

January 2020



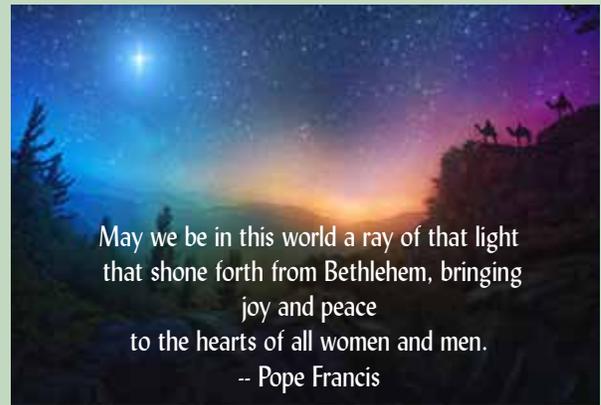
Plans are underway for the upcoming LCWR assembly in Dallas, Texas from August 11 - 14, 2020. This will be an important assembly as the conference continues looking toward the future and the possibilities contained there for religious life.

This assembly will feature Daughter of the Holy Spirit of Mexico, **Mercedes Leticia Casas Sánchez**, as the keynote speaker. For those who have participated in events of the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR), Mercedes is well-known for her leadership, wisdom, and creativity, having served as CLAR president. After completing her term in community leadership, Mercedes was invited by the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to join its staff in 2018 in Rome where she now resides.



More details about the assembly will follow in 2020.

## Christmas Greetings from LCWR



*May the promise of God fill your heart with hope this Christmas.*

*Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your loved ones for a blessed Christmas and peaceful new year.*

*Presidents, National Board and Staff of LCWR*



*From the LCWR Executive Director*

## Emmanuel, God-With-Us, Here and Now, Today and Tomorrow

by Carol Zinn, SSJ — LCWR Executive Director

**A**s I've journeyed through these Advent days of holy waiting and watching, preparing for the feast of the Incarnation with eyes focused on a new calendar year filled with Epiphanies, the experience of the 2019 LCWR Assembly remains with me. The speakers and processes invited us to:

- Widen our tents
- Cross borders and boundaries
- Celebrate our luxurious diversity
- Become web-weavers and web-watchers
- Facilitate the space for the emergence of religious life
- Look toward the global realities of religious life
- Develop more porous borders
- Move towards collaboration more intentionally
- Discern LCWR's role in the public square
- Make good use of technology
- Practice leadership of the whole of religious life
- Deepen our understanding of the intersection of migration, racism, and climate change.

These invitations continue to call to me from the future:

- Can you hear the voice of the Annunciation?
- Do you feel the "Yes" growing within you?
- Will you respond to create the space for the birthing of religious life anew?
- How do you manifest the Light of the World today, for tomorrow?
- Will you choose to return by another route?
- With whom will you journey into the future?
- What is your hope in the God of the Future?
- Can you live and lead in these times of transformation and emergence?



*May the One-Who-Arrives  
find us prepared for the  
birthing of our God  
in ways that bring forth  
the gospel message in this,  
our time,  
for the life of the world.*

As LCWR continues to discern the content of assembly 2019 and allows the emerging orientations to resonate, the work before us prompts a spirit of adventure, enthusiasm, and passion. At the same time, this same work demands a grounding in contemplative processes; a renewing of the core essentials of consecrated, religious life; and a discerning mind, heart, and will that yields a spaciousness within for the fullness of the Paschal Mystery to dwell therein.

Looking to a new calendar year, we see a multitude of opportunities to engage in this work we are called to do, together. From the Leading from Within Retreat to the New Leaders' Workshop to the Imagining Justice event to the Practicing Leadership for a Vibrant and Viable Future Workshops to the Leadership Pathways offerings to the Geographic Gatherings in April, May, and June in which we will initiate a communal reflection and discernment about moving

forward, together, in the exercise of the ministry of elected/appointed leadership. Additionally, there will be important LCWR national work at the spring region meetings as we continue to move into the future together.

Yes, the input of the 2019 assembly continues to call us forth and we choose to respond as wholeheartedly as we once embraced this vocation to religious life and to the ministry of leadership. May the One-Who-Arrives find us prepared for the birthing of our God in ways that bring forth the gospel message in this, our time, for the life of the world.



*LCWR national board meeting in November 2019*

## Nominations Begin for LCWR President and Board

LCWR has begun the process of nominating members to serve in the LCWR presidency and on the national board. All members are asked to begin discerning who they might nominate for these key roles in the life of the conference. Nominations may be submitted by leadership teams or individuals.

Important information on the LCWR nomination and election process was sent to all LCWR members in mid-December and is available on the members' side of the LCWR website. Included with the materials are an eligibility list, the responsibilities of the president and board members, and a prayer for discernment for use by leadership teams as they prepare to nominate members for these positions. The conference is dependent upon the members' participation in the nomination process.

The nomination and election process is overseen by the LCWR Governance Committee which met from December 11-13 in St. Louis to prepare all the nomination materials. The committee members are: Sangeeta Ayithamattam, SCN; Vicki Bergkamp, ASC; Barbara Dreher, CSJ; Maureen Geary, OP; Maria Iannuccillo, SSND; Theresa Sandok, OSM; Sharlet Wagner, CSC; and Carol Zinn, SSJ.

## Update on National Discernment on Canonical Leadership

From the feedback received from LCWR members, many leadership teams have had significant conversations as a result of using the canonical leadership materials available on the members' section of the LCWR website. Clearly, teams engaged the video and reflection process with profound openness and deep desire to participate in the next phase of the LCWR transition ministry service.

The LCWR national office expresses gratitude to all the teams that cooperated with the December 16 deadline for returning their feedback form since this data helps with the next steps of the planning process. Since it is very important that **every** religious institute that is a member of LCWR provide feedback, forms can still be submitted even though the deadline has passed. The data shared will enable LCWR to create a national profile about the capacity of US institutes of women religious to continue to hold chapters and elect leaders from among their members.

LCWR received almost 100 inquiries from leadership teams asking if their whole team could attend one of the five geographic gatherings to be held in April, May, and June 2020. This level of interest is a strong testimony to the importance LCWR members are giving to work together as leadership teams towards the future. While the desire to have all team members present at a geographic gathering is understandable, the priority is to have representation at the meetings by as many different institutes as possible so that the reflection and conversation is rich and broad.

The geographic gatherings are just one step in a much larger national reflection and discernment process. The following step will take place at the August 2020 assembly, which any LCWR member is able to attend.

Questions about the upcoming gathering may be directed to the LCWR office ([jcahill@lcwr.org](mailto:jcahill@lcwr.org)). Additional registration information and preparation materials will be sent to those who signed up for the regional meetings in early 2020.

## Update on LCWR Awards

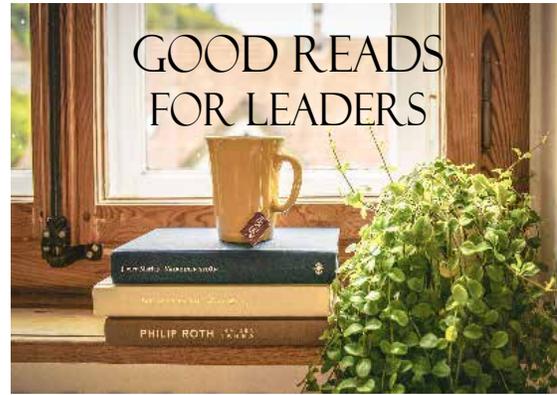
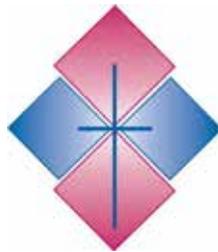
The LCWR national board approved the renaming of the Outstanding Leadership Award (OLA) Committee to the LCWR Awards Committee at the November 2019 meeting. The reason for the title change is that this committee will develop the processes and prepare the recommendations for board consideration for both the annual OLA recipient and the LCWR Lifetime Achievement Award (LAA). The OLA will continue to be awarded annually at the assembly. Recommendations for the LAA will be made to the board when a person who meets the guidelines is recognized by the committee. More detailed information will be shared by the committee at a later time.

The LCWR Awards Committee members, Dawn Tomaszewski, SP; Constance Phelps, SCL; Susan Durkin, OSU; Vicky Larson, PBVM; and Christine Beckett, SCN, staff liaison, thank the regions for sending their recommendations for the 2021 OLA recipient. The committee is now preparing the recommendation for the board to consider in early 2020.

## Updates from NRRO

Each January, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) emails and mails applications for Direct Care Assistance, an annual financial distribution to eligible religious institutes. Completion of this form is the doorway to NRRO funding, educational programming, and consultative services. Applications are due by March 31, 2020, and financial awards will be made in June.

All institutes are urged to complete the Direct Care Assistance application, even if not applying and/or eligible for financial assistance. The information provided enables the NRRO to develop a more comprehensive assessment of retirement funding and needs nationally. This data advances the NRRO's collaboration with other national organizations that support religious life, including LCWR. Any institute that did not receive the application or needs assistance, may contact the NRRO office at 202-541-3215 or contact NRRO grants specialist Monica Glover ([mglover@usccb.org](mailto:mglover@usccb.org)).



## A Living Gospel: Reading God's Story in Holy Lives

by Robert Ellsberg

Reviewed by Colleen McGinnity, BVM

Robert Ellsberg has long been interested in saints and in ordinary people doing good things with their lives. Ellsberg says of his new book, "...my primary purpose: to reflect on the story of God that is written in holy lives. My hope is that through reflection on such witnesses, we may learn to read our own story with new eyes." (XV) Ellsberg believes everyone who strives to grow in love and concern for others, "to increase the balance of love in the world," (4) is writing and living the Gospel through their lives. He invites us to reflect on and discover the "patterns of grace and mystery" present in our daily, usually very ordinary, lives. Through this lens, he goes on to reflect on the lives of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, Flannery O'Connor, and others.

I found the book meaningful and inviting. Where has God been in the "patterns of grace and mystery" in my own life? As a leader in my congregation and a sister to my sisters, how can I invite them to share the story of their lives and see their own patterns of grace and mystery? What have we learned from others about living and being the gospel? For all of us, our lives are a story of grace, a living Gospel, and the world is richer for our lives and our sharing.

## Upcoming LCWR Dates

### Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Renewal Center | Tucson, Arizona  
January 12 – 17, 2020

### LCWR New Leader Workshop

Conference Center  
University of St. Mary of the Lake | Mundelein, Illinois  
March 26 — 29, 2020

### Imagining Justice

Bon Secours Retreat & Conference Center  
Marriottsville, MD  
April 20 — 23, 2020

### LCWR Geographic Gathering

Hyatt Regency Dallas DFW  
DFW Airport, Texas  
April 21— 22, 2020

### LCWR Practicing Leadership: How to Embrace a Vital and Vibrant Future Workshop

Mater Dolorosa Retreat House | Sierra Madre, CA  
May 11 — 13, 2020

### LCWR Geographic Gathering

Sheraton BWI  
Linthicum Heights, Maryland  
May 20 — 21, 2020

### LCWR Geographic Gathering

Sheraton Westport Chalet St. Louis  
St. Louis, Missouri  
June 1—2, 2020

### LCWR Geographic Gathering

Crowne Plaza O'Hare  
Rosemont, Illinois  
June 3 — 4, 2020

### LCWR Geographic Gathering

Sheraton BWI  
Linthicum Heights, Maryland  
June 16—17, 2020

### LCWR Assembly

Dallas, Texas  
August 11 — 15, 2020

### LCWR Practicing Leadership: How to Embrace a Vital and Vibrant Future Workshop

Bethany Center | Lutz, Florida  
September 14 — 16, 2020

### Leading from Within Retreat

San Pedro Retreat Center  
Winter Park, Florida  
January 10 – 15, 2021

### LCWR New Leader Workshop

Conference Center  
University of St. Mary of the Lake | Mundelein, Illinois  
March 25 — 28, 2021

### LCWR Assembly

Orlando, Florida  
August 10 — 13, 2021

### Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Renewal Center | Tucson, Arizona  
January 16 — 21, 2022

### LCWR Assembly

St. Louis, Missouri  
August 9 — 12, 2022

## 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.

## Update

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## LCWR and SHARE for the Roses in December 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

LCWR and the SHARE Foundation are co-sponsoring “The Roses in December” commemoration of the martyrdom of the four US churchwomen in El Salvador: Ita Ford, MM; Maura Clarke, MM; Dorothy Kazel, OSU; and Jean Donovan. They are inviting women religious, as well as the broader community, to celebrate the living legacy of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of the people of God.



The premier event will be an anniversary delegation to El Salvador and Honduras. The group will arrive in El Salvador on November 29 and depart from Honduras on December 7, 2020. While in El Salvador the pilgrims will visit the site where the four church women were martyred, the small chapel where Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated, and the communities where Ita, Maura, Dorothy, and Jean ministered.

After journeying to Honduras by bus, the group will participate in an *encuentro* of indigenous communities of Central and South America, and a *Via Crucis* with relatives of the refugees in the US. Participants will examine the root causes of forced migration and the strategies local communities are using to resist policies, supported by the successive US governments, that are creating the poverty, exacerbating the environmental degradation, and driving the violence that is forcing Hondurans from their homes. The [proposed itinerary](#) provides additional details. The cost of participation is \$1,450 plus airfare. SHARE is seeking contributions to provide partial scholarships and group discounts to participants.

Organizers are also encouraging religious to host a local prayer vigil to honor the memory of Ita, Maura, Dorothy, and Jean. This is an opportunity to educate the next generation about the lives and ministries of these church women and invite them to follow their example of faith in action. LCWR’s goal is to log 40 vigils in 40 cities to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Anyone who is able to hold an event to honor these women, is asked to send a brief description to Janette Cahill at [jcahill@lcwr.org](mailto:jcahill@lcwr.org). More information about the anniversary celebration as well as registration materials are [on SHARE’s website](#). Questions may be directed to [Jose@share-elsalvador.org](mailto:Jose@share-elsalvador.org) or +1 510 848 8487.



- Letter in support of HR 4, the *Voting Rights Advancement Act* and opposing any motion to recommit. LCWR (11/15/19)
- Statement setting forth five principles of sanctuary to guide grassroots and governmental response to the global escalation of displacement. LCWR (11/16/19)
- Statement of faith-based organizations and denominations welcoming the introduction of the *100% Clean Economy Act of 2019*. LCWR (11/20/19)
- Quote for Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s press release in support of the passage of the *Refugee Protection Act of 2019* which would reverse the dangerous, cruel, and immoral asylum and refugee policy changes made by the Trump administration and improve access to protection for refugees and asylum seekers. Carol Zinn, SSJ (11/20/19)
- Comment in opposition to a USCIS proposed rule that would drastically raise the costs of vital immigration benefits while simultaneously reducing access to immigrant benefits for low-income and vulnerable immigrants. Ann Scholz, SSND (11/21/19)
- Comment in opposition to proposed asylum fee by USCIS. Ann Scholz, SSND (11/21/19)
- Letter to Senators urging them to cosponsor the Corporate Transparency Act and the ILLICIT Cash Act, which reveal the true owners of anonymous shell corporations to law enforcement. LCWR (11/26/19)
- Quote in Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s press release on the occasion of the anniversary of seven-year-old Jakelin Améi Rosemary Caal Maquin and in remembrance of the children who have died at the border. Carol Zinn, SSJ (12/8/19)
- Amicus brief challenging Executive Order 13888 that requires governors and local officials to provide written consent in order to continue resettling refugees in their communities. LCWR (12/12/19)

## LCWR Endorses the Refugee Protection Act of 2019

LCWR joined more than 40 organizations endorsing legislation that would strengthen legal safeguards for those seeking protection from persecution and violence. Although there are more refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons now than at any time since World War II, the Trump administration has abandoned the legal safeguards outlined in the Refugee Act of 1980 and violated the spirit and letter of the law. In the process, the administration has abdicated the nation's moral authority and historic commitment to those fleeing persecution.

The Refugee Protection Act of 2019 provides a comprehensive fix and restores the United States' reputation as a beacon of hope for those who suffer from persecution. The legislation will protect the victims of the administration's unlawful policies, respond to the Trump administration's foreign policy choices, and provide long-needed fixes for those seeking protection.

The proposed legislation of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA 19) has strong support from the faith community. As Carol Zinn, SSJ, LCWR executive director, stated: We are called by our faith to welcome the stranger and care for the most vulnerable, and we are challenged by our national values to offer protection to those fleeing violence and persecution. The Trump administration's asylum and refugee policies violate that faith and threaten those values. Congress has a duty to stop the administration's attacks on those forced to flee their homes and to provide protection for refugees and asylum seekers. The passage of the Refugee Protection Act of 2019 would reverse the dangerous, cruel, and immoral asylum and refugee policy changes made by the Trump administration.

In a world where more than 70 million people are displaced including 25.9 million refugees, the United States must do more. Since the program's inception, the US has set an average refugee admissions goal of 95,000 refugees and has resettled up to 200,000 refugees in certain years. In fiscal year 2019, the United States welcomed only 30,000 refugees; the presidential determination for 2020 was set at just 18,000.

## LCWR Demands Justice for All Children Who Have Died in the Custody of the US Government

Jakelin Amei Rosmary Caal Maquin was just 7 years old when she died of cardiac arrest caused by severe dehydration and shock due to lack of care while in the custody of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on December 8, 2018. Jakelin came to the United States seeking protection and the US immigration system failed her.

More than 70 religious leaders and advocates for children and families gathered outside CBP headquarters in Washington, DC on December 9 to mark the anniversary of Jakelin's death and to demand justice for all the children who have died in the custody of the US government: Jakelin, Carlos, Wilmer, Felipe, Mariee, Darlyn, Juan and those still being harmed by US immigration policies.

In a statement released at the time of the vigil, Carol Zinn, SSJ, LCWR executive director said:

Today, in the presence of the God of infinite love, we remember Jakelin Amei Rosemary Caal Maquin. Born in Rauxruha, Guatemala, she died in El Paso, Texas in the custody of the US Border Patrol. Jakelin was just seven years old. We mourn her passing, we pray for her family, and we beg forgiveness for our complicity in her death.

We are called by our faith to care for the vulnerable and challenged by our national values to promote the welfare of all children. We promise to remember, and we pledge to act. As Catholic sisters, as women of faith, we condemn the Trump administration's actions to deny admission to asylum seekers, to hold children in cages, to imprison families, and to use detention and deportation to punish those seeking safety in our country. We will continue to walk in solidarity with our sisters and brothers. We will accompany the mothers, fathers, aunts, and uncles who seek justice and we will never forget God's precious children.

Excerpts from the vigil can be viewed online.

## UN COP25 Climate Talks Close to Mixed Reviews

After two extra days and nights of negotiations, the COP25 Madrid climate conference finally reached its largely unsuccessful conclusion. Delegates reached agreement on a few key issues around commitments and implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#) to curb carbon outputs, while leaving many of the thorniest questions, including carbon markets, to next year's meeting. There was no agreement on the push by some for more ambitious goals, although a compromise was reached requiring richer nations to show that they have kept their promises on climate change in the years leading up to the COP26 meeting next year in Glasgow.



UN secretary general Antonio Guterres tweeted his disappointment saying, "The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation and finance to tackle the climate crisis."

In the last year, people around the globe have felt some of the impacts of global warming—record droughts, wildfires, flooding, and super-storms. The new UN Environment Program (UNEP) [Emissions Gap Report 2019](#) warns that unless global greenhouse gas emissions fall by 7.6 per cent each year between 2020 and 2030, the world will miss the opportunity to get on track towards the 1.5°C temperature goal of the Paris Agreement.

"For 10 years, the *Emissions Gap Report* has been sounding the alarm—and for 10 years, the world has only increased its emissions," said UN secretary-general António Guterres. "There has never been a more important time to listen to the science. Failure to heed these warnings and take drastic action to reverse emissions means we will continue to witness deadly and catastrophic heatwaves, storms and pollution."

## Pope Francis Releases World Day of Peace Message

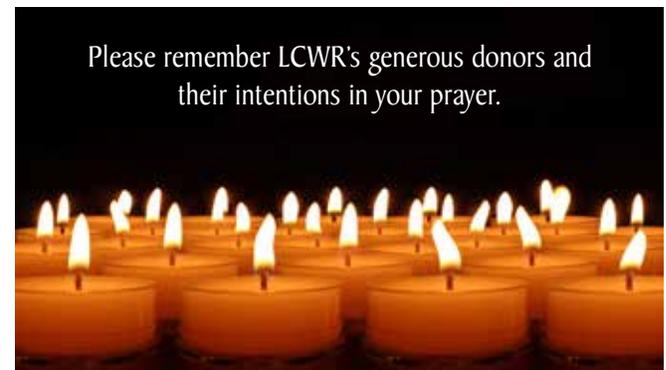
January 1 marks the 53<sup>rd</sup> World Day of Peace and this year, as every year, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human



Development is encouraging all episcopal conferences, dioceses, religious institutes, ecclesial associations, and movements, and all people of good will to organize prayer, liturgies, and vigils to celebrate the World Day of Peace.

In his message, "Peace as a Journey of Hope: Dialogue, Reconciliation and Ecological Conversion," Pope Francis declares that hope puts the world on the path to peace, while "mistrust and fear weaken relationships and increase the risk of violence." He urges all to be artisans of peace—open to dialogue in a spirit of reconciliation, on a journey of ecological conversion that leads to a "new way of looking at life."

In the document the Holy Father describes peace as a journey of hope in the face of obstacles; a journey of listening based on memory, solidarity, and fraternity. He speaks of peace as a journey of reconciliation and communion and ecological conversion. He concludes by reminding the faithful that, "Peace will not be obtained unless it is hoped for." The full [World Day of Peace Message](#) is on the Vatican website.



## Catholics Observe National Migration Week January 5-11

The Catholic church in the United States celebrates National Migration Week from January 5-11, 2020. This year's theme "Promoting a Church and a World for All," reflects the need for Catholics to be inclusive and welcoming to all their brothers and sisters. It is a call for unity to stand in solidarity with, and care for, those who are excluded and marginalized.

National Migration Week 2020 provides an opportunity to focus on the most vulnerable migrants, including [DACA](#) and [TPS](#) holders, who remain in precarious and uncertain situations. It is also a time to reflect on the threats to migrant and refugee children, particularly children who are detained or otherwise separated from their parents, [unaccompanied migrant children](#), and those stuck [waiting in Mexico](#) for asylum in the United States.

A [toolkit](#) for National Migration Week 2020 is available to assist with planning local celebrations and to explore ways in which the Catholic community can better welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants; counter the globalization of indifference; and identify policies that will affirm the dignity of migrants and better secure the common good.



### NRVC Summer Institute

Registration for the NRVC Summer Institute will open in February. Held in Chicago, the workshops include:

- Orientation Program for New Vocation Directors, July 8-12
- Ethical Issues in Vocation and Formation Ministry, July 13-14
- Behavioral Assessment 1, July 16-18
- Is it Generational, Cultural, Personality or Pathology?, July 16-18
- Psycho-Sexual Integration and Assessment of Candidates, July 20-23

### National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations

Applications for the **National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations** for religious institutes with new candidates who have educational debt may be submitted between January 6 and April 20, 2020. [More information](#) is available online.

## News from the UN



**January 24—*The International Day of Education***. The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes even further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.

**January 27 —*International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust***. The world remembers the horror of the Holocaust that resulted in the murder of nearly 2/3 of European Jews. The purpose of remembering this day is to prevent future tragedies.



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

This past month has been filled with opportunities to see the revelation of our God bringing light into darkness. On my recent visit to South Sudan, I was privileged to meet some of the graduates of the Solidarity Teacher Training College and the Catholic Health Training Institute in South Sudan. They are proud of their achievements and confident that they can make a difference in their country. They are grateful to you and all who have supported them in their studies.

I also met Barbara Paleczny, SSND, who, in spite of many challenges, continues to coordinate the Solidarity Inservice Program in Bor, one of the most difficult areas

of the country and an area subject to flooding since July. Imagine going to and from the “airport” on flooded dirt roads, with luggage and on the back of a motorcycle! Her commitment and compassionate outreach to teachers needing inservice programs for certification is awe inspiring. She is just one of our staff in South Sudan who go to great lengths as educators in the most challenging of circumstances.

The assembly in Rome in late November witnessed to the commitment of congregations from around the world who support Solidarity. Religious women are truly a “light in the darkness” for the people of South Sudan. Our compassionate God is revealed in their / your generosity.

The staff of Solidarity in South Sudan and Rome join Friends in Solidarity in thanking you for your interest, support and prayers supporting the capacity building work being done in South Sudan.

May you be blessed during this Christmas season and in the year to come.



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