

October 2017



Mary Pellegrino, CSJ delivers LCWR presidential address

## LCWR Assembly Explores the Call to Embody Love for the Sake of the World

Approximately 780 participants attended the 2017 LCWR assembly in Orlando, Florida from August 8-11, where they explored the theme, "Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Transformation."

Drawing on the rich heritage of contemplation, the participants engaged in processes that drew them together across the lines of their individual orders to ask how their lives and their ministries could best serve the needs of the world today.

In her presidential address, Mary Pellegrino, CSJ spoke of the need to let the "diminishment narrative" regarding religious pass, and to open space for a new "narrative of deepening communion." She urged the leaders to consider what it might mean not only for religious

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## LCWR Issues Public Statements on Current Crises

LCWR recently issued a number of public statements. The [first statement](#) was an outcome of the prayer and dialogue at the 2017 national assembly. In the statement the members implore President Donald J. Trump to engage in dialogue and negotiation when dealing with the escalating tensions between the governments of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The [second statement](#) condemns racism in all its harmful forms whether the violent acts of the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, and White Supremacist groups or the daily acts of hate and discrimination that diminish this country. It goes on to acknowledge Catholic sisters own complicity in institutional racism and commits members to cleanse their hearts and rid the land of this evil.

The [third statement](#) registers LCWR's deep disappointment with President Trump's decision to rescind Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Ending DACA will cause irreparable harm to families and communities and force 800,000 young people back into the shadows. In the wake of this unconscionable action LCWR urges Congress to immediately take up and pass the bipartisan Dream Act of 2017.



*From the LCWR Presidency*

## The Staying Power of Mercy

by Teresa Maya, CCVI — LCWR President

The news has been overwhelming. As I write this Mexico continues to search through the rubble in the hope of finding one more survivor of the devastating earthquakes. Puerto Rico's power grid is indefinitely down and families search on social media for loved ones. The cities and islands flooded and flattened by hurricanes "H through M" on the Gulf and Caribbean are still coming to terms with loss. Our DACA young men and women are once again left in legal limbo and healthcare for the most vulnerable continues to be a "political option." Tensions with North Korea continue to escalate. St Louis is once again struggling with its racial divide. And James Martin, SJ has been "uninvited" in a tragic failure of openness. Not to mention the flooding in South East Asia and Nigeria.

Just one month, and the list feels interminable. This time even the news couldn't keep up. The scope of human tragedy that has surrounded us makes me feel helpless, and yes, sometimes hopeless.

I find it hard to believe that it has been only a month since we left our national assembly, only a month since Connie Fitzgerald, OCD decidedly reminded us that the times we live in demand we "live through Christ into an orientation toward relationship." How have we brought that insight to the endless hours we spent watching the soaked weathercasters boast wind speeds and trajectories? How have we brought our conversations about communion from the assembly to the overwhelming present we are living?



Perhaps we can start by listening deeply into the quieter stories that have defied the sensationalist 24-hours news cycle. The bakers in Houston who couldn't go home and used the 2000 kg of flour they had to make *pan dulce* for the displaced families, the Iowa man who hitched boat to truck to drive to Texas and took my friend's family to safety. The rescue workers in Mexico City with fists raised to quiet volunteers so they can listen for survivors. They are there, we are there, the hands of mercy that will kindle hope anew. The narrative of communion is emerging. We know it in our hearts: *Si se puede, si se puede!*

This emerging communion requires our persistent and stubborn conviction that mercy will prevail. Yes, many of us have spent hours in front of the television or scrolling social media horrified, petrified, dumbfounded... but we must call each other out to mercy. The little that we can do needs to get done! The solidarity of communion happens one relationship at a time. So let us persevere with the letter, the prayer, the small donation, the racism workshop, the phone call, the media post, the blog, the canned goods, the care of creation, the advocacy with our local congressperson.

I pray that as we read these lines all the communities we lead in small and significant ways have been involved in the small acts of mercy that show all those people in sorrow that they are not alone, that we are all in relationship through Christ. That we are the staying power of mercy.

This emerging  
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## LCWR Assembly Explores the Call to Embody Love for the Sake of the World

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life, but also for the polarized church, country, and global community if Catholic sisters lived out of the “more complicated and complex narrative” of communion.

She further noted that the path to communion is the deep, unrelenting grief and heartbreak that mark the lives of US Catholic sisters today. The transformative power of grief was a theme explored as well by the assembly keynoters.

The first keynoter, Dr. Christopher Pramuk, chair of Ignatian Thought at Regis University, spoke of the mystery of Christian faith in the resurrection and its power to show that “life reverberates beyond death,” and that “love will endure beyond any earthly power to extinguish it.” Using songs that suggest that the dead remain with the living, particularly some of the great African-American spirituals, Dr. Pramuk encouraged the participants to believe in “a God whose love overturns the power of sin and death so we can dare to live from a hope that seems, by all reasonable accounts, impossible.”



*Dr. Christopher Pramuk*

The second keynoter, United Methodist minister, artist, and author Jan Richardson, spoke of the transformative power of grief from her personal perspective follow-



*Jan Richardson is blessed before speaking*

ing the 2013 death of her husband after only three and a half years of marriage. Noting that death is a process that can come in many forms: “a physical death, the death of a dream, loss of a familiar lifestyle,” or “the ending or changing of a community that has held our hearts,” she urged the participants not to “hurry the grief along” lest they risk missing the presence of love. She challenged the assembly to ask themselves, “When absence erupts in our lives, how do we call upon the presence of love that goes deeper than our loss? How do we open ourselves anew to the presence of love that endures far beyond death?”



*Assembly deepening group listeners*

Participants practiced contemplative dialogue in small groups following the two keynote presentations asking the questions: What is required of us as leaders having heard these addresses? What matters most for the future of our communities, religious life, and the world we serve? Throughout the assembly participants were also invited to commit to spending time each day in personal and communal contemplation that placed them in deeper communion with the world, especially the places of great suffering and pain.



*Listeners Susan Francois, CSJP; Esther Guerrero, MCDP; Maria Hughes, ASC; and Pat Bergen, CSJ engaged with assembly reflector Liz Sweeney, SSJ in a dialogue on the movement of the Spirit in the assembly deepening groups.*

## LCWR Assembly Explores the Call to Embody Love for the Sake of the World

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*Assembly listeners Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP; Pat Twohill, OP; Sheila Lemieux, CSJP; and Toby Lardie, HM with Liz Sweeney, SSJ*

On the final day of the assembly, the participants engaged in a process designed to lead to the making of commitments to “be the presence of love” as individuals, groups, and as a conference. A panel of younger LCWR members initiated the commitment process by speaking on their vision for women religious and LCWR as it moves into the future. The panelists, Yesenia Fernandez, MGSps; Virginia Herbers, ASCJ; Alba Letelier, SP; and Ann Jackson, PBVM, offered the assembly a hope-filled vision that builds upon the communion developing now in the present, and a trust in a future that “is coursing through our veins.”



*Liz Sweeney facilitates the conversation with Yesenia Fernandez, MGSps; Alba Letelier, SP; Ann Jackson, PBVM; and Virginia Herbers, ASCJ.*

An outcome of the dialogue and prayer of the participants was the decision to issue a public statement imploring President Donald J. Trump to engage in dialogue and negotiation, particularly when dealing with

the escalating tensions between the governments of the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. (see page 1)

Also during the assembly, the members voted overwhelmingly to restructure the board of directors of the conference beginning January 1, 2018.

### Outstanding Leadership Award

During the assembly, LCWR bestowed the 2017 Outstanding Leadership Award on Constance FitzGerald, a Carmelite nun from Baltimore, Maryland. Much of Constance’s work has been with the formation and education of contemplative sisters in the United States and beyond. Her scholarship and writings, particularly on the great Carmelite mystics, have significantly influenced the lives of women religious globally.



### Election of Officers

At the conclusion of the assembly, Teresa Maya, CCVI, the congregation leader of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas, assumed the office of LCWR president for 2017-2018. The conference also voted in Sharlet Ann Wagner, CSC as its president-elect. An immigration attorney, she currently, serves on the general leadership team of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, in Notre Dame, Indiana.



*Bishop John Noonan welcomes the assembly participants to Orlando*

## LCWR Assembly Resources Available Online

The following resources are available at [lcwr.org/calendar/lcwr-assembly-2017](http://lcwr.org/calendar/lcwr-assembly-2017).

- Keynote Address: Will the Circle Be Unbroken? Leaning into the Mystery of Resurrection Faith -- Dr. Christopher Pramuk (English, French and Spanish)
- Keynote Address: "We Stood in the Place of Death and Heard the Living Call Our Name," -- Jan Richardson (English, French and Spanish)
- Presidential Address: "The Future Enters Us Long Before It Happens: Opening Space for an Emerging Narrative of Communion" - Mary Pellegrino, CSJ (English, French and Spanish)
- Remarks of Constance FitzGerald, OCD, Recipient of the 2017 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award (English, French and Spanish)
- Press release on the 2017 LCWR Assembly
- LCWR public statement on the escalating tensions between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (English and Spanish)
- Ordering information for CDs, DVDs, or MP3 and MP4 files of the assembly events
- Short video capturing highlights of the LCWR assembly
- Litany of Catholic Sisters Who Have Died from Violence
- List of assembly exhibitors

LCWR thanks the following communities for their great generosity in providing translations of these materials in French and Spanish:

- Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (San Antonio, Texas)
- Sisters of Bon Secours
- Sisters of Providence (Renton, Washington)
- Sisters of Providence (Montreal)



## LCWR Opens Search for New Executive Director

LCWR is beginning a search for a new executive director whose term will begin concurrently with a new LCWR board on January 1, 2018.

The LCWR executive director provides leadership and direction for the hopes and dreams of the conference including the implementation of the LCWR Call for 2015 - 2022. She collaborates closely with the conference officers; and leads and coordinates the staff of the national office to implement, activate, and advance the conference's purpose and direction. She is responsible with the presidency and board, to anticipate significant trends and issues influencing religious life, the national conference, and the member congregations. Executive experience, a collaborative leadership style and excellent relational skills are essential to the role. A willingness to delegate appropriately is key to managing the multiple aspects of her duties.

LCWR is actively implementing significant changes to its governance structure. These changes will inevitably trigger an evolution of the executive director's role as well. It is critical that the executive director be flexible, adaptable and balanced during this major transition. Personal experience in a governance role is essential. The executive director must understand the history, mission, and purpose of LCWR from her own personal experience as an engaged member of the conference. She is an important public face of LCWR, especially with other national and international conferences and service organizations. In these settings, a gracious, collaborative presence is indispensable.

This call goes forth at a critical time in the life of the conference and in the unfolding story of religious life. LCWR is hopeful and confident that this invitation will find resonance with women religious who are willing to enter discernment with the conference.

LCWR asks that leaders share this opening with potential candidates and encourage them to apply. A position description will be available on the LCWR website, and additional information may be obtained by contacting Janette Cahill in the LCWR national office at [jcahill@lcwr.org](mailto:jcahill@lcwr.org). Candidates may also contact any member of the search committee: Patricia Eck, CBS; Judith Desmarais, SP; Virginia Herbers, ASCJ; Teresa Maya, CCVI; or Carole Shinnick, SSND.

## LCWR National Board Prepares for Governance Changes

The LCWR national board met both prior to the LCWR assembly on August 7, and then following the assembly, from August 12 – 14. Among the topics discussed were:

- The new LCWR governance model and next steps in implementing the changes it brings to the conference.
- A new LCWR task force charged with designing an assessment of the needs of LCWR members that will provide data for planning purposes. The input will help the board prioritize activities, programs, and projects, as well as consider the best use of LCWR's resources to support members. The task force consists of Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF; Mary Jo Nelson, OLMV; Rita Cammack, OSF; and Joan Marie Steadman, CSC.
- A review of the 2017 LCWR assembly, and the purpose and structure of LCWR assemblies in general.
- The appointment of a Transitional Governance Committee that would work for six-months helping to establish LCWR's new board. The transitional committee members are: co-chairs Rosemary Brennan, CSJ and Theresa Sandok, OSM; Katie Clauss, IHM; Esther Guerrero, MCDP; Maria Iannucillo, SSND; Mary Pellegrino, CSJ, and Joan Marie Steadman, CSC. Following the six-months, the board will appoint a new Governance Committee.
- Finding the most effective ways for the conference to work with and support its regions.
- Modifications to the process for selecting LCWR's annual Outstanding Leadership Award recipient.
- Contemplative dialogue on the question: Is there a place for LCWR in initiating reflection, dialogue and a broader conversation about how the ministry of leadership and governance could evolve in the future?
- Search for a new LCWR executive director
- Planning for the LCWR fall regional meetings

The current LCWR board will complete its work on December 31, 2017, as it prepares for the establishment of a new board whose term will begin on January 1, 2018.



*The LCWR national board and staff at its post-assembly meeting in Orlando*

## LCWR Initiates New Nomination Process for its National Board

LCWR is seeking to identify a slate of 12 nominees for nine open seats on the LCWR national board for a term beginning January 1, 2018. On that day, the board will transition from a group made up primarily of regional chairs to a small, more flexible, skills-based board. The initial board will have 15 members: the three presidents, the executive director, secretary, and treasurer, and nine members elected from the membership at large. In order to initiate staggered terms, the nine elected members will be appointed to one-, two-, or three-year terms based on their qualifications individually and collectively.

In addition to traditional board duties, this board will be tasked with overseeing the development of a governance model that addresses the current and future realities of the organization.

To be eligible for election to the board, nominees must be current LCWR members and elected leaders in their own religious institutes with at least two years remaining in their term of office as of January 1, 2018. A member may not serve simultaneously on the board and as a regional chair.

Members may nominate another member for the board, or may nominate themselves. All nominations must be received by October 13. Additional information on the process, as well as the responsibilities of the board may be found on the private side of the LCWR website ([lcwr.org](http://lcwr.org)) under "LCWR Nomination Process."

## Global Concerns Committee Publishes New Resolution to Action

The Global Concerns Committee recently published the Summer 2017 edition of *Resolutions to Action*. In her reflection entitled, "Here and There," Doris Regan, OP deftly weaves her experiences with immigrants in the United States and Honduras into a tapestry of suffering, perseverance, and hope. Her challenge to readers is to embrace the story of immigrants, exiles, and refugees, and to become border-crossers of every kind.

*Resolutions to Action* can be found on the [LCWR website](http://lcwr.org).

## LCWR Resources Available in Spanish

Due to the generosity of many people, LCWR's collection of translations of presentations and articles into languages other than English is growing. For the most recent additions, we are grateful to:

- The Religious of Jesus and Mary
- The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (San Antonio)
- Irma Valeriano González

Available now are:

- Noticing the Arrival of Our Highest Possibility: The Power of Deep Listening – by Carole Shinnick, SSND – Occasional Papers, Summer 2017 (Spanish)
- Living a Reflective Life: An Interview with Otto Scharmer by Annmarie Sanders, IHM – Occasional Papers, Summer 2017 (Spanish)
- Information on Contemplative Dialogue (Spanish)
- Introduction to the Video on Contemplative Dialogue by Liz Sweeney, SSJ (Spanish)

All are available at [lcwr.org/articles-pertinent-religious-life](http://lcwr.org/articles-pertinent-religious-life). (See page 5 for the list of all the 2017 LCWR assembly presentations that are now available in French and Spanish.)

## Represents LCWR at CMSM Assembly



LCWR executive director Joan Marie Steadman, CSC and president Mary Pellegrino, CSJ with the president of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) Brian Terry, SA in August at the CMSM annual assembly. Held in Scottsdale, Arizona on the theme, "All Brothers - Mediators of God's Love," the event included keynotes by John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, and James Heft, SM.

## LCWR Grieves the Death of Helen Maher Garvey, BVM

LCWR mourns the passing of former president of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) and of LCWR, Helen Maher Garvey, following her death on August 6 in Dubuque, Iowa.



Born in Hempstead, New York, she held a PhD in organizational development from Columbia University. Her leadership spanned decades and found expression in a broad diversity of ministries and locales. She served as principal of two elementary schools on Long Island before assuming BVM leadership in 1976 at age 41 when she began her 16 years of service as president and vice-president of her congregation.

During her tenure as BVM president, her compassion led to the creation of the Heartland Housing Initiative in Dubuque, and the renovation of a stately old home into apartments for 22 families, named Helen Garvey Place.

She was elected to LCWR presidency in 1986. In this role she addressed Pope John Paul II on behalf of American women religious when he visited San Francisco in 1987.

In 1993, she began an 11-year ministry as director of pastoral services for the diocese of Lexington, Kentucky. She developed lay leadership and worked with parish councils in a largely rural and unchurched area. Her service on behalf of Catholic sisters entered uncharted territory when she chaired the LCWR History Project to create a national exhibit, "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America." The highly acclaimed exhibit traveled to nine cities coast to coast over a three-year period from the Smithsonian in D.C., to Ellis Island, and westward to Dubuque and other cities on the way to the California coast.

She was also a consultant for the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO), assisting religious commu-

nities plan for their retirement needs, and worked with many individual religious communities as a meeting facilitator and speaker.

In 2009, Helen received the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award.

## LCWR Forms Ongoing Deepening Groups

In response to the expressed desire of a number of members to participate in an ongoing deepening group, LCWR created a process to assist members who so desire to form groups. These virtual/online or in-person groups will engage in ongoing communal contemplative dialogue focused on the essence and meaning of religious life. Once the groups are established they will be self-organizing groups with members accountable to each other.

Some details about the groups:

- The recommended group size is five to six participants
- Persons may sign up as individuals and be assigned to a group or persons can sign up as an already constituted group.
- While persons who live in proximity to one another may wish to sign up as a group that will meet in person, it is anticipated that most groups will meet virtually using an online application such as Zoom or Skype.
- Groups will determine together the frequency and length of their meetings.
- The only accountability required is to the group itself.

In addition to assisting persons in forming a group, LCWR will provide the following resources on the LCWR website:

- a guide to a process for groups to use if they so desire.
- a guide to using Zoom
- a guide for praying together "virtually"
- These materials will be available on the website by mid-October before groups begin to meet.

To be included in the first round of groups established, members must register by October 15, 2017. Members previously received an email from the LCWR office with a link to the online registration form.



## 7,150 Catholic Sisters Help Save Healthcare

Catholic sisters from all 50 states and Washington, DC sent a letter to the US Senate asking them to reject the Better Care Reconciliation Act, and any proposals that would repeal the Affordable Care Act or cut Medicaid. Their message: “We, 7,150 Catholic Sisters in the United States, write to urge you to cast a life-affirming ‘no’ vote against the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) The BCRA would be the most harmful legislation for American families in our lifetimes, and it goes against our Catholic faith teaching.”



The letter stated, “As Catholic women religious, we have witnessed firsthand the moral crisis of lack of quality, affordable healthcare in this country. We have seen early and avoidable deaths because of lack of insurance, prohibitive costs, and lack of access to quality care. We fought for the expansion of coverage in the Affordable Care Act because we saw the life-giving value of crucial healthcare programs such as Medicaid. This program covers over 70 million Americans, including children, pregnant women (and nearly half of all births in this country), people with disabilities, people struggling to get by, and senior citizens. Further, some of our fellow women religious rely on Medicaid in nursing homes when we can no longer care for our sisters at home.”

Mary Pellegrino, CSJ, then LCWR president, explained the commitment of women religious to the right of all people to quality health care. “As women of faith, we take seriously the gospel call to care for those in need. We are committed to a faith-filled vision of healthcare that guarantees health and dignity to all regardless of their station or circumstance. Catholic sisters have been serving and healing the people of the United States for almost 300 years. We continue to minister in hospitals, nursing homes, and clinics across this country. That includes advocating for those whose life and dignity are threatened by the proposed Senate legislation. We urge Senators to reject this bill and seek a bipartisan solution that will guarantee the right to healthcare for all.”

## Sisters Encouraged to Urge Speaker Ryan to Craft a Moral Budget

As Congress debates the FY2018 budget, LCWR invites sisters across the country to join NETWORK to help ensure that the federal budget is a reflection of the values of the nation and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

The federal budget is a moral document that reflects the priorities of the nation. A budget worthy of this nation must prioritize human needs programs, ensure funding to care for vulnerable members of society, restore economic opportunity, and invest in the common good.

Sisters are encouraged to join this effort and to write letters to Speaker Paul Ryan letting him know that a budget that cuts protections for the most vulnerable does not reflect the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Organizers hope to hand-deliver more than 2000 letters to Speaker Ryan’s office. Sisters can mail their letters to NETWORK Lobby, 25 E. Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20001 by November 10.

Resources about the budget and details about the campaign are available on the [NETWORK website](#).

## Catholic Climate Covenant Offers Feast of St. Francis Resources

Every October 4, the Feast of St. Francis (FOSF) celebrates the saint who saw all created beings as his brother or sister. Inspired by this example, Catholic Climate Covenant (CCC) produced a free 90-minute catechetical program to help parishes, schools, and faith communities explore how they can better care for creation and those living in poverty. This year’s program also includes a blessing of the animals liturgy.

Information on how to receive the 90-minute educational program and liturgy is available at [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/FOSF](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/FOSF). Questions may be directed to Carolyn Thele, director of operations, Catholic Climate Covenant: [Carolyn@catholicclimatecovenant.org](mailto:Carolyn@catholicclimatecovenant.org)

## Bipartisan Dream Act 2017 Introduced in Both Houses of Congress

**D**reamers have been waiting for Congress to act for 16 years. Their future is more perilous than ever. On September 5, President Trump announced that he would end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Implemented through executive action by President Barack Obama in June 2012, the DACA program has provided nearly 800,000 young people with work permits and temporary protection from deportation.

It is imperative that Congress enact a just solution for young people brought to this country as children that does not use Dreamers as bargaining chips to increase enforcement or further militarize the borders.

Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced the Dream Act of 2017, S. 1615, in the Senate on July 20, 2017. Congresswomen Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Florida) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-California) introduced the Dream Act of 2017, H.R. 3440, in the House on July 26, 2017. If Congress does not act by March 5, thousands of DACA recipients will be deported.

The bipartisan Dream Act of 2017 would allow undocumented immigrants who entered the United States when they were younger than 18 and have lived in the country for four years to apply for a conditional permanent resident status. If they satisfy work, educational, or military service requirements, they would eventually be eligible to apply for a green card and follow the regular process toward citizenship.

For additional information visit the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition website](#).



Please remember  
LCWR's generous  
donors and their  
intentions  
in your prayer.

## Upcoming LCWR Dates

### 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

### LCWR Assembly

*Dallas, Texas*

August 11 — 15, 2020



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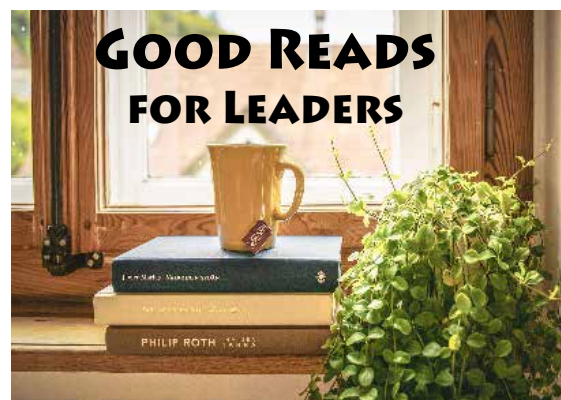
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- LCWR statement in support of the bipartisan Dream Act of 2017, which would offer a pathway to legal status for immigrant youth. Joan Marie Steadman (7/20/17)
- Faith-organization letter to leaders in the U.S. House and Senate urging them to enact a long-term funding extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). LCWR (7/21/17)
- Amicus brief submitted on behalf of faith-related organizations to the U.S. Supreme Court, in opposition to the Executive Order barring refugees and citizens of six predominantly Muslim countries from entry to the U.S. LCWR (7/22/17)
- Endorsement of a bill to establish in the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services the Federal Inter-agency Working Group on Reducing Child Poverty and to develop a national strategy to eliminate child poverty in the United States. LCWR (7/23/17)
- Letter to Chairman Goodlatte of the House Judiciary Committee strongly opposing the "Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act" (H.R. 391) which undermines access to asylum in the U.S. LCWR (7/25/17)
- Letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives urging them to oppose funding for the continued construction of a border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. LCWR (7/25/17)
- Letter to Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, Elaine Duke, urging her to direct Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to cease its "surge initiative" that targets for detention, deportation, and potential criminal prosecution vulnerable children and their sponsors seeking protection at our borders. LCWR (7/28/17)
- Endorsement of the preamble to the interfaith Faithful Budget FY 2018. LCWR (8/8/12)
- Open letter supporting Dreamers and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and asking President Trump to maintain executive support for DACA. LCWR (8/15/17)
- Letter to leadership of Senate Appropriations Committee urging the committee to protect the existing funding of \$948,000,000 authorized for the Unaccompanied Alien Child (UAC) Program in the FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. LCWR (8/15/17)
- Faith-based letter opposing Senators Cotton (R-AR) and Perdue's (R-GA), RAISE Act which would scale back legal immigration, deny millions the opportunity to reunite with family members, and permanently cap refugee admissions at 50,000 per year. LCWR (8/9/17)
- LCWR statement of 700 members gathered in assembly imploring President Donald J. Trump to engage in dialogue and negotiation with leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. LCWR (8/13/17)
- LCWR Statement condemning racism and to acknowledge Catholic sisters own complicity in institutional racism. LCWR (8/16/17)
- Statement by coalition of DC-based Catholic organizations condemning the display of hatred, overt racism, and violence manifest in Charlottesville, VA by members of white supremacist, Ku Klux Klan, and neo-Nazi groups. LCWR (8/16/17)
- LCWR statement of concern about threats to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) LCWR(8/25/17)

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Any LCWR member who has read a book that may be of interest to other women religious leaders is asked to consider submitting a brief review to include in the monthly "Good Reads" column. This is a helpful way to share good resources with one another.

Contact LCWR communications director Annmarie Sanders, IHM for more information ([asanders@lcwr.org](mailto:asanders@lcwr.org)).

## LCWR SIGN ONs & Letters

*(continued from page 11)*

- Open Letter declaring support for Dreamers and DACA recipients and recognizing their enormous contributions to their communities and the shared prosperity of the nation. LCWR (8/28/17)
- Faith-based letter to Acting Secretary of DHS, Elaine Duke calling on her to continue to utilize Temporary Protected Status (TPS) as Congress intended, to protect human life in the face of armed conflict, natural disaster, or other extraordinary circumstances in their countries of nationality. LCWR (9/1/17)
- Interfaith letter to President Trump and members of Congress urging them to support a presidential determination for refugee admissions of at least 75,000 for Fiscal Year 2018. LCWR (9/5/17)
- Amicus brief in support of respondents' right to clean air and an environment that supports the welfare of future generations in *U.S. v. United States District Court for the District of Oregon, Respondent, and Kelsey Cascadia Rose Juliana; et al.* LCWR (9/5/17)
- LCWR statement registering disappointment in the Trump administration's decision to end DACA in six months and calling on Congress to pass Dream Act 2017. LCWR (9/5/17)
- Interfaith letter to Congressional leadership urging them to enact a long-term funding extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). LCWR (9/7/17)
- Letter to Secretary Tillerson and Acting Secretary Duke expressing deep concern about the recent elimination of the Central American Minors (CAM) Parole Program and to share alarm and disappointment upon learning that the Administration is now considering abolishing the CAM Refugee Program. LCWR (9/18/17)
- Interfaith letter to members of Congress urging them to immediately pass a "clean" Dream Act of 2017 (S. 1615/H.R. 3440), which provides a pathway to citizenship for immigrant youth. LCWR (9/19/17)
- Interfaith letter to members of Congress urging quick, bipartisan action to stabilize the health insurance markets. LCWR (9/14/17)

## Resource Center for Religious Institutes National Conference October 31-November 3, 2017

Register now at [www.trcri.org](http://www.trcri.org)

### Changing Times: Challenges and Transitions

- Keynote address by Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, former president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services and currently the President's Fellow for Global Development at Purdue University.
- 40 workshops covering topics related to finance, canon and civil law including planning for institutes in transition.
- New track on eldercare sponsored by NRRO.
- Conference liturgy with Hank Lemoncelli, OMI as celebrant.
- Three pre-conference workshops: Legal Overview for Religious Institutes; Patrimony; and TRENDS for Beginners/Refresher for Users.

### NRRO Offers New Video Resources for Property Planning

For many institutes of men and women religious, a primary obstacle to assuring adequate retirement funding is determining the best use of outdated congregational properties. Often these facilities no longer meet the needs of elder members and are expensive to maintain. Funded by a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the National Religious Retirement Office created *Tending the Vineyard*, a project to promote effective property planning among religious institutes. In 2016, NRRO hosted two national workshops to help congregational leaders explore issues such as renovation vs. new construction, green building, and how effective planning can sustain mission and charism.

In response to workshop evaluations, NRRO is now developing a video series to expand upon specified topics. Available later in 2017, this series will serve as an ongoing resource, offering information and guidelines from property experts and insights from religious who have completed property initiatives at their own communities.

For more information on the NRRO educational, financial and consultative services, visit [www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office](http://www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office).



In 2017, National Vocation Awareness Week is celebrated November 5-11.

In 2018, National Vocation Awareness Week is celebrated November 4-10

### Fall Workshops:

NRVC is offering three workshops for vocation ministers October 11-21 at the Marillac Center in Leavenworth, Kansas. Offered are:

- Orientation Program for New Vocation Directors
- Behavioral Assessment 1
- Behavioral Assessment 2

Registration information can be found at: [nrvc.net](http://nrvc.net).

### Statistics on Recent Vocations are on the Rise

An up-to-date handout on Statistics on Recent Vocations to Religious Life and the Priesthood, prepared by CARA, is available. Leaders are encouraged to use the information in presentations and articles to inform the public as well as members of their religious institute about recent vocation trends. There exists a slow and steady rise in vocations. [nrvc.net/334/publication/4570-links-to-studies-reports](http://nrvc.net/334/publication/4570-links-to-studies-reports)

NRVC encourages all to change the national discourse about vocations from one of scarcity to one of HOPE.

### National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW)

NVAW is an annual week-long celebration of the US Catholic Church dedicated to promote vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life through prayer and education, and to renew prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations.

Observance of Vocation Awareness Week began in 1976 when the US bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year for the celebration. It was later moved to Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in January. In 2014, after extensive consultation, the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations moved the observance of National Vocation Awareness Week to November to engage Catholic schools and colleges more effectively in this effort. For more information about the news release, prayer cards, video clips, and other resources, visit [NRVC.net](http://NRVC.net). NRVC asks that religious communities send any plans, photos, or news about their events celebrated during National Vocation Awareness Week to Deborah Borneman, SCSC at [debbiesscm@nrvc.net](mailto:debbiesscm@nrvc.net).



### RFC Webinars Resume

On September 25, Arturo Chavez, PhD, president of the Mexican American Catholic College, offered in Spanish the webinar Encuentro o Aislamiento: El Reto del Papa Francisco; Dr. Chavez will repeat the webinar in English, Encounter or Isolation: The Challenge of Pope Francis, on September 27. Both webinars will be archived on the RFC website ([www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org)) after their live presentation. More detailed information and registration information is available on the conference website.

### Associate Director Position Open at RFC

The position of associate director of the Religious Formation Conference will be open after the conclusion of the RFC's National Congress in November 2017. To ensure continuity in this significant role, a search began August 1, 2017, with the posting of the job description, application process, and timeline on the conference website ([www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org)). The conference hopes to have a new associate director in place by January 2018. Leaders are asked to share this announcement with their members.

### National Congress 2017

Registration continues for the RFC's 2017 National Congress, Grace in the Now: the Gospel of Encounter. LCWR President Teresa Maya, CCVI will be a congress keynoter, as will Stephen Bevans, SVD. Honoring the RFC's long commitment to both initial and lifelong formation, the conference has invited six young religious, both women and men and all but one still in initial formation, to respond to the keynote presentations. Early registration fees are in effect through October 6. Registration information is available at [www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org).



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

The news these days is heavy on our hearts. Many of us have family members and community members in areas affected by Irma and Harvey. (Will we ever forget these names!) Our prayers are with all those affected by these history-making storms, especially those congregations with members in the affected areas.

Still, the needs of the broader global community press in upon us whether it be in the Caribbean, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh, Yemen or South Sudan. Friends in Solidarity continues to seek support for the work of religious being done in South Sudan, a war-ravaged nation. In spite of being surrounded by civil strife and displaced persons, the Catholic Health Training Institute continues to train nurses and midwives. CHTI has trained over one half of all registered nurses in the country! These student nurses also provide assistance at the local St. Daniel Comboni Hospital run by the Comboni Sisters. Many of the staff members of the hospital have fled the area with their families or are living in camps for internally displaced persons, over 50,000 in Wau town, alone. The certified program for Registered Nurse and Certified Midwives is three years long. The annual fee for tuition, room and board, travel and clinical practice is \$6500. We need to raise \$130,000 to finish the year. Costs have risen exponentially as the economy is in “free-fall” and the inflation rate is the highest in the world at over 800%! 51% of the population is food insecure. Most supplies need to be imported and, because of insecurity on the roads, students must be flown to the town nearest their families.

We believe that education is the way forward in South Sudan. Solidarity students study and live with persons from many tribes and will tell you that the most important learning from their time at CHTI is coming to appreciate and respect people from other cultures. They also are being taught by teachers coming from seven different cultures!

We so appreciate all those who have supported this effort and we trust that you will continue to support

this work. For more information contact: [jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com](mailto:jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com) or go to our website: [www.solidarityfriends.org](http://www.solidarityfriends.org) We have just posted new resources under “What’s New” including our Advent project for students and seniors. [wp.me/p7wB7z-3bn](http://wp.me/p7wB7z-3bn) Be sure to take a look and share the Advent brochure with those working in schools or in senior citizen centers. They will learn about South Sudan and at the same time have the opportunity to contribute a small amount to support the work. Thanks!

## News from the UN

**October 2—International Day of Nonviolence** is marked on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of nonviolence. The UN resolution describes the day as an opportunity to share the message of nonviolence and to reaffirm the universal relevance of the principle of nonviolence and the desire to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, and understanding.

**October 11—International Day of the Girl Child 2017** is celebrated annually to highlight issues concerning the gender inequality facing young girls. This year’s theme is “The Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030.”

**October 16—World Food Day 2017** will focus on the link between food insecurity and migration. Investing in rural development can address factors that compel people to move and lead to increased food security, more resilient livelihoods, better access to social protection, reduced conflict over natural resources, and solutions to environmental degradation and climate change.

**October 17—International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2017** presents an opportunity to acknowledge the effort and struggle of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard, and a moment to recognize that people living in poverty are the first ones to fight against poverty. This year’s commemoration focuses on the importance of the values of dignity, solidarity, and voice underscored in the Call to Action to fight to end poverty everywhere.

**October 24—United Nations Day 2017** marks the 72nd anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the United Nations Charter. With the ratification of this founding document by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations officially came into being.