particular emphasis has been on human trafficking and the inhumane treatment of immigrants and their children.

In April members marched in prayer along Chef Menteur Highway (one of the top three areas in New Orleans for trafficking) as well as visited Eden House, a safe house for women (18-23). Trafficked persons at age 18 are no longer considered by society as victims but as criminals. We learned of the enlightened, compassionate care and holistic approach employed by Eden House to prepare their residents to reenter society as strong, independent women with skills to live productive lives and to give back to society. While there, we witnessed a woman engaged in making gift bags that were ordered by a large company.

Each of our congregations has and continues to financially support efforts on behalf of the immigrants entering at the US borders. Those who have Spanish-speaking members have sent sisters to the border towns, and one congregation will send sisters on a more permanent basis. Members of several congregations prepare gift bags for immigrants who pass through their city in route to a holding area.

Region 5 members also shared what their congregations were doing to guard against potential liability that may arise due to the current sexual abuse climate in our church.



Alabama | Florida | Georgia | Louisiana | Mississippi | Puerto Rico | Virgin Islands

Region 6

The Emergent Planning Process, while taking up much regional meeting time, has been appreciated. The contemplation processes allowed members to spiritually and practically focus on the work at hand.

The fall 2018 meeting panel of young adults responding to the questions, “Where do you find hope today?” and “Where do you see that hope is lacking?” was inspiring, interactive, and thought-provoking. The sisters had lots of questions and welcomed dialogue. Panel members expressed gratitude for being asked to come and to have their hopes and concerns really listened to.

Sexual abuse was the topic of presentations at the spring meeting. A faith-filled woman lawyer with expertise in this painful subject shared wisdom gained through her experience working with children, their families, and those accused. She guided members through a discussion on policies and procedures each community needs to have in place. This was followed by staff from St. Luke Institute who shared coping and resilience skills in compassionate caring for members, those accused, the community, and leadership themselves dealing with a difficult situation.

Members of Region 6 shared best practices, gave support to one another, and had a bit of time to relax and laugh with friends.



Kentucky | Ohio | Tennessee

Region 7

At Region 7 gatherings, we address the national agenda and discuss significant region issues, including having a better global understanding of religious life. At our fall regional, we had a videoconference with Ragheed Saeeds, OP, of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine, a congregation in Iraq, who shared her vocation story and mission of her community in Iraq. The sisters teach all Iraqis, both Christians and Muslims. Conversation was intense but provided insight into the lives of Christians suffering in a war zone.

At our spring gathering, we had a process to help us look at different cultural communication styles and engage cultural diversity. We also had a follow-up presentation on one way to address climate change. The Dominican Sisters, with the help of Graystone Consulting, shared their impact-investing fund, “Climate Solutions.”

We try to have extended conversations on issues that impact our ministry of leadership -- both internal congregational issues and the challenge of external global, societal, and ecclesial issues. These conversations surfaced topics, which we will continue to address at future gatherings and include: collaboration, the sexual-abuse crisis, climate change, and leadership, particularly leadership development for younger members.



Indiana | Michigan

Region 8

Our regional gatherings provided a venue for deepening conversation and personalizing engagement with the annual assembly themes. This year, our region’s focus was “The Power & Hope of Communion: What do we see? How does it feel? What might we do?” To that end, we:

- Invited Carol Zinn, SSJ to our fall meeting to help us more specifically consider how we are called to embrace and embody this time as holy and recognize both the gift and challenge of leadership as blessing; and envision and enliven intentional communion in our region and among LCWR.
- Invited leaders from religious congregations of women in Germany, Japan, and Poland to our spring meeting to share the state of religious life and congregation leadership issues in their countries.
- Invited one another into conversations that matter, with particular focus on how to see and feel the emerging present in our congregations, leadership ministry, and religious life.
- Provided a forum for members to engage in conversations they wanted to have with one another. This year, we discussed how our congregations are meeting the assisted living needs of their members and congregation efforts to advance LCWR’s social justice stances.
- Scheduled constituent visits with our state senators and representatives to advocate for adopting a fair tax and restoring funding for immigrant services in Illinois.



Illinois

Region 9

Ongoing formation was front and center for the members of LCWR Region 9 as we hosted excellent speakers.

In September Teresa Maya, CCVI led a workshop at the “Sisters Without Borders” gathering. Sponsored by Region 9, this was an inclusive gathering for any sister in the region. Teresa focused on the reality of religious life today and a path to embrace the future. At the fall regional gathering, leaders heard Ellen Dauwer, SC executive director of the Religious Formation Conference, speak about the current generation of the women and men entering religious life. This presentation was preceded by a panel of sisters from the Giving Voice cohort who shared their wisdom and engaged in a dialogue across generations. The panel presentation was open to all sisters in the area as well as live-streamed to the entire region.

As we continue to explore ways to adapt for the future needs of congregations, The Wisconsin Religious Collaborative hired an executive director, Ms. Lyn Korte. The collaborative has been actively seeking input not just from the nine member congregations but from all congregations in Region 9 to clarify what needs can be met by a collaboration.

Region 9 has responded generously to the requests for assistance to immigrants at the US border sending sisters and associates and making donations. We continue sponsoring immigrant houses and apartments in our region. We continue to collaborate in programs for women who are seeking to break free from street prostitution, anti-human trafficking, and other justice issues.



Wisconsin

Region 10

Members of Region 10 are primarily involved in education and activism related to issues of racism, immigration, human trafficking, and ecology. Our involvement ranges from financing emergency and transitional housing to providing support for young refugee children in need of help with the English language. Members take an active part in coalitions working to end human trafficking and in ecological projects that raise awareness to the damage done to our earth.

In addition to collaboration on various social justice issues, however, we realize that time for contemplation is necessary in order to keep us grounded. With that in mind, Rose Dowling, FSM and Mary Jordan, FMSA guided us through a contemplative day at our fall meeting, encouraging us to find rest, renewal, and delight in our busy lives. As leaders of our congregations, this is not always easy!

This year Jamie Phelps, OP facilitated our spring meeting. For many years, Jamie served as director of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University, Louisiana. As she has stated, "While diversity is a gift from God, we use our differences as walls or barriers rather than for enrichment." Jamie helped the members focus on breaking down those obstacles and celebrating differences.



Iowa | Missouri (East) | Nebraska

Region 11

Region 11 members support one another and offer vibrant experiences of the power of communion to face practical issues confronting our congregations. Recent dialogue focused on:

- Educating for relational living with lay employees and associates
- Mutual sharing for forwarding our charisms and mission with laity
- Sharing topics of interest to many of our communities, such as green burials

We extended the presence of love responding to LCWR's call to minister at the border by sending sisters, associates and funds. Sharing experiences of the sexual abuse crisis and emergent leadership was inspiring, motivating, and productive.

Regional meeting highlights included a mini-retreat by Barbara Younger, OSB, on the Prodigal Son and Leadership, receiving Anna Maria Reha, SSND's vibrant report on her V Encuentro experience. In July, we hosted "The Face of Mercy," a regional conference with noted scripture scholar Dianne Bergant, CSA.

As we explore our identity as a largely rural region, we have effectively used LCWR resources on the intersection of racism, climate change, and immigration to help us deepen our own awareness of white privilege and racism. This conversation leads us to plan presentations to address social issues such as high suicide rates facing our local Native American populations.



Minnesota | North Dakota | South Dakota | Wyoming

Region 12

There were many issues that Region 12 reflected on throughout the year. The topics that were most pertinent to our region revolved around immigration issues such as the immigrant caravan that came in November of 2018 near the border town of McAllen, Texas. Norma Pimentel, MJ, who is very active in immigration issues along the border town of McAllen, had informed our region about the urgency to help out with the immigrants.

Another topic of interest that Region 12 found important was the presentation Teresa Maya, CCVI gave on the V Encuentro. Our region reflected on how to connect our religious institutes in the strengthening of this process led by the bishops' conference in response to *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Region 12 looked at ways to fund the inter-community novitiate program, which focuses on sisters in initial formation who come together for networking, support, and discussion. Anita Brenek, CDP; Elizabeth Ann Vasquez, SSCJ; and Kathleen Goike, IWBS led the discussion on a proposal to fund the program to which the region unanimously agreed.



Arizona | Arkansas | New Mexico | Texas

Region 13

Region 13 includes a large geographic area and each state in which we live and minister provides a unique backdrop for our experiences. During the time between our fall and spring meetings, our commitment as a region was to address the assembly resolution on racism especially within our congregations.

The geographical expanse of our locations require creativity when it comes to finding common actions between meetings. Last fall we agreed to promote and encourage participation of our congregations/communities in the Manna House Theological Institute's event in Concordia, Kansas in July 2019 where Dr. Shannen Dee Williams will be the primary speaker and will address the reality of racism.

Our desire to self-educate continued in the spring gathering. Guests from several different ethnicities were part of a day-long conversation with us on the topic of racism. *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, written by Robin DiAngelo, was the starting point of the conversations.

We have concern about the limited participation at our meetings due to the broad geographic area of our region. Even though our regional gatherings are somewhat small in number, we feel blessed with insightful and challenging conversations and benefit from the sharing of resources and experiences.



Kansas | Colorado | Missouri (West) | Oklahoma

Region 14

Region 14 hosts two regional assemblies per year – fall in northern California, and spring in southern California. Usually 45 – 50 sisters participate at each assembly, and presenters are brought in for topics of interest. These topics are surfaced at each meeting for future planning.

In October Mary Waskowiak, RSM worked with us on “Leading from the Middle Space.” She helped us identify when we lead from reactive places, operating from limitations and fears, and when we lead from creative places, operating from strengths and love.

In March, Guest House came as our presenters for “Walking with the Wounded Leadership Institute.” We opened the presentations to all sisters in leadership whether they were members of LCWR or not. We were pleased to host some sisters from non-LCWR congregations. This is a practice we hope to continue! Some of the topics and discussions were: addiction as a disease, co-dependency, substance addictions (drugs, alcohol, food, etc.), process addictions (gambling, internet, computer games, spending, hoarding, work/ministry, exercise, etc.). It was very informative and helpful to know the resources available to guide the healing process.

Upcoming topics of interest include religious life futuring, governance (chapters), and intercultural community living.



California | Guam | Hawaii | Nevada | Utah

Region 15

The fall regional meeting, which took place in Beaverton, Oregon, included a presentation by the Interfaith Ministry on Immigrants and Refugees Justice. This covered the struggles of immigrants and refugees in Oregon and how the situation is being mishandled by local private governmental contracts.

Our spring meeting was held in Cottonwood, Idaho. It had been a decade since the LCWR Region 15 had been to St. Gertrude’s Monastery and Spirit Center in Cottonwood. We were a small but robust group of 12. Two local relevant groups to the area were part of our two days.

We heard from The Kootenai County Taskforce on Human Rights about one of the worst Nazi attacks on a Native American woman and her son. This taskforce took to court the leader of the white supremacist group who led the attack and won the case against them. This resulted in the loss of the supremacist’s property as settlement for the lawsuit won by the Native American family.

On the second day two local Native American women shared an informative slideshow and heartfelt storytelling on the history of the land of northern Idaho and the area surrounding St. Gertrude’s Monastery.



Alaska | Idaho | Montana | Oregon | Washington

Stewardship of LCWR's Financial Resources

During 2018, the LCWR finance and audit committee and the office staff have continued to work diligently to ensure the careful stewardship of LCWR's resources. Despite a continued decline in leadership members and congregation members, LCWR remains financially viable. Reconfigurations of congregations will continue to affect LCWR membership. The committee was aware of significant changes that have been occurring and in 2017 recommended that the 2018 and 2019 membership dues remain the same, \$730.00 per congregational unit and \$9.00 per congregational member.

Auditor's Report

Linton, Shafer, Warfield and Garrett, PA completed an audit of LCWR's financial statements and issued an unqualified opinion, noting that the statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of LCWR as of December 31, 2018 and 2017. It notes that the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended are in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. In 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board issued Accounting Standards Update No. 2016-14, Presentation of Financial Statements for Not-for-Profit Entities. LCWR adopted the provisions of this new standard during year ending December 31, 2018. The changes include terminology used to describe categories of net assets throughout financial statements, new disclosures regarding liquidity and the expansion of availability of resources and disclosures related to functional allocation of expenses.

Investments

The LCWR finance and audit committee continues to meet with Sean Caffrey, representative of Christian Brothers Investment Services (CBIS) to review investment performance and the Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Guidelines which were reviewed and updated by the finance and audit committee and approved by the national board. In 2018 the mutual fund investments increased in value from \$9,714,471 at December 31, 2017 to \$11,375,363. The realized and unrealized loss was \$534,290. Net purchases of investments in 2018 were \$2,111,805. Reinvested interest and dividends in 2018 were \$83,377.

Audited Revenues

The total operation revenue increased 17.8% over 2018 compared to the prior year. Revenue from operations was \$2,120,178 and \$1,800,293 for 2018 and 2017, respectively. The major contributors to the operating revenue are membership dues, assembly contributions, and grants.

Audited Expenses

There was an increase of 8.8% in expenses in 2018 compared to the prior year and the major categories contributing to the increase are the programs and grant expenses. The national office showed the most significant decrease in operating expenses from 2017.

Net Assets

In 2018 LCWR net assets increased by 11.5% due to increases in investment in real estate and grant revenue.

Budget 2018 to Actual 2018

Budget targets for expenses and revenue were carefully monitored. Operating revenues were 14% over budget and expenses were less than 1% under budget, resulting in a positive operating variance to budget for the year. The operating revenue, excluding grant income of \$519,328, was \$1,600,820 versus budgeted revenues of \$1,331,300 for a favorable budget variance of \$269,520. The operating expenses, excluding grant expenses of \$351,602, were \$1,349,734 versus budget expenses of \$1,438,068 for a favorable budget variance of \$88,334.

LCWR Building

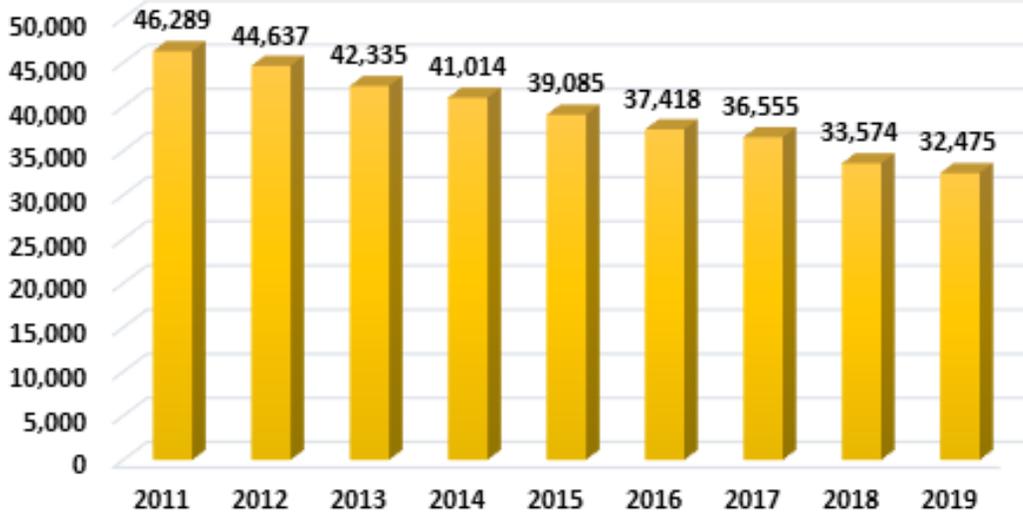
The Cameron Street building jointly owned by LCWR and CMSM that included offices for their own staff as well as for the Resource Center for Religious Institutes and Solidarity for South Sudan was sold the spring of 2018. The income from rents covered 2018 expenses and provided necessary capital improvements. For calendar year 2018, LCWR's portion of the building fund increase was \$1,817,288 compared to \$146,835 in 2017, primarily due to investment gains, including gain on sale of building.

Membership and Assembly Financial Assistance Donations and Grants

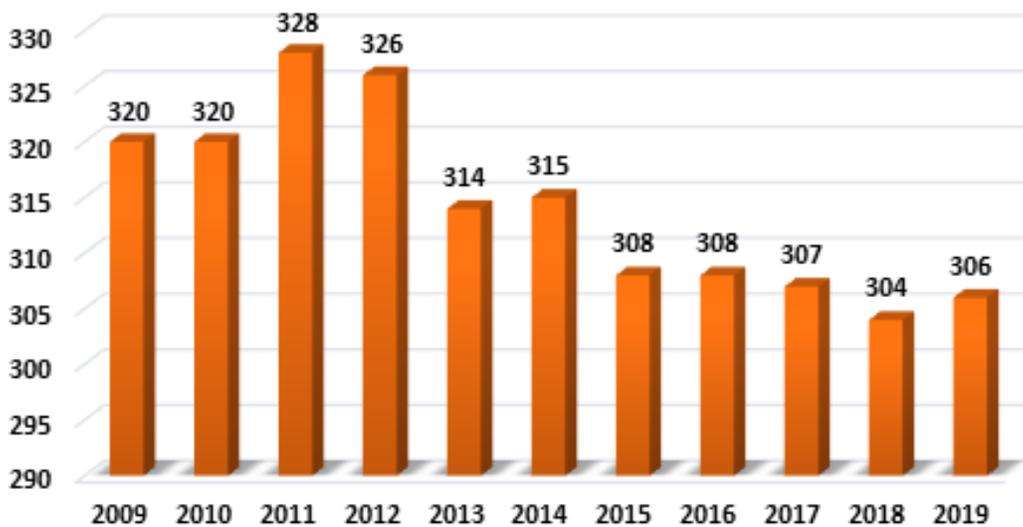
During 2018 donations from 50 congregations (five more than in 2017) for Financial Assistance for Membership Grants totaled \$18,383, an increase of \$1,804 from 2017. In 2018, 21 congregations (two more than 2017) received Membership Financial Assistance Grants for a total of \$12,858, an increase of \$1,708. In 2018, 67 congregations, 21 more than in 2017, donated \$32,765 for Assembly Financial Assistance Grants, an increase of \$8,790 from 2017. Assembly Financial Assistance Grants were awarded to 14 congregations in 2018, the same number as 2017, totaling \$18,957, a decrease of \$2,783 from 2017.



Total Congregation Members

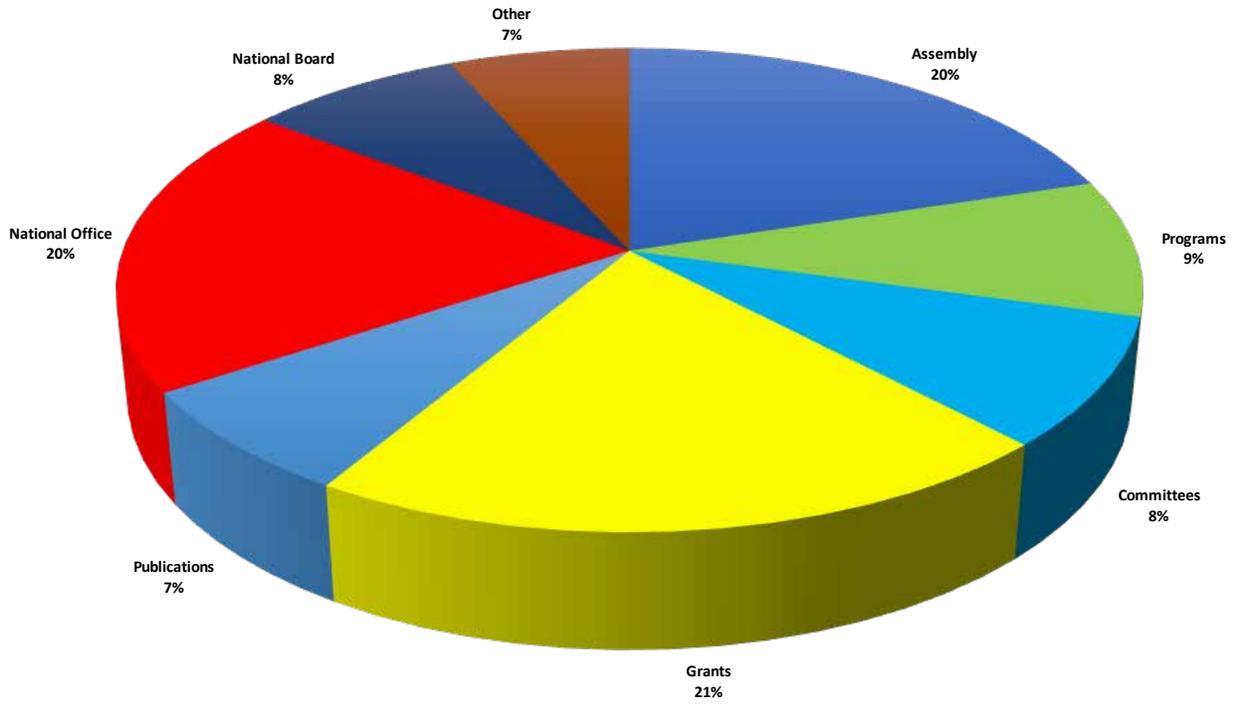


Congregation Units

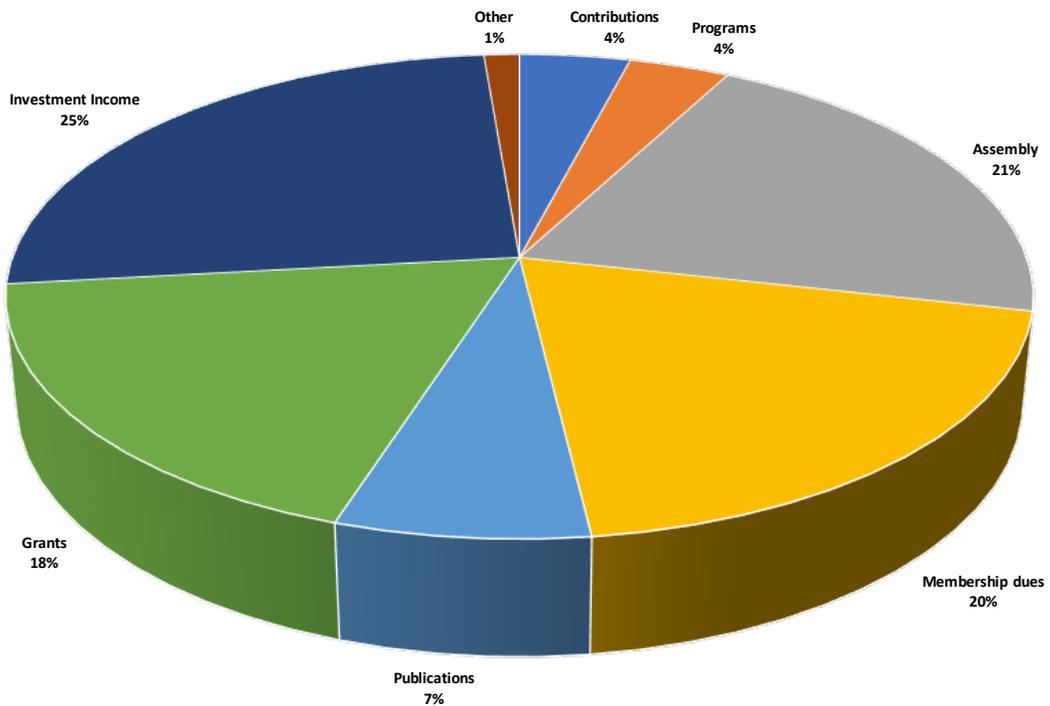


LCWR FINANCES

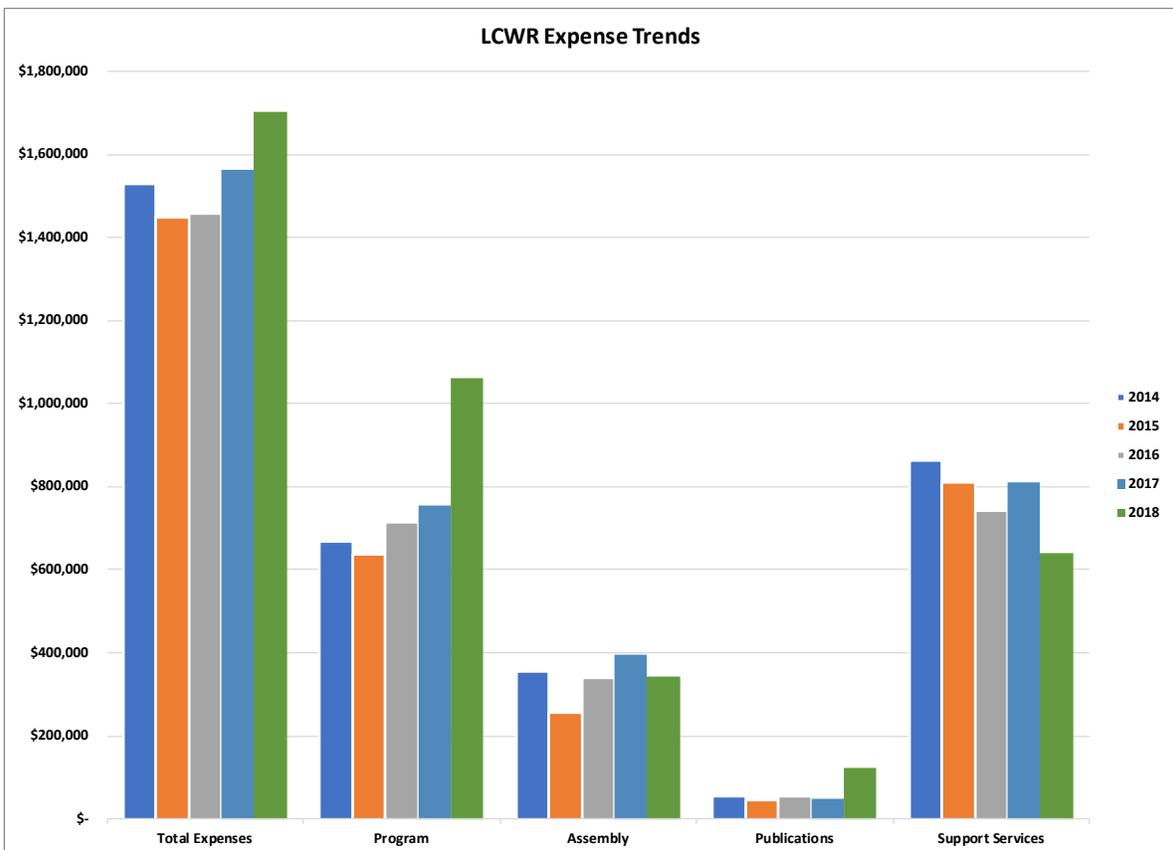
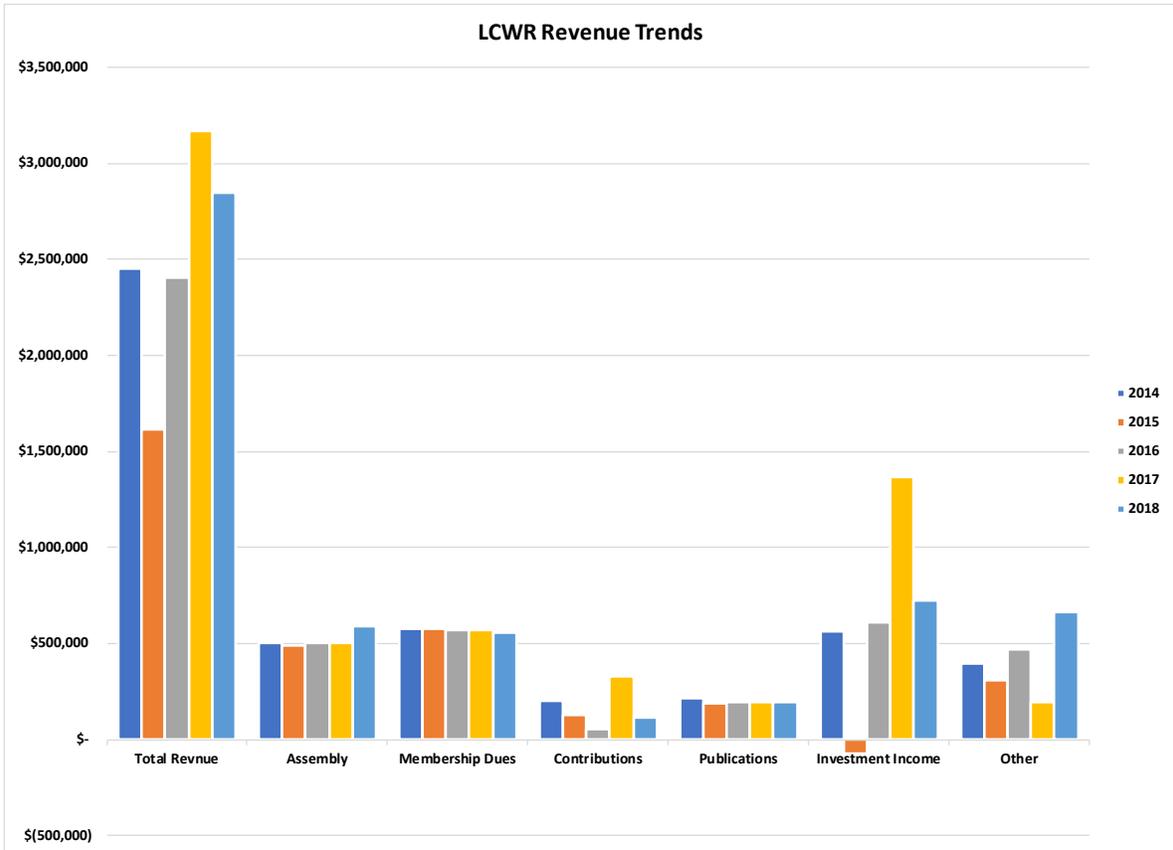
2018 LCWR EXPENSES



2018 LCWR REVENUES



LCWR FINANCES



Collaborating for the Mission of Religious Life

LCWR works closely with other organizations

serving women and men religious in the United States.

These organizations describe how, since the summer of 2018,

their activities and initiatives have attempted to be a presence of love for the world.

Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Mark Padrez, OP — Executive Director

Since August 2018 the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) has undergone major transitions. With sadness we no longer share office space with LCWR, and we moved to new offices in Greenbelt, Maryland, yet more than ever we are enthusiastically committed to continue our collaboration and continuing our mutual ministry to assist the leaders of religious communities. Our relationship with LCWR is an important priority for us at CMSM.

In addition to the new offices the conference has hired three new staff members. In September we had hired a chief operation officer, Tom Southard, who, in his short time, has had a tremendous impact in assisting us in our mission. Recently, we hired Deacon Steven DeMartino, as our director of child protection, whose primary ministry will be to assist communities to become accredited in providing a safe environment in the church for children and young people. Finally, I began my ministry as executive director in April. Major transitions indeed.

In August will be holding our national assembly in San Antonio which we will be initiating a process of discernment and reflection on the realities of religious life today and how the conference must adapt and how to meet the needs of the religious superiors. This assembly is a “new Pentecost” for us in order to meet the demanding and challenging needs of the world and church. Please keep us in prayer.



Resource Center for Religious Institutes

Sharon Euart, RSM – Executive Director

During the past year the board of directors and staff of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) continued to seek ways to carry out its mission of assisting religious institutes in tending to their stewardship responsibilities. Our annual conference in Orlando was a highlight of our activities. The spirit of the gathering, the workshops, speakers, worship celebrations, and opportunities for networking were exciting and enthusiastically received by the participants.



We concluded our second phase of the GHR grant Planning for the Future with our fourth Fidelity to the Journey workshop in September 2018. This session which brought together a group of US bishops, leaders of institutes in transition, and resource persons was entitled Together in Communion. The focus of the workshop was to gain a better understanding of the experience of transition and its impact not only on the religious institute and its members but also on the local church and to provide an opportunity for dialogue and mutual support between bishops and religious leaders. It was truly an experience of communion with participants urging similar workshops be held regionally. RCRI is hoping to expand this opportunity in the coming year.

The Toolbox on the RCRI website continues to expand with new resources available to members of RCRI, LCWR, CMSWR, CMSM, UISG, vicars for religious, and now the Conference of Religious Australia. We are very pleased to expand the access giving more religious assistance with planning for transition.

RCRI embraces the theme of LCWR's 2019 Assembly, Imagining Leadership in a Global Community, as we expand our resources internationally and assist religious leaders in carrying out their current and emerging stewardship responsibilities.



Religious Formation Conference

Ellen Dauwer, SC – Executive Director

The mission of the Religious Formation Conference (RFC) is threefold as well as universal: initial formation, ongoing formation, and the professional preparation of formators. The roots of this mission are in the rich soil of the Sister Formation Conference that was first tilled more than 65 years ago. As these pioneers witnessed to the Presence of Love and the Power of Communion, our work today seeks the same.

Over the past year the mission has been channeled into several key initiatives. First is the introduction of the Together program: a collaborative with Catholic Theological Union designed for newer sisters and brothers that has three main components: theological study, community, and ongoing formation.

Another significant initiative is the restructuring on the local level from 15 regions to 12 member areas. This new structure will commence this fall.

The RFC continues to be in service to women's and men's congregations through the ForMission, Life Commitment, and Orientation to Formation programs and ongoing workshops, publications, and webinars.

Finally, all at the RFC are gearing up for congress 2019 which will be held October 24-27 in Louisville, Kentucky. Its theme becomes more timely each day: "Being Signs of Courageous Hope."



National Religious Vocation Conference

Deborah Marie Borneman, SSCM
Director of Membership Services

The National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) has a vision to set the world ablaze with the fire of God's love through the prophetic, joyful witness of religious sisters, brothers, and priests as radical disciples of Jesus. Its mission is to serve as a catalyst for vocation discernment and the full flourishing of religious life for the ongoing transformation of the world.

This new NRVC mission and vision statement crafted in 2018 speaks fearlessly of being the presence of love and the power of communion in our world. A national convening of collaborators helped to shape a new CARA study, with the support of the GHR Foundation, to compare data about members who entered in 2003-2018 with those who entered from 1993-2008. We recognize an uptick in vocations:

- In 2018, there were 240 perpetual professions from 113 religious institutes compared to 136 perpetual professions from 75 religious institutes in 2015
- In 2018, 440 women and men entered religious life in 177 religious institutes compared to 411 women and men entering 143 religious institutes in 2015

NRVC has more than 1,000 members representing more than 325 institutes and organizations. Vision Vocation Guide and Horizon journal were recognized with 10 awards from the Catholic Press Association. The NRCRV awarded nine grants to alleviate educational debt of candidates entering religious life. The biennial convocation held in Buffalo brought together more than 300 vocation directors and those who support vocations around its theme: Walk with me: Encounter, Accompaniment and Invitation.

National Religious Retirement Office

Stephanie Still, PBVM – Executive Director

The 2018 LCWR assembly explored Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion. The power of communion is something we feel strongly at the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), since our work is possible only through the love and concern of Catholics across the nation. In 2017, they donated \$28 million to the annual Retirement Fund for Religious appeal. This generous love funded \$25 million in financial assistance to 360 religious institutes for the care of elder members. Additional funding was directed to help eligible communities address critical retirement-funding shortages. NRRO consultants walk hand-in-hand with these communities, offering professional expertise and personal reassurance.



Funding from the annual appeal also enables the NRRO staff to furnish educational resources that support leaders in their efforts to enhance and celebrate the power of communion in their institutes. These resources, which focus on retirement and eldercare issues, include the quarterly publication, *Engaging Aging*, and a free webinar series. Together, these tools offer professional updates for care personnel and strategies for addressing retirement challenges in ways that build community.

Our grateful prayer is with all those whose love and support is helping transform the retirement outlook for religious communities.



Friends in Solidarity

Joan Mumaw, IHM

President and Chief Administration Officer

Solidarity with South Sudan is celebrating 10 years of presence in this newly independent country. This decade of service, building the capacity of the people of South Sudan, is due to the commitment of religious men and women the world over to a decision UISG/USG made in 2006. This decision came in response to a request from the bishops of Sudan for assistance in training teachers, health care professionals, farmers, and diocesan pastoral teams. Enjoy this [photo journey](#) through these past ten years.

Friends in Solidarity (FIS), the US partner to Solidarity with South Sudan, is beginning its fourth year as a not-for-profit organization raising awareness of the situation in the country and seeking funding to support the work of Solidarity. Funds raised in the US cover 15% of the yearly budget of Solidarity and, hopefully, with continued support of religious and Catholic foundations, will increase by five percent this coming year. The commitment of religious to this joint initiative and new model of ministry among the poor is a courageous act of hope and compassion among the war-ravaged people of South Sudan.

Friends in Solidarity has been generously supported by LCWR and we are grateful to be part of the new joint offices of LCWR, RCRI, and FIS.

Generous Service to the Leadership Conference

LCWR thanks all who have contributed their time and talent to the conference through service as national board members, regional chairs, committee members, and as liaisons to other organizations.

National Board

Rita Cammack, OSF
 Jan Cebula, OSF
 Susan Durkin, OSU
 Yesenia Fernandez, MGSps
 Elise García, OP
 Eileen Haynes, SCL
 Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ-- President-Elect
 Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS
 Kate Katoski, OSF -- Treasurer
 Teresa Maya, CCVI -- Past President
 Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM
 Theresa Sandok, OSM -- Secretary
 Sharlet Wagner, CSC-- President
 Carol Zinn, SSJ-- Executive Director

Regional Chairpersons

Luke Parker, SJC -- Region 1
 Cathy Sheehan, DW -- Region 2
 Eileen White, GNSH -- Region 3
 Toby Lardie, HM -- Region 4
 Leona Bruner, SSF -- Region 5
 Sharon Gray, SCN -- Region 6
 Ginger Downey, OLVM -- Region 7
 Betsy Pawlicki, OP -- Region 8
 Jean Steffes, CSA -- Region 9
 Rita Menart, PBVM -- Region 10
 Rosemary DeGracia, OSB -- Region 11
 Elizabeth Ann Vasquez, SSCJ -- Region 12
 Jan Ginzkey, OSB (Phyllis Stowell, SCL – Interim)-- Region 13
 Judith Dieterle, SSL -- Region 14
 Guadalupe Guajardo, SNJM -- Region 15

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Advisory Committee for Leadership Pathways

Ellen Dauwer, SC
 Karin Dufault, SP
 Alba Letelier, SP
 Jeanne Hagelskamp, SP
 Pat Kozak, CSJ
 Marie McCarthy, SP, (LCWR staff)
 Margo Ritchie, CSJ
 Susan Weber (facilitator and evaluator)

Contemporary Religious Life Committee

Maria Hughes, ASC
 Sheila Lemieux, CSJP
 Marie McCarthy, SP (LCWR Staff)
 Patricia McDermott, RSM
 Rosalia Meza, VDMF
 Annmarie Sanders, IHM (LCWR staff)
 Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ
 Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR staff)
 Catherine Bertrand, SSND (Facilitator)

Design Team for Emergent Planning Process

Judith Donovan, CSJ
 Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ
 Rosalia Meza, VDMF
 Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM
 Michelle Marie Stachowiak, CSSF
 Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR staff)
 Donna Fyffe (Facilitator)

Finance and Audit Committee

Kate Katoski, OSF – Treasurer
 Janice Bader, CPPS
 Christine Beckett, SCN (LCWR staff)
 Mary Jane Herb, IHM
 Kathleen Keenan, RSM
 Patricia Moriarty, RSM
 Maureen O'Connor, OSF
 Veronique Wiedower, CSC

Global Concerns Committee

Gemma Doll, OP
 Sue Dunning, CSJ
 Susan Francois, CSJP
 Donna Marie Gribschaw, CDP
 Eileen Haynes, SCL
 Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR staff)
 Patricia Siemen, OP

Governance Committee

Judith Desmarais, SP
 Barbara Dreher, CSJ
 Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ (chair);
 Maria Iannucillo, SSND
 Joyce Lehman, CPPS
 Theresa Maya, CCVI (ADD)
 Mary Pellegrino, CSJ (DELETE)
 Theresa Sandok, OSM
 Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR staff)
 Sharlet Wagner, CSC

Occasional Papers Advisory Board

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 Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP
 Pat Kozak, CSJ
 Mary McKay, CSJ
 Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM
 Annmarie Sanders, IHM (LCWR staff)

Outstanding Leadership Award Committee

Christine Beckett, SCN (LCWR staff)
 Jeannie Masterson, CSJ
 Dawn Tomaszewski, SP
 Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA
 Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM

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Catholic Health Association Board

Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR Staff)

Commission on Religious Life and Ministry

Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ
Kate Katoski, OSF
Teresa Maya, CCVI
Theresa Sandok, OSM
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Sharlet Wagner, CSC

Communicators for Women Religious

Annmarie Sanders, IHM (LCWR Staff)

Justice Conference of Women Religious

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Leadership Collaborative

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National Religious Retirement Office Assistance Review Committee

Susan Scholl, FSM

National Religious Retirement Office Management Committee

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NETWORK Board

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Resource Center for Religious Institutes

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USCCB Accounting Practices Committee

Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM

USCCB Committee on Consecrated Life and Vocations

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace

Carol Zinn, SSJ (LCWR Staff)

USCCB National Advisory Council

Kathryn Dougherty, OSF
Jenny Howard, SP

US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking

Ann Scholz, SSND (LCWR Staff)

LCWR National Office Staff



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Executive Director



Christine Beckett, SCN
Associate Director for
Business and Finance



Mary Hughes, OP
Director of Transi-
tional Services



Marie McCarthy, SP
Associate Director
of Programs



Anmarie Sanders, IHM
Associate Director
for Communications



Ann Scholz, SSND
Associate Director
for Social Mission



Janette Cahill
Executive Assistant



Carol Glidden
Administrative Assis-
tant & Membership
Coordinator



Aisha White
Administrative
Assistant