

Update

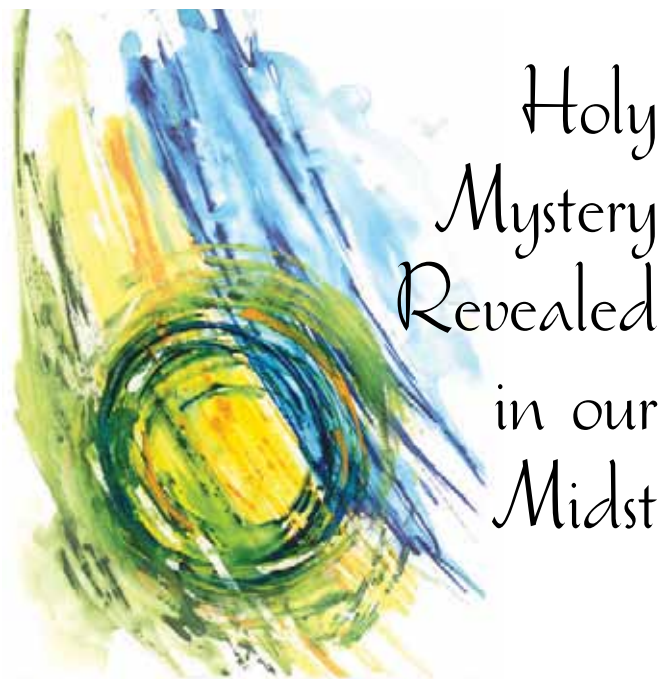
*A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

June 2014

2014 LCWR Assembly

Nashville, Tennessee --- August 12 — 16, 2014

LCWR Officers Make Annual Visit to Rome



Conscious of the great hunger among women religious to be grounded in faith and ever attentive to the movement of God, the 2014 LCWR assembly will create a space for members to discern together where God is leading women's religious life. Set in a context of contemplation, and drawing upon the beauty of the arts, LCWR members will be led through a process to more deeply explore how Holy Mystery is being revealed in the midst of the concrete realities of US religious life as LCWR and its members plan for their future.

Assembly information and registration materials are available on the Members section of the LCWR website.

Members and associates must use their individualized username and password to access this area. (www.lcwr.org)

In early May, LCWR president Carol Zinn, SSJ; president-elect Sharon Holland, IHM; past president Florence Deacon, OSF; and executive director Janet Mock, CSJ spent more than a week in Rome meeting with representatives of various Vatican offices, as well as with other religious and officials. Present at the same time were the officers from the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, who joined LCWR in some of the meetings. Their visits included time with:

- The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF)
- The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
- The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
- The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Immigrants

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LCWR and CMSM officers meet with US ambassador to the Vatican Ken Hackett: Carol Zinn, SSJ; John Pavlik, OFM Cap; Janet Mock, CSJ; Ambassador Hackett; John Edmunds, ST; Florence Deacon, OSF; James Greenfield, OSFS; Sharon Holland, IHM; Ben L. Consigli, FMS; and John Puodziunas, OFM

From the LCWR Presidency

Experiencing Rome Through the Lives of its People

by Sharon Holland, IHM — LCWR President-Elect

Much has been written about the LCWR Rome trip of 2014. Around the edges of intense meetings, however, we shared bits of the everyday lives of people around us. The Domus Carmelitana, our home away from home, reminded us that religious institutes in many places have been faced with numeric decline and the repurposing of buildings. Half of a large structure of the Carmelite Fathers is now a place of hospitality for tourists and pilgrims in Rome.



were Sisters, he began in earnest. The Tau hanging from his rear view mirror was a possession of 25 years; Francis of Assisi and Therese of Lisieux adorned the sun visor. Weaving through Roman traffic, our driver was still able to show us his children, Gaia and Cristiano, on his cell phone. Cristiano had experienced behavioral difficulties, but his attentive father was convinced that his son suffered from some real medical problem. He persevered until a doctor was found who arrived at a diagnosis of ADD and prescribed help.

Our arrival was on the eve of the canonization of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II, hailed in P. Francis' homily, respectively, as pope of openness to the Holy Spirit and pope of the family. Some called it the day of four Popes, with P. Francis presiding, and Benedict XVI among the Cardinals concelebrating. On Saturday afternoon, St. Peter's Square was filled with people praying, singing, or simply waiting in line to enter the basilica; the Square was filled, but voices were quiet and expectant. Many spent the night in the streets in order to get better places when allowed to enter the piazza before dawn.

Following one meeting we were offered refreshments and in the flow of conversation, an official of 40 years willingly produced pictures of a new grandchild. She was anxiously awaiting the visit of a son working as a civil engineer in Romania. Unemployment in Italy is currently at 40%.

Most of our days included sharing scripture reflection and liturgy with the officers of CMSM. Day after day there was the conscious awareness of meditating on texts which described the earliest days of the Christian Community, the "Way," the Church. Those were troubling and yet courageous days, as the apostles and disciples awaited a fuller outpouring of the Spirit. They were days of misunderstanding and challenges, and of miraculous cures and new insights.

At the Sunday "Regina Coeli," Pope Francis, reflecting on the story of Emmaus, urged the large and diverse crowd to read a passage of the Gospel every day and on Sundays to receive communion...to let their own

hearts burn and to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Colored helium balloons dotted the clear blue sky as the prayer concluded.

In addition to the friendly and welcoming people surrounding us in Rome, we were very aware of the prayer and concern with which you followed us throughout those days. Thank you!

Our first taxi driver spoke English willingly and well. After learning, through a chance remark that we



Janet Mock, CSJ; Sharon Holland, IHM; Florence Deacon, OSF; and Carol Zinn, SSJ take time to smell the roses!

LCWR Officers Make Annual Visit to Rome

(continued from page 1)

- The Pontifical Council for Social Communications
- The US Ambassador to the Vatican
- The leadership of the International Union of Superiors General
- The leaders of religious institutes with members in the United States

Archbishop J. Peter Sartain joined the LCWR officers at the meeting with CDF prefect Archbishop Gerhard Müller, and other members of the CDF staff. Following the meeting, which focused on the doctrinal assessment of LCWR, Archbishop Müller's opening remarks were made available on the CDF website. Later Archbishop Sartain released a statement about the meeting. Since LCWR was being asked by the media to offer a perspective on the meeting as well, the officers issued a public statement (lcwr.org/media/lcwr-statement-meeting-cdf-0). Media worldwide have reported on both Cardinal Müller's remarks and the LCWR commentary.

The LCWR officers also met twice with representatives of the Congregation for Religious, including prefect Cardinal João Braz de Aviz; secretary José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM; and other members of the dicastery staff including Hank Lemoncelli, OMI.

► *The officers of both conferences meet with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace* ▼



▲ *The CMSM and LCWR officers meet jointly with the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Immigrants* ▼



(additional photos on page 4)

LCWR Officers Make Annual Visit to Rome

(continued from page 3)



Women religious leaders based in Rome who have members living in the United States listen as Janet Mock, CSJ updates them on various religious life matters



The CMSM and LCWR officers gathered daily for prayer and liturgy, as well as time to socialize



The CMSM officers had an audience on May 5 with Pope Francis

Make Assembly Attendance Possible for Members Through a Donation to the LCWR Scholarship Fund

LCWR is grateful to the congregations who sent scholarship donations for assembly attendance for members. It's not too late to consider sending a donation to the LCWR scholarship fund.

Donations (checks payable to LCWR) may be directed to Grace Hartzog, SC, associate director for business and finance, at 8808 Cameron Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Any congregation that wishes to attend the conference, but needs assistance also is asked to contact Grace (ghartzog@lcwr.org) to request a partial scholarship. Partial assistance with registration and/or hotel accommodations is available through the LCWR scholarship fund.



LCWR Members Encouraged to Reflect on Emerging Insights

A new LCWR contemplative insight card is now available for downloading. The June 2014 card (pictured) is available at: lcwr.org/resources/leadership-pathways/ behold.

The insights on these cards are drawn from the responses submitted from the 15 LCWR regions after completing the "Behold, I am Doing Something New" contemplative process.



Extra Copies of *Praying in These Emerging Times* Available

Some extra copies of the 2014 LCWR reflection book, *Praying in These Emerging Times*, are available for purchase.

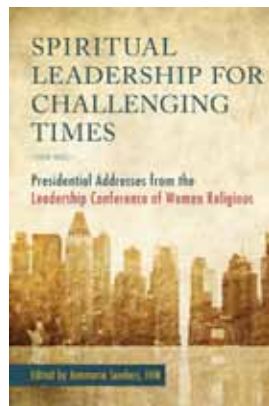
The book contains reflections by LCWR members where they share the images, stories, symbols, and questions that are shaping how they encounter God and how they pray. Artwork by Catholic sisters accompany the reflections, as well as questions and suggestions for deepening the reader's own prayer.

Copies may be purchased online for \$5.00 plus postage at lcsr.org/publications/praying-these-emergent-times. Special rates are available for larger orders.

Spiritual Leadership for Challenging Times Available as E-book

Spiritual Leadership for Challenging Times, the book of 10 LCWR presidential addresses published by Orbis is now available as an e-book through Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

A free reflection and study guide may be downloaded at: lcsr.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/spiritual_leadership_for_challenging_times_-_questions.pdf.



Orders Due for Summer 2014 Occasional Papers by May 30

The Summer 2014 issue of *Occasional Papers* is dedicated to an exploration of discernment through many lenses, including what it means to discern in light of new understandings of the universe.

Writers will be exploring such topics as:

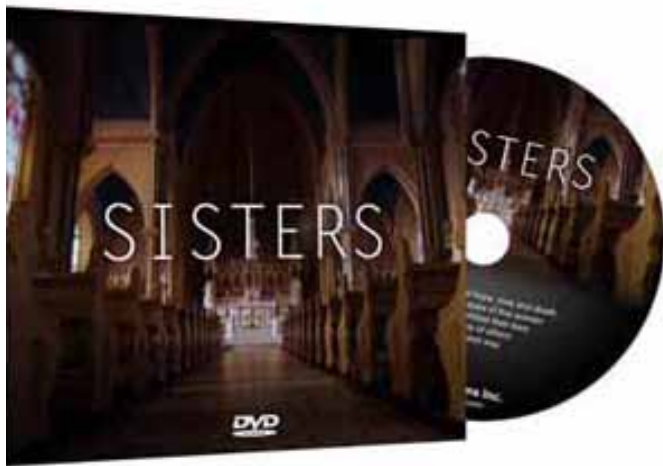
- Learnings from the universe that might help us better attune ourselves to the movement of Holy Mystery in our lives.
- The practice of communal discernment
- Using the arts in individual and communal discernment
- Discernment from the perspective of younger religious
- Discerning the future viability of one's religious institute



The issue will also include an interview with Margaret Wheatley, author of *Leadership and the New Science*, *Turning to One Another*, *Perseverance*, *So Far from Home: Lost and Found in Our Brave New World*, and other books.

Although all LCWR members and associates will receive their own copy of this publication, additional copies may be ordered online at lcsr.org/item/summer-2014-discernment. The cost for 1-100 copies is \$5.00 per copy. The cost is \$4.50 each for orders of 101 copies or more.

LCWR only prints the number of copies that are pre-ordered. **Orders must be received by May 30.** Any questions about orders may be directed to Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcsr.org or 301-588-4955.



Sisters Documentary Proves Popular Around the World

LCWR has been hosting on its website, *Sisters*, a one-hour documentary film about faith and hope, love, and death, seen through the eyes of five Catholic women religious. The film examines the lives of these women, revealing both their humanity and their deep spiritual grounding as Catholic sisters.

To date, the film has now been broadcast on approximately 70 PBS stations around the country and has been viewed nearly 10,000 times on the LCWR website. It also has been screened on the computer in 97 different countries, including Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, and Ukraine.

During this time of increased public interest in the lives of Catholic sisters, members may wish to explore ways to utilize the film to educate others on contemporary religious life. Activities could include:

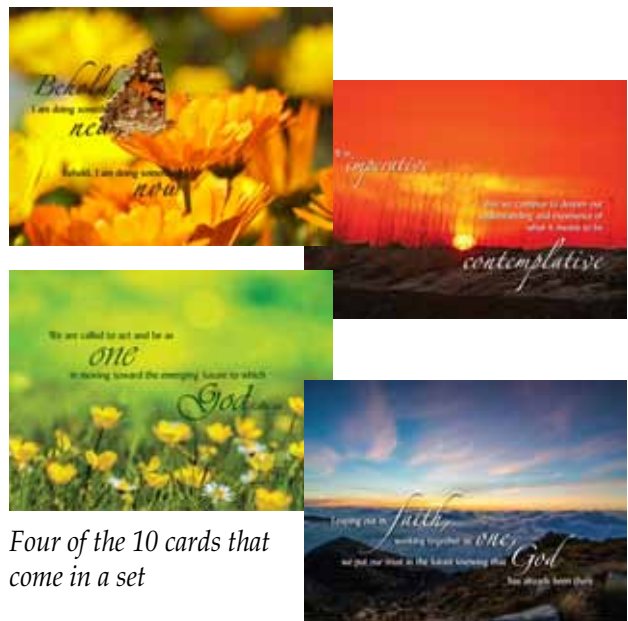
- Hosting a screening of the movie at motherhouses, parishes, and other locations
- Utilizing the film in classes in high school and college
- Inviting young women who may be considering religious life to a showing and discussion

The film is available at: lcsr.org/publications/sisters-documentary.

LCWR Contemplative Insights Now Available as Greeting Cards

LCWR will be making available sets of 10 greeting cards, each containing an insight that has come from the membership during the LCWR contemplative process used at meetings of the regions, committees, the board, and other events.

The cards can be purchased at the LCWR assembly for \$10.00 a set. Proceeds will go to the LCWR operating budget. Members are encouraged to plan to purchase packs as gifts.



Four of the 10 cards that come in a set



Some of the members of Solidarity with Sisters, a local group of women and men who walk with LCWR as spiritual companions, assemble the cards: Linda Donaldson, Ann Jelen, Anne Regan, Mary Ott, Mary Novak, Judy Sholes, Chris Costello (LCWR director of development), Joan Sklamm, Betty Thompson, and Ginny Cohen

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly
Nashville, Tennessee
August 12 — 16, 2014

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

Immigration Reform Possible

It is sounding more and more as if some kind of immigration reform legislation may move forward in the House before the August recess. An increasing number of Republicans, including some Tea Party activists, are speaking publically about the need to pass legislation before the 113th Congress completes its term.



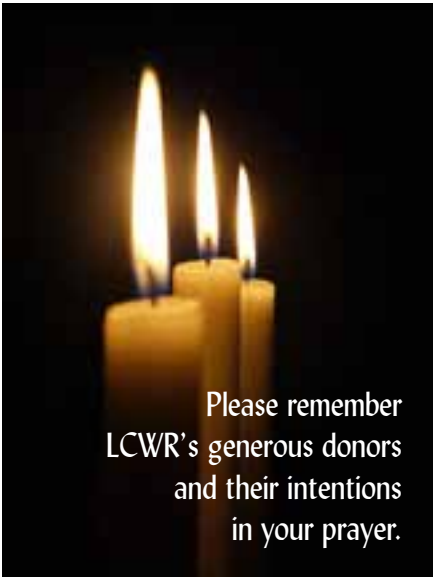
Congress watchers suggest that there is a “legislative window of opportunity” that may open in June and July. While it is impossible to know what proposed legislation will look like, some think there will be three or four packages of bills that will address: border security; interior enforcement; immigrants brought to the United States as children; legalization of undocumented immigrants; and the need to increase employment-based visas and reduce the family visa backlog.

Reform advocates are gearing up for busy weeks ahead. Among their first efforts is Justice for Immigrants’ (JFI) days of prayer and action. Designed to be used from June 2-8, the Pentecost toolkit contains prayers, daily reflections, and suggested actions, including suggestions for some very creative direct action. The kit is available on the JFI website at: tinyurl.com/nb7weya.

JFI is also planning a number of national call-in days. Beginning with a May 29 call to House offices planned to coincide with the visit of US Bishops to Capitol Hill. Calls to Representative’s district offices are planned for June 6 and June 13. The phone number and the message are the same for all three calls. Constituents can call 855-589-5698 to be connected and to ask for a vote on immigration reform legislation that: includes a path to citizenship, supports family unity, and guarantees safe and humane immigration enforcement practices.

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.



Please remember
LCWR’s generous donors
and their intentions
in your prayer.



by Eileen Campbell, RSM

Practicing Contemplative Dialogue

In their spring 2014 meeting Region 4 members participated in a three-hour contemplative dialogue process that integrated three significant areas for consideration from the national office: the contemplative process, the strategic plan, and the nomination of candidates for presidency and secretary. Each topic built on the previous one and members fully engaged the process. We are sharing the process we used in case other regions would like to consider planning something similar in the future or use this approach in their own institutes.

The first “movement” was a reflection and sharing on the contemplative dialogue process itself and what has been learned in our practice of it up to now, as well as how the process does or could assist us in our ministry of leadership. Examples of what was shared included how the process aided a community dealing with a seeming impasse, slowed decision-making processes, dissipated emotional reactions, helped members see deeper meaning and connections among the various areas of their lives and responsibilities, aided members in maintaining a spiritual foundation and providing a spiritual context for the “business” of our communities, grounded members in preparing for and being at meetings, and provided a calming presence that influences how we talk together and helps us let go of rushing and judgments.

The first conversation ended with a contemplative time to transition from the sharing on the call to the use of contemplative processes in our leadership into the next “movement” of reflective reading of the strategic plan. This was followed by an invitation to contemplate and share around our call as LCWR members to engage, affirm, and support the strategic direction of LCWR for

the next seven years. We identified what resonated and what we thought was missing.

The third conversation was a “movement” in the contemplative mode around a call for leadership: to discern what was needed in the role of presidency and secretary in light of our other two conversations and then to raise names for those positions.

Using the contemplative process to engage the members around the LCWR national office topics and their requested feedback was a very powerful experience. It helped focus people, the conversation, and the work and left the members feeling they accomplished much more and in a more effective way. It also helped us really listen to one another and engage in dialogue, and not just exchange ideas. We left the meeting with good energy and gratitude for the wisdom and insight of each person!



Any team that has discovered a helpful practice is invited to submit a brief description of the practice to the Contemporary Religious Life Committee via LCWR associate director for communications Annmarie Sanders, IHM at asanders@lcwr.org.



LCWR Usernames and Passwords

All LCWR members and associates should have completed the process to obtain an individualized username and password that gives them access to the members’ section of the LCWR website. These are needed in order to access a number of critical conference services, including information on and registration for the LCWR assembly. Anyone who has questions about the username or password is encouraged to contact Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org or 301-588-4955.

Effects of Climate Change Already Evident

The US government's National Climate Assessment released in May concludes that: "Climate change, once considered an issue for a distant future, has moved firmly into the present." The report, produced by a team of more than 300 experts guided by a 60-member federal advisory committee and reviewed by a range of scientists, including a panel of the National Academy of Sciences, details the effects of climate change on agriculture, water, human health, energy, transportation, forests, and ecosystems both now and into the future. The full report is available at: nca2014.globalchange.gov/downloads.

The US report follows shortly after the release of an international report, *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change*, by the United Nations Environment Program's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The result of the contributions of thousands of scientists from all over the world, the report calls for increased global efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, develop and transfer knowledge and environmentally sound technologies, and mitigate the harmful effects of climate change. Materials can be downloaded at www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg3/.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged world governments and leaders to move decisively on limiting global temperature increases. "We have to ask the leaders to commit to bold ambitious targets and we will ask them to accelerate their actions on the ground."

Bishops Travel to Capitol Hill to Support Immigrant Justice

Members of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, including some who celebrated mass at the US-Mexico border in Arizona on April 1, will travel to Capitol Hill on May 29 to urge lawmakers in the House of Representatives to act on immigration reform legislation.

"Our trip to the border opened our eyes, even more than previously, to the human tragedies generated by

our immigration system," said Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, auxiliary bishop of Seattle and chair of the USCCB Committee on Migration. "Bringing our experience, as well as the solidarity and spirit we felt with residents on both sides of the border, to our lawmakers in Washington is a natural next step."

Bishops participating in the day include Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami; Bishop Elizondo; Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City; Bishop Oscar Cantú of Las Cruces, New Mexico; and Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona.

The day will begin with a mass for immigrant families at 8:30 at St. Peter's Church on Capitol Hill. Immigrant advocates are inviting their Senators and Representatives to attend. An invitation may be downloaded at: tinyurl.com/k94l4ua.

National Migration Conference to be Held in Washington

The 2014 National Migration Conference (NMC) will be held July 7-10 at the Renaissance Washington, DC. The event is intended to build the capacity of the Catholic Church and society to advance the life and dignity of immigrants, migrants, refugees, unaccompanied migrant children, victims of human trafficking, and other vulnerable people on the move.

Hosted by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., and Catholic Charities USA, the conference combines training workshops and roundtable discussions complemented by general sessions featuring renowned experts and practitioners in the migration field.

The days will be interspersed with opportunities for networking, information-sharing, service recognition, entertainment, and special liturgies. In addition, there will be an entire day for participants to visit Capitol Hill and advocate on critical issues, including and especially comprehensive immigration reform.

The conference also promises to be a celebration of the many contributions that immigrants, migrants, refugees, and other people on the move make to American society. Information and registration materials are available at www.nationalmigrationconference.org.

Abduction of Nigerian School Girls Sparks Global Response

On April 15, 2014 more than 200 girls, most between the ages of 16 and 18, were abducted from the Government Girls' Secondary School in Chibok in northeastern Nigeria by Islamist extremist group, Boko Haram. Early reports indicated that some of the girls were sold as brides, others forced into early marriage, and still others were being held for ransom. While some girls have managed to escape, many are still being held hostage by the extremist group, whose name means "western education is a sin," and its leader Abubakar Shekau.

Worldwide dozens of nongovernmental organizations and national governments along with thousands of individuals have condemned these actions and worked to keep the events in the global spotlight. The international outcry to "bring back our girls" is raising awareness about the dangers and discrimination young women face.

Recently, Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe and New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof discussed the situation in Nigeria and the epidemic of violence against girls and women with the "CBS This Morning" co-hosts. The interview is available on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRzvEzdWHKc

US Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking called on their members to pray for the girls and their families and to act to keep the spotlight on the lost schoolgirls of Nigeria. More information is available at: tinyurl.com/kvsgw5u.

In the wake of the ongoing crisis in Nigeria, Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Mark Kirk (R-IL), and Jean Shaheen (D-NH) re-introduced the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) in the US Senate. IVAWA represents a huge step forward in the US government's commitment to ending this global scourge so that every woman and girl can live a life free from violence and fulfill her basic human rights. IVAWA calls for a comprehensive US response to end violence against women and girls globally. Learn more about IVAWA at: www.futureswithoutviolence.org/section/ivawa.

News from the UN

Women's Influence at UN Growing

A record 15% of United Nations permanent representatives are women, and women hold five of 15 seats on the UN Security Council. "It's quite a significant development," said Joy Ogwu, the ambassador of Nigeria and the president of the council in April. The rising presence of women is "showing that a woman can reach that level and can make a difference is extremely important for somebody who is looking for a path in life," says Raimonda Murmokaite, Lithuania's envoy. More information is available at: tinyurl.com/m4kg6m8.



World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day is held every year on June 20. It is a special day when the world takes time to recognize the resilience of forcibly displaced people throughout the world. World Refugee Day 2014 will continue the UN Refugee Agency's global "1 Campaign," whose theme is: "1 family torn apart by war is too many." Local, national, and international communities are encouraged to reflect on what can be done in order to help those who are forced to flee to find safety, regain hope, and rebuild their lives. More information can be found at: tinyurl.com/82mt7ku.

Advocate for the Education We Want

Globally, one in five girls around the world is denied an education by the daily realities of poverty, discrimination, and violence. Every day, young girls are missing from education, isolated from their friends, forced into marriage, and subjected to violence. Not only is this unjust, it is a waste of potential with serious global consequences. Supporting girls' education is one of the single best investments to help end poverty.



The Global Education First Initiative Youth Advocacy Group, A World at School, and Plan International, with support from UNICEF and UN Girls Education Initiative, have published real stories of change, led by young people from all over the world. The advocacy toolkit may be downloaded at: tinyurl.com/p9meu06.

Conference Spiritual Leadership in Challenging Times: Practices of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious



Saturday, June 7, 2014

8:30 AM to 3 PM

at The Catholic University of America -- Washington, DC
Co-sponsored by the Institute for Policy Research and
Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America and
by Solidarity with Sisters

Presenters:

Former LCWR presidents

Helen Maher Garvey, BVM --- **Mary Hughes, OP**
Pat Farrell, OSF

LCWR Associate Director for Programs

Marie McCarthy, SP

Cost: \$15.00 (includes lunch)

More information and registration:

solidaritywithsisters.weebly.com/june-7-2014---spiritual-leadership-conference.html

The LCWR Resource Sharing Forum

LCWR reminds its members and associates of its LCWR Resource Sharing Forum. The forum is a listserv that is open only to LCWR members and associates that provides a means for communicating with one another online with a question or to share information.

What is being discussed on the LCWR Forum?

Members have posed questions on a wide variety of issues including the following:

- Policies on credit card use
- Recommendations for a chapter facilitator
- Guidelines for use of social media
- Articles on leadership discernment
- Input on the use palliative care

So that all forum members are not receiving the answers to these questions, persons who wish to respond to a question are asked to send their response directly to the individual making the request for information.

What are the benefits of participating?

Members can easily ask other members for help any time they have a question or are looking for information, resources, speakers, facilitators, translators, policies, or good ideas. Members report that they have received very helpful information on questions they have asked.

Members can also participate in polls initiated by the national office, asking for input on LCWR issues. Forum participants can also access the archives of past messages.

What is needed to make the forum successful?

The participation of as many members and associates as possible! The more LCWR members who are a part of the list, the more effective this service will be.

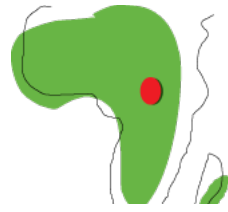
How do I sign up for the LCWR Forum?

Information on signing up for the LCWR Forum is available on the LCWR website in the "Members" section, which is password-protected. Any member or associate who does not have the username and password to access this part of the site may obtain this information from Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org. Carol can also guide members through the process of signing up for the forum.



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SOLIDARITY with South Sudan

by Joan Mumaw, IHM, Development Director-USA
jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com

- Letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson and Attorney General Eric Holder outlining recommendations regarding immediate actions the Obama administration can take to decrease deportations, increase the number of people with immigration status, and ensure that all immigrants' labor and civil rights are protected. LCWR (4/11/14)
- Letter to Secretary John Kerry urging the United States to take specific steps toward nuclear disarmament during the UN meetings on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that will take place in New York April 28-May 9. Carol Zinn, SSJ (4/14/14)
- Letter from faith-based organizations calling on President Obama and Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson to champion immigration reform and to take administrative action to stop harmful enforcement practices, reunite families, and promote community wholeness. LCWR (4/21/14)
- Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) letter to Congress calling on members to enact immigration reform that will reunite families, provide meaningful opportunities for undocumented immigrants to apply for citizenship, and promote community wholeness. LCWR (4/23/14)
- Faith leaders' letter to Senate and House Appropriations Committees asking them to fund international humanitarian and poverty-focused development assistance programs in FY 2015 at equal or higher funding levels as those enacted in fiscal year 2014. LCWR (5/2/14)
- Mother's Day letter to Senator Reid and Speaker Boehner urging them to move from lofty rhetoric about family values to responsible policies that help women and families. Ann Scholz, SSND (5/11/14)
- Letter to Congress opposing efforts to use the appropriations process to change or weaken federal child nutrition programs. LCWR (5/15/14)

National and international news media have raised the profile of South Sudan in recent weeks. There is a call by the United States, European nations, and the African Union for the government and the opposition to honor the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed in January, to allow the UN and other NGOs safe access to corridors to provide humanitarian assistance, especially as the rainy season approaches, and for the two leaders to negotiate a cease-fire and transitional government prior to elections in 2015. These leaders seek power by any means possible and have exploited historical tribal differences to achieve their goals at the expense of the ordinary citizens. More than one million people are displaced and tens of thousands have been killed in what some are calling near genocide.

We are pleased to see the high level intervention by Secretary of State John Kerry and UN Director General Ban Ki Moon. In March, Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) introduced a bipartisan resolution that articulates a US commitment to peace, stability, and justice in South Sudan. The full text of the resolution is available at www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hres503/text. A message may be sent to your representative urging him or her to co-sponsor the resolution by going to www2.americanprogress.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=334.

We invite you and your communities to join the people of South Sudan in prayer for peace in this worn torn country. Because we are all connected, the power of prayer may be the best gift we have to offer.