

LCWR Assembly
Ritual of Repentance
August 11, 2021

As we move forward with this commitment to living the truth of the Gospel, carving deep cosmic tendencies for transforming love, we, the current leaders of LCWR also feel called – on behalf of the Conference – to carve deeply needed words of repentance into our evolutionary path.

When Dr. Howard Thurman visited Mahatma Gandhi in India in 1935, as a parting request, Gandhi asked Thurman and his companions to do him the favor of singing a song. “I don’t sing but I’ll certainly try for you, if I know the song,” Thurman said.

“It’s one of your own songs,” Gandhi said.

“Which one?” Thurman asked.

“Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”

That song, Gandhi said, “in essence provides the meeting place where all of the human suffering and misery is touched by something that lifts it and redeems it and makes it whole.”

We four come before you and our God, in deep repentance, standing at the foot of the cross “where all of human suffering and misery is touched by something that lifts it and redeems it and makes it whole.”

Music: *Were you there when they crucified my Lord...*

Elise: Before God and all who have been grievously harmed through the generations by Papal Bulls that sanctioned the African slave trade, which led to the chattel slavery of 12 million Black people, and the colonization of Native peoples and land, resulting in the genocide of up to 20 million indigenous ... I, Elise García, President of LCWR – on behalf of our Conference and members – acknowledge these sinful acts of our Church ... offer a profound apology ... and pray for forgiveness.

Pause

Jane: Before God and all who have been grievously harmed through the generations by our complicity as women religious in the enslavement of children, women and men ... I, Jane Herb, President-Elect of LCWR – on behalf of our Conference and members – acknowledge these sinful acts by our congregations ... offer a profound apology ... and pray for forgiveness.

Music: *Were you there when they nailed him to the tree...* (1:32 – 2:30)

Jayne: Before God and all who have been grievously harmed through the generations by our tacit or explicit engagement as women religious in Jim Crow, state-sanctioned segregation and other white supremacist practices ... I, Jayne Helmlinger, Past-President of LCWR – on behalf of

our Conference and members – acknowledge these sinful acts by our congregations and institutions ... offer a profound apology ... and pray for forgiveness.

Pause

Carol: Before God and all who have been grievously harmed by our blindness, willful ignorance, and unexamined white privilege as women religious to the present day ... I, Carol Zinn, Executive Director of LCWR – on behalf of our Conference and members – acknowledge these sinful acts among ourselves and our congregations ... offer a profound apology ... and pray for forgiveness.

Carol: Together, we stand at the foot of the cross, hearts broken open, “where all of the human suffering and misery is touched by something that lifts it and redeems it and makes it whole.”

Music: Were you there when they pierced him in his side...