

October 2015

## 2015 LCWR Assembly

pproximately 800 LCWR members and associates came from all parts of the United States and other countries for the annual LCWR assembly held in Houston, Texas under the theme of "Springs of the Great Deep Burst Forth: Meeting the Thirsts of the World." Highlights from the four days of activities are summarized here.



Members listen to speakers in the assembly meeting space in Houston. Texas



Members noted repeatedly in their evaluations of the assembly that the opportunities for conversation and reflection together were among the most invaluable parts of the assembly experience

(continued on page 3)

## Assembly Materials Available on the LCWR Website

The following resources are made available for use by LCWR members who may wish to share them with the members of their own religious institutes.

- Opening Reflection by Janet Mock, CSJ
- Presidential Address by Sharon Holland, IHM (available in English and Spanish)
- Keynote Address: Surprised by Joy: Springs of the Great Deep Illuminating Religious Life -- Janet Mock, CSJ (available in English and Spanish)
- Keynote Address: The Spirit Moving Over the Great Deep: What the World is Thirsting For -- Stephen Bevans, SVD (A PDF document of the slides from this presentation is available on the private side of the website)
- Edited Transcript of Moving Forward: Conversation with Janet Mock, CSJ and Steven Bevans, SVD
- LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Acceptance Address -- Janet Mock, CSJ
- Contemplation, Dialogue and Discernment (Power Point Presentation)
- Press Release on the 2015 LCWR Assembly
- (in English, French and Spanish)
- List of immigrant justice resources gathered during member networking lunch
- Animoto Video of Assembly Highlights
- Information on Ordering DVDs or CDs of Various 2015 Assembly Events

The Spanish and French translations have been made available through the generosity of the Sisters of Bon Secours.

## From the LCWR Presidency

## You Are For Me --- Salvation?!

#### by Marcia Allen, CSJ — LCWR President

omething Richard Rohr wrote in his Daily Meditation on August 26 (2015) struck a note in me: "The ones we think we are "saving" end up saving us, and in the process, redefine the very meaning of salvation!" A koan, to be sure! But it reminded me of another word of wisdom written by one of my mentors who wrote about a "significant insight" for her life.

## To my Neighbor (Any neighbor)

You are for me a sacrament of God's power and God's Love.

You are evidence to me of God's Presence.

You are mystery, concealing and revealing God.

You are uniquely you, uniquely expressing something of God.

I love you – not simply because I cannot reach God unless I do, but because in the mystery that is you, I discover God.

And I discover God in you, in a way I shall never know God anywhere else. The demands of God's love, in you, are at once my death and my resurrection, my mortification and my joy.

I love you as you are because You are God's Beloved, Because God loves you beyond all measuring.

-- Bette Moslander 1923-2015



They renewed what we've always known: that change takes place like the slow wearing away of a stone under water; that we too change under the slow, steady, kindly influence of those who are intent on regarding us with reverence and love.

I believe the wisdom of these two limn for us the salvific way our LCWR leaders and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith lived their lives into new understandings of one another.

The comprehension that the work of life is basically giving ourselves to the reverence of others, no matter their stance with, for, or against us, is one that creates a path towards understanding. It bridges chasms that have the potential of never allowing alliances, collaboration, compromise, peace pacts, or friendship.

It seems to me that this comprehension of the other is at once a challenge to our understanding of who God is as well as who the other is and who we are. Everything changes – or everyone changes – when we understand the seeming unlikely reality that for God everyone is the Beloved!

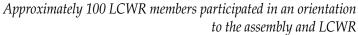
The sometimes fierce fidelity to reverence those with whom they dialogued, I believe, brought the conclusion of the CDF mandate to closure. Critics might say that noth-

ing essentially changed. I would beg to differ. I can see the change in the women who were the spokeswomen for LCWR during these years. I can see that they learned how to study carefully, listen carefully, speak carefully, move carefully through troubled and troubling conversations. I can see how this influenced those with whom they conversed. They renewed what we've always known: that change takes place like the slow wearing away of a stone under water; that we too change under the slow, steady, kindly influence of those who are intent on regarding us with reverence and love. In this experience all of us – CDF and LCWR – have been transformed. In retrospect we can see how we have saved one another.

Members of Region 12 were on hand to welcome the LCWR assembly to Houston

## 2015 LCWR Assembly











(Left) Archbishop

Daniel DiNardo of
Galveston-Houston welcomed the assembly, followed by (right) Hank
Lemoncelli, OMI who brought greetings from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICSAL)



**Sharon Holland, IHM** offered the presidential address, inviting the assembly into discussion of two questions:

- What do we wish to focus on, to empower as we go forward?
- By what "attitudes of heart and mind" do we wish to be characterized?



Janet Mock, CSJ
delivered a keynote
address, saying in
part: "Your challenge
as leaders is extraordinary, for the times
are uncommon – yet
not beyond your
reach.... Your task is
discerning where and
how to be in communion with the activity
of God in our world
now, at this present
moment."

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The conference voted in Mary Pellegrino, CSJ as its president-elect. Mary serves as the congregation moderator for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden. The conference also elected Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF, a leadership team member and congregational secretary of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana as the LCWR secretary.

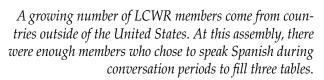


Participants visited the approximately 100 exhibitors during the assembly.

**Stephen Bevans, SVD** He spoke of four thirsts – the thirst for the water of integrity, the wine of hope, the nectar of justice, and the elixir of beauty.



Sharon Holland, IHM; Janet Mock, CSJ; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC and Marcia Allen, CSJ update the assembly on the events leading to the conclusion of the CDF mandate.





Statement of the LCWR National Board on the Conclusion of the CDF Mandate

t the meeting of the LCWR national board that immediately followed the LCWR assembly, the board members issued the following statement:

We were pleased that we could commemorate the conclusion of the CDF mandate with our members during this assembly. The members were heartened by the reports of the frank and honest conversations held between the bishop delegates of CDF and the LCWR officers that helped CDF come to a more accurate understanding of the conference and its mission. As noted by Sister Sharon Holland, IHM in her presidential address, the work required the bridging of cultural chasms that had been caused by two groups that did not know each other's assumptions. The efforts of both the bishop delegates and the LCWR officers these past three years to engage in dialogue on critical questions of faith, spiritual practices, and religious life that had not been previously discussed with such depth and candor led to a significant narrowing of this gap.

We are profoundly grateful for the 10 women who served this conference as its presidents and executive directors from the time CDF informed us of the doctrinal assessment in March 2009 to the April 2015 conclusion of the subsequent mandate: Sisters J. Lora Dambroski, OSF; Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; Mary Hughes, OP; Janet Mock, CSJ; Florence Deacon, OSF; Pat Farrell, OSF; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Sharon Holland, IHM; Marcia Allen, CSJ; and Joan Marie Steadman, CSC. As they shared with the assembly some of the suffering, as well as the

graces brought about through their engagement with the assessment and mandate, we developed an even more profound appreciation of and respect for the efforts these leaders made for the sake of religious life, LCWR, and the wider church and world – efforts often made at great personal cost. We acknowledge as well the contributions of the late Sister Mary Whited, CPPS who was serving as LCWR past president and the late Sister Jane Burke, SSND who was serving as LCWR executive director when CDF informed LCWR of its doctrinal assessment.

Our hope had been to thank Archbishop J. Peter Sartain in person at our assembly banquet, but due to a last-minute flight cancella-

tion, the archbishop was unable to attend. Instead, he joined us through a phone connection that allowed the assembly as a body to express our gratitude to him. The spontaneous and prolonged standing ovation that he received from our members spoke clearly of our appreciation for the manner in which he accompanied LCWR through these difficult and challenging years of public trial. We also recognize the commitment Archbishop Sartain made to wholehearted participation in this process and we are grateful for the time, energy, and openness he invested in the work of building bridges between CDF and LCWR.

We believe that the experience of these three years of respectful, honest, open dialogue about matters that are at the core of our life contributed significantly to a conclusion of the mandate that was agreeable to both CDF and LCWR. Our greatest desire now is that the positive outcome of these years of intense work at building relationships, establishing trust, inviting questions, and creating spaces for honest conversations -- even on topics that can be divisive -- will serve as a source of hope to others within the church and the world. Clearly, such work is demanding and difficult, but in this age of intolerance of differences and growing polarities, it may be one of the most indispensable tasks of these times.

LCWR past and current presidents and executive directors share their experience of the CDF doctrinal assessment and mandate: J Lora Dambroski,OSF; Marlene Weisenbeck,FSPA; Mary Hughes, OP; Sharon Holland, IHM; Janet Mock, CSJ; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Marcia Allen, CSJ; Florence Deacon, OSF; and Pat Farrell, OSF



## 2015 LCWR Assembly

#### **Actions for Justice**

uring the assembly, LCWR members from the local region led the participants in a justice action focused on the plight of families seeking refuge in the United States from violence and death in their home countries. Participants viewed the testimony of three mothers from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala who had been held with their children and hundreds of other families in the for-profit detention facility in Karnes City, Texas. Attorney Jonathan Ryan, executive director of the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) also shared his experience of providing free and low-cost legal services to under-served immigrant families in Central and South Texas. Assembly participants then took time to contact President Obama and urge him to end family detention. They also contributed \$6,150 to a fund established to assist families in securing bonds for their release from detention while they await adjudication of their claims to immigration relief.

The conversation about family detention and efforts to end the practice of incarcerating mothers and their children continued over an informal lunch. Approximately 400 sisters shared information about their ministry to immigrants and explored strategies for ending family detention and establishing justice for immigrants.

The LCWR members also affirmed a resolution where they committed themselves to examine the root causes of injustice and their congregation's complicity in injustice, and to work to effect systemic change as they seek to establish economic justice, abolish modern-day slavery, ensure immigrant rights, promote nonviolence, and protect Earth and its biosphere.

Aware as well of the two executions scheduled in Texas as the assembly met, the members remembered in their prayer all those who would be impacted by these deaths, and recalled LCWR's commitment to work to abolish the use of the death penalty.

Region 12 chair **Lourdes Leal, CDP** speaks about the plight of families seeking refuge in the United States





Atty. Jonathan Ryan; and LCWR members Eileen Gannon, OP and Marilyn Geiger, OSF on a panel on the detention of families.

LCWR director of communications Annmarie Sanders, IHM interviews keynoters Janet Mock, CSJ and Stephen Bevans, SVD on various topics including hope, prophetic dialogue, religious formation, and religious life in the future.





In a transfer of leadership ritual, the assembly thanked Carol Zinn, SSJ for her term in the LCWR presidency and blessed the new presidency and national board.

Outgoing board members Ellen Dauwer, SC and Judith Desmarias, SP receive a blessing led by LCWR executive director Joan Marie Steadman, CSC



**Sharon Holland, IHM** thanks **Archbishop J. Peter Sartain** for his work on the CDF mandate.
Archbishop Sartain joined the assembly through a phone connection and received a standing ovation.

Janet Mock, CSJ received the 2015 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award. In accepting the honor, she said in part: "I have been one of you as a member, as an associate member, and as executive director for a total of 23 years – so I have no illusions about the fact that I receive this as one who has learned about leadership through you and your predecessors. Thank you for stretching my imagination, affirming and challenging my ideas, and walking in solidarity with me as sisters through the years."



#### LCWR National Board Meets in Houston

he 20-member LCWR board met in Houston for one day prior to the LCWR assembly and for three days following the assembly. They were joined by members of the LCWR staff.

Prior to the assembly, the board considered the treasurer's report given by Pat Eck, CBS, as well as reports from the LCWR staff.

The three-day meeting following the assembly was designed to consider the topics before the board in a contemplative manner. Among those topics were:

- a review and debriefing of the assembly
- planning for LCWR's future and its sustainability
- report on the Congress on Consecrated Life and assembly of the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR)
- discussion of the relationship between the Association of Hispanic Women Religious in the United States and LCWR
- LCWR development efforts
- the Leadership Collaborative
- reflection on the LCWR Call 2015-2022 and how LCWR might move into the future
- fall LCWR regional meetings.

Prior to the board meeting, the LCWR executive committee approved the following new appointments to LCWR committees:

## **Assembly Resolution Committee** Kate Hendel, BVM

Contemporary Religious Life Committee Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ

Finance and Audit Committee Kate Katoski, OSF

Global Concerns Committee Danielle Bonetti, CSJ Alice Gerdeman, CDP

Nominations and Elections Committee Mary Ann Daly, SC

Outstanding Leadership Committee Jeannie Masterson, CSJ Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM



The LCWR presidency: Sharon Holland, IHM; Marcia Allen, CSJ and Mary Pellegrino, CSJ lead the national board meeting



LCWR national board and staff at post-assembly board meeting in Houston



Joan Marie Steadman, CSC stands behind President Obama at a White House briefing on the president's clean power plan.

# White House Invites LCWR Executive Director for Presentation of Clean Power Plan

resident Barack Obama invited LCWR executive director Joan Marie Steadman, CSC to the White House on August 3 when he publically presented his clean power plan. She stood behind the president at the White House briefing and was thanked by him for her leadership in rallying Catholic sisters across America to take on the issue of climate change.

LCWR issued a statement noting that it welcomes the creation of national standards to reduce carbon pollution and mitigate climate change, noting that such limits are essential to the health and welfare of all people, especially the most vulnerable, and to the wellbeing of the planet.

"In his Encyclical, 'Laudato Si', the Holy Father reminds us of our biblical call to live in right relationship and to cooperate with God's design for our world. When we choose lives of simplicity, hope, and love we honor God's presence in our world; we grow closer to God and we build the community for generations to come," said Joan Marie. "We sincerely hope that President Obama will continue to work with the international community to seek a robust agreement to protect our common home for present and future generations at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference."

## Members Make Assembly Attendance Possible for Others Through Donations to the LCWR Assembly Scholarship Fund

CWR expresses its profound gratitude to the congregations that sent donations to assist members who requested financial support for registration and/or hotel accommodations for the 2015 LCWR assembly. Members who received support have noted their deep appreciation and promise their prayers for the donors.

### Pilgrimage to El Salvador Filling Up

ore than 30 women religious from across the country are expected to join LCWR president Marcia Allen, CSJ for SHARE El Salvador's November 28-December 5



pilgrimage commemorating the 35th anniversary of the martyrdom of the four church women.

The program will include a pilgrimage to the site of the martyrdom of the four women, opportunities to speak with those who knew them, and a visit to the sites of the martyrdom of Archbishop Romero and the Jesuits and their co-workers. Delegates will discuss the root causes of forced migration and the current challenges facing impoverished communities. They will visit and lend support to grassroots movements of women, human rights defenders and the mothers of the disappeared, and anti-mining and environmental activists.

The cost for the programs is \$1200.00 plus airfare. Partial scholarships may be available from SHARE. Details and registration materials are available at: tinyurl.com/nhz3vlw.

SHARE is encouraging those who are unable to make the trip to El Salvador to organize local events to honor Ita, Maura, Dorothy, and Jean and to share these women's stories of commitment and courage with younger generations. Questions may be directed to Lora Wedge at 510-848-8487 or lora@share-elsalvador.org.

### Leading from Within Retreat

Leading from Within
is a retreat for LCWR members
and LCWR associates who are serving
in congregation leadership



January 17 — 22, 2016

Redemptorist Renewal Center at Picture Rocks Tucson, Arizona

www.desertrenewal.org

Join with other women religious leaders for a five-day retreat that will provide opportunities to reflect on the blessings and challenges of religious life leadership today. The days will include input, contemplative space, a variety of ritual experiences and some opportunity for individual spiritual direction and sharing in small wisdom circles for those who choose.

#### Retreat Directors







Janet Mock, CSJ

Space is limited to 30 persons.

More information and registration materials are available at lcwr.org/sites/default/files/calendar/attachments/lfwretreat | 6.pdf

## **Upcoming LCWR Dates**

#### Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Retreat Center Tucson, Arizona January 17 — 22, 2016

#### **Imagining Justice**

Bethany Center Lutz, Florida March 7 — 10, 2016

#### LCWR New Leader Workshop

Conference Center University of St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein, Illinois April 7 — 10, 2016

#### **LCWR** Assembly

Atlanta, Georgia August 9—13, 2016

#### **LCWR** Assembly

Orlando, Florida August 8—12, 2017

#### LCWR Assembly

St. Louis, Missouri August 7—11, 2018



*Update* is an official publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious published monthly and distributed to members nationally. © 2015 LCWR All rights reserved.

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#### **USCSAHT Seeks Members**

S Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) is seeking members interested in being part of a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor



services, and engages in advocacy in an effort to eradicate modern-day slavery.

Membership in USCSAHT is open to congregations of women religious, coalitions working against human trafficking in which women religious participate, individual sisters, lay associate members of congregations, and lay colleagues that have demonstrated their commitment to end human trafficking. USCSAHT is ideal for those who seek to extend their current work against human trafficking by joining in common efforts to create educational resources, serve survivors, or advocate change. www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org

## Federal Judge Dolly Gee Orders Administration Release Families

n August 21, US Federal District Judge Dolly Gee ruled that the Obama administration has until October 23 to begin releasing hundreds of migrant mothers and children who have been locked up for months awaiting their asylum hearings.

In her ruling Judge Gee rejected the plea by the administration to reconsider her July finding that the government violated the 1997 settlement of the Flores case regarding child migrants. However, she did grant the government's request to exceed the five-day release requirement under certain circumstances. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will be able to hold mothers and children for up to 20 days given situations like last year's unprecedented arrival of 70,000 Central American families at the US southern border.

The Obama administration has already made changes to its family-detention practices in the face of pressure from citizens and legislators. Even before Judge Gee's latest ruling, DHS began releasing those mothers and children who had been detained the longest.

## November Justice for Immigrants Gathering Set

ustice for Immigrants, a campaign of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, is planning a November 11-13 national convening in Chicago.



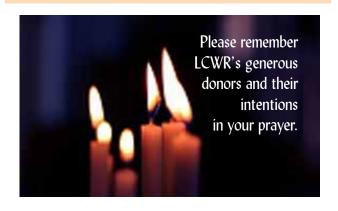
Designed to reenergize efforts for immigration reform, the conference entitled Moving Forward: Immigration in 2016 and Beyond will bring together immigration advocates and activists from across the country.

Chicago Archbishop Blase Cupich will deliver the keynote address. Planners anticipate conversations around: championing pro-reform policies, messaging and communications, advocacy for immigrant justice at the local and national levels, developing alternatives to detention, and pastoral approaches to integration of immigrant communities.

The cost for the conference, which will be held at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel at O'Hare Airport, is \$250 for a shared room; \$350 for a single and includes two nights lodging, all meals, conference materials, reception, and airport transfers. Questions may be directed to Tony Cube at acube@usccb.org. Additional information and registration is available at:tinyurl.com/oqad2v7.

### Is Your Leadership Term About to End?

f 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.



# Many Disappointed in State's Departments 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report

ach year the State
Department issues a
Trafficking in Persons
(TIP) Report on the status of countries efforts to end human trafficking.

This year's report was a disappointment to many in the anti-trafficking community. Most of the concern centered on the decision to



upgrade Malaysia from its Tier 3 ranking in last year's report to Tier 2 Watch list in the 2014 report. The State Department admits that trafficking continues in Malaysia, but contends that the government's increased effort to address the problem warrants the new ranking. This despite the widely reported discovery—after the reporting deadline—of the remains of refugees shoveled into mass graves.

Although the State Department insists that the ratings are not politicized, human rights groups note that Malaysia's upgrade could smooth the way for a US-led free trade deal with the Southeastern Asian nation and 11 other countries. Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ), who authored a 2000 law that led to the creation of J-TIP, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, said that the office's authority is being undermined by the president's trade agenda.

The report is available at: tinyurl.com/ohqlvpy.

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#### News from the UN

#### The United Nations Celebrates a Milestone Birthday

October 24 marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. In his anniversary message Secretary General Ban Ki-moon reminds global citizens, "The 70th anniversary



of the United Nations is an opportunity to reflect – to look back on the UN's history and take stock of its enduring achievements. It is also an opportunity to spotlight where the UN – and the international community as a whole – needs to redouble its efforts to meet current and future challenges across the three pillars of its work: peace and security, development, and human rights." More information about the celebration visit is available at: www.un.org/un70/en.

## UN SDGs to Include Goal to End Human Trafficking and Slavery

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are expected to include a goal to end human trafficking and slavery. The inclusion of the goal signifies recognition on the part of the world's governments that modern slavery and development go hand in hand. More information is available at: tinyurl.com/o545hm4.





- Letter of welcome to Pope Francis from the interfaith community in Washington, DC in anticipation of his September 23-24 2015 visit. Sharon Holland, IHM (8/1/15)
- Letter to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget asking for an increase in funding to support US efforts to prevent violent conflict and mass atrocities. LCWR (8/1/15)
- Open letter from faith leaders encouraging all the presidential candidates to clearly address poverty, inequality, and climate change especially in light of Pope Francis' recent encyclical. Sharon Holland, IHM (8/3/15)
- Letter from Catholic leaders in the State of Maryland to Senator Cardin requesting to meet with him to discuss the Iran nuclear deal. Ann Scholz, SSND (8/20/15)
- Letter in support of the Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015 urging House and Senate committee leadership to ensure full consideration of the bill. LCWR (8/21/15)
- Letter from Christian leaders to Members of Congress urging them to support the diplomatic agreement with Iran. Joan Marie Steadman, CSC (8/23/15)
- Letter to Senators expressing strong opposition to Senators Grassley and Vitter's substitute amendment to the "Stop Sanctuary Cities Act" which seeks to coerce law enforcement agencies to implement Department of Homeland Security's immigration detainers. LCWR (9/1/15)
- Letter from advocates for immigrants' rights welcoming Pope Francis and his message of respect and dignity for all people. LCWR (9/8/15)
- Letter of faith leaders to Congress welcoming
  Francis' concern for the poor and the planet and his
  call for a discussion of critical issues that transcends
  conventional divisions. Joan Marie Steadman, CSC
  (9/14/15)



#### 19th Religious Formation Conference

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania November 5-7, 2015 Keynote Speakers: Daniel Groody, CSC and Janet Mock, CSJ Pre-Congress: November 5, 2015

Registration: www.relforcon.org/congress-2015

#### **Advent Retreat**

#### Learning to Live and Pray in Joyful Hope

(Jointly offered by RFC and NRVC) Addie Lorraine Walker, SSND December 14-17, 2015

Redemptorist Renewal Center, Tucson, Arizona Registration: www.relforcon.org/advent-retreat

## NRRO Offers Workshops on Property Planning

he National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), through the coordinating efforts of Brother Stephen Glodek, SM, continues to prepare resources on property planning. Through the generosity of a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, NRRO will be offering workshops in 2016, the dates and locations of which will be announced later this fall. NRRO is posting updates and resources as they become available at www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office/tending-the-vineyard.cfm.