SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

Presidential Addresses from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Annmarie Sanders, IHM, editor

“A stirring set of speeches. … should be of interest to all American Catholics, to women’s groups, and to Vatican watchers.” —Library Journal, (starred review)

In April 2012 the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) received a notification from the Vatican charging the organization with doctrinal and pastoral errors that were “grave and a matter of serious concern.” One of the outcomes was an outpouring of support and solidarity with the sisters, an appreciation for their lives of selfless service, and evidence of a strong hunger for a type of spiritual leadership attuned to the signs of the times.

This volume collects ten presidential addresses from the LCWR’s annual assemblies. Beginning in 1978 with Sister Joan Chittister’s reflections on the changing models of religious life, it concludes with Sister Pat Farrell’s moving speech at the historic 2012 gathering, responding to the Vatican’s notification.

“Powerful, profound, prophetic—these words of women religious leaders carry rich spiritual wisdom and challenge everyone in the church to walk their different vocational paths with the fullest measure of truth and love.”

—Elizabeth A. Johnson, Fordham University

“These addresses are remarkable articulations of the challenges faced and the contributions offered by women Religious who, amid massive misunderstanding, institutional resistance, and material loss, have been shining a steady light into the darkness of both culture and Church in the last three decades.” —Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM, author, Prophets in Their Own Country

“Lively, provocative and inspired reflections given by some of the most thoughtful, educated, and faithful women in the Catholic church today.”

—James Martin, SJ, author, Jesus: A Pilgrimage

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