

**LCWR 2023 Annual Assembly Breakout Session**  
**Sacred Encounters: What We Are Learning at the Various Stages of the Journey**  
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Given the topic of this breakout session and the movement toward transformation of religious life:

1. What were some of the practical learnings or helpful guidelines that participants were left with?
  - Hearing the voices of our lay partners is critical for many of us — new eyes, perspectives.
  - Required: creativity, fidelity, generosity.
  - Challenge of sharing one's culture – goes way beyond sharing documents or properties or healthcare.
  - We must articulate the context of our unique and shared realities.
  - Challenges of being transparent, even with our own sisters.
2. What tools, skills or “hands on” resources were offered that participants can share with their members?
  - The various congregations who shared their experiences and their stages of decision making offered many tools. It would be good for all congregations to view the presentation on this topic that will be available on LCWR's website.
  - Continue to make use of the various groups offering archives storage and support.
3. What questions was the group left with that could provide opportunity for further exploration with members?
  - Challenges around relationship with commissaries — understanding another congregation's culture and history. Even our language and its meanings are difficult to transmit.
4. What insights were gained that contribute to the emergence of religious life into the future?
  - Keeping the relationships going is still at the center, even as we make decisions about material things.
  - Everyone is in some stage of letting go, making new decisions about eldercare.
  - We are all we are — our relationships in all things.
  - Getting to the essence of religious life — before, while and after — we settle the questions re. properties, ministries, membership, governance.
5. What does LCWR need to be attentive to as religious life evolves into the future?
  - LCWR needs to help members with all things regarding commissaries.
  - Beyond focusing on individuals, members need more information about appointing another congregation's leadership as commissary so there might be a natural succession.
  - LCWR could be helpful and perhaps is already advocating for widening the pool of commissaries beyond women religious. Lay women would be far preferable to priests or bishops.

Bottom Line: It takes a lot of courage to make these decisions, enter these processes, to address governance, to make final plans.