

New Leaders Gather From Around the Country for LCWR Workshop

More than 80 LCWR members recently gathered in Riverdale, New York for the LCWR New Leader Workshop. The leaders came from 23 religious communities, representing all 15 regions, 21 states and Celaya, Mexico for the March 17-20 workshop at the Passionist Spiritual Center.

Offered each spring, the workshop included the topic of leadership presented by Mary Persico, IHM; canon law, Lynn Jarrell, OSU; civil law, Bernadette Kenny, RSHM; communications, Camille D'Arienzo, RSM; finance and trends, Hertha Longo, CSA; and human development, Donna Markham, OP.

Breakout sessions were available on each of the above topics with special attention to interests that surfaced through the participants' questionnaire and at the workshop itself. At the conclusion of the workshop leadership teams had an opportunity to meet and discuss ways in which they might put into practice suggestions

made by the presenters. The faculty responded to the large group with questions that surfaced during the gathering.

High praise was given by participants for an outstanding, professional, inspiring, and challenging faculty and to a spirited staff for creating the experience. Participants appreciated the practical input on issues they face daily, meeting other new leaders, the table sharing and the availability of faculty and staff throughout the workshop.

One participant commented, "This was a powerful experience for me -- an excellent foundation for my
(continued on page 5)



*Workshop presenter
 Camille D'Arienzo, RSM*

Inside this issue:

- 3** LCWR Delegation to Mexico
- 6** LCWR Assembly 2005 Update
- 7** Annual Visit to Vatican Offices



From the LCWR Presidency
Seeing Life Anew, Afresh and with Surprise

by Constance Phelps, SCL -- LCWR Vice President

It's been cold. Winter cold. Yet with just a few hours of sunshine and warmer weather the tulip leaves are breaking through the dark, chilled ground. An unmistakable sign of spring. It is that time, each year, when I am surprised by the beauty of new life.

As I write, we are still in the season of Lent, a season of preparation. It is meant to be the church's springtime (literally), a time when, out of the darkness of sin's winter, a repentant, empowered people emerges. No wonder one liturgy refers to it as "this joyful season." It is a season in which we are led to the surprised joy of the resurrection.



of ambivalence, and, to a lesser degree, signs of hope. As I summed up our listing, I likened the United States to a dot painting masterpiece defined not by the broad strokes of national media, but by a myriad of small specks that come together to form the national picture. Therefore, what we offer are some of the small specks that are integral to the painting – knowing that in isolation they do not mirror the total reality of the United States.

I wondered if that is really our reality – we only see specks. Even as leaders we, at times, do not have a clear perception when we think we have a

Christ's resurrection and the empty tomb turn our attention away from all that is wrong with us and with the world, and spur us on to experience the abundant life he promises.

I, too, feel I've been in seasonal preparation. During our board meeting in February, we drafted preparatory information for the InterAmerican Conference in May; and continued prep for our annual visit to the Vatican offices in April. As we reflected to ready ourselves, as well as our materials, I was aware that preparation

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presupposes anticipation. And we anticipate when we are hopeful. But, for me, the experience was not that simple.

Each conference attending the InterAmerican Conference was instructed to consider the realities of their respective country: politically, culturally, socially, and economically; to indicate how these realities impact religious life; and finally, to suggest possible action steps.

What our delegation surfaced was a picture of the multifaceted reality of the United States. It was difficult to articulate with clarity the complexity of the reality we experience. Contained in our listing were serious concerns and challenges, some trends, a degree

grasp of the whole. Perhaps it is necessary to isolate the specks prior to moving back for a clearer perspective of the whole picture -thus, seeing it anew, afresh, with surprise and signs of hope.

Our continuing preparation for the InterAmerican Conference is an opportunity to focus on the possible actions steps women religious can take to effect change socially and ecclesially, rather than remain mired in the evident inequities, injustices and flaws. A sign of hope.

The softening of hardened winter ground, the winds and rain allow tulip leaves to appear and prepare for the blossoms yet to come. And we anticipate the fragrance and vibrant color as buds burst open. Yes, a sign of hope.

During Lent our need for repentance could not erase the good news that Christ overcame all sin. His resurrection and the empty tomb turn our attention away from all that is wrong with us and with the world, and spur us on to experience the abundant life he promises.

LCWR Mexico Delegation Focuses on the Struggle for Economic Justice Across Borders

by Marie Lucey, OSF
Associate Director for Social Mission

After months of anticipation and preparation, the LCWR/Witness for Peace trade delegation to Mexico, an outcome of the 2003 assembly resolution against NAFTA, became a reality February 19 – 26, 2005. For one week, the delegation of 11 listened, learned, reflected, and shared on experiences coordinated by two capable WFP Mexico team members. Words and acronyms such as globalization, neo-liberalism, NAFTA, FTAA, CAFTA, and AFTA became actualized in the lives of individuals and groups with whom we met as we traveled from Mexico City to Oaxaca City to Teotitlan del Valle and back to Mexico City.

Unfortunately, the negative impacts of the 1994 North America Free Trade Agreement outweigh the positive. With the opening of trade barriers among Canada, the United States and Mexico, without protective stipulations, the promised advantages to workers on both sides of borders have not materialized, especially for Mexicans. Mexican agriculture has been consistently undersold by highly efficient, heavily subsidized US imports. Unable to compete, many farmers have been forced off the land, usually migrating north to find work. Oxfam has estimated that 400,000 Mexican farmers leave their land each year.

For centuries, Mexicans have referred to themselves as “people of corn.” Corn is not only the major crop but is part of the cultural identity of the people. Moreover, during the 10,000 years since corn originated in Oaxaca, Mexicans have developed many varieties of corn adapted to various terrains and climates. Now, rather than growing their own corn, many Mexicans are forced to buy cheaper, single variety corn, some of which has been grown from genetically modified seeds, i.e., containing chemicals or animal genes. With the elimination of tariffs, any corn can come in without supervision. When GMO (genetically modified organisms) corn is freely sold in Mexico, there is danger of contamination of native corn.



Elaine Davia, CBS watches Pastora, a member of the La Vida Nueva women's weaving cooperative in Teotitlan, demonstrate the spinning process

The delegation also met with members of two coffee cooperatives, both from the state of Oaxaca, who formed cooperatives in an attempt to compete in the free trade market. In speaking of what coffee means to them, one co-op member told us: “Coffee is close to our heart. It is part of our inheritance. We work together on it. Yes, we are people of corn, but we drink coffee from the time we are kids. We drink it through our mother’s milk.” But these growers of “fair trade” coffee have been unable to find access to the US market, selling their beans instead to several European countries.

A highlight of the delegation was a visit to a women’s weaving cooperative, “La Vida Nueva” (New Life) in the Zapotecan village of Teotitlan del Valle where the delegation spent the night with the families of several different co-op members. The women work hard, transforming raw wool into colorful yarn, then spending long hours every day at their looms producing beau-

(continued on page 4)

LCWR Mexico Delegation Focuses on the Struggle for Economic Justice Across Borders

(continued from page 3)

tiful, richly colored rugs. Too poor to rent a shop in Oaxaca, they depend on tourists and other groups who may go out of their way to stop in Teotitlan.

On the last day in Mexico City, a visit with Bishop Samuel Ruiz, retired bishop of Chiapas who consistently stands with poor and oppressed people, confirmed all we had been hearing from the Mexico team and from the groups with whom we met. Stressing the strong connection between faith and justice, Bishop Ruiz called for justice for migrants and urged us to raise the consciousness of legislators and CEOs about the effects of NAFTA and to oppose the signing of CAFTA. *Note: having learned from the NAFTA experience, many individuals and organizations in the United States and in Mexico voiced such strong opposition to the FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) that its passage failed. The US then turned to forging regional agreements, CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement) and AFTA (Andes Free Trade Agreement).*

So, what do we do with what we learned? While individual members of the delegation committed themselves to various specific actions, as an LCWR delegation we identified three actions that all would pursue: 1. share the experience with other LCWR members, particularly through the regions; 2. promote the purchase of Fair Trade coffee; 3. urge congressional representatives not to support the signing of CAFTA. (For information on Fair Trade products see www.globalexchange.org.)

Members of the delegation with members of the women's weaving cooperative.

1. Delegation members meet with Bishop Samuel Ruiz, retired bishop of Chiapas

2. Sandra Ann Silva, SHF (left) and Georgene Schumacher, SLW (right) speak with a representative from UCIRI, a coffee cooperative in Oaxaca

1



2



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(continued from page 1)

term of leadership." Another noted, "This workshop has been most valuable, not only for content, but also as a time to step away from one's own agenda and expand horizons with leaders of other congregations." Another participant said, "This was the best workshop I've attended in a very long time."

Staff and organizers of the program in attendance were executive director Carole Shinnick, SSND; associate director for finance and planning, Eleanor Granger, OSF and executive assistant, Suzanne Delaney, IHM.

Plans are in progress for next year's workshop at the Center for Development in Ministry at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois, March 30 – April 2, 2006. Registration and information will be available in October 2005 and will also be posted on the LCWR website at www.lcwr.org.

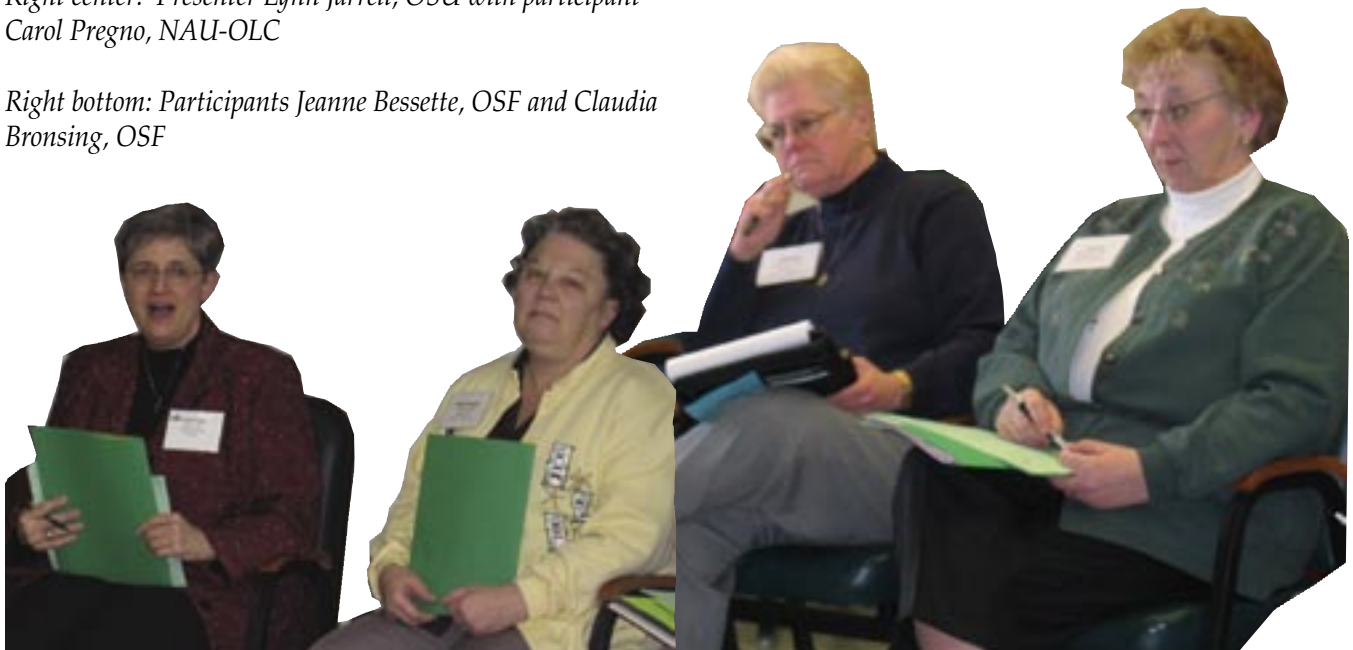
Photos:

Below: Workshop presenter Hertha Longo, CSA with participant Rosemary Fonck, OSF

Right top: Presenter Mary Persico, IHM with participant Rose Marie Surwilo, OSF

Right center: Presenter Lynn Jarrell, OSU with participant Carol Pregno, NAU-OLC

Right bottom: Participants Jeanne Bessette, OSF and Claudia Bronsing, OSF



LCWR Assembly 2005 Updates



August 19 - 23, 2005

Anaheim, California

August 19

Registration: 1:00 - 6:00 PM

Opening of Assembly: 7:00 PM

August 22

Assembly Adjourns after LCWR Banquet

August 23

Departure and Travel Day

Featured Entertainment at the LCWR Banquet

The Presentation Sisters Learning Center Ballet Folklorico will entertain at the LCWR assembly banquet on August 22.

The dancers are women ranging in age from 25-50 years old, most of whom are recent immigrants from Mexico. In addition to working in difficult factory jobs, taking care of their children and taking English and computer classes at the learning center, they practice dancing several times a week. As costumes are very expensive to buy, the women design and make all their own costumes. Started a year and a half ago, the ballet folklorico is one of the many classes offered at the learning center, an adult school sponsored by the Presentation Sisters in Watts.



*The Presentation Sisters Learning Center Ballet Folklorico
will entertain at the LCWR assembly banquet*

Assembly registration materials will be mailed to all LCWR members and associates in May.

Annual Visit to Vatican Offices



The LCWR presidency -- Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; Beatrice Eichten, OSF; and Constance Phelps, SCL -- and the executive director, Carole Shinnick, SSND will be in Rome from April 3-9, 2005 on their annual visit to various Vatican offices. News from their visit will be reported in the May 2005 issue of *Update*.

FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Emerging Communities Featured in CSRL Newsletter

The current issue of CSRL's newsletter, *Kindling*, features a 14-page focus section on emerging communities. The section begins with an introduction, followed by profiles of six new groups (two of women, two of men, and two men and women). Each profile contains the founding story and date, location, current canonical status, and canonical status goal.

The religious studies report of the section highlights two studies, one by Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA and one by Patricia Wittberg, SC and Mary Bendyna, RSM for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

The applicable canons of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and an excerpt from *Vita Consecrata* on new expressions of consecrated life are included as well as nine references to other publications for further research.

Members of the center will be receiving a copy of the issue, if they have not already received it. Others who would like to receive a PDF copy of *Kindling* by e-mail can request it at csrl@visioni.com.



20,000

Number of copies printed of *In the Sound of the Gentle Breeze*, the LCWR peacemaking reflection book

Update

Update is an official publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious published monthly and distributed to members nationally.

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Leading From Within Retreat

A few spaces are still available for the Leading From Within Retreat

January 15-20, 2006

Mater Dolorosa
Passionist Retreat Center
Sierra Madre, California



Registration must be accompanied by the deposit.

From the LCWR Executive Director

All This Juice and All This Joy

I was facing a long gray drive to New York. The March day hung heavy – drizzly, cold, and uninviting before me. At the last minute I grabbed a double CD album of La Bohème to keep me company. An hour later, having lost my local NPR station and unable to find another, I popped in the CD.

Soon I was lifted off I-95 and swept into the Left Bank artists' community of the late 1800s. Oh, my – the color! The passion! The romance! Puccini's soaring arias and aching chords flooded the car. Has anyone ever written lovelier music? Has anyone ever savored the honey and the salt of life like the young Bohemians of La Bohème? Is love ever more exquisite than when the specter of untimely death lurks outside the door? Crossing the George Washington Bridge, I thought my



Carole Shinnick, SSND

Non-juicy social justice might smack of grim self-righteousness. The challenge, of course, is finding a way to live juicy while respecting the parameters of the life we have chosen.

The arts can help. Art at its best allows us to enter worlds unavailable if we only move from bed to pew to car to office to table to TV to bed again. A Saturday morning spent in quiet leisure at the local art museum can open whole new worlds. A summer evening concert

in the park, sitting on a blanket, hem to hem with our neighbors and listening to Mozart can expand the soul and heal the spirit. A poem a day read from a bedside book might be more essential than a multivitamin.

Culinary imagination brought to the community table, can help us all live juicy. Here's a favorite of mine – an alternative to the standard iceberg lettuce salad. Alternate slices of fresh, ripe tomatoes with slices of fresh mozzarella on a large dinner plate – about three hearty slices of each. Arrange wedges of ripe avocados around the tomatoes and cheese. Drizzle extra virgin olive oil over the plate's contents. Season with sea salt and fresh ground pepper. Arrange three large leaves of fresh sweet basil on the tomatoes and mozzarella and garnish with a lemon quarter. Serve with lots of hot crusty

*Non-juicy living is
deeply dangerous
for religious.*

heart would break listening to Rodolfo's poignant final love song, "Ah, Mimi, mia bella Mimi."

I arrived at my destination in the Bronx like one in a time warp, shaking my head and trying to re-focus on the here-and-now. A line from Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem "Spring" came to mind: "What is all this juice and all this joy?"

The artist SARK tells us to "Live juicy" and encourages us to embrace ourselves as "splendidly imperfect." This is hardly the message we got in Religious Life 101. I can't recall anything about juicy living in formation, or anyone using words like "savor," "relish" or "delight." The emphasis was on asceticism, denial and discipline. Yet, asceticism, denial and discipline unbalanced by savor, relish and delight are very chilly indeed. Non-juicy living is deeply dangerous for religious. It can reduce poverty to bookkeeping, chastity to aloofness, and obedience to unthinking compliance. Non-juicy community living can diminish to convenient co-existence.

*The Easter story tells us that our God loves us,
"splendidly imperfect" as we are, and invites us to plunge
head-first into "all this juice and all this joy."
Go for it.*

bread, olive oil for dipping, and perhaps some chilled chardonnay. Tell them this is it – this is supper. Most of all do this on a mid-week night – not a special occasion. Put on an Italian opera. Enjoy living juicy.

The Easter story tells us that our God loves us, "splendidly imperfect" as we are, and invites us to plunge head-first into "all this juice and all this joy." Go for it. I'll see you there.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly

Anaheim, California

August 19, 2005

Registration: 1:00 - 6:00 PM

Opening of Assembly: 7:00 PM

August 22, 2005

Assembly adjourns after LCWR Banquet

August 23, 2005

Departure and Travel Day

LCWR-CMSM Delegation to El Salvador

November 30 -- December 6, 2005

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center

Sierra Madre, California

January 15 -- 20, 2006

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank,

Franciscan Center -- Tampa, Florida

February 12 -- 14, 2006

LCWR New Leader Workshop

St. Mary of the Lake -- Mundelein, Illinois

March 30 -- April 2, 2006

LCWR Assembly

Atlanta, Georgia

August 18 -- 22, 2006

LCWR Assembly

New Orleans, Louisiana

August 2 -- 6, 2007

NRVC Offers Workshop on Vocation Ministry and the Issues of Civil, Canon and Immigration Law

Our Lady of the Snows Shrine -- Belleville, Illinois

April 4 -- Dan Ward, OSB

Issues of Civil and Canon Law

April 5 -- Margaret Perron, RJM

Immigration Law

Participants can register online for this workshop by going to "Calendar: on the NRVC website.

Workshop Offered on Sexual Abuse: Response & Prevention

May Workshop in St. Louis Still Open for Registration

St. Luke Institute and the Legal Resource Center for Religious, in collaboration with LCWR, will present a two-day workshop for LCWR national and regional members on May 24-25, 2005 in St. Louis, Missouri. There are 19 spaces available which will be filled on a first come basis.

This two-day workshop will focus on civil, canonical and psychological issues. Case studies will be used to assist participants to apply and integrate what they are learning. More information on this workshop as well as registration materials may be obtained online at: www.lrcr.org/mission/workshops.htm.

NATRI Financial Management Seminar Offers Valuable Opportunity for Ongoing Education for Leadership

The annual NATRI seminar for leadership with financial oversight, new treasurers and finance personnel will be offered at St. John Center for Youth and Family in Plymouth, Michigan from June 6-10, 2005.

The program continues to present key elements of the financial management of religious institutes. Areas that are covered include: respective roles of leaders and finance personnel for fiscal responsibility; accounting; financial planning and forecasting; civil and canon law responsibilities; investment concepts and issues; risk management; relationship with development programs; retirement planning; and utilization of government programs. Previous participants have appreciated the opportunities for networking, dual tracks for certain topics, open forums and guidance in the many resources available to address the stewardship issues of religious institutes.

The brochure with registration form has been mailed to all major superiors and to all NATRI members and subscribers. The program is also available on the NATRI website. For more information about the program or for additional brochures contact the NATRI Office at 301/587-7776 or e-mail natri@natri.org.