

Update

*A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

March 2004

LCWR Board Meets in Arizona

The 20 members of the LCWR national board, as well as four members of the LCWR national office staff were recently in Scottsdale, Arizona for an LCWR board meeting as well as for a joint meeting with the board members and staff of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men.



Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM, LCWR past president; Constance Phelps, SCL, president; and Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, vice-president; chaired the meetings.



Among the topics discussed by the LCWR board were:

- 2004 LCWR/CMSM Assembly
- LCWR jubilee celebration
- LCWR goals
- Interamerican Conference -- 2005
- Collaboration with other religious conferences



More on the board meetings on pages 4 & 5

Marie Lucey, OSF, LCWR associate director for social mission; and board members: Maria Elena Martinez, OSF; Rita Ann Teichman, SSJ; Irma Gonzalez, IWBS; and Sara Dwyer, ASC

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From the LCWR Presidency

Breathing Out Peace Together

by Constance Phelps, SCL -- LCWR President

As the month of March comes this year, I am mindful of March 2003 when President Bush issued his ultimatum to Iraq. As I review these past months enmeshed in conflict, I question where we are a year later, personally, nationally, and internationally. Prior to the declaration of war, LCWR, nationally and locally, used every means we could to advocate for no armed conflict. And, sadly, much of what we anticipated last year is a reality: the spiral of violence, the loss of life, the destruction, the devastation, the deteriorating economy, the deepening poverty, and the varied and myriad costs of war.



time to reflect together and to encourage one another as we journey toward the celebration of new life at Easter. Viewed in this way, it is a season of hope.

Perhaps, during this Lenten 2004 period of reflection, the roots of peace will stir ever more strongly in our world. Perhaps this March, by our continued and communal prayer and fasting, by our continued public witness for peace, by our seeking paths to dialog and reflection, by our advocacy we will know hope. For such an effort to bring peace

into the light is an act of hope.

William Stafford, poet and pacifist, cautions us:

"How we stand here is important.

How we listen for the next things to happen

How we breathe."

This March we watch events in the Middle East as they continue to unfold. We observe what is occurring in the United States as we prepare for elections in the fall.

Lent is a time when we have the opportunity to bring to light the roots of our relationship with God, a time to stir, once again, our relationships with one another, a time to reflect together and to encourage one another ...

Let us breathe in the Spirit and breathe out peace together.

*Sandra Louise Litzinger, *Word, Wisdom & Worship*
Thanks to Sue Miller, SCL for the inspiration for this reflection

And we can well ask: where do we find hope? We who work for, dream of, and pray for a world of peace and justice, where is our hope? How do we continue to proclaim a vision of peace and justice for all people?

March, also, finds us in the midst of Lent. Some time ago, I read that the root of the English word to name this liturgical season is *lente* or springtime.* Knowing that springtime is nature's season of new beginnings gives me hope. For it is the season of reawakening; the season when hidden roots begin to stir from deep winter sleep and stretch toward the sun, eventually springing forth in new life. In new beginnings, in new life, I find hope.

Lent is a time when we have the opportunity to bring to light the roots of our relationship with God, a time to stir, once again, our relationships with one another, a

FYI

18,627

is the number of orders received for LCWR's *Tending the Holy: Daily Reflections on Caring for the Earth*.

16

is the current number of LCWR member congregations or organizations associated with LCWR members that have joined the ink cartridge recycling project.

Collaborative Viability Project to be Phased Out

The Collaborative Viability Project (CVP), initiated by NATRI, NRRO, and LCWR in 1996, has helped many religious congregations to assess the viability of their individual institutes and to use the outcomes as a springboard for strategic planning. Congregations have launched programs to invite and support new members, engaged in the processes for licensing their healthcare facilities, and focused on preparing new leaders for their institutes. It has indeed been an effective tool for systemic change - probably one that far out-performed what the original designers hoped for.

In November 2003 the CVP Planning Committee met to map next steps in light of evolving needs and declining requests for materials and consultations. It seemed apparent that, for the most part, any congregation who wished a CVP consultation had already requested it. After careful consideration, the committee decided to bring closure to the CVP consultation service as of March 1, 2004. Consultations will still be provided for institutes already engaged in the self-assessment process at the time appropriate for them. The CVP Planning Committee wishes to acknowledge with deep gratitude the unnamed leadership and finance officers who have served generously as consultants.

A small quantity of the viability booklets, in both English and Spanish, will be available for purchase at half-price as long as the supply lasts. For further information, contact: Lorelle Elcock, OP at 301-587-7776 or Lelcock@natri.org.

Marie Augusta Neal, SND de Namur

1921 - 2004

LCWR celebrates the life of Marie Augusta Neal, who died on February 26, 2004. A sociology professor at Emmanuel College, Boston, she will long be remembered for her significant role in the renewal of religious life since Vatican II. She also made significant contributions to research on change in the Catholic church, analysis of Catholic social teaching and work for social justice, particularly human rights.

Space Still Available for LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

A few spaces are still available for participants in the LCWR Leading from Within Retreat to be held at San Pedro Retreat Center in Winter Park, Florida from January 16-21, 2005.



Regina Bechtle, SC and Nancy Schreck, OSF will facilitate the retreat which will include input, quiet contemplative space, a variety of ritual experiences and some opportunity for individual and group spiritual direction. Participation in the retreat is limited to the first 25 LCWR national members who register and send to the national office the \$100 deposit toward the total of \$525.

LCWR Requests Careful Treatment of Directory Information

The February 2004 issue of *Update* carried an article about the policy of LCWR concerning mailing labels. For the LCWR national office, protecting the privacy of members is very important. Consequently, a great deal of care is taken before the mailing labels are made available to any person or group. For the most part, LCWR does not allow its labels to be used for fund-raising purposes.

In effect, the information in the LCWR membership directories needs to be treated similarly. Essentially, the directories include the same information that is carefully handled at the national level. It is important to remember this when individual members, associates, or subscribers are asked to share LCWR directories with others. Some may want to use the directory to develop mailing labels or lists.

The national office requests members, associates, and subscribers to keep this in mind. Regional LCWR members may also want to review their region's policy for sharing mailing lists and labels, and if there is no policy, to consider putting one in place.



LCWR board members Mary Catherine Rabbitt, SL and Maureen Broughan SSJ discuss the USCCB document with CMSM board members

Among the topics included on the agenda of the joint LCWR/CMSM board meeting were:

- The future of LCWR/CMSM assemblies
- A presentation by Andree Fries, CPPS, executive director of the National Religious Retirement Office on the future of the religious retirement collection
- A presentation by Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, director of the Center for the Study of Religious Life on learnings from the leadership forums
- Discussion on the draft of the document of the USCCB's Committee on Women in Society and Church entitled *Collaboration Between Clergy and the Women Who Work With Them*



CMSM board member John Duffy, CPS, joins Carol Wagner, RDC; Dorothy Jean Beyer, OSB; Marilyn Kessler, SSND; and Maria Elena Martinez, OSF



Beatrice Eichten, OSF and Jeanne Bessette, OSF



CMSM board member Dan Casey, FSC meets with (clockwise from Dan) Carole Shinnick, SSND; Anne Hennessy, CSJ; Rita Brink, OSB; and Rose Jochmann, OSF



LCWR national office staff members: Eleanor Granger, OSF; Carole Shinnick, SSND, Annmarie Sanders, IHM and Marie Lucey, OSF

Blessing of Outgoing Board Members

An outdoor prayer service took place during the LCWR board meeting to bless the four board members whose terms will end in August 2004: Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM; Maureen Broughan, SSJ; Jeanne Moore, OP; and Pamela Smith, SSCM



Marie Lucey, OSF with Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM



Pamela Smith, SSCM with Mary Catherine Rabbitt, SL



Maureen Broughan, SSJ with Rita Brink, OSB



Jeanne Moore, OP with Jeanne Bessette, OSF

Resources Available for Elections 2004

"One of our greatest blessings in the United States is our right and responsibility to participate in civic life. Everyone can and should participate . . . Since the last presidential election and our last reflection on faithful citizenship, our nation has been attacked by terrorists and has gone to war twice. We have moved from how to share budget surpluses to how to allocate the burdens of deficits. As we approach the elections of 2004, we face difficult challenges for our nation and world." -- from Faithful Citizenship, USCCB

An important element of the "responsibility to participate in civic life" is to educate oneself on issues and candidates. Although some of these issues are complex, and no one candidate has a perfect record on issues of importance to Catholic women religious, there are resources to help all be informed voters. A few resources are:

Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Responsibility, available for \$3.75 per single copy. For further information go to www.usccb.org. To order, call 800-235-8722.

NETWORK electronic resources: go to www.networklobby.org; see on home page, Network – Guide to 2004 Elections, and find options. (Elections and Candidates particularly helpful.)

Bread for the World offers free of charge a resource titled "Elections Matter: Vote to End Hunger." To order copies or download go to www.bread.org.

Election 2004: A Time for Political and Moral Choices available from LCWR Region VII Justice Coordinators at www.cscsisters.org.

For debt issues, see www.jubileeusa.org, Debt and '04 Elections.

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Unhappy Birthday Cards Available

This year the IMF and World Bank celebrate their 60th birthdays. Jubilee USA Network encourages sending unhappy birthday cards to these institutions calling on them to cancel the debt of impoverished nations without conditions. To send a card see: www.jubileeusa.org and find "send an unhappy birthday card."

What's Up at Wal-Mart?

The retail giant Wal-Mart has been receiving some bad press in recent months, and for religious shareholders and others concerned about fairness and justice, this is good news.

More than 30 religious groups, including some LCWR members, have filed a shareholder resolution calling the company to issue a Sustainability Report to Shareholders by October 2004. The report would include "adoption and implementation of practices designed to protect human rights, worker rights, land and the environment." Wal-Mart has tried every means to get the resolution off the books because of their other problems.

An additional perspective is offered by Margaret Mimerley in an article titled "Wal-Mart and the Economic Destruction of Black Communities," in the January 8, 2004 issue of *The Black Commentator*. The author assails Wal-Mart for its happy commercials which put a false face on a company which prevents union organizing and, before being sued, required employees to work overtime without pay. She also calls to task some black business leaders who welcome the company because it provides jobs and lower cost goods in black neighborhoods. The author questions: what kind of jobs? lower prices at what cost to both U.S. employees and workers around the globe? and what about the small black businesses forced to close when Wal-Mart comes to town?

A question for all to consider: do we really need to shop at Wal-Mart?

From the LCWR Executive Director
Our Time, A Blessed Time

*The human heart can go to the lengths of God.
Dark and cold we may be, but this
Is no winter now. The frozen misery
Of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move,
The thunder is the thunder of the floes,
The thaw, the flood, the upstart Spring.*

*Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul men ever took.
Affairs are now soul size.
The enterprise is exploration into God.*

From: *A Sleep of Prisoners*
by Christopher Fry



Carole Shinnick, SSND

tee chose to name the realities of our day and our world and to proclaim this "a time of favor from the Lord." The Jubilee Committee, after reviewing the recommendations from the regions, and praying over the jubilee texts, will invite us as LCWR to proclaim a year of jubilee, to celebrate "a time for extravagance of heart and total passion."

Working with these two groups, I had a strong sense that through the regions, and then through these wonderfully generous women, LCWR was being especially called to embrace our time –

our one, unrepeatable moment – as holy. It isn't perfect. Our days are rife with human tragedy, failure, and disappointment. How easy it could be disheartened beyond repair – until, that is, we see our time as "soul-sized." What else can we do, dear sisters, except to step into this time together, trusting that our "...enterprise is exploration into God."

Christopher Fry, a British playwright sometimes called "the Shakespeare of his time," was a Quaker and a pacifist. His writing career was interrupted by World War II. For four years he served in the Pioneer Corps, a group responsible for fighting the fires and dealing with the damage caused by the incessant bombing of England. Despite the difficult days he and his country had seen during the war, when he resumed his writing career, his plays exuded optimism and hope. From the lips of one of his characters, an imprisoned, dreaming soldier comes the astonishing line, "Thank God our time is now when wrong comes up to face us everywhere."

Perhaps we all have a tendency to see times other than our own in a softer light. Some refer to "the golden age of religious life," possibly thinking that a time when we

*What else can we do, dear sisters,
except to step into this time together,
trusting that our "...enterprise is exploration into God."*

were very numerous and staffing parochial schools and hospitals around the country, was exactly how it should be. As an adolescent, I daydreamed about living in the romantic times of the Renaissance. (That was until I realized that deodorant and dental care were in very short supply!)

Two LCWR committees that have met since the beginning of the year have each been led to claim this time, our time, as a blessed time. The Goal-Setting Commit-

New Nomination and Election Committee Members Appointed

At the February LCWR board meeting, two new members were appointed to the Nomination and Election Committee: Dorothy Scesny, PBVM, from New Windsor, NY (Region 1) and Barbara Mass, SLW, Arlington Heights, IL (Region 8). At the August 2004 assembly, they will replace out-going member and chair, Chris Ludwig, CSJ, and Veronica Wiedower, CSC. At that time Ardis Cloutier, OSF will assume the position of chair.

Materials for the nomination process have been sent to the committee members and regional liaisons for the spring regional meetings. LCWR is grateful to the committee and liaisons for all they do at the meeting and following it to make the nomination process run smoothly.

FROM THE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS LIFE

CSRL Offers Cultural Audit Workshop

One of the publications produced by the Center for the Study of Religious Life (CSRL) is the Cultural Audit Notebook. This tool assists a group (religious congregation, formation team, region)

- to develop a profile of their internal culture;
- to view their internal culture in relation to the dominant US culture;
- to examine ways culture influences their thinking and behavior, positively and negatively; and
- to become familiar with resources for meeting the challenges of their own culture and the cultures they encounter.

This summer CSRL is offering another workshop to help individuals conduct a cultural audit for their group. The facilitators are Frances Cunningham, OSF, and Rudy Vela, SM, both members of the team that developed the cultural audit. Workshop participants will do several of the exercises provided in the Cultural Audit Notebook. There will be both small group and large group work.

The workshop will be at **Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, June 10-12, 2004** 8:30 AM -- 4:00 PM each day. Note these dates are slightly different than the ones first published. For further information and registration forms contact Virginia Piecuch, CSRL program coordinator, at 773-752-2720 or vpiecuch@visioni.com.

Discounts:

- There will be a \$50 rebate from CSRL on registration costs for the second and third member of a congregation attending the workshop if the congregation is a CSRL member.
- If a Cultural Audit Notebook is ordered from CSRL ahead of the workshop and is picked up at the workshop by a participant, the cost is only \$200. The regular price is \$300 plus shipping and handling.

Seminar Addresses Law in the Service of Governance

The Legal Seminar, sponsored by the Legal Resource Center for Religious, is being held March 10-14 in Denver, Colorado. This year will see an increased number of participants gathering for the meeting which focuses on governance through the prism of law.

The opening address by Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, vice-president of LCWR, will discuss law in the service of governance. In addition to general sessions, seminar participants will have the opportunity to attend five of the 21 workshops offered. Each workshop will focus on a civil or canon law topic of importance to religious leadership and their members. Speakers include both civil and canon lawyers with expertise and experience helping religious orders.

Religious Formation Conference Regional Workshops 2004-2005

A Movement in Hope:
Continuing the Conversation on a
Theology of Religious Life

With theologians:
Janet Ruffing, RSM
Katherine Hanley, CSJ
Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD
Patricia Walter, OP
Donald Goergen, OP
Mary Ellen Sheehan, IHM
Anthony Gittins, CSSp
Donald Senior, CP
Barbara Reid, OP
Anita de Luna, MCDP

Dates, locations and registration information are available on the RFC website:

http://www.relforcon.org/5_wkshops/5_2004workshops.htm

NRVC Convocation 2004 Focuses on 'Fidelity to Jesus: A Paradigm of Hope'

The NRVC Convocation 2004 will take place at the Marriott O'Hare Airport Hotel in Chicago from September 9-13. The keynote speakers, Timothy Radcliffe, OP and Mary Maher, SSND, will address participants on the theme of "Fidelity to Jesus: A Paradigm of Hope."

This convocation is open to congregational leadership and, for this year, the NRVC Board is inviting professed religious under the age of 40. As part of the convocation, there will be a special process for interaction with the keynote speakers, vocation directors, congregational leaders, and younger religious. For quality dialogue, NRVC hopes to have representative samples from all these populations. The convocation will also include workshops that would be appealing to all groups. All major superiors and council members are invited to attend.

Convocation information will be posted on the NRVC website www.nrvc.net in April.

NRVC Begins Drafting Five-Year Strategic Plan

All major superiors will be receiving a copy of a preliminary working document of the NRVC Five Year Strategic Plan. This report is far from complete. It includes a preamble, the NRVC mission statement, projected trends and challenges for the next 10 years, and an explanation of six organizational priorities for the next five years.

The report does *not* include specific action plans. The NRVC board believes that it is best at this point in the process to receive the necessary feedback from NRVC members, major superiors and directors of its collaborating organizations. In other words, NRVC needs to know if it is going in the right direction.

NRVC stresses that it values the thoughts and opinions of others and asks LCWR members to carefully review the information when they receive it and mail or fax a response on the form that is enclosed by *April 15*.

Responses may also be mailed to NRVC@aol.com with the subject heading "Strategic Plan."

NRVC Launches New Spanish Language Website

In March 2004 the NRVC will launch an affiliate website to the Vision website. The new Spanish language site, www.vocacioncatolica.com, is for young adults who are interested in deepening their faith lives and possibly considering a religious vocation. The site will include:

- a sampling of articles about finding one's path, religious life, prayer, and living in two cultures;
- descriptive listings of participating religious communities;
- an opportunities section posting events and ministry and service opportunities for Latino/a youth;
- a web index that links visitors to many sites of interest to Hispanic Catholics and Latino/a young adults seeking information about church vocations, religious life, and Catholic culture and teaching.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR New Leader Workshop
Mundelein, Illinois
March 25-28, 2004

LCWR/CMSM Joint Assembly
Fort Worth, Texas
August 19 -- 23, 2004

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat
Winter Park, Florida
January 16-21, 2005

LCWR Assembly
Anaheim, California
August 19 -- 23, 2005

LCWR Assembly
Atlanta, Georgia
August 18 -- 22, 2006