

Update

A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

December 2014

LCWR Appoints Joan Marie Steadman, CSC New Executive Director

The LCWR national board has appointed Joan Marie Steadman, CSC the organization's executive director. She will assume the position on January 1, 2015, after Janet Mock, CSJ finishes her three-year term on December 31.



A Sister of the Holy Cross of Notre Dame, Indiana, Joan recently completed a five-year term as president of her community and had served previously in community leadership for 10 years. Some of her previous ministries have included: associate director of healthcare ethics at the Markula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University; vice-president for mission at Holy Cross Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah; regional executive team member at Holy Cross Health Services of Utah; pastoral associate at St. Therese Parish, Fresno, California, and St. Elizabeth Parish, Richfield, Utah; novice director for her community, and administrator and teacher in several elementary and secondary schools.

She holds a bachelor of science degree in biology from Saint Mary College, Notre Dame, Indiana, and a master of arts degree in spirituality from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Joan currently serves as a member of the board of the Loyola University Health System in Chicago, and has served on several hospital boards, as well as the board of Saint Mary College, Notre Dame.

"Joan's extensive ministerial background and her experience in religious life leadership will be valuable



LCWR Leadership Attend Annual USCCB Meetings

The LCWR presidency -- Sharon Holland, IHM; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Marcia Allen, CSJ -- and executive director Janet Mock, CSJ attended meetings of the Commission for Religious Life and Ministry as well as committee meetings related to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops from November 7-8, and were observers at the USCCB general assembly from November 10-11.

Commission for Religious Life and Ministry

The Commission for Religious Life and Ministry is the USCCB's official link with conferences of women and men religious and is comprised of

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assets to LCWR," said LCWR president Sharon Holland, IHM. "US religious life is in a period of significant transformation, and the conference is fully committed to providing our members with the resources needed in these critical times. We feel confident that Joan will lead the conference with great wisdom and skill."

From the LCWR Presidency

Yes! God so Loved the World ... (John 3:16)

by Marcia Allen, CSJ — LCWR President-Elect

Christmas is upon us. Gifts abound, or, the pressure of preparing them! We wonder how to move through the press of gala events, community and family expectations, decorating and gifting. Through it all, however, runs the reality of that single-focused Gift. Caught up in Christmas fever our very being longs for the deep still silence when the always-here God will once again recall us to ourselves and rebirth in us the memory of Incarnate Presence.

The event of Christmas, for all its commercialism, sparks our religious imaginations. Our Christian memory shakes from the foils of the frenetic pre-Christmas-induced exhaustion and cynicism, the Mystery of God's outpouring of the Godself into the world as human. Here in the amazing Feast of Christmas we remember all over again our human life's meaning. Here is the One who will teach us



what God is like. Here is the One who will teach us what being human is like. Once again, at Christmas we prepare to follow this One into the real meaning of life.

This Gift, the one gift that matters, we recognize as our sole reason for anything we do. Entering into Christmas as gift, gifted and giving, leads us into the Mystery of Jesus, the Christ of Faith. This is the One who, crucified to the world and the world to him, draws us ever more deeply into our first "Yes," with yes again and again. This ever-deeper intimacy is the gift over and over again, received and given. We, born into this world, are consecrated to this same gifting intimacy. With Christ we are crucified to the world and the world to us: love, steady and tender born in and through us, making every day the gift of Christmas.

This is the One who,
crucified to the world and
the world to him,
draws us ever more deeply
into our first "Yes,"
with yes
again and again.



LCWR Leadership Attend Annual USCCB Meetings

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the executive committees or presidency of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR) and LCWR. Bishop Michael Burbidge (Bishop of Raleigh, NC) represents USCCB on the commission. The executive directors/secretaries of each of the four conferences, the president of the National Conference of Vicars for Religious (NCVR) and the executive director of the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) also attend these meetings.

Receiving Pastoral Ministers into the United States

This year's agenda included discussion on the updated *Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers into the United States*, a significant document outlining rights and responsibilities of international priests, religious, and laity coming into the United States for ministry. It came to the attention of this commission three years ago that women religious, especially, were being invited into the United States by pastors from their home countries to minister here without the knowledge of diocesan officials. Consequently, these ministers have had no opportunity for enculturation and had no access to information about their rights as pastoral ministers or their responsibilities as ministers in the United States.

The current guidelines provide important information to assure that international ministers working in the United States have the proper preparation and are assured their rights as Catholic ministers serving the church in the United States. The document may be read online at ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/cclv-guidelines/#1 and is available for purchase through USCCB. Every congregation is urged to have a copy of this document and attend one of four workshops to be held in 2015. The workshops are designed for key personnel in religious communities who are responsible for drafting and implementing policies regarding international pastoral ministers. Information on the guidelines and the regional workshops may be found at www.usccb.org/about/general-counsel/guidelines-for-receiving-pastoral-ministers-in-the-united-states.cfm.

The commission also heard an excellent presentation by NRRO executive director Janice Bader, CPPS as a preparation for a request that will go to the November 2016 USCCB meeting to extend the national collection for religious for another 10 years. The current term of the collection ends in 2017.

Updates from CARA

Thomas Gaunt, SJ, executive director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) updated the commission on surveys related to religious life conducted by CARA on topics such as aging trends in the United States reflected in the aging of religious institutes, Hispanics entering religious life, family support for religious vocations, and cultural dynamics that support/do not support vocations to religious life. CARA, in collaboration with Trinity University, Washington, will conduct a survey on international sisters serving in the United States. One survey will be sent to the leader in each congregation and another to international sisters in every congregation in the United States to determine the level of care and enculturation taking place for international sisters and the receiving communities. In addition, the survey will address what opportunities are available to international sisters that support their life as a religious.



Year of Consecrated Life

The commission discussed the upcoming Year of Consecrated Life, scheduled to begin on November 30, 2014 and conclude February 2, 2016. The four conferences have planned three days in 2015 for all religious throughout the country to open their doors and invite in their neighbors:

February 8, 2015

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LCWR Leadership Attend Annual USCCB Meetings

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Come and Meet your Sisters and Brothers

This is viewed as an open house to welcome in friends and neighbors to acquaint or deepen their knowledge of religious life.

DVDs of the *Women & Spirit* documentary as well as greeting cards can be ordered through the LCWR office for use during this year.

Summer 2015

Serve with your Sisters and Brothers

This is an opportunity to invite families and young adults to join religious in days of ministry designated according to the schedule in places of ministry.

September 16, 2015

Pray with your Sisters and Brothers

This provides an opportunity to invite neighbors and friends to join religious in prayer. This might be followed with light refreshments.

LCWR hopes to use the programs and publications that are in place to highlight the Year of Consecrated Life. Additional resources are available through the National Religious Vocation Conference at nrvc.net/275/publication/year-of-consecrated-life-2841 and at www.vocationnetwork.org/articles/article_sections?q=year_of_consecrated_life.

Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations

The USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, which is staffed by the USCCB Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, meets annually with the executive directors of consulting organizations related to clergy (National Federation of Priests Councils, National Organization for Continuing Education, National Association of Hispanic Priests, National Association of Diaconate Directors), vocations (NCDVD, NRVC, Serra), seminary formation (Institute for Priestly Formation, National Association of College Seminaries, National Association of Theological Schools) and religious life (CMSM, CMSWR, LCWR, consecrated virgins, secular institutes, vicars for religious).

At this year's meeting on November 8, each group (clergy, consecrated life, seminary formation, and vocations) formed small groups to give reports from each organization and to discuss the questions related to the Synod on the Family prepared by each organization. Earlier in the year each LCWR region responded to the following questions:

- How is marriage central to the New Evangelization and the promotion of vocations?
- What can be done to support better the pastoral care of families?
- In what way can your organization promote the gift and responsibility of marriage in the church?

A lively discussion followed both in small groups and in the large group setting. Of interest, the response of LCWR members to these questions was reflected in every group as everyone is engaging in the complexities of family life today, the stresses placed on families, and the reality of non-traditional families. It was beneficial to engage in this conversation and hear the response from everyone for the need to listen deeply to people's experience and respond with understanding and compassion.

Sharon, Carol, Marcia, and Janet attended the general sessions of the USCCB general assembly as observers on November 10 and 11.

These annual experiences provide an opportunity for two indispensable components within the church -- the charismatic and the hierarchical -- to engage in conversation and hopefully, call the best from each for the good of the church in the United States and beyond.

Occasional Papers Article Available in French and Spanish

Translations in French and Spanish of the article "The Discipline of Communal Discernment," by Carole Shinnick, SSND, published in the Summer 2014 edition of LCWR's *Occasional Papers* are available on the LCWR website at: lwr.org/articles-pertinent-religious-life.

The translations are provided courtesy of the Sisters of Providence of Montreal.

LCWR Executive Committee Meets in Washington, DC

Members of the LCWR executive committee -- Sharon Holland, IHM; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Marcia Allen, CSJ; Pat Eck, CBS; Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF; Rosemary Brennan, CSJ; and Janet Mock, CSJ met November 4-5, 2014 at Washington Retreat Center, Washington, DC and joined CMSM for a joint executive committee meeting on November 6. Rosemarie Jasinski, CBS was unable to attend because of a prior congregational commitment.

Work included review of the LCWR financial report, investment report, investment guidelines, and 2015 projected budget. The committee accepted the budget, which was reviewed by the LCWR finance and audit committee in October, and authorized the staff to implement it beginning January 1, 2015. The budget will be on the agenda for approval by the board at its February meeting.

The executive committee also discussed the 2015 assembly, a revised process for the Outstanding Leadership Award, the Year of Consecrated Life, planning for the joint board meeting with CMSM in February, and the orientation and transition planning for Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, who will become LCWR's executive director January 1, 2015.

Call for Leadership Pathway Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to pilot the next module of Leadership Pathways entitled, "God's Mission at the Center: The Foundations of Mission Grounded Leadership." Groups will begin in late January and continue, for approximately nine months with time off between segments. Anyone who is able to help pilot this module is asked to send a message with her name and e-mail address to Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org. Anyone with questions or who would like to talk further about this opportunity may e-mail or call Marie McCarthy, SP at mmccarthy@lcwr.org or 301-803-9590.



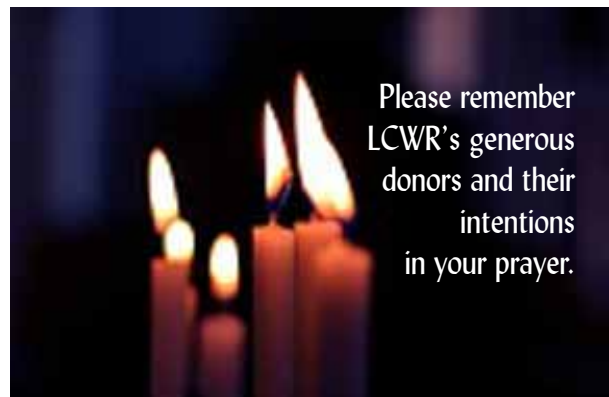
LCWR New Leader Workshop Features Outstanding Faculty

The 2015 LCWR New Leader Workshop will be held from March 19 to 22 at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. This annual LCWR offering is recommended not only for those who are new to religious life leadership, but also for those who may be returning to leadership. The program is specifically tailored to the unique questions and challenges of religious life leadership today and includes presentations, processing experiences, ritual, and integration sessions where participants begin to apply the workshop learnings to their own institute's realities.

This workshop will cover topics of critical importance for religious life leaders in the areas of spiritual leadership, canon and civil law, human development, team-building, care of the elderly, and more. Presenters include Nancy Schreck, OSF; Janice Bader, CPPS; Simone Campbell, SSS; Mary Haddad, RSM; Mary Hughes, OP; Lynn Levo, CSJ; Christine Rody, SC; and members of the LCWR staff.

Participants are encouraged to attend as councils, although individuals are welcome to attend as well.

More information and registration materials are available at lcwr.org/sites/default/files/calendar/attachments/nlwregistration2015.pdf. Registration deadline is January 20.



THE Occasional Papers

Leadership in the Middle Space



In her address at the 2014 LCWR assembly Nancy Schreck, OSF explored the concept of living and ministering in what she termed “the middle space.” As she noted, religious life is currently in a middle passage with “the in-breaking of something new, of major shifts in world view, our cosmology, with the concurrent breakdown of so much of what is familiar.”

The Winter 2015 issue of *Occasional Papers* will explore the challenges of embracing religious life in the middle space and the potential of these times. Articles will examine

- Leadership in the middle space
- A closer look at the LCWR Call 2015-22 and its relation to the middle space
- The prophetic identity of religious life for these times
- Thriving in the middle space
- Perspectives on religious life in the middle passage from a younger religious
- The middle space created as one crosses cultures
- Unmasking long-held assumptions

The issue also includes an interview with John Sivolon, MM, author of *God’s Mission and Postmodern Culture: The Gift of Uncertainty*.

Although all LCWR members, associates, and subscribers will receive a copy of *Occasional Papers*, many leaders order additional copies for their own members and associates. Orders and payment must be received by **December 16, 2014**. Orders may be placed online at lcwr.org/item/winter-2015-leadership-middle-space.

Imagining Justice: A Learning Lab for Leaders and Justice Promoters

The recently redesigned LCWR annual gathering now known as Imagining Justice: A Learning Lab for Leaders and Justice Promoters will take place from March 2-5, 2015 at Presentation Center in Los Gatos, California. Kathleen Pruitt, CSJP will guide participants as they seek to ground their work for justice and peacemaking in the heart of the gospel message and to experience the essential relationship between contemplative consciousness and prophetic action for justice. A flyer with a full description of the gathering and registration information is available on the LCWR website at: tinyurl.com/noaxvld.

Registration must be submitted by December 15.



Leading from Within Retreat

Leading from a New Place

One space is still available for this retreat for
LCWR members
and LCWR associates who are serving
in congregation leadership

January 11 — 16, 2015
 Bethany Retreat Center -- Lutz, Florida
bethany.catholicweb.com

Registration form:
lcwr.org/sites/default/files/calendar/attachments/lfwretreat15_0.pdf

LCWR Receives 2014 Mission Award from US Catholic Mission Association

On October 24, the US Catholic Mission Association presented its 2014 Mission Award to LCWR during the annual USCMA conference. LCWR executive director Janet Mock, CSJ received a standing ovation as she accepted the award from USCMA board member and LCWR member Janice McLaughlin, MM. The award inscription reads: “The 2014 Mission Award is presented to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in recognition for embodying a Gospel-inspired, non-violent concern for the dignity of the poor, and strengthening the religious dimension of commitment to social justice.”

In her acceptance speech, Janet said in part, “It is truly humbling to accept the United States Catholic Mission Association’s annual award in the name of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. I am humbled by the power of your witness, and so while I stand here on behalf of the leaders of communities of women religious in the United States, I am keenly aware of your prophetic presence through the years. Your witness has inspired and educated us as a conference and has helped us to grow. You have gone all over the world and received the Good News from all the people you have encountered. You have affirmed God-within-them and in doing so, you have manifested the Good News that the Reign of God is alive.

“Thank you for your witness and thank you for honoring LCWR with this award.”



Janet Mock, CSJ accepts the USCMA award on behalf of LCWR



USCMA board member and LCWR member Janice McLaughlin, MM; Janet Mock, CSJ; and USCMA executive director John Nuelle, MS at the USCMA award dinner



LCWR Addresses Conference of Communicators for Women Religious

LCWR associate director for communications Annmarie Sanders, IHM addressed the annual conference of the Communicators for Women Religious (CWR) in Long Beach, California. CWR invited her to speak on the doctrinal assessment of LCWR by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and its implications for communications directors of women’s religious congregations.

CWR, a network of professional communicators serving women religious, marked its 20th anniversary during the September conference.



- Letter to conferees of the State Foreign Operations omnibus appropriations bill asking them to include provisions that would address the root causes of forced migration from Central America of children and families. LCWR (10/21/14)
- Letter to leaders of the US House and Senate urging members to take action in the upcoming lame duck session to provide continued funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). LCWR (10/23/14)
- Letter from leaders of frontline human rights organizations, survivors of the commercial sex trade, advocates, and allies working to end human trafficking and provide services to victims asking the Associated Press not to replace the word “prostitute” with “sex worker.” Ann Scholz, SSND (10/31/14)
- Letter to Representative Chris Gibson (R, NY-19) thanking him for his recent comments on climate change expressed in a letter to the editor in the local paper. LCWR (11/14)
- Letter to Senator Diane Feinstein (D, CA) encouraging her to stand fast against those who seek to censor her committee’s report on torture. Sharon Holland, IHM (11/10/14)
- Letter to Congressional conferees urging them to ensure adequate funding is appropriated for accounts that prevent violent conflict, avert mass atrocities, and protect civilians threatened by such crises. LCWR (11/14)
- Letter to Congress urging members to support a full-year omnibus appropriations bill for FY 2015 that responds to the nation’s current urgent needs, to be enacted before the December 11 expiration of the current continuing resolution. LCWR (11/14)
- Letter to chairs and ranking members of the Senate and House appropriations committees urging them to support the House level of \$42.381 billion for the base allocation for the FY2015 State Foreign Operations (SFOPS) bill as well as a minimum of \$8.6 billion for humanitarian needs in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) during upcoming appropriations negotiations. LCWR (11/14)

- Letters to President Obama, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, and Ms. Cecilia Muñoz asking them to use their discretionary authority to defer the deportation of Rosa Robles Loreto. Janet Mock, CSJ(11/10/14)

Upcoming LCWR Dates

Leading from Within Retreat

*Bethany Retreat Center
Lutz, Florida
January 11 — 16, 2015*

Imagining Justice

*Presentation Center
Los Gatos, California
March 2 — 5, 2015*

LCWR New Leader Workshop

*Conference Center - University of St.
Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois
March 19 — 22, 2015*

LCWR Assembly

*Houston, Texas
August 11—15, 2015*

LCWR Assembly

*Atlanta, Georgia
August 9—13, 2016*



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Justice Promoters Explore New Avenues of Collaboration

Social justice promoters from congregations of women religious gathered at River's Edge Retreat Center in Cleveland, Ohio for their first-ever national convocation November 11-13. Participants representing more than 100 congregations from 26 states and one Canadian province met to explore the theme: "Entering the Transforming Future: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Ministry in the Coming Age of Religious Life."

Keynote Speaker Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International, challenged participants to strive always to push back fear and establish the peace and justice of the reign of God.

The convocation also featured eight participant led workshops where they shared insights into specific social justice topics, built social media skills, and reflected on the spirituality underlying action for justice.

Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM, facilitated the work of the two-day event helping the justice promoters to strengthen their work on critical global and national concerns and to share innovative strategies and best practices to respond more effectively to issues that affect the lives of people and the planet. Promoters plan to continue to collaborate and to share prayer, education, and action resources.

Participants took the opportunity to call on President Obama to provide the broadest possible relief to those trapped in the shadows by the broken US immigration system and they challenged congressional leaders to enact comprehensive, compassionate immigration reform.

These justice seekers gathered, rooted themselves in their Catholic tradition, and reached towards the future. Convocation co-chair Ann Oestreich expressed the sentiments of many, "While the future is unknowable, the fact that these sisters, and those who minister with them, remain deeply committed to justice, transformation, and collaboration is a sign of hope for all."

Catholic Health Association Launches 100 Days of Prayer

The Catholic Health Association has launched 100 days of prayer leading up to the World Day of the Sick on February 11, 2015. On that day, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, at 1:00 PM thousands of people across the United States will stop for one powerful moment of prayer for those who are sick and injured and those who care for them.

The event is one of many that will celebrate CHA's 100 years of healing ministry; providing a passionate voice for compassionate care. Interested participants may go to www.chausa.org/100 to join the prayer event.

Pope Francis' 2015 World Peace Day Message to Focus on Human Trafficking

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has announced the theme selected by Pope Francis for the upcoming World Day of Peace. The theme, "Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters" will be the title of the Message for the 48th World Day of Peace, celebrated on January, 1 2015. The pope's full message for World Peace Day will be released by the Vatican in mid-December. The World Day of Peace, initiated by Pope Paul VI, is celebrated each year on the first day of January.



Is Your Leadership Term About to End?

If your leadership term is ending this month, we ask you to submit a change of leadership form found in the LCWR Members Information section (password-protected) of the website at lcwr.org/members/lcwr-membership-information.

OurVoices Campaign Announces ‘Light for Lima’

This December as world leaders meet in Lima the future is on the line. Time is running out for world leaders to reach an agreement that will mitigate devastating effects of climate change. This is why OurVoices is organizing #LightForLIMA - a global, multi-faith prayer vigil.



On December 7, from 8:00 - 8:30 PM, people from diverse faith and spiritual communities will gather for public vigils lit by solar lamps. Resources are available at ourvoices.net/lima-resources.

The December meeting in Lima is where world leaders will try to agree on the fundamentals that will guide the Paris climate talks next year. Success in Lima is one giant step forward in the quest for a robust climate treaty that protects the planet and the future.

Registration Open for Catholic Social Ministry Gathering 2015

Registration for the 2015 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, February 7-10 continues. The event will include presentations by USCCB President Archbishop Joseph Kurtz (Louisville), Archbishop Thomas Wenski (Miami), Monsignor Ray East, Father Daniel Groody, and other notable speakers as hundreds of Catholic leaders pray, learn and advocate around the theme, To Go Forth: Encountering Christ in the Heart of the World. There will be an opportunity for members of CMSM and LCWR institutes to meet on Saturday, February 7 at 11:00. Registration information may be found at: www.cvent.com/events/to-go-forth-encountering-christ-in-the-heart-of-the-world/event-summary-45867e9fce7444f9af42ed2b5d050392.aspx.



National Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Scheduled for December 11-14

Plans for this year’s National Gun Violence Sabbath include the National Vigil for Gun Violence Victims at the Washington National Cathedral (and in states across the country) on Thursday, December 11, and an invitation to congregations across the nation to participate via prayer, song, vigils, and education Thursday through Sunday.

Approximately 75 institutes of women religious participated in last year’s event which was held in March. Religious institutes can pledge to join hundreds of religious congregations in the sabbath at marchsabbath.org/sabbath/.

Human Trafficking Ad to Appear in Airline Magazines

US Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) in cooperation with the Omaha-based public relations firm of Bailey Lauerma is once again sponsoring an anti-trafficking advertisement in airline magazines.



The newest ad exposes the scope of labor trafficking and encourages readers to get involved in stopping the horror of modern day slavery. They hope to place the advertisement in a number of airline inflight magazines including the December issue of American Airlines’ magazine, *American Way*.

USCSAHT also announces that the video of the address by Estrella Castalone, FSA, director of Talitha Kum, at their October 5-8 meeting in Washington, DC, is now available online. Estrella used the occasion to introduce the work of the International Network of Consecrated Life against Trafficking in Persons, to her American audience. Her remarks about the scourge of trafficking in persons and the work of Talitha Kum are available at media01.commpartners.com/CHE/CC_Oct2014/index.html.



SOLIDARITY with South Sudan

By Joan Mumaw, IHM
jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com

This past year has been a very difficult one for South Sudan. The violence that exploded last December has led the country to a civil war. More than 7 million people are facing the threat of hunger. Solidarity has temporarily lost the mission of Malakal: the community suffered the attacks at Christmas and during the following months the house and teacher training center were completely looted.

The Solidarity Teacher Training College (TCC) in Yambio has seen two classes of teachers graduate. Without the center in Malakal, TCC plans to increase its facilities to receive more students. Dormitories, a dining porch, sanitation and staff rooms will be added.

At the Solidarity Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI) in Wau registered nurses graduated again with top results and continue to prepare midwives as well.

The Solidarity Pastoral Team is responding to the present crisis, with trauma healing, reconciliation, and peace-building workshops as well as emergency pastoral visits to war ravaged dioceses.

The Solidarity Agricultural Program involves the local population. Capacity-building workshops are taking place in Riimenze. The agricultural programs at the STTC in Yambio and at the CHTI in Wau are also designed to develop community farming and sustainable agriculture practices.

Now more than ever the Spirit that moves Solidarity is needed. The diversity of more than 260 congregations working together in different ways -- governing, forming communities, supporting with funds, personnel and praying -- is a model for the people in South Sudan and for our students. We thank you for journeying with Solidarity as we walk hand in hand with the local church and the people of South Sudan. If you are not yet involved, we invite you to be part of this initiative.

If you are looking for alternative gifts during this holiday season, consider a contribution to Solidarity to educate a nurse, midwife or to train a teacher.



Photo by Paul Jeffrey

News from the UN

International Human Rights Day is observed by the international community every year on December 10. It commemorates the day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When the General Assembly adopted the Declaration, it was proclaimed a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.” More information is available at www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday.



International Migrants Day, December 18, is a day set aside to honor the courage of those who seek to overcome adversity and to live a better life. Today, globalization, together with advances in communications and transportation, has greatly increased the number of people who have the desire and the capacity to move to other places. Additional information is available at www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday.

UNICEF reports that since the 2008 recession, 2.6 million more children have become impoverished than have escaped poverty in 41 wealthy countries. Child poverty increased by the largest percentage in Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Croatia, and Ireland. In 2012, 24.2 million children were living in poverty in the United States, a net increase of 1.7 million from 2008. More information is available at www.unicef-irc.org/article/1069.

Scientists Report Human Influence on the Climate System Undeniable

The findings of the intergovernmental panel on climate are clear, human influence on the climate system is growing. The report gave 95% certainty that warming since 1950 is human-made; not from natural effects and that its impact is already being felt on every continent.

The panel reported that if left unchecked, climate change will increase the likelihood of severe, pervasive, and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems. However, options are available to adapt to climate change and implementing stringent mitigation activities can ensure that the impacts of climate change remain within a manageable range, creating a brighter and more sustainable future.

The synthesis report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) integrates the findings of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report produced by over 800 scientists and released over the past 13 months. It is the most comprehensive assessment of climate change ever undertaken.

“We have the means to limit climate change,” said IPCC chair RK Pachauri. “The solutions are many and allow for continued economic and human development. All we need is the will to change, which we trust will be motivated by knowledge and an understanding of the science of climate change.”

World leaders are already pledging to meet the challenge. President Obama set a new target to cut US carbon pollution by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025. China is committing to peak its CO₂ emissions around 2030 while striving to peak earlier and to boost its share of non-fossil fuel energy to around 20%. The new emission reduction target announced by President Obama will roughly double the pace of US carbon pollution reduction from 1.2% per year from 2005 to 2020, to 2.3-2.8% from 2020 to 2025. This target keeps the US on track to reduce its carbon pollution on the order of 80% by 2050.

Additional information about the IPCC, including links to its reports, may be found at www.ipcc.ch.