

October 2006

## LCWR Closes Jubilee Year with a Call to Move Forward with Vision and Courage



*More than 800 LCWR members and associates attended the 2006 LCWR Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia*

**L**CWR closed its jubilee year at the 2006 assembly with a call to step into the future with boldness.

This call was first voiced by keynoter Joan Chittister, OSB. In concluding her address, "Remembering the Vision, Embracing the Dream," she stated, "I beg you my friends, if religious life is to be religious life, form your communities to climb and climb and climb to that new land where God awaits us even yet, even now. And do it courageously and with confidence. Why?... Because, like the people of Israel, God's word to you at the foot of the mountain at this great anniversary moment is for the sake of the people, for the sake of the planet, for the sake of the children, for the sake of the church. With Joshua, the courageous go on, go on, go on."

In her presidential address, Bea Eichten, OSF challenged the members to reflect carefully on the events and realities that both push and draw them through the doors into the future. Focusing on the doors of identity, wisdom, ecclesial identity and world relationships, she called upon leaders to "live our questions in the hope of living into answers."

The challenge to move forward was poignantly portrayed by four women religious leaders whose congregations, ministries, and property were severely

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*Participants at the pre-assembly interfaith prayer service at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic Site.*

## From the LCWR Presidency It's All About Choice

by Mary Dacey, SSJ — LCWR President

This summer I had the privilege of attending three major assemblies: the Sisters of St. Joseph's Federation Event, which marked the 40th anniversary of the National Federation of Sisters of Saint Joseph, and the CMSM and LCWR assemblies which both celebrated the close of their jubilee year. Different cities — for the most part, different people, but a common hope for religious life now and in the future.



Ultimately, it is all about choice. No matter how powerful the rhetoric of challenge and inspiration, it comes down to the individual and collective choices that we make each day. One "yes" to religious life made however long ago is only as good as my latest choice — made in fidelity to a lived charism and in response to the unique needs of our times.

Powerful speakers set the tone. Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ described the frontiers that we as religious face today. Alfredo Sfeir-Younis invited us to be messengers of universal love and service in the global neighborhood that is our world. Stephen Glodek, SM

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and Dominic Izzo, OP interpreted the story of an Old Testament Joseph and explored the implications of our dreams today. Joan Chittister, OSB asked the hard questions. "Would we be women of courage rather than conformity, a leaven rather than a labor force?" These were just some of the issues that we pondered, discussed, and took home with us.

It was the story of an aging sister, however, reflecting on her life and vocation that provided a poignant lens for me to focus all that had been shared about visions and the dreams. Bea Eichten, OSF shared the story in her presidential address. At a community gathering that centered on "choice" as a basic component of mature religious life, an 86-year old sister responded, "I don't think I ever made that choice." How many of us could say the same at some point in our life?

For me, the assembly panel of women religious leaders whose communities had been devastated by Hurricane Katrina embodied that kind of choice. Each struggled to find words equal to the loss she had endured, both personally and communally. Buildings, treasured possessions, communal histories, a place called home — all gone in a moment. Each faced a situation demanding choices, with no roadmap in sight. The details of their stories were unique, the pattern of their response achingly similar. Each dug deep into the well of her charism as the only way to turn, even when it did not offer easy consolation. "Emptiness," "the dark night," and "the God of the desert" replaced life as usual and led to an experience of transformation that few of us could imagine.

They offer a compelling example for us all. How do we deal with the trauma of diminishment and uncertainty?

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*Are we willing to be  
stripped in ways that will  
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at this time and in this place?*

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To what do we cling? Are we willing to be stripped in ways that will open us to God's dream at this time and in this place? Would our foremothers and forefathers be proud to call us daughter? The choice is mine ... yours.

## LCWR Closes Jubilee Year with a Call to Move Forward with Vision and Courage

*(continued from page 1)*

impacted by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes. Sylvia Thibodeaux, SSF; Mary Kay Kinberger, MSC; Beth Fitzpatrick, O Carm; and Dorothy Trosclair, OP spoke passionately about leading during a time of great chaos and confusion and what their learnings can say to all women religious as they live through this time of radical transformation in religious life.

In accepting the 2006 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award, Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ also noted how these times call forth a courageous and prophetic response on the part of women religious. Observing that the LCWR call to step into the chaos of the unknown is an unprecedented challenge today in this very conflicted world, she added that the missions today are more profound than any she and her companions ever knew. "It isn't the future structures of our individual congregations or even the future unfolding of religious life that is at stake," she said. "Rather, it is the realization that humankind has been cast into a deeper chaos, a chaos that is global, more enveloping, than at any other historical moment."

Other highlights of the LCWR gathering included:

- the participation at the keynote address of approximately 100 Atlanta-based women leaders from various faiths and professions
- the election as LCWR president of Mary Whited, general superior of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, and the reelection as conference secretary of Jeanne Bessette, OSF
- the participation of approximately 300 LCWR members in a pre-assembly interfaith prayer for peace at the Ebenezer Baptist Church.
- the endorsement of a resolution, previously approved by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, that condemns torture in all its forms

The assembly resolution, the texts of the keynoter, president, Gulf Coast panelists, and Catherine Pinkerton, as well as the photos from the assembly are on the LCWR website at: <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrannualassembly/previousassemblies.htm>. Information on ordering DVDs or CDs of these presentations and the five breakout sessions is also available on the website.



**Joan Chittister, OSB:** *"Only you can make the difference now between remembering the vision and achieving the dream. It is your choice. What will you do?"*



**Bea Eichten, OSF:** *"I suspect that some of us wish it were an easier time to be in leadership... but my hunch is that same wish would have been voiced by the women who have gone before us and brought us to this time."*



Bea Eichten, OSF presents the LCWR 2006 Outstanding Leadership Award to **Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ**, who stated in part, *"We must fully immerse ourselves in this dark night, knowing that these dark times are the conditions for rebirth."*



*Donna Markham, OP, moderator, with panelists from New Orleans: Sylvia Thibodeaux, SSF; Mary Kay Kinberger, MSC; Beth Fitzpatrick, O Carm; and Dorothy Trosclair, OP*

*J. Lora Dambroski, OSF and Beth Taylor, CSJP lead the assembly in the universal greeting of peace.*

## 2006 LCWR National Assembly



*The 2006-2007 LCWR presidency (Mary Whited, CPPS; Bea Eichten, OSF; and Mary Dacey, SSJ) with members of the LCWR national board in the background*

*CMSM executive director Paul Lininger, OFM Conv, and president Dominic Izzo, OP accept an award from LCWR honoring CMSM's 50th anniversary*



*More than 100 women leaders from Atlanta joined the LCWR members for part of the assembly*



Gift from CMSM to LCWR for its 50th anniversary

## CMSM Honors LCWR at its August Assembly

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) marked its jubilee year at its annual assembly in August in Burlington, Vermont. Using the theme “50 Years of Men’s Religious Life as a Conference — A Coat of Many Colors,” the 140 leaders reflected on the biblical saga of Joseph as a metaphor

for what is asked of religious and of the growth that is possible when one responds to a call.

Mary Dacey, SSJ and Carole Shinnick, SSND represented LCWR at the assembly, during which CMSM honored LCWR for its 50th anniversary. In accepting the framed artwork given to LCWR to honor its service, Mary Dacey noted that the real gift from CMSM had already been given in the mutual respect and friendship that has grown between the conferences during these 50 years.



Mary Dacey, SSJ accepts CMSM’s gift to LCWR from CMSM officers Michael Higgins, CP and Dominic Izzo, OP

## LCWR Calls for Day of Prayer, Fasting and Advocacy for Immigrants

LCWR urges Catholic sisters in the United States to participate in a day of prayer, fasting, and advocacy for immigration reform on **Friday, September 29**.

The conference calls US women religious to contact their representatives and senators asking them to support legislation that calls for “just, humane, and fair comprehensive immigration reform,” as requested by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Specifically, LCWR urges legislative advocacy that calls for reconciling the House and Senate versions of immigration reform, stating that it is “critical that the

punitive House bill not prevail.” They further urge that these essential elements be included in immigration reform: a viable path to citizenship for the 11-12 million undocumented persons in this country; a temporary worker program which protects the rights of all workers; reform of the family-based immigration system to expedite family reunification; and restoration of due process protection for immigrants.

## Through the Generosity of LCWR Members...

This year, 44 congregations with members in LCWR donated to the LCWR assembly scholarship fund. These generous donations enabled 40 persons, representing 23 congregations, to attend the 2006 assembly.

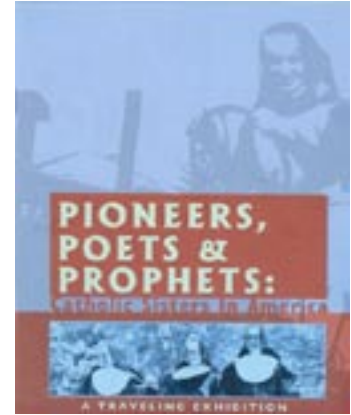
## LCWR History Exhibit Update

The LCWR History Committee continues its work to plan and raise funds for the exhibit entitled, "Pioneers, Poets & Prophets: Catholic Sisters in America."



Carole Shinnick, SSND accepts a check for \$500,000 from Carol Keehan, DC, CEO of Catholic Health Association

The Catholic Health Association recently made a donation of \$500,000 to this project. The committee is actively working to secure more donors and grants for the exhibit.



The History Committee met at the motherhouse of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in St. Louis in September to review the more than 600 suggestions for exhibit artifacts submitted by approximately 120 congregations. Mellissa Berry of Bob Weis Design Island, the exhibit design company working with LCWR, joined the committee to review its work to date.

A copy of the exhibit brochure is available on the LCWR website at <http://www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/exhibit.htm>

## Leading from Within Retreat



January 14 – 19, 2007  
Franciscan Center — Tampa, Florida

Directors:

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

A few spaces are still available,  
as well as a limited amount of scholarship money

Registration form is in the members' information section of the LCWR website: [www.lcwr.org](http://www.lcwr.org)

## Mark the Date!

LCWR New Leader Workshop  
March 15 - 18, 2007



St. John Center — Plymouth, Michigan

An outstanding faculty including:

Nancy Schreck, OSF  
Simone Campbell, SSS  
Christine Rody, SC  
Hertha Longo, CSA  
Fran Repka, RSM  
Mira Mosle, BVM

Registration materials will be sent to all members in a World Merge message in October

## LCWR National Board Meeting

The LCWR national board met both prior to and following the LCWR assembly in August. Among the items on the board agenda were:

- Evaluation of the LCWR assembly
- Response to the post-hurricane realities in New Orleans
- Proposals on the LCWR assembly and on an action witness for immigration reform
- Direction for the 2007 LCWR assembly
- LCWR leadership roles and the nomination and election process
- LCWR history exhibit
- Financial report
- Reports from the officers and staff
- Report on the April 2006 trip of the LCWR officers to the Vatican offices
- Agenda for the LCWR fall regional meetings

The national board recommended several items for discussion at the LCWR fall regional meetings. These items include:

- Follow-up on the CARA study on sexual abuse policies and practices
- The LCWR history exhibit
- Nominations process for the election of LCWR officers
- LCWR justice activities
- LCWR online membership directory
- Plans for responding to the post-hurricane realities in New Orleans
- LCWR online resource-sharing forum

The board also affirmed the continuation of Maureen Shaughnessy, SC and Margaret Mayce, OP for another year as the at-large members of the LCWR executive committee.

## LCWR Members Appointed to Serve

The LCWR national board approved the following appointments:

- Rosemary Fonck, OSF to the Accountability Task Force of the National Catholic Development Conference
- Michele Morek, OSU to the LCWR Assembly Resolutions Committee

## 59th Annual DPI/NGO Conference Focuses on Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development

The theme of the 2006 DPI/NGO Conference, held September 6-8 at the United Nations, was "Unfinished Business," and opened with an audio-visual presentation, "How are you? The Millennium Development Goals." Major addresses and panel sessions focused on moving development forward, while roundtables addressed a variety of topics within that framework, e.g. Emerging Approaches to Healthcare, Science and Technology for Education, Human Security, Commitment to Reducing Extreme Poverty and Hunger, The Role of Media in Achieving the MDGs, and Promoting Respect for Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution. Secretary General Kofi Annan addressed the closing session.

LCWR and CMSM hold joint NGO membership with DPI (Department of Information) status and were represented by Marie Lucey, OSF, LCWR associate director for social mission, and T. Michael McNulty, SJ, CMSM justice and peace coordinator.

## Registrations for LCWR Think Tank Due by December 1

Registrations for Think Tank IX, "Uprising of Hope," to be held in Santa Cruz, California from February 26 - March 1, 2007, are due in the LCWR office by December 1, 2006. Registration is open to LCWR members and congregation peace and justice coordinators. Registration forms can be obtained from the LCWR national office through Carol Glidden at [cgidden@lcwr.org](mailto:cgidden@lcwr.org).

## LCWR Opposes Use of Torture

In addition to endorsing at its assembly the CMSM resolution to oppose the use of torture in any form, LCWR signed in June an interfaith statement opposing torture: *Torture Is A Moral Issue: A Statement of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)*. LCWR also became an endorsing member of NRCAT.

Recently, messages from the LCWR national office have urged justice and peace coordinators to contact congressional representatives to oppose the president's measure which threatens Article 3 of the Geneva Convention. On September 19, NRCAT joined Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice, a statewide interfaith network, in holding a press conference in Hartford, Connecticut in which religious leaders called upon Senators Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman to take a firm and public stand against any weakening of the US commitment to Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. Further information is available at [www.nrcat.org](http://www.nrcat.org).

## 'Words, Not War' Statement Released

At the end of July, LCWR signed on to a statement by religious leaders on the need for direct negotiations with Iran. The statement, developed in consultation with Faithful Security: National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Strategy, is to be released to the media on or near September 27. It has been signed by heads of denominations, Jewish and Muslim leaders, theologians, and leaders of national faith-based organizations. The statement can be found at [www.wordsnotwar.org](http://www.wordsnotwar.org).

## News from the Center for the Study of Religious Life

### CSRL Coming Events

**April 15-18, 2007**

Interdisciplinary Forum

"The Individual and the Common Good"

El Retiro San Inigo Retreat House, Los Altos, California

**August 16-18, 2007**

Workshop: "Using the Cultural Audit"

Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois

<http://www.religious-life.org/programs/index.html>



## 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 April 1 -- August 31, 2006)  
\$517.96

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:

<http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/recycling.htm>.



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## From the LCWR Executive Director Of Goldfish and Potted Plants

The pots of summer littered my porch and it was time to clean them out for next year's growing season. I had raised some pretty serious basil, now frozen as pesto in small plastic containers. They will serve as delicious reminders of summer when tossed with pasta in January. I had purchased my plants as four inch seedlings at Home Depot and, with the help of MiracleGro and my own semi-attentive care, they had bloomed into lush bushes of intoxicating aroma and seductive green leaf.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

showy) cheer for our friend, Routine. Of course, the obvious down-side of routine is that without periodic review and regular disruption, it can quickly reduce thought to tapioca and imagination to mush.

So when I hear myself saying things like "Oh, I'd never eat sushi." Or, "I can't learn Spanish - I'm too old for that," a little alarm goes off inside that says, "Caution! Stagnation alert! Beige life ahead!" I

know I'm in trouble when I start seeing limits that aren't really there. After all, what keeps me from trying sushi except that the fact of eating raw fish wrapped in seaweed does odd things to my stomach? And as for learning Spanish, I know that it is not that I "can't" learn. It is really more that I don't want to make a fool of myself in attempting to practice it.

So, you can imagine my surprise when, as I pulled the dead stalks out of the pots, I discovered that the root systems had not expanded beyond their seedling size. It was as if the plants were so used to the parameters

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*Of course, the obvious down-side of routine is that without periodic review and regular disruption, it can quickly reduce thought to tapioca and imagination to mush.*

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of their original containers that they never even considered exploring past their imagined confines. Even more surprising to me was how large and hardy they appeared (and were) above the soil.

I have heard about a similar phenomenon in gold fish. If the fish have been swimming round and round in a small bowl for their entire lives, even when put into a much larger aquarium, they will - at least initially - keep the same pattern and swim in the same small circles as they had in the little bowl. They become prisoners of their routine.

Sometimes routine is very useful. I'm glad that I don't have to think too hard about where I've stored my shampoo each morning. I'm happy to find the Raisin Bran right where I left it in the cupboard. I put my keys in the same spot each night to prevent last minute panic in the morning. Without routine we would be enveloped each day by a swarm of mosquito-sized decisions that could overwhelm us, or at least hamper our ability to focus on truly demanding tasks. So let's pause a minute and send up a little (very modest, not too

A few weeks ago the gospel of the day was the story of Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician woman. His less-than-pastoral response to her request that he heal her daughter ("It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.") does not deter her from pressing her point. I like to think that Jesus needed this woman and the healthy jolt of truth she offered to expand his own sense of himself and his call. I think two people were healed that day.

I am inspired by folks who continually push their own boundaries - who do not want to be pot-bound plants or circling gold fish. I am inspired by the Catherine Pinkertons of the world who truck off to demanding work each day with no thought of staying home in a

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recliner to watch Oprah. I'm inspired by the young veterans from nearby Walter Reed Army Hospital whom we often see in downtown Silver Spring, learning to walk again on thin titanium prostheses.

Speaking of routine, it's time for me to head for work. But, where in the world did I leave my keys?

## LRCR 2007 Annual Legal Seminar

### Flowing Waters:

#### Channeling Energy Through Turbulent Waters

Adams Mark Hotel — St. Louis, Missouri

March 8-11, 2007

### 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, Ed.D. & 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 LRCR website ([www.lrcr.org](http://www.lrcr.org)) will have updates as planning continues.

## CSRL Scholars Think Tank Meets in Chicago

The Scholars Think Tank is one of the newest projects of the Center for the Study of Religious Life. It is one structure which contributes to the ongoing interdisciplinary mission of CSRL. It is designed to respond in a timely fashion to current realities in the United States, and to provide feedback on current studies or written materials which might be helpful to leaders.

The first members of the CSRL Scholars Think Tank are:

**William A. Barry, SJ** serves as editor-in-chief of *Human Development* magazine, co-director of the Jesuit tertian-ship program of the New England Province and staff member of Campion Renewal Center, Weston, Massachusetts. He holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

## Upcoming LCWR Dates

### LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Franciscan Center*

*Tampa, Florida*

January 14 — 19, 2007

### LCWR 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-CMSM Joint Assembly

*Denver, Colorado*

August 1 — 4, 2008

### LCWR Assembly

*New Orleans, Louisiana*

August 11 — 15, 2009

**Kathleen Sprows Cummings** is the associate director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism and assistant professor of history at the University of Notre Dame. She holds a PhD in history.

**Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD** serves as vice president and academic dean of Catholic Theological Union and assistant professor of practical theology and Hispanic ministry. He holds an STD in theology.

**Katarina Schuth, OSF** is professor of the scientific study of religion at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas, author of major studies of US Catholic theologates and seminaries. She holds a PhD in cultural geography.

**Patricia Wittberg, SC** is professor of sociology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, author of numerous works on religious life, editor of *Review of Religious Research*, 2002-2008. She holds a PhD in sociology.