

December 2005

Design of an Exhibit on US Women Religious Begins at LCWR Charrette

LCWR took a significant step forward in its work to mount an exhibit on the contributions of women religious to US history. From October 27-29, 24 people gathered for a charrette to brainstorm possible themes and directions for a museum exhibit and to begin a design.

Melissa Berry of Design Island Associates facilitated the charrette, which brought together exhibit designers, curators, artists, historians, archivists, journalists, and representatives of the LCWR membership and staff. The charrette opened with an overview by Karen Kennelly, CSJ of the historic contributions of women religious in such areas as education, healthcare, and social service, and their response to the needs of the country including care of the wounded in times of war and ministering to those in need during epidemics and natural disasters.

The participants engaged in discussion on why the story of women religious has largely gone untold, unexamined and unrecognized; how common stereotypes of religious can be dispelled and replaced with stories of commitment and values; and how these ideas can be represented in a unique, fresh and engaging way.

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LCWR President-Elect Mary Dacey, SSJ at the charrette

LCWR Executive Committee Meets in November in Maryland

The members of the LCWR executive committee (Beatrice Eichten, OSF; Mary Dacey, SSJ; Christine Vladmiroff, OSB; Jeanne Bessette, OSF; Mary Ann Summa, OP; Margaret Mayce, OP; Maureen Shaughnessy, SC; and Carole Shinnick, SSND) met in Takoma Park, Maryland from November 7-10.

In addition to reports from the presidents, executive director, secretary and treasurer, the committee discussed other items including: follow-up from the 2005 LCWR

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LCWR President
 Beatrice Eichten, OSF

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From the LCWR Presidency
An Advent Experience

by Mary Dacey, SSJ -- LCWR President-Elect

Love the season of Advent. It begins with emptiness, expectation and waiting...a word spoken, a question and a response. It begins with a womb, the sacred capacity for life and the promise of fulfillment. It tells again the story of a journey. One woman shares the good news of a promise; another understands and shares the mystery.

Mary's whole life gets turned around even as it turned toward another. The very essence of receptivity is first to know emptiness. The first condition of relationship is to make space for the other. "And the Word was made flesh."

What happens next is most natural. Having received the word of God, Mary seeks the wisdom of the older

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They assured us that in two, very short days,
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and the humanity of women religious in this country.*

woman to share her fears, her faith and her courage. Elizabeth instinctively knows how to be and what to say. For Elizabeth had her own story. Having long suffered the humiliation of childlessness, she knows in real and painful ways about waiting, longing and hoping.

Young and old came together to celebrate the mystery of new life. Imagine the joy of their shared revelation! Imagine the stories they told in their time together. And isn't this what women do?

In late October I had the incredible good fortune to be involved in an experience that had Advent written all over it. All the elements were there: women and story,



waiting and birthing, life and mystery, grace in abundance. It was called a charrette--an artistic brainstorming. Its purpose was to create an exhibit that would bring to life the LCWR history project, a celebration of the contributions of women religious to the United States.

Sister historians, sociologists, artists and leaders joined a group of talented, generous, and inspiring artists and designers from across the country. These modern day "angels" told us not to fear.

They assured us that in two, very short days, out of virtually nothing, an end product would emerge that would capture the history, the heroism and the humanity of women religious in this country. The process was collaboration at its finest! Divided into four teams, we brainstormed, we told stories, we laughed and we asked questions. "Is it sister or nun?" "What really was the impact of that Vatican Council?" "How do you explain a call?"

The result was a diversity of engaging and creative scenarios for the exhibit with, not surprisingly, a number of common themes. The most consistent theme of all, however, was that this was a story that must be told. When we eventually reached the bottom line of how to finance the project, it was one of our artist angels who

*"Sisters," she chided us.
"You have built countless school and
hospital systems in this country.
Surely, you can build an exhibit."*

uttered the most compelling and persuasive challenge. "Sisters," she chided us. "You have built countless school and hospital systems in this country. Surely, you can build an exhibit."

Modern echoes of an Advent scene. And the word will be made flesh!

Exhibit on US Women Religious

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Both in small and large group sessions, the participants worked on initial plans for the exhibit, including identifying the major themes of the exhibit's story and envisioning the layout of the exhibit through creative use of artifacts, photographs, and interactive technology. The artists present were able to translate some of the initial ideas into rough sketches.

The charrette concluded with a strong endorsement of the exhibit concepts, with participants stating in many ways their conviction that the historical contribution of women religious to the United States is a story that needs to be told -- honestly and boldly.

The goal is to open the exhibit at one of the nation's most prominent museums and then travel it to other sites throughout the country.

The charrette participants recommended that LCWR proceed with the next phase of this project, which involves two major efforts -- fundraising and exhibit content development. The LCWR History Committee is interested in hearing feedback from LCWR members who discussed this project at their fall regional meetings. This important project, which has the potential to educate and inspire thousands, will proceed only if donors can be found.

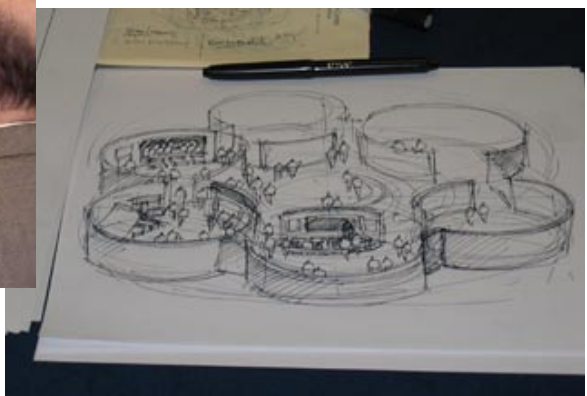
More information on the exhibit, as well as photos of the charrette can be found on the LCWR website at: <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwraboutus/Jubilee/charrette.htm>

LCWR charrette participants:

- Melissa Berry -- *Design Island Associates*
- Barbara Cervenka, OP -- *Siena Heights University*
- Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ -- *Center for the Study of Religious Life*
- Carol Coburn -- *Avila University*
- Mary Dacey, SSJ -- *LCWR President-Elect*
- Mike Devine -- *Devine Design Group*
- Shalini D'Souza, SCN -- *Sisters of Charity of Nazareth*
- Nanci Edwards -- *Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History*
- Jerry Enzler -- *Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium*
- John Fialka -- *Wall Street Journal*
- Irene Fugazy, SC -- *Sister of Charity of New York*
- Helen Garvey, BVM -- *LCWR History Committee (chair)*
- Patricia Grey -- *The Pittsburg Foundation*
- Mame Jackson -- *Wayne State University*
- Karen Kennelly, CSJ -- *LCWR History Committee*
- Kathryn Lawlor, BVM -- *Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
- Kathy Mangum -- *Walt Disney Imagineering*
- Mary Oates, CSJ -- *Regis College*
- Katherine Ott -- *Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History*
- Constance Phelps, SCL -- *LCWR History Committee*
- Annmarie Sanders, IHM -- *LCWR Staff*
- Nancy Seruto -- *Seruto and Company*
- Carole Shinnick, SSND -- *LCWR Staff*
- Shim Yokoyama -- *Illustrator and Designer*



Charrette participants: Carol Coburn; Carole Shinnick, SSND; Shalini D'Souza, SCN; and John Fialka



One of the initial sketches of the exhibit by Shim Yokoyama

Charrette to Plan Museum Exhibit



Charrette facilitator Melissa Berry posts results of the brainstorming sessions on the exhibit

Feedback from LCWR Members

Feedback on potential donors or content ideas for the exhibit on the contributions of women religious can be sent to Helen Maher Garvey, BVM, chair of the LCWR History Committee. Helen can be contacted at 859-299-8695 or hmgarvey@aol.com.

As the project progresses, LCWR members will be kept informed and invited to participate in content development.



Participants Katherine Ott; Mike Devine; Constance Phelps, SCL; and Irene Fugazy, SC



Shim Yokoyama sketches possible designs for the exhibit, while Mike Devine leads a table discussion

LCWR Executive Committee Meets in November in Maryland

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assembly, preparations for the 2006 and 2007 assemblies, a revised resolution process, and the exhibit on US women religious. The executive committee also prepared a tentative agenda for the February 2006 meeting of the national board.

The LCWR and CMSM executive committees also met jointly during those days. The two committees considered issues related to the Cameron Street office building which is owned jointly by CMSM and LCWR, and did some remote planning for the annual trip to Rome.

Beatrice, Mary, Christine, Jeanne, and Carole attended a meeting of the Commission on Religious Life and Ministry that spent most of the agenda preparing for the upcoming request to continue the National Religious Retirement Collection past the sunset date of 2007. Following this, the members of the LCWR presidency and Carole participated as observers at the meeting of the US Catholic Conference of Bishops in Washington, DC.



Margaret Mayce, OP, executive committee member-at-large



Maureen Shaughnessy, SC, executive committee member-at-large



Mary Ann Summa, OP, treasurer



Paul Lininger, OFM; Christine Vladimiroff, OSB; Msgr. William Fay; Mother Quentin Sheridan, RSM; and Mary Ann Seton LoPiccolo, SC; at the meeting of the Commission on Religious Life and Ministry (CRLM)



Representatives from the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (Mother Regina Pacis, FSGM; Mother Shaun Vergauwen, FSE; and Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, SV) and Mary Dacey, SSJ at the CRLM meeting



Hank Sammon, FMS; Andrée Fries, CPPS; and LCWR secretary Jeanne Bessette, OSF at the CRLM meeting

LCWR Retreat Opportunity One Space Available



Due to cancellations, two spaces are now available for the LCWR Leading from Within Retreat.

The retreat will be facilitated by Nancy Schreck, OSF and Regina Bechtle, SC.

January 15 - 20, 2006

Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center
Sierra Madre, California

Contact Suzanne Delaney, IHM at sdelaney@lcwr.org or 301-588-4955 for more information.

New Leader Workshop Registration Due by December 16

The LCWR national office has been receiving registrations for the redesigned New Leader Workshop scheduled for March 30 - April 2, 2006 in Mundelein, Illinois. The new structure and revised curriculum promises to provide women religious in congregational leadership with important information on religious life and the challenges and blessings of leadership today.



The workshop will feature an outstanding faculty and stimulating presentations. Participants will have multiple opportunities to consider ways of employing their new insights once they return home. The weekend program will draw its major themes from the LCWR document, *The Dimensions of Leadership*, and will incorporate prayer and ritual throughout.

More information on the content of the workshop, the faculty, facilities and schedule is available on the registration form which can be downloaded from the LCWR website at <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrprograms-resources/newleaderworkshop.htm>. Registration is due by **December 16**.

Global Concerns Committee Reviews its Assembly Roles

When the LCWR Global Concerns Committee met from October 26-28, members reviewed the 2005 assembly and anticipated the 2006 assembly in Atlanta. One of the committee's responsibilities is to "initiate assembly resolutions related to justice and monitor implementation." (GCC Brochure). When a proposed resolution has gone through the region review process, it is usually approved by the assembly. Although the 2005 resolution was not approved by the required two-thirds of the body, in light of the 50th anniversary, the GCC plans a regional implementation review of past resolutions.

The GCC also "when appropriate, plans pre-assembly events to assist members in becoming better informed about an issue specific to the local community where the assembly is held." The committee plans to work with Region 5 and on-site members in Atlanta to orga-

nize a pre-assembly event. It is also the GCC's responsibility to "plan for public witness during the assembly when appropriate." Due to other activities generated by the 2006 Assembly Planning Committee, the GCC will not plan an additional public witness for 2006.

A decision was made to write a letter of concern to Bishop Robert C. Morlino of Madison, WI who was recently appointed to the Board of Visitors of WHIN-SEC/SOA. During a subsequent meeting of the LCWR executive committee, the presidents agreed to sign the letter.

In Memoriam

**Elizabeth Carroll, RSM
1971 LCWR President**

Elizabeth (Betty) Carroll, a Pittsburgh Sister of Mercy for 70 years, died on November 25 at age 92. She was an outstanding leader who advocated for the education of women religious and the rights and full dignity of women in the Catholic church and society, both in the United States and Latin America.



Cindi Lash wrote in the November 28th issue of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, "By the time she turned 69, Sister Elizabeth "Betty" Carroll had earned three degrees, headed a college, led her religious order and written numerous articles about women and their role in the Catholic church.

"For nearly 50 years, she'd encouraged -- sometimes prodded -- Pittsburgh's Catholic women to obtain the best education possible, pursue fulfilling lives and recognize their own value in and out of the church.

"For the next 16 years, she would do the same for women in Peru, confronting excruciating poverty and danger while founding and running a women's support center.



"She expected the very best, that a woman would go as far as possible," said Sister Grace Ann Geibel, immediate past president of Carlow University. "In the core of her being, she had a real sense and belief in the power of education. She understood that was the way for people to live freely."

Betty carried that same belief to the formation of Catholic sisters and was a strong advocate that women religious receive the best education possible for their religious life and their professional service.

Betty was a faculty member at Mount Mercy (Carlow) College for many years and a summer lecturer at Catholic University and Marquette University.

She served as dean at Mount Mercy College for 11 years and president for three years, from 1960-63. She was president of the Pittsburgh Sisters of Mercy from 1964-74, during which time she served as president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

Nationally, she also held leadership positions with the Federation of the Sisters of Mercy of America, the Sister Formation Conference, and the Women's Ordination Conference. She wrote extensively about the role of women in the Catholic church.

In 1982, at the age of 69, Betty went to Peru where she served in pastoral ministry in Chimbote. She is a co-founder of Casa de la Mujer, a program in Chimbote aimed at educating, empowering and ending abuse of women. In 2000, the Casa established a school for women named for her.

In 1996 Carlow University honored Betty as a Carlow Woman of Spirit and in 2003 the Religious Formation Conference honored her with its Jubilee Award for outstanding leadership. She was also the recipient of several honorary degrees.

The full text of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's obituary can be found at <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05332/613588.stm>.

Theresa Kane, RSM and Betty Carroll, RSM



Jubilee USA Network Council Holds Annual Meeting

Although there was a full agenda for the Jubilee USA Network Council's November 10-11 meeting, members of Jubilee took time to celebrate victories of the past year on debt and global justice. It was acknowledged that if the Jubilee organization did not exist, even the limited victory at the G-8 this summer would not have happened. Because the victory was limited to debt cancellation for only 18 countries when at least 40 more impoverished nations are in need of 100% debt cancellation without harmful conditions, the council moved quickly to address the challenges remaining.

Because of the partial victory, the danger is that there is a perception in the general public that debt cancellation was achieved. The council and Jubilee congregations need to keep the pressure on until real debt cancellation is accomplished. In addition, debt connections to other issues, e.g., trade and environment, will be strengthened. The first immediate action is to press for passage of the Jubilee Act in Congress, sponsored by Representative Maxine Waters. A legislative assistant from Rep. Waters' office addressed the council, stressing the importance of referring to legislation by both name and number when contacting a member of congress whether by letter or by phone. Calls are urged now to representatives urging them to co-sponsor H.R. 1130, the Jubilee Act, if they have not done so. Further information can be found on the Jubilee website: www.jubileeusa.org.

In planning for the future, the council approved a strategic plan for 2006-2008. To set in motion the establishment of linkages with allied organizations in order to broaden the movement, a panel of organizational representatives inspired the group with work being done on other issues connected with debt: The Institute for Policy Studies, author of "The Debt Boomerang," which links debt and poor countries with debt and the United States (www.ips-dc.org/boomerang); Oil Change International which addresses "New Energy for Debt Cancellation: The Debt and Climate Link;" American Friends Service Committee linking debt and trade; and TIGRA (Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research and Action) which organizes immigrant communities on remittances and debt (www.transnationalaction.org).

An energetic debate took place on whether or not to relate to the ONE Campaign, with reasons pro and con advanced by many members. The final decision was entrusted to the coordinating committee who will engage in further dialog.

Jubilee USA Network members will join Witness for Peace on a delegation to Nicaragua to observe first hand the impacts of debt and economic policies of the IMF, World Bank, and InterAmerican Development Bank. Inquiries about the November 2006 delegation can be made by contacting Ken Crowley at ken@witnessforpeace.org or Neil Watkins at neil@jubileeusa.org.

NETWORK Board Approves Strategic Plan, Addresses Budget Concerns

During the November 3-6 NETWORK board meeting, the board approved a strategic plan for 2006-2008, developed in committee over the past six months. Also, with the assistance of an outside consultant, the board worked through a decision making matrix which all found helpful.

The development staff and board committee expressed concern at the marked drop in membership renewals from the last mailing, a mailing that displayed a changed logo, which may have contributed in part to the decline. Because NETWORK, like LCWR, is a membership organization, it depends on memberships and donations for its budget. Members of LCWR congregations are urged to renew their NETWORK membership if they have not done so. The flooding of office space in the spring, moving costs, increased rental costs, and a flat investment market have placed a strain on the budget presented by finance staff. Board members committed to working with development on fundraising efforts.

In an evening session, board members entered into a lively discussion about the history and future of NETWORK being a woman-led organization. This conversation will continue in the spring meeting.

LCWR Finance Committee Meets

The LCWR Finance Committee met in Silver Spring, Maryland in October. The members present were: Maryann Summa, OP -- Sparkill, NY (Chair), Rose Jochmann, OSF -- Green Bay, WI; Alice Cote, RJM- Washington, DC; Jean Keniry, OSF-Rochester, MN; Mary Persico, IHM -- Scranton, PA and Eleanor Granger, OSF -- LCWR staff.

The major agenda items discussed included the following:

Financial Position: LCWR investments, in line with the national scene, are recovering slowly and hopefully will help in producing a positive bottom line by the end of the fiscal year.

Membership Dues: In the last number of years, the membership dues have been increased slightly to ensure a balanced budget. In the last two years, the committee worked on a plan to confront the reality of reorganizations and mergers among several congregations at present and in the ensuing years. As a result of this conversation, the finance committee presented a new dues structure policy to the LCWR national board in August 2005. The regional chairs brought this proposed new structure to their regions at the fall meetings. The national board will review the response of the regions and make a decision on the dues structure at their February 2006 meeting.

Investments: As of September 2005, the LCWR has a new investment group. The Christian Brothers Investment Services at the New York office will now manage the conference's investments in what is called the Christian Brothers Balance Fund. In these changing times, it is LCWR's desire to be good stewards of these monies and to use the interest to continue to serve the conference in the various offices.

Audit Firm: Last February LCWR engaged the audit of Linton Shafer Warfield & Garrett, PA of Rockville, MD. Audit or audit reviews are conducted each year.

LCWR 2006 Budget: The committee spent quality time examining the draft of the LCWR 2006 budget. The resulting draft of the budget was recommended to the executive committee in November and will be pre-

sent to the national board in February for the formal acceptance.

Cameron Street Building: The Cameron Street building is owned by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. During this meeting Matt Wade, SM (CMSM associate director) met with the committee to discuss several items of business regarding the long-range planning for the upkeep of the building as well as the audit results of the past years.

Future Dates: The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held in Silver Spring, Maryland from April 26-27, 2006.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR-CMSM Delegation to El Salvador
November 30 -- December 6, 2005

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat
Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center
Sierra Madre, California
January 15 -- 20, 2006

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank,
Franciscan Center -- Tampa, Florida
February 12 -- 14, 2006

LCWR New Leader Workshop
St. Mary of the Lake -- Mundelein, Illinois
March 30 -- April 2, 2006

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

LCWR Assembly
New Orleans, Louisiana
August 2 -- 6, 2007

Listen to the Music of the Night

Darkness blankets the northern world these days. Night begins around 4:30 and yields to day reluctantly at 7:30 or 8:00 the next morning. This is the time of year when children -- barely discernible shifting clumps on the street corners -- wait in the dark for school buses. This is the time of year when windows of homes and shops glow warmly along the streets, inviting passers-by to come in from the dark and the cold. This is the time of year for mystery. This is the time of year for seeking. This is the time of year for surprises.



Carole Shinnick, SSND
dark.

Perhaps we sit having lost direction, or energy, or joy. Perhaps we sit with our own private wars or disasters or failures. "Why?" "How come?" "If only."

As a child I equated Advent with Lent. Both were purple and penitential. Both meant some form of self-sacrifice ending in a splendid feast. Then in adulthood, Advent changed from purple to the silver-blue of night. I have come to see the year's quiet end-season as a time for waiting in -- and trying to befriend - the

"Night-time sharpens, heightens each sensation. Darkness stirs and wakes imagination. Silently the senses abandon their defenses ..." The Phantom of the Opera, a native of the dark, understood night's power to reveal what light cannot. The Phantom -- no doubt a mystic of sorts -- knew what wise persons have always known -- that if we befriend the dark, it has gifts to offer that are unavailable in "the garish light of day."

What a perfect setting for Advent. Each year in this time of special darkness we are invited to sit with ourselves and our world looking at the unexplainable in the soft light cast by candles set in an evergreen wreath. This year we sit in darkness with a year of horrendous natural disasters still swirling in our minds. We sit with awareness of violence both cruel and unimaginable.

*... we are invited to sit
with ourselves and
our world looking at
the unexplainable
in the soft light
cast by candles ...*



In the dark our rational approach to life is useless. Our compasses don't work and our senses betray us. The questions we bring hang mid-air, unanswered. Instead paradox surrounds us. Lions and lambs nap together. Bloody swords till the soil. Dead wood sprouts green leaves. Mountains flatten. Deserts bloom. A virgin gives birth. All of Advent's answers to the questions we

In the dark our rational approach to life is useless.

*Our compasses don't work and
our senses betray us.*

*The questions we bring hang mid-air,
unanswered.*

whisper in the dark are counterintuitive. Our friend, The Phantom, encourages us to let go. "Slowly, gently, night unfurls its splendor. Grasp it, sense it, tremulous and tender ..."

Shortly after Christmas, the days begin to lengthen. Although there is a certain excitement in the march towards spring and the long days of summer, I do not want to go there too quickly. I want to relish this Advent season and its dark mystery. I want to listen to the music of the night.

¹ "The Music of the Night" music and lyrics by Andrew Lloyd Webber

FROM THE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS LIFE

The Center for the Study of Religious Life conducts interdisciplinary and intercultural reflection on the life of Catholic religious sisters, brothers and priests in the United States. It serves as a resource to religious congregations and their leadership in promoting the vitality and mission of religious life. The following is a schedule of upcoming events.

January 2006

Kindling – Winter 2007 Issue

Focus: Expressions of Vowed/Consecrated Life

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

February 5-8, 2006

Using the Cultural Audit Workshop

Marywood Center, Jacksonville, FL

Presenters:

Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD & Caroljean Willie, SC

http://www.religious-life.org/programs/cu_workshop.html

Interdisciplinary Forum:

**“The Individual and the Common Good”
For Leaders and Scholars**

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

March 5-9, 2006

King’s House, Belleville, IL (St. Louis area)

September 24-27, 2006

Bishop Malloy Retreat House, Jamaica, NY
(New York City area)

April 15-18, 2007

El Retiro Jesuit Retreat House, Los Altos, CA
(San Francisco Bay area)

LRCR Seeks New Associate Director in Civil Law

The Legal Resource Center for Religious, in Silver Spring, Maryland, is seeking an attorney for the position of associate director in civil law.

LRCR, a Catholic non-profit organization, provides research, advice, consultations, publications, and educational programs on both civil and canon law issues to religious leaders and treasurers. Duties include providing legal assistance to institutes, overseeing publications and legal projects. The position requires a licensed attorney, a religious or a person with experience working with religious institutes.

Submit letters of application and resume to: Executive Director, LRCR, 8812 Cameron St., Silver Spring, MD 20910. See www.lrcr.org for more information on LRCR.

LCWR National Office Bids Farewell to Staff Member

LCWR administrative assistant Eva McCrae resigned from her position at LCWR, effective November 14. Eva had been employed at the conference since 1987.

LCWR thanks Eva for her years of work and wishes her well in her future endeavors.



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