



Contemporary Religious Life Annotated Bibliography **Compiled by the LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee**

Suggested Questions:

1. What insights does this article/book shed on the mystery and meaning of religious life as I/we live it today and into the future?
2. In what ways does this article/book stretch me/us toward re-imagining the place of women religious in relation to the present realities in our church and the world?

October 2010

Gallares, Judette, RC, "Opening the Heart to Listen, Becoming Mystics and Prophets Today"
http://www.uisg.org/public/Attachments/Plenaria%202010_Judette%20Gallares%20.pdf

In her presentation to the 2010 Assembly of the International Union of Superiors General, Judette Gallares, RC, a Cenacle Sister from the Philippines, explores the connections between mysticism and prophecy. In the context of the story of Lydia from the Acts of the Apostles, she identifies the movements and phases of ongoing conversion which set the stage for awakening a mystic and prophetic spirit. She calls for a revitalization of our communities as places where we can learn the language of understanding and seek ways of bridging the gaps with others. She invites us to reflect more deeply on our religious call to be mystics and prophets in our own inner journeys and throughout the whole of creation. This article is a "must read" for all who seek to integrate the mystic and prophetic dimensions of our lives as religious.

Prevallet, Elaine, SL, "Religious Vows: Energy of Life for Life"
http://www.crc-canada.org/bd/fichierNouveaute/619_3.pdf

In her presentation to the Canadian Religious Conference, Elaine Prevallet, SL addresses the vows of consecrated life from a universal perspective. She invites the hearer to re-orient our identity as religious in the context of the whole of creation. Drawing from Vatican II, she calls for a healing of the split between mind and heart and the theologies of love for God and love for creation. "The whole earth needs to be included in our understanding of our vows," she says. "Life is one energy, and it expresses itself in us and through us. With all of creation we then form a community of life." Elaine challenges leaders to hold the vision of religious life in the context of creation and to encourage their communities to live in hope.

Sempore, Sidbe, OP, "In a Multidimensional Africa, Giving One`s Life Out of Love"
http://www.crc-canada.org/bd/fichierNouveaute/618_2.pdf

For anyone interested in a perspective of religious life that come from across the globe, this presentation, which was given at the 2010 Canadian Religious Conference, is worth reading. Born in Burkino Faso, Sidbe Sempore OP adds a unique perspective to the realities of men and women living religious life today. He explores several obstacles and challenges of living one`s vows in the multi-cultural and multi-religious setting and highlights the rays of hope that are present. He indicates that prophecy is alive and that synergy and solidarity are pathways to the future for religious congregations in that continent.

Sweko, Liliane, SNDdeN, "Called To Illuminate with Prophetic Light the World of Darkness"
http://www.uisg.org/public/Attachments/ENG_Liliane%20Sweko.pdf

Liliane Sweko SNDdeN, an African woman religious who, prior to being elected to her leadership team, ministered for many years in Africa. She situates her remarks in her experiences in Africa. Drawing on the gospels, she indicates that in the very nature of religious life is the call to denounce, announce, and renounce as mystics and prophets in the world today. She names darkness present in the world and suggests actions to light the darkness in prophetic ways: the sound formation of women religious; involvement in ecclesial, national and international organizations; and networking across issues of justice and peace.

April 2010

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001

Although many women religious may have read the first edition in the late 1970s, Walter Brueggemann`s second edition is well worth the time. Well versed in the Old Testament, he relates the prophetic stories to our contemporary situation. Brueggemann challenges us to be "alternative communities" which must be both critical and energizing in our prophetic ministry. The question we can ask as we read *The Prophetic Imagination* is "what would it look like if women religious were committed to being alternative communities in our Church and in our world today?"

Fitzgerald, Constance. "From Impasse to Prophetic Hope: Crisis of Memory."
CTSA Proceedings 64 (2009): 21-42. <http://www.ctsa-online.org/0021-0042.pdf>

Constance FitzGerald continues to challenge us as theologians, as women religious to engage the impasses in our lives, our Church and our society, from a perspective of prophetic hope by leading us through some deeper reflections on what John of the Cross calls "the purification of memory". Constance stretches us to see beyond our "old assumptions, burdened by memories that limit our horizons" that essentially make us "unfree to see God coming to us from the future." Our memories make us who we are, and the "difficulty is that memories can lead us to either healing and empathy or hostility and destruction." As a Carmelite, Constance shares that the grace of contemplation is essential for "the purification of memories". As we proceed in the process of re-remembering and letting go of all that stands in our way, it is only then that we are open to the gift of hope, the prophetic hope for which we, our church, and our society yearn and is in fact the bridge to a new future.

Maher, Mary, SSND. "Between Imagination and Doubt: Religious Leadership In Postmodern Culture." Keynote Address to LCWR National Assembly, August 18, 2002.
<http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrannualassembly/previousassemblies.htm>

The keynote address at the August 2002 LCWR National Assembly was given by Mary Maher and it was very timely. However upon re-reading and reflecting on Mary's address in 2010, it appears to be even more timely and imperative for women serving in congregational leadership to ponder. Mary invites us to consider that as religious women we need to use and stimulate our imaginations to *shape* the cultures in which we find ourselves – and in that process we will experience the *tension* between what we might *imagine* and what we *doubt* can happen. We are living in times when we live out of various combinations of pre-modern, modern and postmodern worldviews and yet we are called to be prophetic, to be women of hope for our the Church and for our world. How are we being and living the gospel in response to the signs of the times today? Mary challenges us to overcome our doubts, not with certitude nor with clarity but rather with our imaginations. This article is a great companion to Brueggemann's *The Prophetic Imagination*.

Schneiders, Sandra. "Religious Life as a Prophetic Life Form." *National Catholic Reporter*. Five-part series. <http://ncronline.org/news/women-religious/schneiders-explore-meaning-religious-life-today>

In this essay in five parts, Sandra Schneiders invites the reader to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the meaning of apostolic religious life today. Seeing religious life as a participation in the prophetic vocation and mission of Jesus, she explores "Religious Life as a Prophetic Life Form", the "Call and Response of Prophetic Action", "What Jesus taught us about His Prophetic Ministry", the "Tasks of Those Who Choose the Prophetic Life Style", and "Religious Life as a Sharing in Jesus' Passion and Resurrection". With keen insight and sensitivity she seeks to analyze the current situation of religious life under investigation and encourages the clear articulation and courageous claiming of our experience. Sandra encourages us to willingly live the vocation to which we have been called in spite of the sufferings that may be involved.

Vigil, Jose Maria, CMF. "A Call to Religious Life Worldwide."
<http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr006/josemariavigil.htm>

In this article, the Spanish Claretian explores profound changes that are impacting religious life today especially in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. He highlights the prophetic and charismatic nature of religious life and raises questions that touch on the relationship of religious life to the institutional dimension of Church. In light of a present religious crisis, he invites religious to assume whatever risks are necessary to create a new future. He calls for careful analysis of our current situation as well as a substantial change in light of shifting social and cultural realities throughout the world.

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