

March 2014



Members of the LCWR national board meet at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson.

LCWR National Board Engages in Strategic Planning for 2015-2022

The LCWR national board gathered from February 16 to 21 to conduct its regular business, as well as engage in a process to set a direction and consider major initiatives for the conference for the next seven years.

Led through the strategic planning process by facilitator Marisa Guerin, PhD, the board worked to create a plan that would:

- Guide the organization in setting priorities
- Convey LCWR's mission, values, priorities, and needs to its members, collaborators, donors, and other publics



(continued on page 3)

Mercer Actuaries to Conduct Survey of All US Religious

The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) and the Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) are collaborating to update the Mercer Mortality Tables for Women and Men Religious.

The current Mercer Mortality Tables for Men and Women Religious were created in 1995 to more accurately represent the longer life expectancies usually experienced by members of religious institutes. Given that the mortality tables for the general population have been updated in recent years, NRRO and RCRI have consulted with Mercer about validating and, if necessary, updating the tables for religious. The Mercer Mortality Tables provide information for various forecasting models, including the Tracking Revenue, Expense, Net Assets, Demographics, Savings (TRENDS) program used by RCRI. NRRO uses the tables to calculate the retirement needs analysis. Reliable census projections are a critical component not only of these tools but also of all aspects of planning for an institute's membership.

NRRO and RCRI are dependent upon the assistance of LCWR members. In order to create statistically valid tables, Mercer will need census data for 35,000 to 50,000 religious, in other words, for the majority of US religious. All LCWR members are asked to aid in this effort by supplying the data requested from NRRO and RCRI in email messages they will send.

From the LCWR Presidency

'The Joy of the Gospel'

by Sharon Holland, IHM — LCWR President-Elect

"Never make an important decision in November or February!" So said the novice director, decades ago. Perhaps the cold grey days of a Michigan November, introducing winter, and the still grey days of February, delaying spring, prompted that warning to young novices.

As leaders, we are well aware that decisions must be made, whenever. Obviously Pope Francis is of the same mind. Toward the end of November 2013, he launched "The Joy of the Gospel" (*Evangelii Gaudium*). My first reaction was joy in its uplifting and inspiring message. My next was awareness of a daunting challenge.

The opening line, "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus," is both light and

*My first reaction was
joy in its uplifting and inspiring message.
My next was awareness of
a daunting challenge.*

challenge. It is a light, inviting joy. It is a challenge not to communicate the grey of the February sky, as if I had never encountered Jesus. I am reminded of the line attributed to Teresa of Avila, "God deliver us from sorry saints!"

Recently, an IHM theologian offered a day of reflection on the mystical and prophetic dimensions of the Church. She urged us to re-read the Gospel, our constitutions, and *Evangelii Gaudium*. Even small pieces of re-reading the latter can give direction to a day: "Goodness always tends to spread" (n.9) and "Jesus can also



break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him..." (n.11).

On a much larger stage than many of our own decisions, this February thousands of athletes and their families chose to participate in the Olympics in Sochi, Russia, despite reports of danger. There, on the world stage, unfolded the wonders of history's evolution as men and women of countries in bitter conflict with one another in the past and in the present entered into the games together. Some walked into the beautiful Russian venue behind the distinctive flag of a country which once had disappeared into the Soviet Union. With breathtaking pageantry the history of

*It is a challenge
not to communicate
the grey of the February sky,
as if I had never encountered Jesus.*

Russia was portrayed, exposing the world to unknown dimensions of creativity and culture ... an Olympiad of another sort. One of the world's greatest sporting events was ushered in with world famous Russian ballet and classical music.

When IOC President Thomas Bach gave his formal welcome, he urged all to remember that the Olympic Games are about building bridges, about bringing people and nations together, without discrimination. He reminded the athletes that they are ambassadors. Of course there will be sharp competition, as all test their skills to the full. But, the participants insist when interviewed that life in the Olympic Village is an incredible experience of the fundamental unity of humankind.

This too is a message of hope, and a cause for joy.

LCWR National Board Engages in Strategic Planning for 2015-2022

(continued from page 1)

The planning process began during a two-day meeting of a subcommittee of the board and staff held in December. Also facilitated by Marisa, the subcommittee worked to define the context in which LCWR finds itself and name some of the challenges the conference and US women religious are facing and anticipate will continue facing during the next seven years. The board then worked to refine the initial draft of a plan and further developed LCWR's direction and possible initiatives.

A first draft of the plan, which builds on the LCWR Call for 2010 to 2015, will be presented at the spring regional meetings to the members with an invitation to provide feedback. The board and staff will review the feedback, modify the plan accordingly, and present a second draft to the members before the August national assembly. At that time, the assembly can choose to affirm it or send it back for further modification.

As part of its regular business the board reviewed reports from the LCWR presidency, treasurer, executive director, and staff, and discussed a number of other matters including:

- the 2014 LCWR assembly
- a new contemplative decision-making process that

could guide the way all LCWR gatherings (assemblies, regional meetings, committee meetings, etc.) are executed

- revisions to the LCWR assembly resolution process
- the CDF mandate to LCWR.

The meeting was held at the same time as the CMSM board meeting, allowing the two groups to share in prayer, Eucharistic liturgy, meals, and socials each day, as well as in one joint board meeting. At the meeting the two boards reviewed the financial report on the jointly owned office building, as well as a report on the survey conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) on behalf of the two conferences on immigration.

The joint board session also included a presentation by Janice Bader, CPPS, executive director of the National Religious Retirement Office, on the statistics and projections regarding the aging of communities of US women and men religious. Janice raised concerns about the supports needed to enable vowed religious life to continue as a lifeform in the United States, the ability of institutes to successfully incorporate new members,



Janice Bader, CPPS

(continued on page 4)



LCWR national board and staff in Tucson, Arizona

LCWR National Board Engages in Strategic Planning for 2015-2022

(continued from page 1)

and the need for new indicators of religious institute viability.

The two boards considered a proposal for how US women and men religious may address these critical concerns. More information on the proposal will be shared at the LCWR spring regional meetings.

The LCWR board and staff concluded its gathering by engaging in a contemplative review of the days together. The following insights were shared during the review:

- We are confident that the Spirit is moving within us and shaping us for a future, and we are willing to go where the Spirit is leading.
- We are experiencing a movement of opening, deepening, darkening and we hold this all as holy mystery.
- God is faithfully calling us forward and we are faithfully listening in hope as we live our charism into the future.
- If we are attentive to Holy Mystery, we will be open to change, to dying, and to letting go in a spirit of hope.
- Our attentiveness to the working of the Spirit expands our vision beyond strategies and helps us discover the essence of our identity.



LCWR president-elect Sharon Holland, IHM; CMSM president-elect James Greenfield, OSFS; LCWR president Carol Zinn, SSJ; CMSM president John Edmunds, ST; and LCWR executive director Janet Mock, CSJ



Members of the LCWR and CMSM boards in a joint session



West Cosgrove, director of education for the Kino Border Initiative, joined the LCWR and CMSM boards and staff to speak of his work along the US-Mexican border and the plight of immigrants seeking refuge in this country.

Save the Dates!

LCWR Assembly

Nashville, Tennessee

August 12 — 16, 2014

This assembly will be a unique experience of exploring the most critical matters facing women religious leaders.

Set in a context of contemplation, and drawing upon the beauty of the arts, LCWR members will be led through a process to more deeply explore how Holy Mystery is being revealed in the midst of the concrete realities of US religious life.

More information to follow.

February 28: Last Day to Order *Praying in These Emergent Times*


The deadline for ordering LCWR's 2014 reflection book, *Praying in These Emergent Times*, is Friday, February 28.

Orders for these books can now be made online at (lcwr.org/media/news/order-now-lcwr-reflective-journal-praying-these-emergent-times). The cost is \$5.00 per copy plus postage, however, special rates are available for ordering in bulk. Orders can be paid for by credit card or check. The books will be mailed by April. LCWR will print only the amount of copies that are pre-ordered.

LCWR is also making the books available to motherhouse and retreat center gift shops. The \$5.00 price allows for a substantial markup and a greater profit margin for the gift shop.

Praying in These Emergent Times provides reflections by LCWR members where they share the images, stories, symbols, and questions that are shaping how they encounter God and how they pray. Artwork by Catholic sisters will accompany the reflections, as well as questions and suggestions for deepening the reader's own prayer.

Questions about orders may be directed to Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org or 301-588-4955.



**Praying
in These
Emergent Times**

**A Reflective Journal for
Our Spiritual Journey from
the Leadership Conference
of Women Religious
(LCWR)**

**Catholic sisters share the
images, stories, and
questions that deepen
their encounter with God**

**Suggestions for prayer
are included**

\$5.00 plus shipping

Order by Feb. 28, 2014



LCWR Members Encouraged to Reflect on Emerging Insights

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

Extra Copies of Winter 2014 Occasional Papers Available



Due to a printer overrun, extra copies of the Winter 2014 edition of LCWR's Occasional Papers are available for purchase. An order form can be found at lcwr.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/oporderswinter14.pdf



What's Happening with Leadership Pathways?

In the third week of January the online learning cohorts for Leadership Pathways were officially launched. Four groups have begun working with the materials for the first module of “Becoming the Leaders We Hope to Be.” Within these groups there are three leadership teams who have elected to participate together. One of the groups consists of a large leadership team and has no additional outside members. Two of the groups consist of members from a variety of congregations along with the leadership team of a particular congregation. All the groups are in the stage of getting comfortable with the technology and the site and are beginning to engage with one another around the materials provided.

During the coming months LCWR will send notices announcing registration for additional learning cohorts for “Becoming the Leaders We Hope to Be” and seeking volunteers to pilot the initial materials for an online learning lab in Leadership and Evolutionary Consciousness.

In addition to the launching of the online learning cohorts, at the beginning of January all LCWR members received materials initiating a member-wide conversation (lcwr.org/sites/default/files/page/files/process_for_ind_and_team_for_spring_final_form.pdf). Many members have indicated that they are working with the materials provided and are finding them helpful. At the spring regional meetings this year, the fruits of these conversations will form the substance of the contemplative process. Members will be invited to engage in small groups sharing the fruits of their reflection and team conversation in a contemplative dialogue. The highlights from these contemplative dialogues will be gathered to seed a next conversation among the members.

A number of members have indicated that they are using the processes and materials that were provided for

additional team reflection and conversation on other topics. Some teams are considering sharing the reflective piece on “Taking a Contemplative Stance” (lcwr.org/sites/default/files/page/files/contemplation_article.pdf) and adapting the process provided for use with congregation members.

Responding to Questions

A question came to the LCWR office from one of the fall regional meetings: How will this process facilitate dealing with the regular problems that confront leaders and sharing best practices across congregations?

A starting point for responding to this question is provided in the title of this section: “Responding to Questions.” The choice not to call this section a question and answer column is in keeping with the kind of resource Leadership Pathways hopes to be and is quite conscious. The most serious and important issues facing leaders today do not have answers. Rather the most important issues really are questions that must be lived into with a full awareness of the complexities and contradictions within them.

Leadership Pathways aims at creating the context and consciousness needed for holding these issues, problems, and concerns and providing members with resources and processes to assist them in entering into a contemplative engagement with the complexities of the realities with which they are faced. In other words, Leadership Pathways hopes to provide the container within which members can grapple with a wide range of very complex issues. In this sense, Leadership Pathways provides an essential component that assists members in dealing with the regular problems that confront them and for sharing best practices with others.

Questions and Comments Welcome

In order to keep Leadership Pathways responsive to the needs of the members LCWR needs to continue hearing from its members. Questions, suggestions, and thoughts about Leadership Pathways may be sent to Marie McCarthy, SP, LCWR’s associate director of programs, at mmccarthy@lcwr.org.



Keeping in Touch

by Maragret Ormond, OP
Dominican Sisters of Peace

Dominican Sisters of Peace (DSOP) was formed in 2009 from a union of seven previously independent Dominican congregations, following a long process of discernment. Three years later, in 2012, an eighth congregation joined DSOP through the process of merger. Leadership terms are six years, so this addition of new members occurred half-way through the first term of leadership. As a result of the original union and subsequent merger, more than 580 members are now located in 37 states, with additional sisters missioned in Africa, Honduras, Vietnam, and Peru. Generalate offices are located at the Columbus, Ohio motherhouse. Other founding congregations maintain central houses in Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana (2), and Michigan; as well as a second foundation in Ohio (Akron).

The congregation was formed in April 2009, and by August of that year leaders initiated the process of a monthly webcast. In some ways this is the contemporary substitute for monthly letters from leadership. The technical equipment and expertise are available at the Columbus motherhouse. Filming takes place in a center that can seat more than 100 members, so those in the local area are invited to attend but many simply watch at home. Initially sisters who were not present in Columbus could access the webcasts at home on their computers. Eventually the technology was developed to the point where some of the other foundation houses (e.g. those located in Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Louisiana, and a few other locations) had the possibility of two-way interaction.

Members of the leadership team develop the agenda for each of these webcasts during their regular team meetings; during the actual webcasts each member of the team provides some part of the input. Occasionally per-

sons other than leadership are invited to speak. A typical agenda includes a welcome by the prioress, something inspirational, something seasonal (e.g. Christmas, Lent, Easter), report on major decisions of leadership, review of the work of selected committees, announcements and preparatory work for summer assemblies (held annually since the formation of the congregation), news from various offices and personnel (e.g. finance, vocation). Sisters and other persons assuming new congregational positions are introduced.

A more recent development has been to devote specific webcasts to ongoing concerns (e.g. sustainability), and to assign readings in preparation for the webcast. Time is allotted for personal and group discernment, and some of this is reported back before the end of the webcast. Webcasts that involve sensitive material (e.g. financial data) are restricted to sisters only.

Each webcast is archived, and accessible for later viewing for those unable to attend or watch the “live” session. The congregational historian collects scripts from those who present and prepares a summary for the archives.



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



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

Editor: Annmarie Sanders, IHM
8808 Cameron Street — Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301-588-4955 Fax: 301-587-4575
E-mail: asanders@lcwr.org Website: www.lcwr.org

Upcoming LCWR Dates

Imagining Justice: A Learning Lab for Leaders and Justice Promoters

*Bethany Retreat Center
Lutz, Florida
March 3 — 6, 2014*

LCWR New Leader Workshop

*Conference Center - University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois
March 27 — 30, 2014*

LCWR Assembly

*Nashville, Tennessee
August 12 — 16, 2014*

Leading from Within Retreat

*Bethany Retreat Center
Lutz, Florida
January 11 — 16, 2015*

LCWR Assembly

*Houston, Texas
August 11—15, 2015*

GOP Immigration Reform Standards Draw Criticism

LCWR released a statement (tinyurl.com/kad9ghn) on February 3 regarding the “Standards for Immigration Reform” issued by House Republican leaders on January 30.

While many immigration advocates, including LCWR, welcomed the standards as a sign of Speaker Boehner’s willingness to move forward, criticism from within his own party caused him to back off quickly. Less than a week after laying out principles to guide immigration reform in the House, the speaker was quoted as saying it would be “difficult” to get any legislation approved this year by his GOP majority.

Most advocates remain hopeful that reform can be accomplished in the 113th Congress, but no one thinks it

will be easy or simple. The Republican principles are troubling on many levels. They prioritize employment-based immigration over family unity; fail to lay out a pathway to citizenship for the approximately 11 million Americans trapped in the shadows; and focus far too heavily on enforcement measures that would cost billions of dollars and militarize border communities.

News from the UN

March 8 International Women’s Day

Celebrated annually on March 8, the 2014 theme for International Women’s Day is: “Equality for women is progress for all.” Despite the enormous gains that women have made since the United Nations first began celebrating the day in 1975, women, who make up half of the world’s population, still represent 70 percent of the world’s poor. One in three American women is living at or near the brink of poverty. More than 60 million girls worldwide are child brides, married before the age of 18. Worldwide the completion rates and learning levels of girls are lower than those of boys. Three women die each day as a result of domestic violence.



International Women’s Day grew from the activities of labor movements at the turn of the 20th century in North America and across Europe. Since those early years, International Women’s Day has become a global rallying point to build support for women’s rights and full participation in the political and economic spheres. Additional information is available at www.un.org/en/events/womensday/.

UNICEF Report: The State of the World’s Children Released

UNICEF’s report, entitled *The State of the World’s Children 2014 in Numbers*, highlights the critical role data plays in realizing children’s rights. The report reveals global disparities in child welfare and provides advocates and policy makers alike with information to craft interventions to ensure that all children can thrive. The interactive report is available at www.unicef.org/sowc2014/numbers/.

LCWR's Leading from Within Retreat

Twenty-eight LCWR members participated in the LCWR Leading from Within Retreat from January 19-24 at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson, Arizona.



Hilton Sisters Project Seeking Sisters Willing to Share Their Story with the Media

As the Hilton Sisters Project finalizes its plans for the launch of National Catholic Sisters week at St. Catherine University March 7-9, 2014 and the broader National Catholic Sisters Week March 8-14, (www2.stkate.edu/ncsw/home) it seeks some assistance.

The project is working to create a network of sisters who have uniquely interesting stories and who would be willing to share their background and story with the media.

To raise awareness for the launch of National Catholic Sisters Week and keep a steady stream of stories about the contributions of sisters in mainstream media, these sisters would be called on to share their story by participating in interviews with news outlets.

The following are possible ideas:

- A sister who has aged with grace and vigor, who is still leading a healthy, dynamic life in her 80s or 90s.
- A sister who is young (20s or 30s) and can speak to the joy of consecrated life, someone who doesn't feel she has made any sacrifices or reductions by becoming a sister, but rather feels it has freed her to become her fullest self, embracing all her God-given talents.
- A sister who has a particularly poignant or compelling story of lived religious life. Maybe she did something interesting or unusual before entering (worked as a hair stylist, sang in the opera, pulled the night shift at a diner, immigrated to the United States) perhaps she has some notable achievements as a sister (lobbied for an important bill, composed award-winning music, etc.).
- A sister who has had an incredible influence or relationships with young women looking into religious life.

Background on sisters who might be good candidates for this network and the sisters' contact information may be sent to Christina Capecchi, christinacap@gmail.com who will follow-up with the sister.



- Letter to Senators urging them to oppose any proposals to pay for the cost of extending unemployment insurance coverage by changing the eligibility requirements for the Child Tax Credit. LCWR (1/23/14)
- Letter to Senate Intelligence Committee requesting that they release the Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA torture. Carol Zinn, SSJ (1/28/14)
- Letter to members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees urging them not to include immigration detention bed mandate language in the appropriations bill that funds the US Department of Homeland Security for FY 2015. LCWR (1/24/14)
- Letter to President Obama urging the Administration to request flexibility to transfer funds between the accounts for immigration detention and alternatives to detention and to reject the principle of a mandated daily detention level in its FY 2015 budget request to Congress. LCWR (1/24/14)
- LCWR statement in response to the GOP Standards on Immigration Reform. (2/3/14)
- Letter to senators from Catholic leaders encouraging them to reject calls for increased sanctions on Iran that could threaten the prospects for a diplomatic solution that would advance peace and security in the region. Janet Mock, CSJ (2/6/14)
- Statement of conscience affirming the view previously expressed by many religious authorities that nuclear weapons are inherently immoral because of their horrific and indiscriminate effects on civilians and on the environment. Carol Zinn, SSJ (2/7/14)

Is Your Leadership Term About to End?

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

Catholic Social Ministers From Across Country Gather in DC

Hundreds of leaders in Catholic social ministry from dioceses, parishes, national Catholic organizations, religious communities, and universities converged on Washington from February 2-4 to discuss the message and vision of Pope Francis: "Becoming 'a Poor Church for the Poor.'"

The gathering included an opening plenary address by John L. Allen, Jr., former senior correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter*, associate editor at the *Boston Globe* and Vatican expert for CNN and National Public Radio. Michael Naughton, professor of Catholic studies at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, gave the keynote followed by a response by Michel Roy, secretary general of Caritas Internationalis.

Attendees also participated in Capitol Hill visits, during which state delegations urged their members to promote peace abroad through negotiations, humanitarian and development assistance, and to work to end poverty and inequality in the United States.

CMSM and LCWR hosted a pre-conference gathering of men and women religious that provided the opportunity for networking and a brief update on immigration reform efforts in the Capitol and in the field.

The Catholic Social Ministry Gathering is sponsored by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and 15 national Catholic partner organizations. More information is available online at www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org.

Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Scheduled for March 13-16

From March 13-16 faith communities across the country will participate in the National Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend. LCWR is one of more than 50 national faith denominations and organizations urging congregations to pledge participation. Participating can be as easy as incorporating a prayer, hymn,



reading, or educational activity into an already planned service.

Legislative action has proven to be effective. In the six states where comprehensive gun violence prevention laws exist, there has been a significant decrease in gun violence. Unfortunately, many people have not heard about these success stories and may be starting to lose hope. The sabbath is an opportunity to recommit to the cause and to share the message that gun violence prevention laws do save lives.

LCWR has promised that 100 of its members' congregations will pledge to participate. Congregations and communities can pledge to join the Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath at www.marchsabbath.org. Event ideas and sample materials are available on the same website.

Religious NGOs Fight Human Trafficking at Super Bowl XLVIII

Many religious congregations and other NGOs worked with the hospitality industry and law enforcement agencies to combat human trafficking at Super Bowl XLVIII. A tri-state coalition of 40 Roman Catholic institutions located throughout the New York City metro area worked for months to increase awareness about the issue. Volunteers contacted more than 1,200 hotels and motels in areas surrounding Met Life Stadium in New Jersey. Seventy-nine percent of hotel and motel managers requested and received educational information. Some have begun formal training of their staff members to make them aware of how to spot trafficking activity.

A video on trafficking created by high school students at the Academy of the Holy Angels in Demarest, New Jersey is available at tinyurl.com/lkst2sc.

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



Collaborative Leadership Development Program Preparing Leaders for the Future

*Who will embody your congregation's
charism and mission in the future?*

*Are younger members, co-members or associates
of your community prepared to meet
the demands and challenges of leadership?
Are they leading from a spirituality attuned
to global and local realities?*

*How will your congregation support and prepare
associates and co-members for
emerging leadership roles?*

These and other questions are addressed through the Collaborative Leadership Development Program (CLDP), sponsored by a coalition of religious congregations of women, in partnership with LCWR. This forward-thinking program is an integrative 18-month process with a multi-cultural perspective, designed to prepare participants with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to assume leadership positions in community and ministry.

The CLDP blends relational and contemplative practices, while fostering self-growth and spiritual development through prayerful study and interaction, online forums, mentoring, and coaching. The program seeks to broaden awareness of sustainability and social justice in a changing church and global society.

Vowed women religious, co-members, or associates (male or female) of congregations based in the United States are eligible. Applicants must be recommended by their congregational leadership. They must be younger than 60 as of January 1, 2014 and commit to attend three six-day sessions beginning August 2014. More information is available at www.TheCLDP.org. Anyone interested in receiving an invitational letter, detailed brochure, and application form should contact Rita Waters, RSM program assistant, at rwaters@sistersofmercy.org or 301-587-0423 x 2310, or Kathleen Wade, program director, at kwade42@gmail.com.

Enrollment is limited to 35. Applications due: April 15, 2014.

Minimum Wage Legislation Pending in Congress

The gap between those living in wealth and those living in poverty continues to widen. In the United States the wealthiest one percent earned 19 percent of the income in 2012, the highest since 1928. Productivity of US workers continues to increase and yet their wages remain stagnant even as their cost of living rises. The current \$7.25 federal minimum wage translates into an annual income of \$15,080 for a full-time worker, more than \$4000 under the poverty level for a family of three. If the federal minimum wage was pegged to cost of living increases it would stand at \$10.74 today. Raising the minimum wage would help to close the wage-gap, benefit more than 30 million workers, 88 percent of them adults, while helping to stabilize communities and grow the economy.

Legislation to raise the minimum wage is pending in Congress. The Fair Minimum Wage Act, (S. 460/H.R.1010) would increase the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour by 2015 and begin adjusting minimum wage to inflation starting in 2016. Senator Tom Harkin expects a vote in the Senate during the week of March 10. More info is available at www.raisetheminimumwage.org.



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