

LCWR National Board Meets in Tucson Responding to the Critical Issues Facing Religious Life Leadership Today

At its recent meeting in Tucson, Arizona, the LCWR national board looked at some of the most important issues facing religious life and the conference today. The agendas at both the LCWR board meeting and joint meeting with the board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) included many of the topics needing careful consideration by religious at this time. Among the items on the agendas were:

- follow-up to the LCWR assembly 2005 recommendations
- follow-up to the CARA study on the policies, practices and procedures of congregations of women religious regarding sexual misconduct of members
- a revised assembly resolution process
- the LCWR history project
- the relationship of US women and men religious with the institutional church
- upcoming assemblies
- the national religious retirement collection and the ongoing retirement needs of women and men religious
- the InterAmerican Conference in Bogota, Colombia
- the LCWR dues structure
- an update on NACPA study of the LCWR national



The LCWR and CMSM national boards met at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson, Arizona from February 18-22.

- office
- the Leading from Within Retreat
- approval of a redesigned LCWR logo
- the regional jubilee celebrations

Lynn Levo, CSJ, from the staff of Saint Luke Institute, joined the LCWR board for discussion of the CARA study results. Helen Maher Garvey, BVM, chair of the LCWR History Committee, was present for discussion of the history project; and Mary Jo Moran of the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA) joined the board by phone for discussion of the national office study. Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ joined the joint boards for an update on the Center for the Study of Religious Life and a discussion of the future of religious life, and Andrée Fries, CPPS and Janice Bader, CPPS were present for the discussion on the national religious retirement collection. Also participating with the 21-member board in the meetings were

Inside this issue:

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From the LCWR Presidency

'Falling in Love in an Absolute, Final Way'

by Mary Dacey, SSJ -- LCWR President-Elect

Even with our best efforts, it is virtually impossible for women religious in leadership not to be concerned with diminishment—aging members and decreasing numbers.

In December and early January I experienced the deaths of three women religious in the Philadelphia area. Though they were members of three different congregations, and their ministries and personalities were significantly different, they were all in the prime of life (at least by the new baby boomer standards) when they died.

One was a charismatic leader. She sang and danced her way into the hearts of those with and to whom she ministered. Over the years she served as formation director,



your life." Her funeral services were packed, and several memorial services were held to accommodate all who came to pay tribute to Honor Keirans, SSJ.

The third was an elementary school teacher whose passion for teaching spilled beyond the classroom to sacramental instruction and RCIA classes. She was beloved by her students, their parents and the broader parish community where she served. Simple and unassuming, she would have been

most uncomfortable with the outpouring that occurred after she was killed in a hit-and-run accident. From the bedside prayer vigil of her sisters to the standing-room-only funeral to the special memorial liturgy, the death of Paul Mercedes, IHM became a media event that touched the entire city of Philadelphia.

However distinct, these three women had one thing in common. In the words of Pedro Arupe SJ, they had "fallen in love in an absolute, final way." What had "seized their imagination had affected everything" in their lives, and that, in turn, had affected everyone who knew them.

In light of their stories, it is difficult to focus on the practical considerations of diminishment. Perhaps, diminishment is our call to an absolute, final love that

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chaired LCWR's Region 3 and served as vice-president of her congregation. She led the joyous celebration in Vatican Square when Katharine Drexel was proclaimed saint, but she could just as easily lead her peers in a raucous version of "When the Saints Come Marching In." For two days, family members, friends, and religious from across the country poured into a chapel that was far from adequate for the funeral services for Bea Jeffries, SBS.

Another was a college professor. An attractive and dynamic teacher, she was always on the go. As chair of the education department she was active on the state and local level. She supervised and mentored countless young teachers both inside and outside the classroom. Relative, colleague, student or friend had this to say: "You always knew where you stood with her, but you could not want a more loyal and faithful person in

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"Nothing is more practical than finding God."*

shuns what is safe and self-absorbed. Perhaps, Arupe's words hint at the heart of our future, regardless of aging and numbers. "Nothing is more practical than finding God."

LCWR Board Meetings in Tucson

(continued from page 1)

LCWR staff members: Eleanor Granger, OSF; Marie Lucey, OSF; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM.

Prior to the board meetings, the Commission on Religious Life and Ministry also met in Tucson. Bea Eichten, OSF; Mary Dacey, SSJ; Christine Vladimiroff, OSB;

Jeanne Bessette, OSF; and Carole Shinnick, SSND joined representatives from CMSM, the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the National Religious Retirement Office for the meeting.

Information from the board meetings will be shared in more detail at the spring LCWR regional gatherings.



Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, executive director of the Center for the Study of Religious Life, led the joint boards in a discussion on the history and future of religious life



Helen Maher Garvey, BVM updated the LCWR board on the exhibit to highlight the contributions of women religious to US history



Lynn Levo, CSJ of Saint Luke Institute joined the LCWR board to look at follow-up steps that came from the CARA study on the policies, procedures and practices of women religious congregations regarding member sexual misconduct



The LCWR and CMSM boards met with Andrée Fries, CPPS and Janice Bader, CPPS to discuss the future of the national religious retirement collection

LCWR Board Meets in Tucson



Bea Eichten, OSF and Dominic Izzo, OP, president of CMSM



Members of the LCWR national board who will be completing their term in August 2006: Mary Horgan, SP; Rita Ann Teichman, SSJ; Mary Catherine Rabbitt, SL; Sara Dwyer, ASC; Patricia Murphy, SSND; Dorothy Jean Beyer, OSB; and Christine Vladimiroff, OSB



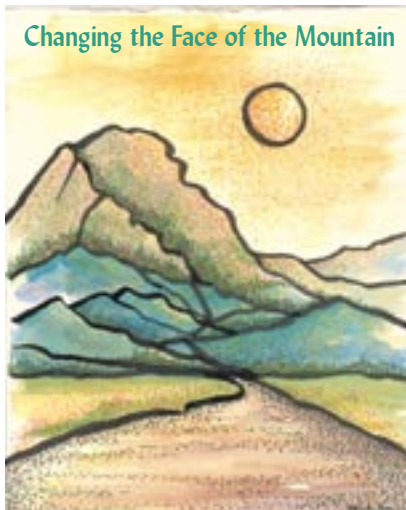
Bea Eichten, OSF; Jeanne Besette, OSF; Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; and Mary Dacey, SSJ



Barbara Hagedorn, SC and Paul Lininger, OFM Conv, executive director of CMSM



Maryann Summa, OP; Margaret Mayce, OP; Rita Ann Teichman, SSJ; Rachael Castillo, MCDP; and Carole Shinnick, SSND



Orders for the LCWR Reflection Book Accepted Through March 15

LCWR will be publishing a new daily reflection book focused on the call to vision for a changed future. The theme of the book is "Changing the Face of the Mountain," an image drawn from the presidential address of Christine Vladimiroff, OSB delivered at the 2005 LCWR assembly.

The book contains reflections by 64 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 22,000 copies of the 2005 reflection book were sold, enabling many people to join in prayer around a common theme.

The book is designed for use in June, July and August.

LCWR members, associates and subscribers will receive a copy of the publication. Proceeds from the sale of the book are used to assist LCWR's operational budget. Forms for ordering additional books are available on the LCWR website under Publications at <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/2006reflectionorder.pdf>

LCWR Board Approves Dates for Upcoming Assemblies

Although every effort was made by LCWR to retain New Orleans as the site of the 2007 assembly, LCWR's conference planners, Nix and Associates, has advised LCWR to reschedule its New Orleans assembly to 2009. LCWR has now procured a site in Kansas City, Missouri for the 2007 assembly.

The LCWR national board approved these sites at their February meeting, and gave approval jointly with the CMSM national board to hold the 2008 joint meeting in Denver, Colorado. The dates for these meetings are found on page 7 of this newsletter.

Promotional Materials Developed for LCWR History Project

The LCWR national board affirmed the work of the LCWR History Committee on the exhibit to honor the contributions of women religious to US history.

Among the next steps of this project is the work to raise the needed funds for the exhibit's creation. The committee, under the leadership of Helen Maher Garvey, BVM, engaged the assistance of development consultants Madeline Franze, SSJ and Mary McFadden, SSJ to draft a development plan. The committee also contracted with Design Island Associates to create the exhibit, as well as the promotional materials needed for fundraising.

In March, all LCWR members and associates will receive in the mail a copy of the brochure created by Design Island in collaboration with the committee. Members and associates are asked to notify Carole Shinnick, SSND with the names of any persons or organizations who can be approached by the LCWR staff and committee members as potential donors. Additional copies of the brochure are available.

More information on the history project will be shared at the regional meetings.



Justice for Immigrants Campaign at Critical Juncture

The USCCB Justice for Immigrants Campaign, of which LCWR is a core member, reports that 70 dioceses now have an official point of contact. In some other dioceses there is active involvement but no official contact has been appointed. The campaign continues to focus on education at the parish and other local levels, but at this moment urges thousands of phone calls to US senators in anticipation of a legislative vote by the end of March.

In December 2005 the House passed an enforcement-only, punitive bill, HR 4437, which criminalizes both undocumented persons and those who assist them. This would include religious institutions such as hospitals, social service agencies, and congregations, as well as individuals. The bill includes mandatory detention, deportation with no further entry, and building a wall on the southern border with Mexico. This bill, as well as S 1033, the McCain-Kennedy bill, and others will be marked up by the Senate Judiciary Committee who will present a combined bill to the Senate. HR 4437 must be defeated. S 1033, which calls for comprehensive immigration reform, not just enforcement, must be strongly supported even though it is not the vehicle which will ultimately come to the Senate. Both the USCCB and CHA are urging calls and visits to senators by local groups and bishops in support of S 103. The campaign's website is: www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Several dioceses and religious congregations are effectively using a DVD, "Dying to Live," to put a human face on immigration. The DVD can be obtained from the Center for Latino Spirituality and Culture, University of Notre Dame: http://www.nd.edu/~latino/units/dying_video.htm.

The Catholic Alliance for the Common Good Holds Strategy Retreat

In June-July, 2005, the Catholic Alliance for the Common Good was incorporated with the mission of promoting the core values of the Catholic social justice tradition and the best of US civic values: the dignity of the human person, justice, concern for the poor, and the common good. The alliance promotes these values through media relations and coordination to forge a new faith voice in the public arena. LCWR is represented by its associate director for social mission.

From January 27-29, 2006, representatives of Catholic organizations, universities, and community groups met on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, with Alliance staff, theologians and legal experts to interact around the mission and purpose of the alliance, identify core values on which to focus messaging, and map what each brings to the alliance. LCWR brings primarily its "field" or constituency, as well as credibility, and a historical commitment to working on justice issues.

A process of identifying core values to be promoted in media messaging and with local Catholic groups was led by Michael Culliton, Director of NETWORK Education Project. Key strategies are: communicate aggressively, coordinate local and national Catholic groups dedicated to the common good, and build bridges to similarly inspired interfaith efforts. Local organization is essential. The hope is to influence both 2006 elections and 2008 national elections with the fullness of Catholic social thought.



LCWR associate director for social mission Marie Lucey, OSF assists with the core value identification process at the Catholic Alliance for the Common Good retreat.

LCWR Think Tank 2006 Survives Snowstorm

Twenty-nine of 31 registrants for the February 12-14 LCWR think tank made it to the Franciscan Center in Tampa, Florida despite the major snow storm of the year on the east coast. LCWR members, justice and peace coordinators, and communications directors from across the country gathered enthusiastically to engage the "Roars and the Whispers" of their lives in processes and rituals led by Pat Siemen, OP.

During the final evaluation participants agreed to plan another think tank for 2008 to be held on the west coast. Although the energy of the group was for a 2007 workshop, all agreed that locating a site and a presenter was better served by a two-year planning period. Three volunteers will undertake the planning for a site where earthquakes rather than snowstorms may be nature's challenge!



Upcoming LCWR Dates

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

Kansas City, Missouri
August 3 -- 7, 2007

LCWR-CMSM Joint Assembly

Denver, Colorado
August 1 -- 4, 2008

LCWR Assembly

New Orleans, Louisiana
August 11 -- 15, 2009



Participants in the LCWR think tank in Tampa participated in prayer rituals and discussions engaging the "Roars and Whispers" of their lives.

From the LCWR Executive Director

Come Fly With Me

Remember a time when flying was rather elegant — an event for which people dressed up in their Sunday best, looking forward to the special experience of dining 30,000 feet in the air on tiny meals served in tidy plastic service ware. No more. Flying today is a contemporary ascetic experience — necessary but hardly enjoyable, and definitely no longer elegant.

I have my own list of dreaded words that prelude experiences on the same par as root canal work and sleeping in a room with an Olympic snorer. They include (but are not limited) to:

- “We’re expecting a pretty full flight this morning...”
- “We seem to be experiencing a slight mechanical problem...”
- “Because of our delay, some of you may miss your connections in Atlanta...”
- “And now all of you in group 18 may board at your leisure...”
- “Our in-flight movie selection today is *Big Momma’s House*...”
- And my personal favorite - “We’re expecting a little turbulence today, folks...”

On a recent trip to St. Louis, we were told *after* we had boarded the plane that, “Our flight to St. Louis will be 2 hours and 7 minutes. Unfortunately the lavatory on our aircraft is not working.” Yikes!

And then, of course, there is the particular trial of the security check. I have come to equate this aspect of trav-

I wish I could tell you some ways in which you can find meaning and redemption in flying today.

eling with planter’s warts, used car commercials, and the heartbreak of adult acne. In 10 seconds or less you must take off your shoes, your coat, your jacket, remove your laptop, and haul your carry-on up to the conveyor belt. You must do all this, while clenching your boarding pass between your teeth so that you can show it to the TSA agent on the other side of the metal detector



Carole Shinnick, SSND

who, like a cattle-herder at the slaughter house, is yelling “Keep it moving, folks!”

I do have a plan regarding security check-points. I am designing a user-friendly approach to screening that involves pushcarts that can be loaded with the traveler’s belongings and put through the screener while the person goes through the metal detector. After screening, the passenger rolls the cart to a carpeted area where soothing music, aromatherapy, and massage chairs assist

in post-screening recovery. After I patent the design I plan to split the enormous income with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, and the Send-Carole-on-a-Hawaiian-Vacation Campaign.

I wish I could tell you some ways in which you can find meaning and redemption in flying today. I know so

Sometimes I have tried to find glimpses of the Divine in the airport and my fellow passengers

many of you do it and I know that – all joking aside – just getting there can be draining. Then you have to rise to whatever occasion is on the other end, gather your wits, figure out how to do without the items in your lost luggage, and “be there” for the people and event for which you have traveled. Sometimes I have tried to find glimpses of the Divine in the airport and my fellow passengers – like the young mother I watched recently in the waiting area cooing over her tiny infant. Sometimes I try to find everyday scripture in the signage in the terminal – like “Where will your dreams take you?” (American Express) Or “Add tranquility to any space.” (Sky Mall catalog)

Or you can write a column about your adventures for your newsletter. I’m writing this somewhere over Ohio en route to Chicago where it’s raining and 23 degrees. Our flight is late and I will miss my connection to Tucson. However, I have enjoyed the pleasure of your company. I know you have a choice of reading materials. So, thanks for traveling with me.

FROM THE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS LIFE

CSRL Offers Ongoing Reflection on Religious Life

One of the activities of CSRL is convening interdisciplinary conferences and workshops to engage scholars, religious and others in reflection on the data and experience of religious life.

Using the Cultural Audit Workshops

In February the center held one of its "Using the Cultural Audit" workshops in Jacksonville, Florida. This is a regular offering of CSRL bringing together men and women from congregations who have decided to use the cultural audit or who are seriously thinking about it. Congregations use this tool to become more self-aware of their congregational culture in light of the dominant US culture. Some institutes want to learn how to be welcoming to new members from cultures other than those that already dominate in the congregation. Others see it as a tool to prepare for the merger of several provinces, regions or institutes.

A team of two facilitators walks the participants through the various sections of the cultural audit tool produced by CSRL explaining how it might be used. The participants do many of the exercises included in the tool. The facilitators for the February workshop were Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD and Caroljean Willie, SC. Constance Phelps, SCL was a facilitator-in-training.



Constance Phelps, SCL and Caroljean Willie, SC



Cultural audit participants Eileen McKenzie, FSPA; Alexine Nii, TSSF; and Jean Moore, FSPA



Participants Marcia Lunz, OSF and Sue Felice, OSF

Interdisciplinary Forum: The Individual and the Common Good

The center's new series of interdisciplinary forums begins March 5 - 8. Each forum brings together scholars from various disciplines and leaders from religious congregations to explore a current topic of interest. This series is examining the tensions between the good of individual members and the good of the community that can be experienced in religious life today. Three case studies are used to focus the discussion.

The next two sessions are Sept 24-27, 2006 in Jamaica, NY and April 15-18, 2007 in Los Altos, CA.

For more information on CSRL programs see <http://www.religious-life.org/programs/index.html>

Legal Resource Center for Religious Hosts Workshops

March 7-8, 2006

St. Louis, MO
Civil and Canonical Structure
of Institutes and Ministries

March 23-24, 2006

Silver Spring, MD
The Institute and Ministries as Employers:
Members as Employees

Workshop registration fee: \$295 each
See the www.lrcr.org for additional information
Call 302-589-8143 or e-mail njefferies@lrcr.org

Financial Management Seminar planned for June

The annual NATRI Orientation to Financial Management seminar for leadership with financial oversight, new treasurers and finance personnel of religious institutes will once again be held at St. John Center in Plymouth, Michigan.

The program runs from June 5 to 9 and continues to present key elements of the financial management of religious institutes. Areas that will be covered include: stewardship roles of leaders and finance personnel; financial planning, budgeting and forecasting; accounting and investment concepts and issues; civil and canon law responsibilities; utilization of government programs; risk management; relationship with development programs; and retirement planning.

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. All are encouraged to pass this information along to whoever might benefit from it. More information about the program and additional brochures may be obtained from the NATRI office at 301-587-7776 or natri@natri.org.

Religious Formation Conference Offers Ongoing Renewal Opportunities for Leaders and Members

The Religious Formation Conference is offering regional workshops for corporate learning. The workshops, framed in consultation with the staffs of CMSM and LCWR, will be led by presenters with acknowledged expertise and experience.

Day 1 – 1:00 - 5:00 pm – For leaders and ministers of formation

How to engage your congregation in theological reflection and social analysis.

Day 2 – 9:00 am – 4:00 pm – For all members of congregations, associates and others who may be interested

A workshop for skill-building

Team 1 – Maria Cimperman, OSU and Jim Hug, SJ

Team 2 – Joe Nangle, OSF and Marie Dennis

First workshop:

April 7-8, 2006

Region 13 – Colorado Springs CO (Team 2)

For information contact the Religious Formation Conference (301-588-4938, rfc@relforcon.org) and watch for updates on the RFC website: www.relforcon.org



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