

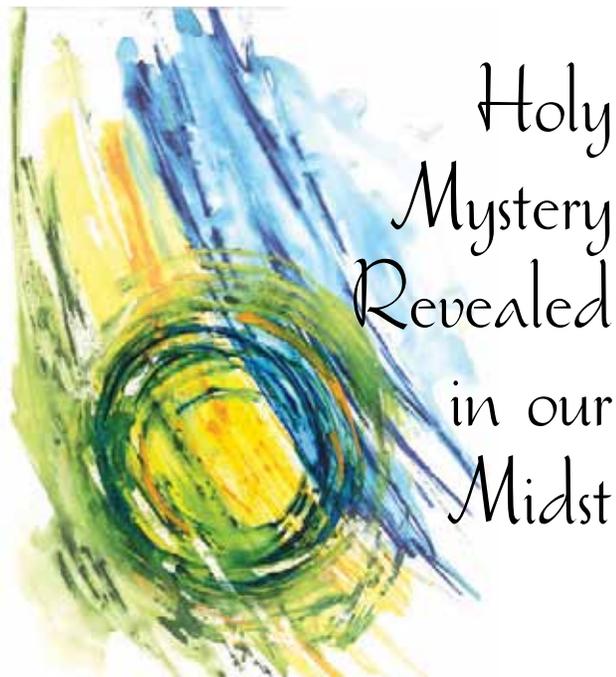
Update

A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

May 2014

2014 LCWR Assembly

Nashville, Tennessee --- August 12 — 16, 2014



Holy
Mystery
Revealed
in our
Midst

Conscious of the great hunger among women religious to be grounded in faith and ever attentive to the movement of God, the 2014 LCWR assembly will create a space for members to discern together where God is leading women's religious life. Set in a context of contemplation, and drawing upon the beauty of the arts, LCWR members will be led through a process to more deeply explore how Holy Mystery is being revealed in the midst of the concrete realities of US religious life as LCWR and its members plan for their future.



LCWR has called forth one of its own members, Nancy Schreck, OSF, to lead the assembly in reflection on how Holy Mystery is being revealed through the essential considerations facing religious life and religious life leaders at this time. Nancy will assist the participants in a discernment of God's presence and call. What is the invitation from Holy Mystery for religious life for these times?

Among the highlights of the assembly will be a conversation among three LCWR members on how they experience Holy Mystery revealed in their midst through the realities challenging their institutes. The conversation will provide a "template" for the members to take home so that they can create spaces in their own congregations for the revelation of Holy Mystery.



Nancy Conway, CSJ

Margaret Ormond, OP

Ana Lydia Sonera
Matos, CDP

Assembly information and registration materials are available on the Members section of the LCWR website.

Members and associates must use their individualized username and password to access this area. (www.lcwr.org)

LCWR to Honor Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ with its 2014 Outstanding Leadership Award

Theologian Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ will accept the 2014 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award. This prestigious award honors a person whom the LCWR members wish to recognize and thank for modeling extraordinary leadership.



Elizabeth, a Sister of St. Joseph of Brentwood, New York, serves as a professor of theology at Fordham University. She has a long history of distinguished

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From the LCWR Presidency

Many Ways to Celebrate One Faith

by Florence Deacon, OSF — LCWR Past President

This Palm Sunday as I listened to the African American Spiritual, “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?” being sung in Chinese at Holy Family Church in Taipei, Taiwan, I began reflecting on other Holy Week observances in which I had participated over the years.

As a child we celebrated midnight mass for Easter as well as for Christmas. Very early in my religious life a new, vibrant team of co-pastors introduced our parish to new liturgical norms for Holy Week.

The sisters, including this non-choir member, were the choir for that first Easter Vigil liturgy and for many future ones. We began with a huge fire lit outside the church which brought all the neighbors to their porches to see what was going on. This was the first time I experienced a realistic lighting of the fire for the Pascal candle and the inclusion of baptisms. The Easter Vigil became an anticipated part of the liturgical year for me and the innovations brought by the two priests resulted in a renewal of parish life throughout the year.

Before Palm Sunday liturgy in Monterrey, Mexico I was surprised to see vendors selling plants outside the church which could be purchased to be blessed during the liturgy. During distribution of Communion, the celebrant continued praying the concluding prayers of the mass so he finished before the congregation did. While I appreciate a liturgy which keeps moving, that attempt to reduce the length of a long service left me feeling empty.

One Holy Week I visited Ettenbeuren, Bavaria, the home town of our found-



resses who came to the United States with their two parish priests 165 years ago to minister to German immigrants. That faith was still much in evidence on Good Friday as I processed with the villagers praying the rosary aloud to a neighboring village where we joined in an outdoor Way of the Cross. Uniting the new with the traditional, we prayed a modern way of the Cross which I had given them based on how the body of Christ is being wounded today.

In Spanish Harlem we blessed the palms in a little park surrounded by housing projects and then processed into church singing psalms in Spanish. One of my favorite aunts who had terminal cancer was visiting me, and our shared experience of that brilliant, peaceful day stays with me. She loved to sing and wanted to experience the Easter liturgy at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Because the tickets to the liturgy presided over by the cardinal were long gone, we arrived for the following mass. The sidewalk all the way around the block was already packed with people, more than the Cathedral could hold. We waited more than an hour to attend a silent liturgy which didn’t have a choir or even any music.



There are so many different ways to celebrate that one faith we share.

If, as St. Augustine said, “We are Easter people and Allelulia is our song,” it was all in our hearts that day. We did take that song outside, though, and after mass sat on the steps of St. Patrick’s Cathedral watching the last of the Easter parade, a mixture of fashion and fun with hats both serious and silly.

There are so many different ways to celebrate that one faith we share. Jesus Christ is risen, and now lives on through us...

LCWR Invited to President Obama's Easter Prayer Breakfast

The White House extended an invitation to LCWR to attend the fifth annual Easter Prayer Breakfast hosted by President Barack Obama. Persons from various Christian denominations joined with senior members of the Administration on April 14 for a morning of prayer and reflection as Holy Week began.



President Obama offers remarks at the prayer breakfast



President and CEO of the Catholic Health Association Carol Keehan, DC reads from the scriptures



LCWR director of communications Annmarie Sanders, IHM represented the conference at the breakfast and was able to greet President Obama and extend the gratitude and prayer of US Catholic sisters to him

LCWR to Honor Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ

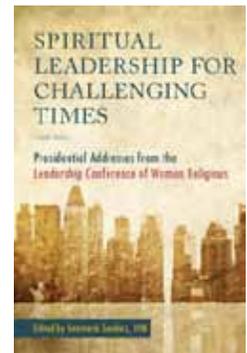
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ministry to the church, including past service as president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and the ecumenical American Theological Society. Her leadership in her field has grounded, inspired, and challenged people of faith throughout the world. She is a prolific writer whose works have drawn her readers into an exploration of the mystery of God and have been translated into more than 12 languages. Her public service in the church has included consultation to and service on committees of the Vatican and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops on topics such as science and religion, ecological ethics, and issues related to justice for women.

LCWR will celebrate Elizabeth's selfless service and superb leadership on the last evening of the LCWR assembly.

Reflection and Discussion Guide Available for LCWR Presidential Address Book

Available online for free is a reflection and discussion guide created for *Spiritual Leadership for Challenging Times*, a book of 10 LCWR presidential addresses. Orbis Books released the publication in February.



The group, Solidarity with Sisters, created the guide as a means of helping readers apply understandings of spiritual leadership to their own lives and work. The guide may be downloaded at: lcwr.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/spiritual_leadership_for_challenging_times_-_questions.pdf.

The book sells for \$20.00 and may be purchased through Orbis (www.orbisbooks.com/spiritual-leadership-for-challenging-times.html), Amazon, or Barnes & Noble. A 40% discount is available for LCWR members (information on ordering with the discount is available in the members' section of the LCWR website (www.lcwr.org)).

US Religious Host InterAmerican Committee Meeting

by Janet Mock, CSJ

LCWR and CMSM hosted this year's meeting of the InterAmerican Committee, the annual gathering of the presidents and executive directors of the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR), CMSM, and LCWR. Enjoying the hospitality of the Bon Secours Spirituality Center in Marriottsville, Maryland, this year's meeting took place from March 31 to April 4 and included meetings and visits to various sites in Baltimore and Washington, DC.

Attending the gathering were: John Edmunds, ST and John Pavlik, OFMCap (CMSM); Michel Proulx, OPraem and Yvon Pomerlieu, OP (CRC); and Carol Zinn, SSJ and Janet Mock, CSJ (LCWR). The representatives of CLAR were unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. For all of us, not having our colleagues from CLAR with us made the experience poorer. We held them in our thoughts, prayer, and discussions throughout our time together.

In addition to sharing updates and activities of the three conferences since our 2013 gathering in Montreal, the group met with representatives of several organizations ministering to populations in great need globally. Among those were: Joan Mumaw, IHM, development director-USA, Solidarity with South Sudan Project; Juan Molina, OSST, USCCB director of the church in Latin America who spoke on the USCCB outreach in Haiti; representatives of Catholic Relief Services; and Ann Scholz, SSND and Eli McCarthy, directors of social ministry for LCWR and CMSM; as well as a justice promoter from USCCB and a pastor from a local Washington, DC parish, 80% of which are recent immigrants.



Juan Molina, OSST (left) and Joan Mumaw, IHM (far right) with committee members



John Pavlik, OFMCap; Michel Proulx, OPraem; and Carol Zinn, SSJ enjoy a guided tour of the Baltimore Basilica

Also on the agenda was discussion about the upcoming Year of Consecrated Life. Each conference talked about possible ways to celebrate this year and to promote the meaning and mission of religious life. It was a common hope that 2015 will strengthen the church and the church's mission.

Realizing that all work and no play does not bode well for anyone – national conferences, included -- the group visited the Baltimore Basilica which is the first Roman Catholic cathedral built in the United States; the Baltimore Inner Harbor; and various sites in Washington, DC, as well as attend-



The InterAmerican Committee at the LCWR-CMSM office building in Silver Spring, Maryland

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US Religious Host InterAmerican Committee Meeting

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ing a reception in their honor at the LCWR-CMSM office building in Silver Spring. We also gave our Canadian friends a taste of Maryland crabs at a local Baltimore haunt!

While each of these activities is very educational and enriching in and of itself, it is the interaction among us that makes our gatherings so meaningful. We share and learn from one another's life experiences; directly and indirectly we share and learn from one another's culture. In conversation we understand at much deeper levels how urgent is our need of one another, not only at the inter-American level but across the globe. We realize that, though cultures differ, our challenges are quite similar. We, LCWR representatives, felt blessed to have had the opportunity to enjoy and savor time with our counterparts in CRC and CMSM.

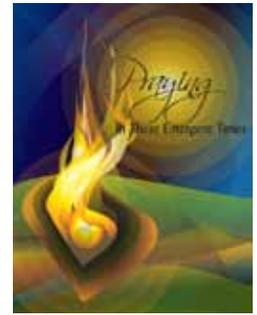


The committee meets with representatives from Catholic Relief Services in the CRS office in Baltimore

Reflection Inadvertently Left Out of LCWR Book

LCWR offers its sincere apologies to **Johanna Rickl** of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary for inadvertently leaving out her beautiful reflection written for *Praying in These Emerging Times*.

We share the reflection below so that readers may enjoy it here.



The parched earth under my knees impels me to cry out, "For you my soul thirsts..." The gentle hum of 500 indigenous voices locks me into a oneness that is overpowering despite my inability to understand the words. In this moment, transcending time, I feel suspended in a sea of sacred space. The holiness was palpable at that outdoor Holy Thursday liturgy in the highlands of Mexico.

Today I struggle to live in awareness of that Presence within me and others. Sometimes, as I hear "Behold the Lamb of God..." I let my eyes sweep over the faces of those gathered, in an effort to be conscious of the One who is an evolving presence in each of us. Oh, to be attentive to the source of life within and around me! I am immersed in it, but like a fish in the ocean, I can be oblivious of the Source of Life in whom I "live and move and have my being."

You, Divine Mystery, are closer to me than I am to myself.

*Johanna Rickl, CHM
Davenport, Iowa*

LCWR Members Encouraged to Reflect on Emerging Insights

A new LCWR contemplative insight card is now available for downloading. The May 2014 card (pictured) is available at: lwr.org/resources/leadership-pathways/ behold.

The insights on these cards are drawn from the responses submitted from the 15 LCWR regions after completing the "Behold, I am Doing Something New" contemplative process.



LCWR New Leader Workshop



The 2014 LCWR New Leader Workshop drew 73 participants, from several different countries, to the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois from March 26 to 30. In 2015 the workshop will be in the same location from March 19 to 22.



Lynn Levo, CSJ explored leading in a time of change and transition and working together as teams



▲ *Christine Rody, SC and*
▼ *Simone Campbell, SSS*
presented on canon and civil law.



Janice Bader, CPPS presented on issues facing religious congregations as large numbers enter their elder years



Nancy Schreck, OSF spoke on spiritual leadership and the identity and role of religious life



Participants had the opportunity to work as teams each day in integration sessions



Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly
Nashville, Tennessee
August 12 — 16, 2014

Leading from Within Retreat
Bethany Retreat Center
Lutz, Florida
January 11 — 16, 2015

Imagining Justice
Presentation Center
Los Gatos, California
March 2 — 5, 2015

LCWR New Leader Workshop
Conference Center - University of St.
Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois
March 19 — 22, 2015

LCWR Assembly
Houston, Texas
August 11—15, 2015

Members Enable Assembly Attendance for Others Through Donations to the LCWR Scholarship Fund

LCWR is aware that attendance at the national assembly is financially challenging for some members. Any congregation that has the means to enable the attendance of another member is invited to consider a donation to the LCWR scholarship fund. The conference is grateful to those congregations that have already sent in contributions.

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

Orders Due for Summer 2014 Occasional Papers by May 30

The Summer 2014 issue of *Occasional Papers* is dedicated to an exploration of discernment through many lenses, including what it means to discern in light of new understandings of the universe.

Writers will be exploring such topics as:

- Learnings from the universe that might help us better attune ourselves to the movement of Holy Mystery in our lives.
- The practice of communal discernment
- Using the arts in individual and communal discernment
- Discernment from the perspective of younger religious
- Discerning the future viability of one's religious institute



The issue will also include an interview with Margaret Wheatley, author of *Leadership and the New Science*, *Turning to One Another*, *Perseverance*, *So Far from Home: Lost and Found in Our Brave New World*, and other books.

Although all LCWR members and associates will receive their own copy of this publication, additional copies may be ordered online at lchw.org/item/summer-2014-discernment. The cost for 1-100 copies is \$5.00 per copy. The cost is \$4.50 each for orders of 101 copies or more.

LCWR only prints the number of copies that are pre-ordered. **Orders must be received by May 30.** Any questions about orders may be directed to Carol Glidden at cglidden@lchw.org or 301-588-4955.

(ghartzog@lchw.org) to request a partial scholarship. Partial assistance with registration and/or hotel accommodations is available through the LCWR scholarship fund.



By Eileen Hurley, SCL

The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth leadership team gathers monthly for an extra morning for “Prayer & Planning.” This time is spent in prayer, reflection/reading, and conversation around an article that enhances our lives as leaders and sisters or that deepens our lives theologically as women of the church. We conclude our time with lunch together. These get-togethers are rich for body, mind, and spirit as we bond through serious conversations and some “lighter” camaraderie!

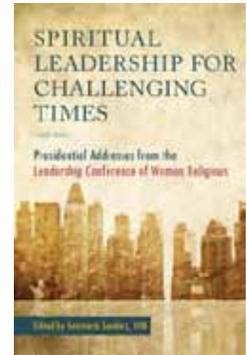
We also plan celebrations for one another’s birthdays with one of us planning around a theme pertinent to that person. This way we pray, laugh, and enjoy one another’s company.

Days of reflection for the community have been planned and presented by our leadership team. The four of us led an Advent day of prayer in 2012, as well as a Lenten day of prayer in 2014.



Any team that has discovered a helpful practice is invited to submit a brief description of the practice to the Contemporary Religious Life Committee via LCWR associate director for communications Annmarie Sanders, IHM at asanders@lcwr.org.

Conference Spiritual Leadership in Challenging Times: Practices of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious



Saturday, June 7, 2014

8:30 AM to 3 PM

at The Catholic University of America -- Washington, DC
Co-sponsored by the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America and by Solidarity with Sisters

Presenters:

Former LCWR presidents

Helen Maher Garvey, BVM --- **Mary Hughes, OP**

Pat Farrell, OSF

LCWR Associate Director for Programs

Marie McCarthy, SP

Cost: \$15.00 (includes lunch)

More information and registration:

solidaritywithsisters.weebly.com/june-7-2014---spiritual-leadership-conference.html

Solidarity with Sisters is a group of laypersons in the Washington, DC area who serve as advocates for and spiritual companions of Catholic sisters.

www.solidaritywithsisters.org

Pre-LCWR Assembly Workshop on Planning for the Future

LCWR, RCRI and NRRO will be presenting a workshop prior to the opening of the LCWR assembly on **Tuesday, August 12**. The workshop will address the urgency of planning for the future and will familiarize participants with the services available to religious congregations.

More information will soon be sent to LCWR members, but those interested may wish to hold this date and time.



LCWR Officers Travel to Rome

Prayers are requested for the LCWR presidency (Carol Zinn, SSJ; Sharon Holland, IHM; and Florence Deacon, OSF) and executive director Janet Mock, CSJ as they make their annual visit to Rome. They will be meeting with various Vatican dicasteries, UISG officers, and leaders of congregations based in Rome from April 28 through May 5.



LCWR Usernames and Passwords

By now all LCWR members and associates should have completed the process to obtain an individualized username and password that gives them access to the members' section of the LCWR website. These are needed in order to access a number of critical conference services, including information on and registration for the LCWR assembly.

Anyone who has questions about the username or password is encouraged to contact Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org or 301-588-4955.

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.

NCR Launches Global Sisters Report

Global Sisters Report, (globalsistersreport.org) a new initiative of the *National Catholic Reporter*, launched its website in late April. This groundbreaking project, made possible by a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, expands coverage of women religious both in the United States and around the globe. International coverage begins with Asia and parts of Africa and will expand as the project develops.

All around the world, women religious are living the Gospel, engaged in meeting the needs of people through humanitarian and systems-change work. Using their ministries as the lens, journalists will highlight some of the critical issues facing the people they serve. Human trafficking, migration, climate change, and questions of inequality and justice will be major focus areas.

Global Sisters Report will also give greater voice to women religious through their own writing. Columns and blogs about theology, contemplation, the environment, trends in religious life, justice, and formation will be featured.

The Global Sisters Report welcomes suggestions for articles, writers, and visuals. Ideas for stories that need to be told may be sent to: sisters@ncronline.org. Women religious and associates interested in writing should contact Jan Cebula, OSF at jcebula@ncronline.org with topic suggestions and a writing sample. Compelling photographs or visual artwork may be sent to Tracy Abeln at tabeln@ncronline.org.



Update is an official publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious published monthly and distributed to members nationally. © 2013 LCWR All rights reserved.

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What's Happening with Leadership Pathways?

An Update on the Pilot Groups

Three of the four initial pilot groups are moving along at varying paces through the module, "Becoming the Leaders We Hope to Be." This is the foundational module of the learning lab on Identity as a Leader. One group, which was composed of a single leadership team that is in the final year of its term, found that the demands of preparing for chapter made it difficult, if not impossible, to devote the needed time to participate in Leadership Pathways. They expressed the hope that the new team will be able to take advantage of the opportunity.

Once the pilot groups have completed the module, learnings from the groups will be used to adjust the content and process so as to better serve participants. Thus far, members of the groups have generally found the material and process engaging and helpful. There have been some bumps with the technology that have been sorted out as members move along, and there is a general sense that each unit may, in fact, take longer than four weeks to complete. No one will be surprised to learn that the greatest challenge thus far has been finding a common time when the learning cohort can be online together. By September 2014 Leadership Pathways will be ready to make the foundational module of Identity as a Leader available to the wider membership. An invitation to register for this module will be offered early next fall.

The next module to be developed for the learning cohorts will be a foundational module on Mission-Grounded Leadership. The plan is to have these materials ready for pilot groups to test them at the beginning of January. An invitation to participate in a pilot group on Mission-Grounded Leadership will be coming early this coming fall.

Learning Lab on Evolutionary Consciousness and Leadership Materials are being developed by Ilia Delio, OSF for the learning lab in Evolutionary Consciousness and Leadership. In late spring or early summer members will be invited to volunteer to be part of one of the pilot groups for this learning lab. The groups will begin exploring this topic in September.

Member-wide Conversation

At regional meetings this spring, members engaged in contemplative conversation together, using a process provided by the national office. This process provided an alternative form of engaging the contemplative process that has been grounding the work of LCWR at all levels. The feedback from these conversations is being gathered and will be used to shape the ongoing conversation and contemplative engagement among us.

Responding to Questions

With the launch of Leadership Pathways this past fall a number of questions emerged from the regions. One of the most frequently asked questions is "Who can participate?" Can the possibility of participation be extended to emerging leaders, congregation members, treasurers, development directors, associates?

In discussing this, the advisory committee felt that it would be wise to keep participation limited to current members of LCWR initially. Once the materials are more fully developed and current members have had the opportunity to participate, consideration can be given to making the program more widely available.

Members wondered about continuity both in the members-wide conversations and in the learning cohorts given the turnover of membership in LCWR. Turnover in the membership of LCWR is a part of the reality of the organization. In order to assist those coming in new to step into the ongoing conversation, current members will need to be attentive to orienting new members and to filling them in on the history of various conversations. At the same time, with the learning cohorts, the advisory committee felt that once a person has joined a cohort, should her term end before the cohort completes the module it is working, it makes good sense to have the individual continue to completion, if she wishes to do so.

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Catholic Advocates Carry Pope Francis' Message to the Hill

On March 24 Catholics took Pope Francis' recent apostolic exhortation, *Joy of the Gospel*, to Capitol Hill. In briefings held on both the Senate and House sides of the Capitol, Thomas J. Reese, SJ; Simone Campbell, SSS; Ann Scholz, SSND; and Eli McCarthy unpacked the words and actions of Pope Francis and explored their application to US politics and policy.

Thomas Reese, SJ, author and senior analyst at the *National Catholic Reporter*, spoke about the importance of Pope Francis being the first pope from the Americas and the Global South. He also provided an introduction to the pope's critically important justice teachings contained in the apostolic exhortation, reminding those present that, "Pope Francis is calling us to reject indifference and embrace the poor."

Ann Scholz, SSND, LCWR associate director for social mission, commented on the pope's message on economic inequality and wealth disparities in the light of global needs. She reminded those present that "Pope Francis is clear—unless and until we address the structural causes of poverty we will continue to face endless crises and we will fail to solve the world's most pressing problems."

Eli McCarthy, CMSM director of the office of justice and peace, spoke about the pope's strong call to peacemaking in our world. "Pope Francis illuminates that 'war is the suicide of humanity.' Instead, peace requires the justice of concern for the poor and equitable distribution of wealth. Justice requires peacemakers who turn their swords into ploughshares."

NETWORK executive director Simone Campbell, SSS spoke directly to the political challenges of translating the moral teachings of the pope into government actions. She said, "The president's meeting with Pope Francis is an opportune time to highlight the pope's message for the 100%. Pope Francis is challenging all of us to work for the common good by having government effectively regulate markets to bring down income and wealth disparities so that all prosper."



Thomas Reese, SJ and Ann Scholz, SSND speak at a Capitol Hill briefing

Leadership Pathways Update

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A final desire expressed by some of the regional members was that the materials be adapted for use with members considering leadership and with congregation members to assist them in understanding more fully the scope of elected leadership. The advisory committee felt that these were excellent ideas and that there was nothing to preclude someone from creating such adaptations. At the same time, the focus for now needs to remain on developing the materials for the members themselves.

Advisory Committee to Meet

The advisory committee for Leadership Pathways will hold its first in-person meeting at the end of May. The committee will review progress up to this point and the feedback that has been received, as well as outlining next steps for the development of the program.

The advisory committee needs to hear from the members. Suggestions, questions, or comments on any portion of the program may be sent to mmccarthy@lcwr.org. Input from the members is needed in order to make this program genuinely responsive to the needs of elected leaders.

Healthcare Exchange Enrollment Tops Eight Million

A surge in last-minute enrollments ahead of the March 31 deadline pushed the number of persons signed up for health insurance through the exchanges established under the Affordable Care Act beyond eight million. That figure exceeds even the original estimate from the Congressional Budget Office for enrollments, which had been in doubt because of problems associated with the healthcare.gov website.

In a media statement, the Catholic Health Association (CHA) welcomed the enrollment figures as a positive sign that the law will help to significantly reduce the number of uninsured and increase health security for all. CHA also called on states refusing thus far to expand their Medicaid programs under the law to do so, and pledged to continue efforts to expand Medicaid and increase enrollment in the exchanges. More information is available at: tinyurl.com/p8toyy4.

Fast for Families Returns to the Mall

The Fast for Families returned to Washington, DC on April 9. After seven weeks, more than 18,000 miles and more than 90 congressional districts, the “Fast for Families Across America” buses completed their journey by returning to the National Mall where the Fast for Families movement originally began. The buses were greeted by a rally of hundreds of supporters from the faith, business, labor, and immigrant rights communities.

“We have talked to thousands of people across the country and we know that America wants reform,” said Eliseo Medina, a Fast for Families leader. “We will take the thousands of stories we’ve heard and the demand that has been made by our country to Speaker Boehner. We will continue to pray for him and his Party that they may look deep into their hearts and find the moral courage to do what they know is right and take a vote on immigration reform. It is the right thing to do for immigrants, for our communities, for our economy and for our country.”

The rally on the Mall brought together the Fast for Families leaders and the 100 women of We Belong Together

– Women For Commonsense Immigration Reform who were just completing a 48-hour fast on the Mall.

“These courageous 100 women are demonstrating the kind of courage that House leadership needs to bring a humane immigration reform bill to the floor, and that the Executive branch needs in order to stop deportations,” said Pramila Jayapal, Chair of We Belong Together, a co-sponsor of the Women’s Fast for Families. “Women bear the brunt of the broken immigration system and they are tired to of seeing their families torn apart and the country that they love being less than it should be.”

Just hours after they rolled into Washington fasters and activists delivered a letter with 20,000 signatures to Speaker Boehner’s office that urged him to give America a vote on commonsense immigration reform. More information is available at: fast4families.org and www.webelongtogether.org.

News from the UN

Promise of Education for All May be Broken

Worldwide one in 10 children still go through life without an education. That is 57 million primary-school-age children who are denied an education despite the world’s promise to put every child in school by 2015. Thirty-one million of these out-of-school children are girls.



Investment in quality education could lift 171 million people out of poverty and give all children the chance to live healthy, prosperous, and empowered lives. A commitment by donor nations to allocate at least 10% of their foreign aid budget to basic education could make the difference.

The deadline for achieving universal primary education as set by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is fast approaching. More information is available at: tinyurl.com/paxo7us.

UNHCR Calls on Americas to Keep Unaccompanied Children Safe

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) is concerned by increasing numbers of children in the Americas forced

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News from the UN

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from their homes and families, by violence, insecurity, and abuse in their communities and at home.

In a recently released report, *Children on the Run*, UNHCR analyzes the humanitarian impact this insecurity has had on children, forcing them across international borders to seek safety on their own. The agency calls on governments to take action to keep children safe from human rights abuses, violence, and crime, and to ensure their access to asylum and other forms of international protection. The full report including UNHCR's recommendations to the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and the United States may be downloaded at: www.unhcrwashington.org/children/reports.

Debate over Raising the Minimum Wage Heats Up

Most Congress watchers expect, and many American workers hope, that raising the minimum wage will be high on the "to do" list of their elected representatives this spring. Full-time workers earning the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour make just \$15,080 a year; \$4,700 below the poverty line for a family of three.

US Senator Tom Harkin [D-Iowa] and Representative George Miller [D-CA-11] have introduced the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013 (S 460/HR 1010). Their bill would raise the federal minimum wage in three steps to \$10.10 per hour, and adjust it each year thereafter to keep pace with the rising cost of living. If the bill were to pass, the \$10.10 wage would take effect in 2016. It would also raise the minimum wage for tipped workers from its current low rate of \$2.13 per hour, where it has been since 1991, to 70 percent of the full minimum wage.

There is lively debate about the effect of a hike in the minimum wage on the economy. Opponents contend that increased labor costs will cause businesses to cut jobs. Proponents suggest that increasing the minimum wage would put more money into the pocket of workers and actually grow the economy by \$22 billion. Still others argue that raising the minimum wage is a simple matter justice; a recognition of the dignity of worker.

Senator Barbara Mikulski [D-MD] introduced related legislation known as the Paycheck Fairness Act to ensure women have a fair shot at earning as much as a man for equal work. It failed to gain enough support to get past a threatened filibuster in an April 9 cloture vote and is at least provisionally dead.



- Letter to Secretary of State John Kerry urging him to continue his pursuit of a comprehensive agreement to end the long-standing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians with the mutual recognition, dignity, justice, and security that each side deserves. Janet Mock, CSJ (3/19/14)
- Letter to President Obama and Secretary Kerry from faith leaders promoting support and encouragement from the United States for the ongoing negotiations for peace in Colombia. Ann Scholz, SSND (3/23/14)
- Letter in support of the Border Enforcement Accountability, Oversight and Stakeholder Engagement Act of 2014 which focuses on creating a border enforcement system that values accountability and oversight of border officers and agents. LCWR (3/24/14)
- Letter to the leadership of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees seeking their assistance to fund a series of authorized programs in the FY 2015 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill that are absolutely critical to fighting the growing problem of human trafficking and forced labor. LCWR (3/19/14)
- Letter to Secretary Kerry urging the United States to take specific steps toward nuclear disarmament during the UN meetings on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that will take place in New York April 28-May 9. Carol Zinn, SSJ (4/14/14)
- Letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson and Attorney General Eric Holder outlining recommendations regarding immediate actions the Obama administration can take to decrease deportations, increase the number of people with immigration status, and ensure that all immigrants' labor and civil rights are protected. LCWR (4/11/14)

Ways to Support the People of South Sudan

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During this Easter season, a time when we celebrate once again the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, I have also been reflecting on the new life that abounds during the springtime. The biblical verse, "I have come that you may have life and life in abundance" comes to mind and is motivation for my work on behalf of the people of South Sudan, a people yearning for new life in the midst of civil unrest.

This past week we received a letter from the president of the Solidarity Board which met recently in Rome. Paul Smyth, a Claretian Missionary, thanks the congregations that have supported the work of Solidarity in many forms: personnel, financial contributions, and prayers. He also makes a plea for what he calls the "Widow's Mite." This time it is a request for personnel with administrative skills and leadership experience as well as people who can prepare teachers and nurses, farmers and pastoral workers. For those of you who might wonder what next, I can assure you there is "life after leadership." You have transferrable skills that may be of use to this project in Sudan or in a support positions here in the United States or in Rome.

Please take time to read his letter and think about how you can support this ministry which is a commitment made on behalf of religious around the globe. The letter is posted on the Solidarity website and may be accessed at: www.solidarityssudan.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=351:letter&catid=2:frontpage



Joan Mumaw, IHM discusses South Sudan with Yvon Pomerlieu, OP and Michel Proulx, OPraem of the Canadian Religious Conference during the recent InterAmerican Committee meeting in Maryland

NRRO Accepting Applications for Planning Process and Workshops

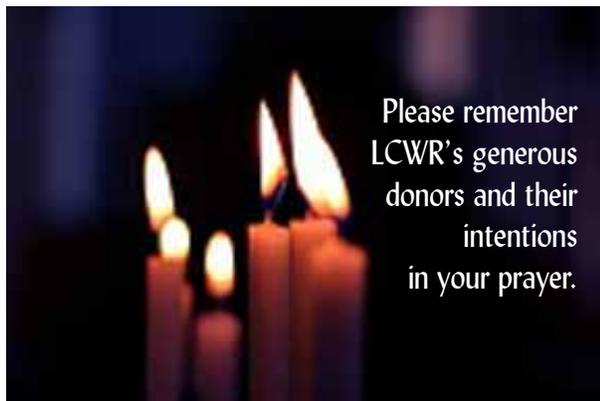
NRRO is accepting applications for the September 2014 planning and implementation process and for any of the 2015 planning workshops. Significant consultative assistance and funding are available through this program for any religious institute with more than 25 members and an under-funded retirement liability of 40% or greater. Institutes that have a higher level of funding are welcome to participate in the educational component and to receive consultative assistance, but they are not eligible for financial assistance. A recent participant wrote, "We are most grateful for everything—the workshop, the fine consultants who walked with us month after month and provided excellent guidance along the way, and of course, the final decision by the management committee to give us the funding."

For more information and for a list of previous participants see www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office/planning-and-implementation-assistance.cfm.



Handbook on Educational Debt and Vocations to Religious Life

Written for major superiors, vocation directors, and congregational treasurers, this handbook is intended to offer an overview of the NRVC/CARA Study on Educational Debt and Vocations to Religious Life, as well as practical guidelines and direction regarding the financial, canonical, and spiritual implications of dealing with newer members who enter a congregation with educational debt. Edited by Dr. Kathleen Mahoney, this 23-page handbook is made possible through the generosity of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. This handbook is available for download at: www.nrvc.net/239/article/handbook-on-educational-debt-and-vocations-to-religious-life-1791.



2014 NRVC Summer Institute

Each year NRVC provides vocation ministers serving in today's church various opportunities for professional growth through its comprehensive summer institute. The workshops are designed for those who wish to deepen their understanding of the complex theological, spiritual, psycho-sexual, ethical, and diversity issues often present in contemporary vocation ministry. This year's summer institute offers four workshops at the downtown campus of DePaul University, July 8-22. Complete information on topics, presenters, and registration may be found at: www.nrvc.net/download/1565/nrvc_2014_workshop_brochure.pdf?view=tru.

NRVC 2014 Convocation: It is good that we are here...rise and have no fear

NRVC will culminate its yearlong 25th anniversary celebration at the NRVC Convocation, November 6-10, 2014, at the Marriott O'Hare in Chicago. As a special anniversary gift, NRVC members can register guests who belong to or work for their religious institute at a member price.

Schedule highlights, the roster of speakers and workshops, and information regarding registration may be found in the convocation brochure at www.nrvc.net/274/article/join-us-in-chicago-for-convocation-nov-6-10-2014-3212.



LCWR is on Facebook: www.facebook.com/lcwr.org