

Working to Build Global Connections

InterAmerican Committee Plans for Ongoing Collaboration Among the Religious of the Americas

Each year delegates from the conferences of Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the United States meet as an InterAmerican Committee to continue to build relationships among the religious men and women of the Americas. The venues for these meetings rotate each year among locations in Canada, Latin or South America, and the United States. The previous committee meeting was held in March 2004 in Washington DC and focused primarily on preparing for the InterAmerican Assembly held in May 2005 in Itiaci, Brazil.

This year's InterAmerican Committee meeting was



Participants are the March 2006 InterAmerican Committee meeting included: (top row) Nueza Botelho Dos Santos, Clara Delpin (translator) Carole Shinnick, Paul Linninger, Dina Maria Orellana, (bottom) Dominic Izzo, Vilma Esperanza Q. Moran, Margaret Toner, Christine Vladimiroff, Alain Ambeaul and Michael McNulty

hosted by CLAR (the Confederation of Latin American Religious) and was held from March 14-16, 2006 in Bogotá, Colombia. Christine Vladimiroff, OSB and Carole Shinnick, SSND represented LCWR at the meeting, joining representatives of CMSM, CRC (the Canadian Religious Conference) and CLAR.

The agenda had three main segments:

- Following up on the 2005 InterAmerican Assembly
- Sharing conference updates of activities, concerns, and plans
- Preparing for the coming year and the InterAmerican-focused activities until the next committee meeting in Canada scheduled for March 27-29, 2007

During the meeting the group committed to continue to highlight the spirit of collaboration among the conferences of the InterAmerican. For example, Christine will be reporting on the meeting in Bogotá during the business meeting at the 2006 LCWR assembly in Georgia. The justice and peace coordinators of all the conferences will continue to seek for common actions related to social justice issues.

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From the LCWR Presidency

Making Globalization a Positive Trend

by Christine Vladimiroff, OSB -- LCWR Past President

I have two images competing in my mind when someone mentions the word "globalization." The one is the Tower of Babel--the confusion and invisible walls of misunderstanding that scatter a once homogenous people. The center that held this people in community was imploded and language became the metaphor for separation and alienation. They could no longer understand what a person was saying. So they became "other," called stranger, seen as a threat and gradually named "enemy." Violence and war made their entry into human history.



We met in Bogotá, Colombia and talked—representatives of the Conference of Religious of Canada, the Confederation of Latin American Religious and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious of the United States. There were Tower of Babel moments, as we strained to grasp the concepts coming from distinct worldviews. There were Pentecost breakthroughs in understandings and moments of profound solidarity. We celebrated them around the table breaking bread and sharing

the cup -- a sign of our oneness in Christ.

The second picture is Pentecost. A disparate crowd of people sharing nothing in common but presence at a Middle East bazaar, they came from different villages and spoke different languages. The Spirit is poured out on them. The crowd becomes a community bonded by an experience of God in their midst. Each hears the other in her own language. The individuals are linked by an understanding beyond words. The diversity is enriching and not divisive. The Gospel is preached and the Church is born "that they may be one."

Gustavo Gutierrez, OP writes: "the concrete forms of the following of Jesus are connected with the historical movements of an age." Authentic spirituality is born out of the particulars of life changing events. Just mentioning the word "globalization" can bring passionate arguments to a conversation. Whether people are supportive or in opposition to the reality of globalization there is recognition that it is a world-changing development in our lifetime. It has brought profound dislocation and misery to many. It holds tremendous opportunities for bringing about a global society that makes of humankind one family. Globalization requires us to fundamentally change. We must cultivate new attitudes and sharpen our interpersonal skills and yes, venture into languages other than the comfort of our own. The world is flat, Tom Friedman would tell us and everything is new.

As I flew back from the InterAmerican Committee meeting, I re-lived my week in Latin America. Travel has the capacity to transport us into a new environment with incredible speed, but only our heart can open us to the richness of the "other." I believe that those of us in religious life with our desire to forge authentic community have much to contribute to making globalization a positive trend in this the third millennium of Christianity. We need to bring our spirituality and values to the public conversation around issues of globalization. Our spirituality is linked to the significant historical developments of our lifetime. The unavoidable difficulty of making space for the Other is the crisis of our times.



Carole Shinnick, SSND (1st on left) and Christine Vladimiroff, OSB (3rd from left) with representative of the Colombian Religious Conference at the recent InterAmerican meeting.

LCWR Names Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ its 2006 Outstanding Leader

LCWR will present its Outstanding Leadership Award this year to Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ. The award presentation will take place at the 2006 LCWR assembly in Atlanta.

Catherine is a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph, Cleveland, and is completing 22 years as a lobbyist with NETWORK, a Catholic social justice lobby. She assumed this position in 1984 after completing her term of leadership in her congregation and in the presidency of LCWR.

Her early ministries were centered on education and administration at the secondary level. As women religious responded with great tenacity to the call of Vatican II to delve more deeply into their foundational roots, to become more authentically who they were called to be and thus respond more prophetically to the needs of the modern world, Catherine became involved in church renewal movements with a focus on the role of women in the Church.

Currently, she is vice president of the Churches' Center on Theology and Public Policy, a member of the executive committee of the newly-formed Resource Center for Faith and Public Policy, and serves on the Board of Americans for Democratic Action. Among her awards are the Institute of Women Today Award, two awards naming her as one of the Most Influential Women in Cleveland, the St. Joseph Academy Leadership Award, and the John Carroll University Centennial Education Medal. She has also been inducted into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame.

Asked what characterizes her efforts at this time, Catherine stated, "The incredible response of women religious to the plethora of changes throughout the years and the incredible depth of that response proves indisputably Metz's conviction that 'religious life is a prophetic gift given to the Church, which shall not be taken from it.' We are blest women."

LCWR national office staff members visited the NETWORK offices to notify Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ of her upcoming Outstanding Leadership Award. (Top photo) Carole Shinnick, SSND; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; Catherine; Marie Lucey, OSF; and Simone Campbell, SSS, NETWORK national coordinator. (Bottom photo) Catherine (5th from left) is congratulated by members of the NETWORK staff.



Save the Date!

2007 LCWR New Leader Workshop

March 15 - 18, 2007

**The Retreat Center at St. John's
Plymouth, Michigan**

More information to follow in the fall

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It also was decided that rather than automatically schedule an InterAmerican Assembly every five years, the committee will determine when and if a larger group of representatives needs to come together based on a common focus or topic. Because all the conferences are aware of the financial impact of the larger assembly, every effort will be made to find economical ways to gather larger numbers of participants.

Two outings were included in the committee's time together. The Religious Conference of Colombia hosted a luncheon gathering on March 15, followed by an informational meeting with the staff of the office. On March 16, the group went to the Salt Cathedral in Zipaquirá, Colombia.

The participants agreed that the committee meeting was both rich and productive, affirming the vitality of religious life in the Americas.

More information on the InterAmerican Network as well as photos from the meeting in Bogotá can be found on the LCWR website at: <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrprogramsresources/InterAmerican.htm>.



Photos from the InterAmerican Committee meeting with representatives of the Colombian Religious Conference



Work Progresses on LCWR Exhibit on Catholic Sisters

LCWR recently produced a brochure on the proposed traveling exhibit on Catholic sisters and their contributions to US history and culture. The exhibit, entitled "Pioneers, Poets and Prophets: Catholic Sisters in America" is still in the planning stages, but the production of the brochure allows the LCWR History Committee to proceed with its fundraising efforts for this project.

A copy of the brochure has been mailed to all LCWR members and associates. All members also received via e-mail a form asking them to identify potential donors who could be contacted by the committee to see if they would be willing to support the exhibit.

In addition to their fundraising efforts, the LCWR History Committee members are also developing the exhibit storyline. Once the storyline is complete, more information will be sent to congregations regarding the types of artifacts that are needed for the exhibit.

The committee is grateful to all members who can assist in identifying donors now and in sharing artifacts in the near future.



Mellissa Berry and Shim Yokoyama of Bob Weis Design Island, the company assisting LCWR with the traveling exhibit, review a draft of the brochure on "Pioneers, Poets and Prophets: Catholic Sisters in America."



Changing the Face of the Mountain

LCWR will be mailing during the first week of April the new reflection book, *Changing the Face of the Mountain*. In addition to the copies printed for all LCWR members, associates and subscribers, orders for approximately 18,600 copies were also received. A few additional copies were printed and are available for sale.

LCWR thanks its 64 members who contributed their writings to this project.

LCWR Endorses Interfaith Statement on Water

Initiated by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, a statement titled "Water: Essential for Justice and Peace," was developed for consideration by participants in the 4th World Water Forum (WWF) held in Mexico City March 16-22, 2006. Five Christian organizations joined the Hopi Villages of Arizona in issuing the statement. Suzanne Golas, CSJP, director of WATERSPIRIT, was delegated by LCWR to join the writing committee.



The complete statement and and list of signers can be found on the LCWR website at: <http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/issues.htm>.

Lent, Cherry Blossoms and Congressional March Madness

In Washington, DC, March brings cherry blossoms and congressional budget debates. This year, a heated debate on the Immigration Reform Bill of 2006 was added to the "March Madness." A Lenten discipline for many LCWR members and justice workers across the country has been to make repeated phone calls to their representatives and senators urging support for a comprehensive immigration reform bill and a bi-partisan proposal to add \$7 billion to the budget to restore funding addressing human needs programs, funding which had been eliminated or severely cut in the proposed "war budget."

The USCCB's Justice for Immigration Campaign, as well as the Catholic Health Association, strongly urged Catholics to oppose a law-enforcement based immigration proposal that would penalize both undocumented persons and anyone who assists them, and to support a bi-partisan comprehensive immigration reform bill.

Many of the 930 participants in the Ecumenical Advocacy Days, held in the capital March 10-13, spent the last day walking the halls of congress, meeting with their congressional representatives on a variety of issues including: the Jubilee Act (debt cancellation), the federal budget, immigration, funding for the new reliable replacement warhead, torture, trade, genocide in Darfur, and other issues important to the faith community.

At noon on the same day these justice advocates stood in spring-like sun praying for an end to the Iraq war during an interfaith gathering on the west lawn of the Capitol.

Cover the Uninsured Week 2006

Sponsored by the Catholic Health Association, this year's Cover the Uninsured Week is scheduled for May 1-7, 2006. Many Catholic health care facilities will engage in a variety of activities to demonstrate the ministry's commitment to health care that works for everyone.

From the LCWR Executive Director

A Room with a View

During the March InterAmerican Committee meeting in Bogotá, Colombia, the delegations from Canada, South America, and the United States were housed in a downtown Carmelite convent. The surrounding neighborhood was a mix of high-rise apartment buildings and small homes, of large industrial complexes and tiny shops. My room on the third floor faced a school gutted for repair where brightly colored mobile units served as classrooms.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

Each morning by six o'clock the streets were teeming with children and adults purposefully striding into their respective days. Tiny yellow taxis and belching busses swarmed in a chaotic, seemingly rule-free pattern. And I would sit by the window with my morning coffee to watch the parade.

The children were dressed in school uniforms. Some were preppy – gray pants or skirts, crisp white shirts and pullover sweaters. Others were sporty – track suits

*What I do know is that when facts have faces,
they migrate from the brain to the heart.*

of navy and yellow with bright white running shoes. Moms with coats hastily thrown over their aprons delivered sleepy six-year olds to the classroom door. Older boys traveled in clumps, laughing and poking each other when a group of girls passed by. The girls, in turn, giggled, blushed and pretended to ignore the



attention of the boys. At that early hour a couple of soccer games were already in full swing in the school yard, complete with spectators.

I began to recognize the same people each morning. There were several young couples who walked hand-in-hand into their workdays. One well-dressed dad arrived each morning with his son on his shoulders, the child looking like a little prince riding above the crowd.

And there was one teen-aged boy who pushed a small wheelchair with a younger child in it -- so bundled against the morning chill that I never actually saw if the child was a boy or a girl. One old man walked two dogs – an arthritic yellow lab, and a hyperactive toy poodle.

During our time in Colombia, we heard over and over again how the governmental policies and business practices of North America are having devastating effects on the people of Colombia. Free trade agreements and galloping globalization exploit Colombia and multiple other countries, creating widespread unemployment and making the very resources of the country unaffordable to the people whose labor provides them.

This information was not new to me, but hearing it in the context of Colombia, from the people who deal with

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it daily had a punch-in-the-stomach effect on me. It was painful to own that our country and our market-driven version of international relationships directly harm our gracious hosts as well as my 6:00 AM companions.

I wish I could tell you that now that I am back home I feel empowered to do something to address the

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Materials Available on Reconfiguration of Religious Institutes

The proceedings from "To Tangle or To Tango: The Reconfiguration of Religious Institutes," are now available. The proceedings are from a conference held in Sydney, Australia in 2005 that brought together members of 65 religious institutes from Australia, New Zealand, Pacific, Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom, Jamaica, and the United States to have a conversation about the potential of various forms of reconfiguration processes to enable the vitality of both mission and community life into the future.

Information on ordering copies of the materials can be found at www.governance.com.au.

A Room with a View

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situations I understand in a new way. But I don't. Letters to congress, phone calls to the White House, signing petitions feel like so many fistfuls of popcorn thrown against a granite wall. If I see a label on a piece of clothing that says "Made in Colombia" should I refuse to buy it because it was probably made by an underpaid factory worker or should I buy it because it will contribute to the Colombian economy? I really don't know.

What I do know is that when facts have faces, they migrate from the brain to the heart. Those faces now come uninvited when I'm driving to the office. They float before me at my computer. They live quietly at the edges of my consciousness – playing soccer, heading for work, exercising the dogs, riding in a wheelchair. I expect that they will be with me now for a long, long time. And I hope they will gently but persistently disturb me – those dear people I met in Bogotá in a room with a view.

Walk the World to Fight Hunger on May 21, 2006

At the invitation of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Promoters of Religious Congregations, based in Rome, the LCWR executive committee approved LCWR participation in an effort of the United Nations World Food Programme to demonstrate commitment to the first UN Millennium Development Goal: To reduce hunger and poverty by one half by 2015. Titled "Fight Hunger: Walk the World," this campaign has also been joined by CMSM, Caritas, and other national and international organizations.

In 2005, 201,000 people walked in 266 locations in 91 countries, and raised enough money to feed 70,000 school children for one year. This year the goal is for one million walkers in 325 locations. The walk will begin at 10:00 a.m. and extend over 24 hours and time zones, starting in Auckland, New Zealand.

The LCWR executive committee, national board, and staff encourage members to visit www.FightHunger.org to see how to organize a walk locally, join an existing walk, and take other actions. A visit to the website will also initiate a sponsor's donation of 19 cents (enough for one school meal). Walking the World on May 21 will help to end child hunger.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

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

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



House Democrats Issue Catholic Statement of Principles

led by Representative Rosa L. DeLauro (D-CT), Catholic representatives released a statement of principles signed by 55 out of 72 House Democrats. The statement documents how their faith influences them as lawmakers, making clear their commitment to the basic principles at the heart of Catholic social teaching and their bearing on public policies. The full text of the statement can be found at: www.house.gov/delauro/press/2006/February/catholic_statement_2_28_06.html.

FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

CSRL Designs and Develops Tools for Leaders

One of the activities of the Center for the Study of Religious Life is designing and developing tools to assist leaders of religious congregations and societies of apostolic life in carrying out their mission.

KINDLING

In each issue of *KINDLING*, the FOCUS section deals with various topics of interest to religious today. The next issue of *KINDLING* will contain expressions of consecrated/vowed life. Past issues have covered

- Cultural Diversity and Anti-Racism;
- Emerging Communities;
- Reconfiguration of Religious Institutes;
- Honoring the Integrity of Creation;
- Community in Society and Religious Life: What We Can Learn from Family Systems Theory;
- Challenge of Interreligious and Ecumenical Dialogue.

All of these issues can be accessed from the CSRL web page at <http://www.religious-life.org/newsletters/index.html>

Publications

Other tools designed and developed for discussion to assist leaders within their congregations include CSRL publications: Cultural Audit; Reflection & Dialogue Series — Mission, Community, Becoming a Religious; Theological Reflection for Transformation; Young Religious' Reflections; and Facilitators' Reflections.

For more information on CSRL publications see <http://www.religious-life.org/pubs/April%20Sale.html>

Updates from the National Religious Vocation Conference

2006 NRVC Convocation

NRVC once again is inviting major superiors to attend its biennial convocation which will be held at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel in Irvine, CA, from September 7-11, 2006. The theme this year is "Called, Vowed, Committed: Belonging to a New Generation." Keynote speakers include Ronald Rohlheiser, OMI, author and theologian, and Laurie Brink, OP, assistant professor of biblical studies at Catholic Theological Union and a member of Generation X. In addition, John Allen, NCR Rome correspondent, CNN Vatican analyst, and author, will be the keynote speaker at a prayer breakfast to conclude the convocation on September 11. Men and women under the age of 30 who are in discernment or in initial formation are also invited and will be a significant part of the process. Further information and online registration will soon be available on the NRVC website at www.nrv.net.

NRVC Code of Ethics for Vocation Ministry

The NRVC Ethics Committee held its first meeting in March in Chicago. The purpose of this committee is to update the present NRVC code of ethics to reflect the proper relationships and boundaries for vocation ministry. The committee decided to broaden the present code to include the responsibilities of the vocation director, major superior, prospective candidate and community membership for vocation ministry. In addition, a section will include a guide for confidentiality and boundary maintenance. Serving on this committee are: Dr. Monica Applewhite, PhD, president of Praesidium Religious Services; Gilmary Bauer, RSM, ethicist and Detroit regional president of the Sisters of Mercy; Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, NRVC executive director; Thomas Nairn, OFM, professor of Catholic ethics, director of Health Care Mission Leadership; Jennifer Reed, executive director of Pathways to Hope; and Teri Wall, OP, vocation minister, Great Bend Dominican Sisters and NRVC national board member. The committee intends to complete its work by September.

Praesidium Advisory Council for Religious Accreditation

Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, NRVC executive director, accepted the invitation by Dr. Monica Applewhite, presi-

dent of Praesidium, Inc., to be a member of the Praesidium Advisory Council for Religious Accreditation. The purpose of this council is to advise Praesidium in its religious accreditation process and its ongoing refinement. Since part of the accreditation process includes standards for vocation directors, it is hoped that this will further strengthen and enhance NRVC's commitment to promote professionalism in vocation ministry.

Workshop on Discerning Priesthood and Religious Life with Candidates with Homosexual Tendencies

On April 6, 2006, NRVC will be offering a workshop in response to the new Vatican instruction concerning the criteria for priesthood. This one day workshop is entitled "Discerning Priesthood and Religious Life with Candidates with Homosexual Tendencies" and will have as its presenter Rev. Stephen Rossetti, PhD, noted author and CEO/president of St. Luke Institute.

This workshop, which is presently the only one of its kind being offered in the country, will focus on the assessment, screening, and possible formation of candidates with homosexual tendencies. The topics that will be treated include the psychology and church teaching regarding homosexuality and the specific concerns/areas which may impede/promote healthy human and spiritual formation in the candidate who has some homosexual tendencies. Although the workshop will look at the document's implications for religious life, this workshop will interest all religious and diocesan vocation directors, seminary personnel, formators and all of those entrusted with the responsibility of assessing candidates for priesthood and religious life.



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