

Update

A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

February 2007

The Next Frontier: Religious Life at the Edge of Tomorrow

LCWR 2007 Assembly Explores the Next Frontiers of Religious Life

August 1—5, 2007

Where is religious life moving at this significant time in history? What can religious congregations and religious life leaders do to prepare for the shifting realities ahead?

These questions and more have shaped the focus of an enlivening 2007 assembly: "The Next Frontier: Religious Life at the Edge of Tomorrow." The event will take place in Kansas City, once the beginning of the American frontier and an appropriate setting to launch the conference from its 50th anniversary to an exciting exploration of the next era of religious life.

The LCWR Assembly Planning Committee invited Laurie Brink, OP as the keynote speaker to address the gathering from her dual perspectives as a biblical scholar and a newer member in religious life. She will speak on the collective future of religious life and offer



2007 LCWR Assembly
Keynote:
Laurie Brink, OP

suggestions for gracefully moving towards this future. Laurie is an assistant professor of biblical studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and directs a project in which scholars of Roman history, early Christianity, and Jewish studies explore the ancient social, religious, and cultural world out of which Christianity emerged. She holds a master of arts degree from the Maryknoll School of Theology and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago.

All LCWR members and associates are asked to note the unusually early date of the assembly: August 1-5 (August 5 is the travel day).

24 LCWR Members Participate in Leading From Within Retreat in Tampa

For the third year, LCWR offered the Leading From Within Retreat which was held this year in Tampa, Florida. Attended by 24 LCWR members, the retreat was led by María Elena Martínez, OSF and Marga-

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From the LCWR Presidency **Seeking and Finding Hope**

by Beatrice Eichten, OSF — LCWR Past President

Finally! We got several inches of fluffy snow last night, the sun is shining, and the good news is that it is so cold the snow won't melt. It is Martin Luther King holiday, so kids are making snow angels, folks are shoveling, and the big "kids" with snowblower toys are happily sending snow to their neighbors' yard. Now doesn't that sound like someone who likes Minnesota winters? It's true! The grey/brown days of no snow and 40 degree weather do not make my heart sing. The beauty and silence of fresh snow does. For me, it creates a sense of wonder and awareness of the world around me.



This sense of wonder fits with a song by Peter Ostrousko* that I heard as I drove on semi-treacherous roads this morning. "Miracle" exhorts us to expect a miracle today:

Look for a miracle today.
 Open your eyes and look around.
 Open your ears and hear the sound —
 the message of hope is all around.
 Don't let the stardust leave your eyes.
 Don't let your hopes and dreams slip by...
 your soul will not survive.

When the grey brownness of the day and the world events get me down, this is an important reminder. I

*I find it takes discipline
 to look for goodness and hope
 in a world wracked by
 violence and broken relationships.*

find it takes discipline to look for goodness and hope in a world wracked by violence and broken relationships.

In October, I participated in a study tour of Israel/Palestine. In the midst of so much oppression, I heard Pal-

estinian women speak of the struggle to simply live and provide for their families. In the face of incredible obstacles, their determination to continue their ordinary lives, their commitment to speak out against injustice, and their support for one another was edifying. That they retain dreams and hope is remarkable. I came back feeling anger and shame for our country's failure to pressure Israel to honor international agreements, and concern that we in the US seemingly do not have the right to criticize Israel without being labeled anti-semitic.

But I look around and see goodness and hope. One evidence is the book, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid*, written by former President Jimmy Carter, which fairly and courageously lays out the situation (it matches the facts on the ground as I experienced them). That the word "apartheid" is being openly used is hopeful – it names a

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reality that makes us pay attention and, hopefully, take action.

So the miracle of snow and of hope permeates my day. May it permeate yours (perhaps without the snow!)

*CD, *Pilgrims on the Heart Road*



LCWR Reflection Book, *So Much is in Bud*, Available for Sale Until February 15

LCWR will be publishing a new daily reflection book focused on living with hope, staying open to possibilities, and dreaming for what may yet to be. The title of the book is “So Much is in Bud,” drawing from a Denise Levertov poem used by Bea Eichten, OSF in her presidential address at the 2006 LCWR assembly. The reflections in the book are designed for use between May 27 and July 22.

The book contains reflections by 57 LCWR members on the words of various writers and thinkers on visioning, as well as on related passages of scripture. The objectives of this publication are:

- Provide LCWR members with a spiritual tool that can aid their reflection on significant themes pertinent to religious life
- Provide LCWR members with a resource that can be shared as well with their own members
- Foster a bond of unity in prayer among LCWR members, other women religious, and anyone else who wishes to utilize the reflections. More than 20,000 copies of each of the last three LCWR reflection books were sold, enabling many people to join in prayer around a common theme.

LCWR members, associates, and subscribers will receive a copy of the publication. Information on ordering additional copies was sent to all members online and

is also available on the LCWR website at: www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/2007reflectionorder.pdf. **Orders for this book must be received by February 15.**

The cost of the book is \$4.50, plus postage. Special rates are available for ordering in bulk. Proceeds from the sale of the book are used to assist LCWR’s operational budget.

Nominations for LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Due by March 16

All LCWR members have the opportunity to nominate persons for consideration for the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award. This award is given annually to a person who has significantly contributed to the ministry of leadership and who reflect the LCWR mission.

Criteria for the award are:

- Modeling commitment and collaboration to the ministry of leadership in the wider church and society
- Creative and innovative leadership in the church and society
- Significant contribution, as a leader on the national and/or international level, particularly to women religious congregations in the United States
- Prophetic stance in living the Gospel values.

This year LCWR is accepting nominations through an online survey program. On January 15 the national office sent all members a message with a link to the nomination form. The form needs to be returned by **March 16.**

The award will be presented at the LCWR assembly in August. Prior award recipients were Mary Luke Tobin, SL (2003); Theresa Kane, RSM (2004); Mary Daniel Turner, SNDdeN (2005); and Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ (2006).

24 LCWR Members Participate in Leading From Within Retreat in Tampa

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ret O'Brien, OSU who provided daily presentations and offered group and individual spiritual direction.

The retreat centered on the theme "A Woman Wrapped in..." and utilized cloths woven by women in Chiapas, Mexico throughout the presentations, prayer, and ritual.

Comments from the participants about the retreat included:

The grace found in the experience and wisdom of the "sisterhood" of religious leadership can't be matched. LCWR does well in making that grace available in many ways. This retreat, the facilitators, and the participants all graced me.
-- Darla Vogelsang, OSU

The retreat was just what I needed to strengthen me in my call to leadership. Through the process of the retreat I became more aware of the power and presence of God... I am renewed and re-energized to "lead from within."
-- Celeste Wobeter, ND

It is a rare opportunity for leaders to gather together for the sole purpose of praying, reflecting, and sharing. There was no pressure of agenda business and decisions. It was a time to be enveloped in the arms of God.
-- Teresa Tuite, OP

When your own leader's heart is ready, this retreat is a powerful way of affirming and deepening your leadership, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.
-- Mary C. Obawa, OSF

The retreat helped ground us women and as religious. Rooted again in this identity as God's beloved, we now have the potential to be better leaders. Sharing this experience with other leaders was tremendously supportive.
-- Cheryl Clemons, OSU



Margaret O'Brien, OSU and
María Elena Martínez, OSF



Participants, directors, and staff wrapped in their rebosos/shawls at the 2007 LCWR Leading From Within Retreat in Tampa

**Plan Now to Attend the
2008 LCWR
Leading from Within Retreat**
*Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona
January 20 - 25, 2008*

NRCAT Calls for Individual Signers of Statement of Conscience

LCWR is an endorsing member of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) and has signed the "Statement of Conscience: Torture is a Moral Issue." Quite a few sisters are among the current 13,000 individual signers. During a January 16 outreach and organizing planning summit in Washington, DC, members reviewed the goals of NRCAT which had been approved by the coordinating committee and engaged in a strategizing session. NRCAT's participating and endorsing organizations were urged to invite more individuals to sign the statement in order to reach the goal of 50,000 signers.

More information about NRCAT and an opportunity to sign the statement are available at www.nrcat.org.

LCWR Members Issue Public Comments to the DOE About Complex 2030

Both LCWR staff and those who initiated the public comment statement in opposition to Complex 2030 (Bomblex) are grateful to the congregations who added their signatures to the statement of 23 national religious organizations.

Following the December 14, 2006 hearing at the Department of Energy (DOE), (see January 2007 *Update*) an invitation for state and regional signers was extended. Of the 50 plus additional signers, 33 were LCWR member congregations, 10 of whom also submitted their own comments. The Friends Committee on National Legislation and the National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger are very grateful for this strong support of women religious.

The list was submitted to the DOE on January 17, the deadline for submission of public comments. The DOE is expected to make its first request for funding in early February.

Leading from Within Manual A Leadership Program Designed for Use at Home



LCWR offers a leadership mentoring program that can be pursued from home. The conference developed *Leading from Within: A Mentoring Leadership Manual* that is based on the three dimensions of leadership (symbolic/meaning-making, relational, structural/organizational). Many leaders have already used this manual and have found it extremely helpful in their ministry.

The program

- is especially helpful to those relatively new to leadership but is a valuable reflection tool for any leader.
- involves a period of reflection, study and exploration on the part of the leader. The process usually takes about one year.
- involves partnering with an experienced leader or former leader who serves as a mentor, or forming a peer mentoring group.
- is flexible. Participants can do as many or as few of the units as works well for them.
- offers a variety of experiences that will accommodate different styles of adult learning.

The manual is in a three-ring binder for easy removal and addition of pages, as users find material to expand what is in the book. Information on ordering can be found on the LCWR website at: www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/mentoringleadership.htm.

LCWR Endorses Catholic Charities Poverty Campaign

On January 10, during a briefing on Capitol Hill, Catholic Charities launched a major campaign, "Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good." LCWR was present as one of the partners who endorsed and will promote the campaign, the goal of which is "to reduce poverty in the United States by 50 percent by the year 2020." This figure represents reducing poverty from its current 37 million people, about 12.6 percent of the population, to 5-6 percent. Since 1967, the US has continued to define "poverty" as income below \$20,000 a year for a family of four, obviously a significant understatement of the number of people most US Americans consider poor. Nearly all other industrialized nations set the poverty line as a percentage—about half—of the income of the typical (median) family. The US poverty line is equal to only about 28 percent of median income.

By its endorsement, LCWR commits itself to promote the campaign among its members, encourage them to add their congregational endorsement, and promote the campaign among their members. LCWR will provide a link to the campaign (www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/poverty) on its website: . Congregations can endorse the campaign via this website as well as access the policy paper and other resources. Catholic Charities considers LCWR a valuable partner because women religious have historically been committed to service and advocacy on behalf of people made poor by economic and social systems.

Marie Lucey, OSE, LCWR associate director for social mission; and Paul Lininger, OFMConv, CMSM executive director (far left) represented the two conferences at the launching of Catholic Charities' Poverty in America campaign.



LCWR Promotes Christian Peace Witness for Iraq Event

As the fourth anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq approaches, a significant event is being planned for March 16, 2007 by a large number of Christian denominations and organizations, including LCWR. The event in Washington, DC will begin with a 7:00 PM worship service at the Washington National Cathedral, followed by a candlelight procession of about two and a half miles to the White House, where a late night peace vigil will take place. Some participants plan to risk arrest in a nonviolent act of "divine obedience" (civil disobedience). People are invited to participate in as much of the witness as they are able and willing to do. The hope is for large numbers in the nation's capital, as well as local events using resources found on the Christian Peace Witness website.

The peace witness calls the President and Congress to: end the US occupation; support US troops; rebuild Iraq; say NO to torture; and say YES to justice. It also encourages participants to take each of these calls as a personal challenge to pray and act to end the US occupation and renew their commitment to peacemaking.

Since each participating group is asked to promote the event, LCWR members are asked to share the information with their congregations and encourage participation. (By way of information, March 16 is the evening before a peace demonstration in the capitol sponsored by ANSWER). For a Christian Peace Witness flyer, a list of partners, and further information (including why this is a Christian witness), please visit www.christian-peacewitness.org.



Support the LCWR Scholarship Fund by Recycling Ink Cartridges

Number of Entities Participating in Program
LCWR, CMSM, RFC, NATRI, LRCR
and 16 LCWR Member Congregations

**Amount of Money Received into
LCWR Scholarship Fund**
(From September 1, 2006 — January 15, 2007)
\$314.61

**Congregations are asked to consider participating in
this program and inviting
other entities to do so as well.**

**Other possibilities are health systems, universities,
schools, and other works.**

Participation in the program is easy and has no costs.

Recyclable items include: ink jet cartridges,
laser cartridges, and cell phones.

More information is on the LCWR website at:
www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/recycling.htm.

NATRI Offers Orientation for New Treasurers, Business Officers and Councilors for Finance in Religious Institutes

NATRI will again host an Orientation to Financial Management of Religious Institutes. This annual seminar for new treasurers, finance personnel, and leadership with financial oversight will be held at The Retreat Center at St. John's in Plymouth, Michigan. The program will be from June 4-8, 2007. Registration materials will be arriving later this month. Seasoned presenters such as Daniel Ward, OSB (law); Hertha Longo, CSA (planning); and Constance Neeson, LSW (Medicare and Social Security) will be returning to assist the class of 2007.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank

Villa Maria del Mar
Santa Cruz, California
February 26 — March 1, 2007

LCWR New Leader Workshop

The Retreat Center at St. John's
Plymouth, Michigan
March 15 — 18, 2007

LCWR Assembly

Kansas City, Missouri
August 1 — 5, 2007

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona
January 20 — 25, 2008

LCWR-CMSM Joint Assembly

Denver, Colorado
August 1 — 4, 2008

LCWR Assembly

New Orleans, Louisiana
August 11 — 15, 2009



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From the LCWR Executive Director

Some Offbeat Lessons in Leadership

While flying home from Tampa after the third Leading from Within retreat, I finished reading Frank McCourt's *Teacher Man*, his account of a 30-year career in the New York City public school system. With the retreat and the women who made it still on my mind, it did not take much for me to connect McCourt's uniquely unorthodox classroom style to the ministry of leadership.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

What is striking about McCourt's approach is his decision to free himself from the rigid role-expectations of a teacher. In his career, he broke most of the rules of traditional pedagogy: "Never smile before Christmas. Give them homework every night. Stick to your lesson plan. Neatness counts. Remember – you're in charge."

Margaret Wheatley would say that McCourt also decided against the "command and control" version of leadership in his classroom. Instead, he surrenders some of his control to help his students discover their own inner authority. On his very first day at McKee Vocational and Technical High School on Staten Island, two students begin a fight and one throws his lunch across the room at the other. The bag lands near McCourt's feet. He stoops, picks it up, unwraps the sandwich and quietly eats the entire thing — with relish — at nine o'clock in the morning. This stuns the students who quickly shift their focus to him. To say the least, the fight is over and he engages his students' curiosity. And, of course, the student who threw the lunch discovers the consequences of his action when lunchtime rolls around.

Early in his career, McCourt realized that most of the excuse notes for undone homework and missed school days had been written by the students themselves. He saves the notes and eventually reprints them for the students to critique. They are startled and amused to see their own (albeit anonymous) samples of "creative writing." He tells the students that as future parents, they need to learn how to write much better excuse notes. His assignment: to write excuse notes for some notorious sinners and scoundrels — Adam and Eve, Judas, Attila the Hun, Lee Harvey Oswald — to name a few. The results are both hilarious and brilliant.

While teaching in Stuyvesant High School, an elite magnet school for New York's best and brightest, he encounters a tell-tale numbness of imagination in the children of ambitious parents. These are students whose only measure for success has become grades, acceptance into Harvard, and lucrative careers in medicine or finance. So, instead of demanding writing assignments, McCourt invites the students to bring in recipes and cookbooks drawn from their own ethnic

backgrounds and to recite them in dramatic readings. Musically inclined classmates soon add accompaniment and the class becomes a lively venue for heartfelt recitations of marinara sauce with accordion background, and recipes for Peking duck read over the plucking of a Chinese mandolin.

McCourt makes lots of mistakes and often is filled with self-doubt. But he engages his students, fires up their imagination and gets them to re-evaluate their world-views. Most of all, he raises their own expectations of themselves. He is not afraid to share his own story. He is not afraid to step out of his role. He is not afraid to say he blew it. He is not afraid of doing the unexpected or of looking foolish. In fact, he recognizes that he can

*... his stories
offer valuable insights into leadership.*

only lead his classes if he is rooted in his own experience and trusts his intuitions. McCourt really does "lead from within" – not from the front of the room or from behind his desk.

As readers of *Angela's Ashes* know, McCourt has little use for the church, particularly as he experienced it as a child growing up dirt-poor in Limerick. So it might amuse him to know that I would write a column for leaders of communities of women religious, holding him up as a model. But his stories offer valuable insights into leadership. Know your own story. Help others to claim theirs. Don't get stuck in your role. Do whatever you can to jump-start the imaginations of those you lead. Invite them to venture into the unfamiliar. And don't take yourself too seriously. And so we say, "Thanks, Teacher Man!"

From the
Center for the Study of
Religious Life

What's Really Going On?

Join other leaders and religious, experts in their fields, for an important conversation about how to identify and address the underlying issues in community life that confront leadership today.

Interdisciplinary Leadership Forum
April 15-17, 2007

El Retiro Jesuit Retreat House — Los Altos, California

Issues to be explored:

- Religious who find it difficult to find the right ministry
- The tension between family and community needs
- Cultural diversity in community
- The use of patrimony

More information and the registration form see www.religious-life.org/pdfs/CA%20Registration111706.pdf.

The registration deadline is February 15.

The Religious Formation Conference Presents...

Right Relationships: A Reflection on the Vow of Chastity

July 14-21, 2007

Washington Theological Union
Washington, D.C.

A segment of the "We Are the Change" Summer Forum series designed for women and men religious who have made first profession since 1965

Presentations:

- Biblical perspective with James Scullion, OFM, assistant professor of scripture and academic dean at Washington Theological Union
- Psychosexual perspective with licensed psychologists Kathy Galleher, PhD, and Quinn R. Connors, OCarm., PhD
- Mission perspective with Simone Campbell, SSS, executive director of NETWORK

Facilitators assist small-group process during the program.

For more information: www.relforcon.org or call 301-588-4938

LRCR 2007 Annual Legal Seminar

Flowing Waters:

Channeling Energy Through Turbulent Waters

Adams Mark Hotel — St. Louis, Missouri
March 8-11, 2007

REGISTER NOW

Highlights of the 2007 Legal Seminar:

Two Pre-Assembly Workshops

Civil & Canon Law 101: Concepts & Procedures

Civil & Canon Law 301: Procedures for Administration

Keynote Addresses:

"Immigration: The State of the Issue"

Donald Kerwin, JD

Executive Director, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

"Strategies for Passing on the Charism"

Melanie Morey, EdD & John Piderit, SJ, PhD

14 Breakout Sessions on Emerging Topics

Subscriber Registration Fee	\$450
Each Workshop Fee	\$225
Adams Mark Hotel	\$100
	plus tax/Guest Room

The Legal Seminar registration brochure is available on the LRCR website (www.lrcr.org). Updates will appear as planning continues.