

# Update

A Publication of the  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

July 2017



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## Speakers, Facilitators, and Listeners Prepare for 2017 LCWR Assembly

The 2017 LCWR assembly, *Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Transformation*, is structured to help the participants be conscious of the movement of God, not only within themselves, but as it flows among the whole body. The assembly will utilize a number of processes designed to create an atmosphere that facilitates throughout the gathering the movement from "I to WE," from the individual to the communal.

As preparation for this experience, all those serving as speakers, facilitators, and listeners, as well as the LCWR national office staff, are creating that atmosphere now. Each person has a copy of the graphic above which has photos of all who will be playing a role in the assembly, and has been asked to spend time with the photos in a contemplative manner in these weeks leading up to the assembly. By doing so, a field of creative energy will build among all, a field that will help them to connect even more profoundly with one another when they are together at the assembly. They make this commitment believing that the energy and connection will then impact the gathered body as a whole. All assembly participants are invited to do the same and pray for and with all those shown here.

*From the LCWR Presidency*

## This is What I Know Now

by Mary Pellegrino, CSJ — LCWR President

**R**ecently I was interviewed for a newspaper story to be published prior to our assembly in August. It was a lengthy phone interview sandwiched between a series of meetings, a conference call with our NRRO consultants, and a visit with a sister over dinner. One of the questions the interviewer asked was what I've learned this past year serving in the presidency of LCWR that I could not have learned otherwise. I thought that it was an interesting question, and I hope that I offered an equally interesting answer.

Since then I've found myself revisiting and rephrasing that question, asking myself what I've learned throughout nearly nine years of elected leadership. What do I know now that I didn't know before?

The answer rises immediately from a place so deep and true and grateful: The hearts of my sisters.

Perhaps that's the answer that many of you would come to as well. While the ministry of leadership in religious congregations at this time is undeniably complex and high level, and we need to exercise this leadership in systemic, anticipatory and forward-thinking ways, I believe that it remains at its core a profoundly intimate and deeply personal ministry in relationship to our sisters – from the youngest to the oldest with all the capacity, the frailty, and experience held within that container of grace.

Our leadership calls us to the most tender of places and circumstances with our sisters – to the aching heartbreak of their ministries, to the uncertainty of navigating life's transi-



tions, to the questions and the deepening of their vocations, to the vulnerability of their woundedness, to the heart-stopping news of an unexpected diagnosis, to the joy of jubilee and to silent witness and companionship into the heart of God.

I find that one of the greatest challenges of leadership is not to hold these dimensions of the ministry as a whole in my consciousness, but to actually live in that reality each day – to go from high-level business in the board room to still

presence with a dying sister in her bedroom, to the joy of another's jubilee, to the milestone anniversary of a beloved ministry. It's as though our own hearts must be in a permanent posture of readiness, continually making available the quality of presence or presence of mind needed for the next encounter. It is necessary, holy, and exhausting work.



The answer rises immediately from a place so deep and true and grateful:

The hearts of my sisters.

As we do the business of our congregations – high-level and complex, forward-thinking and anticipatory – we do so carrying with us the joys, the griefs, the hopes, and dreams of all of our sisters – our elders, our peers, our mentors, both living and dead - in a collective consecration that gives witness to the fullness of the paschal mystery.

This, I believe, is the gracious blessing and exquisite burden of leadership in religious congregations at this time and through all time.

This is what I know now that I didn't know then.



## 718 Now Registered for the LCWR Assembly in Orlando

To date, 718 LCWR members, associates, and guests have registered for this year's LCWR assembly.

Registrations are still being accepted. Information about the assembly can be found in the members section of the [LCWR website](#).

Some highlights of the assembly will be:

### **Keynote Address by Chris Pramuk**

**"Will the Circle Be Unbroken?**

**Leaning into the Mystery of Resurrection Faith"**

### **Keynote Address by Jan Richardson**

**"We Stood in the Place of Death and Heard the Living Call Our Name"**

### **Looking to the Future: A Conversation with LCWR Members**

Yesenia Fernandez, MSGsP; Virginia Herbers, ASCJ; Ann Jackson, PBVM; and Alba Letelier, SP.

### **Deepening Groups**

### **Committing to Be the Presence of Love**

An opportunity to determine the commitments participants wish to make to better the world

### **LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Tribute to Constance Fitzgerald, OCD**

## LCWR Moves Forward with Governance Restructuring

**A**t the LCWR spring regional meetings, members offered wide-spread support for the proposal to restructure the conference's national board. As noted at the meetings, the restructuring of the board is an initial step toward adapting LCWR's governance and organization to allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness to shifting demographics and other rapidly changing realities that impact both congregations and the conference.

The ad hoc governance task force, comprised of Marcia Allen, CSJ; Rosemary Brennan, CSJ; Theresa Sandok, OSM; and Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, is developing a transition and implementation plan for establishing a new board to be in place January 1, 2018. This plan will be presented to the current board at its meeting in August following the assembly.

LCWR also requested from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life a three to five year period of experimentation with changes to the governance and organizational structures of the conference without having to make changes to its statutes at this time.

Members will be asked at the assembly to express support of this direction through a simple affirmation process. In preparation for that process all members are reminded that materials can be found in the members section of the [LCWR website](#) under the title LCWR Governance Model: Proposed Changes. For those who may have missed a regional meeting and for those who would like to review the matter, the following are available:

- Video introduction and overview of proposed changes:
- Communication to members on governance proposal - March 2017
- Governance proposal - pdf of slides
- Introduction to video on governance proposal - text

## Four Candidates to Stand for LCWR President-Elect

All LCWR members who will be attending the LCWR assembly are encouraged to acquaint themselves with the four women who have allowed their names to go forward in the LCWR presidential election. Bios and photos of each are available in the members section of the LCWR website. The four are:

- Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ
- Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS
- Joyce Lehman, CPPS
- Sharlet Ann Wagner, CSC

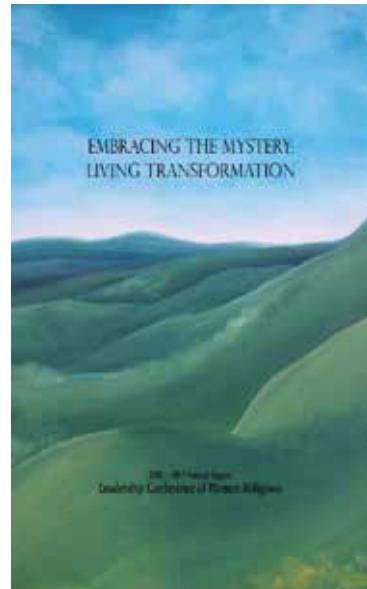
LCWR thanks these women for their willingness to serve the conference in this key role.

## Help Make Assembly Attendance Possible for Members Through a Donation to the LCWR Scholarship Fund

LCWR is grateful to the congregations who sent scholarship donations for assembly attendance for members. It is not too late to consider sending a donation to the LCWR scholarship fund.

Donations (checks payable to LCWR) may be directed to Grace Hartzog, SC, associate director for business and finance, at 8808 Cameron Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Any congregation that wishes to attend the conference, but needs assistance also is asked to contact Grace ([ghartzog@lcwr.org](mailto:ghartzog@lcwr.org)) to request a partial scholarship. Partial assistance with registration and/or hotel accommodations is available through the LCWR scholarship fund.



## LCWR Annual Report Available Online

The 2016-2017 LCWR annual report is available at [lcwr.org/publications/2016-2017](http://lcwr.org/publications/2016-2017). All members are encouraged to read the report in order to understand the extent of the service offered by the conference. Members will be asked to approve the report at the August assembly.



## LCWR Speaks Out Against the Paris Agreement Withdrawal

**A**s a member of the Catholic Climate Covenant, LCWR was among the Catholic organizations issuing a public statement expressing deep disappointment in President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement and stop all future payments to the Green Climate Fund. The statement implores the president to reconsider.

The statement notes that the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has encouraged the Trump administration—in letters and visits to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, National Security Advisory Lt. Gen. HR McMaster, and Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin—to abide by the Paris Agreement and live up to its commitments for the Green Climate Fund. In March, 15,000 Catholics sent a petition to President Trump asking him to honor the Paris Agreement and to contribute to the Green Climate Fund. Across the United States, the message from Americans to President Trump is clear: any short-term economic gains should not be at the expense of long-term stability. This is not what America wants.



## LCWR Executive Committee Works on Governance Restructuring

In their May 30 - June 1 meeting, the LCWR executive committee dedicated significant time to moving forward the work of restructuring the conference to meet the needs and demands of these times. More information on this work will be presented at the August assembly. The committee also conducted reviews of financial and audit reports, a recommendation on membership dues, updates on the office building, a review of the assembly plans, and other business.

The committee made the following appointments:

### LCWR Treasurer

- Kate Katoski, OSF (beginning January 1, 2018)

### LCWR Finance and Audit Committee

- Janice Bader, CPPS

### LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee

- Sheila Lemieux, CSJP

The members of the executive committee are: Mary Peligrino, CSJ; Teresa Maya, CCVI; Marcia Allen, CSJ (the presidency); Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF (secretary); Pat Eck, CBS (treasurer); Rosemary Brennan, CSJ and Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS (members-at-large); and Joan Marie Steadman, CSC (executive director).



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## LCWR Committee Explores the ‘Nuns and Nones’ Movement and its Possible Call to Religious Today

The LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee met in Washington, DC from June 1-2. Included on its agenda was work on both the 2017 and 2018 LCWR assemblies, as well as significant discussion on interest expressed by some millennial leaders for mentoring and support from women religious.

During the committee meeting four of the women religious who had participated in a gathering of “Nuns and Nones,” hosted by the Harvard Divinity School, joined the members by videoconference. The four: former LCWR presidents Nancy Schreck, OSF; Mary Dacey, SSJ; and Carol Zinn, SSJ; and current LCWR member Anne Curtis, RSM, shared their experience at the gathering which brought together several women religious as well as millennials who identify themselves as nones, meaning they have no affiliation with a formal religion. More information about this gathering can be found in the Summer 2017 issue of LCWR’s *Occasional Papers*.

The sisters who participated in the Harvard gathering shared their responses to questions such as:

- What would you say about the hungers that you are noting among this younger age group? How do they resonate with your own or those of women religious in general?
- What is the invitation to women religious in journeying with young adults? What is already happening? What could it look like in the future?

The committee concluded that leaders of women’s religious congregations would benefit from greater understanding of the experiences of the millennial generation, including millennials who are in religious life, as well as those seeking support from women religious as they search for community and a meaningful spirituality. The committee will be keeping this topic on its agenda and encourages LCWR members to consider participation in this movement as described in *Occasional Papers*.



*Members of the Contemporary Religious Life Committee meeting in Washington, DC were Ana Lydia Matos Sonera, CDP; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; Cathy Bertrand, SSND (facilitator); Marie McCarthy, SP; Pat McDermott, RSM; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ; and Maria Hughes, ASC.*

## Upcoming LCWR Dates

**LCWR Assembly**  
Orlando, Florida  
August 8 — 12, 2017

**Leading from Within Retreat**  
Redemptorist Renewal Center  
Tucson, Arizona  
January 14 – 19, 2018

**Imagining Justice Workshop**  
Redemptorist Renewal Center  
Tucson, Arizona  
March 12 – 15, 2018

**LCWR New Leader Workshop**  
Conference Center  
University of St. Mary of the Lake  
Mundelein, Illinois  
April 12 — 15, 2018

**LCWR Assembly**  
St. Louis, Missouri  
August 7 — 11, 2018

**LCWR Assembly**  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
August 13 — 17, 2019



*Participants at the 2016 LCWR assembly processed their experience in deepening groups where they had the opportunity to engage in contemplative dialogue. Important insights arose from those dialogues which were collected and shared briefly during the assembly.*

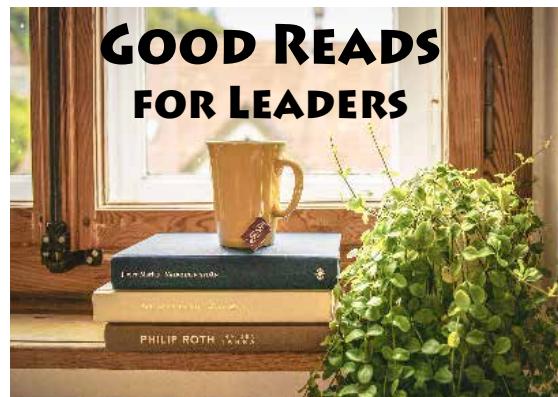
*Throughout the year, LCWR is sharing some of these insights in various ways so that all members may utilize these thoughts and ideas for their own reflection. Individuals may wish to spend time with the insights personally, and leadership teams may want to consider them communally.*

### Embracing the Mystery: Living Transformation

- If we as women religious, desire a future of depth, we must embrace a contemplative stance which is at the heart of gospel mission.
- Our time is NOW. We're being called from a way of doing into a new way of BE-ing, of sharing our faith journeys, of embracing new containers to thrust us into our unknown future and live out the Gospel for the church and the world.
- In the midst of the challenges of the ministry of leadership, entering into the Divine Mystery, personally and together as a team, allows us to be permeated with Divine Love and this Divine Love is what we have to offer to others.
- Develop a discipline/practice for creating contemplative spaciousness within and gift the world with that capacity.

### Is Your Leadership Term About to End?

If your leadership term is ending this month, we ask you to submit a change of leadership form found in the LCWR Members' Information section (password-protected) of the website at [lcwr.org/members/lcwr-membership-information](http://lcwr.org/members/lcwr-membership-information).



### Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint by Nadia Bolz-Weber

Recommended by Miriam D.Ukeritis, CSJ

**P**astrix came to me from a laywoman in her mid-70s. As I opened this Christmas gift, she simply remarked, "I've found a lot of wisdom in this book and want to share it with you." Interesting, I thought. Then I read the brief description on its back cover, introducing it as a "profanity-and-prayer-laden narrative about an unconventional life of faith." I was intrigued. Though barely 200 pages in length, *Pastrix* was not a quick read. Several times, I found myself stopping to reflect on the author's musings on Jesus' message or her unique application of a familiar Scripture story to real life.

*Pastrix* is not an autobiography, but it is autobiographical. The author shares her faith journey thematically, from the perspective of one who has lived on the margins, struggled through life experiences that could make a wonderful movie, and come to a rich understanding of Jesus' call to her and his message to all. She speaks of the development of her faith, the expression of her faith, and the community of her faith. One reviewer noted that Nadia Bolz-Weber takes Christianity into corners of life where the church can be pretty uncomfortable going. In the book, she takes the reader to the margins where she opens us to the sincere search and honest struggle of women and men whose lives and life experiences are very different from most of ours – and who are also hungry for God and community. Discovering what is happening in this segment of God's church is critical to us as we seek to understand our future as people of God.

*Note: Some of the language in this book is raw and might be offensive to some.*

## RCRI Workshop: Fidelity to the Journey: Transition Planning for the Future

Sharon Euart, RSM -- Executive Director

Through the generosity of the GHR Foundation and building on our 2016 workshop experience, RCRI hosted a three-day workshop that brought together 40 leaders from religious institutes that have made important decisions regarding their institute's future and who are currently in the process of planning for transition. The workshop was held at the Carmelite Spirituality Center in Darien, IL on May 23-25, 2017.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide institute leaders with tools and information for this important transition; to hear from the participants about their needs, challenges, and helpful resources; and to provide an opportunity for prayer, reflection, and interaction with leaders of other institutes experiencing similar transitions.



The workshop presenters brought a rich and varied experience and expertise to the program highlighting four key areas of transition planning: biblical imagery and leadership, legacy and charism, the community and the grieving process, and leadership and governance. Nancy Schreck, OSF; Jean Bartunek, RSCJ; Paula Cooney, IHM; and Sharon Holland, IHM provided excellent content on these important topics and the challenges facing institutes today. Susan Schorsten, HM skillfully facilitated the meeting and led the group through discussion and reflection on the presentations..

Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, LCWR executive director; Mary Hughes, OP, LCWR director of transition services; Stephanie Still, PBVM, NRRO executive director; Anna Marie, Tag, RSM, a NRRO eldercare consultant, were also available to the participants.

Reflecting the gratitude of the group for the program, one participant wrote: "Meeting other folks in the same position and hearing from them was most helpful. I came home thankful for all that we have already accomplished and for those who have gone before and done such a fine job preparing us for what is to come."



## Update from NRRO

In mid-June, Direct Care Assistance will be distributed from the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO). These awards are funded through the Retirement Fund for Religious collection held each year in parishes across the country.

The 2016 appeal raised more than \$25 million in (arch) diocesan donations with individual and organizational contributions bringing the total to more than \$30 million for the second year in a row. The NRRO will distribute \$25 million through Direct Care Assistance. Among other factors, these distributions are based on census, cost of care, and assets. Participating institutes submit this data to NRRO each year. Any institute that is not providing information is asked to call NRRO to become part of the process for 2018.

More information on the NRRO educational, financial, and consultative services, are available on the NRRO website at [www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office](http://www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office).



by Joan Mumaw, IHM  
President  
[www.solidarityfriends.org](http://www.solidarityfriends.org)

Recently the board of Friends in Solidarity identified three major goals for the organization, one of which is exposure. In other words, getting the word out there about Friends in Solidarity, the US partner to Solidarity with South Sudan. This ministry belongs to all of us.

The decision to initiate Solidarity with South Sudan came from UISG/USG after a request from the Bishops of Sudan. More than 200 religious congregations of men and women have supported this initiative. It is a collaborative ministry involving men and women religious from 17 congregations and 14 countries located in four sites in South Sudan. Currently there are 28 priests, brothers, and sisters in the country training teachers, nurses, midwives, farmers, and pastoral teams. In spite of the civil war, all of these ministries are fully functioning. The teacher training college was the only college in the country to graduate teachers at the end of 2016. Half of all registered nurses in the country have been trained at the Catholic Health Training Institute since 2010. We need your support and that of the Catholic community to continue this work in this, the poorest and least literate country in our world.

You can help us with our goal of getting the word out about this innovative ministry. Post a link to our website on your website. [www.solidarityfriends.org](http://www.solidarityfriends.org) Go to our Facebook page and "like" and "share" our page with your friends and relatives. [facebook.com/solidarityfriends](https://facebook.com/solidarityfriends). Share the news that good things are happening in the midst of chaos, famine, and violence in South Sudan. And if you are able, please support us with personnel or financial assistance. For more information go to our website or send a message to [jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com](mailto:jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com).

The commemoration of Independence Day in South Sudan is July 9th. Please join us in prayer for the people of South Sudan. You can access a prayer service here: [wp.me/p7wB7z-3a1](http://wp.me/p7wB7z-3a1).

Thanks for your support. Look for us at the LCWR assembly.



## 2017 RCRI National Conference

RCRI's 2017 national conference that will be held from October 31 to November 3 at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch. The theme will be "Changing Times: Challenges and Transitions."

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, former president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services and currently the president's fellow for global development at Purdue University. She also served as dean of the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business

**Workshops:** 40 workshops covering topics related to finance, canon and civil law, and planning for institutes in transition. We will also offer a new track on Elder-care sponsored by NRRO. On November 2 a conference liturgy will be celebrated for all participants.

**Pre-Conference Workshops:** Three pre-conference workshops will be offered prior to the conference: Legal Overview for Religious Institutes 2017 – Michael Airdo; Patrimony: Canon and Civil Law Issues – Donna Miller; and TRENDS for Beginners/Refresher for Users – Larry Lundin, SJ and Hertha Longo, CSA.

**Conference Registration:** A link is posted on the RCRI website at [www.trcri.org](http://www.trcri.org) for members and guests to register. RCRI members will receive a discount if they register before the deadline.