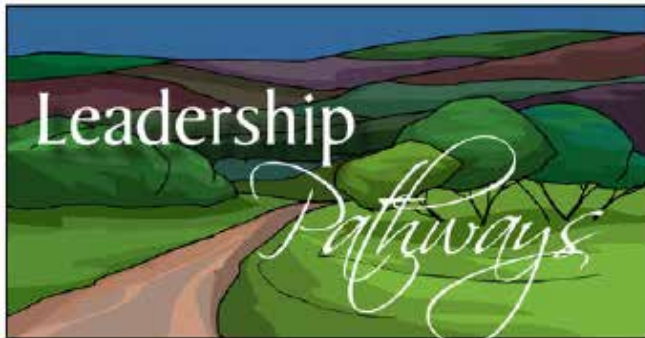


# Update

A Publication of the  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

February 2017



## LCWR Grant Receives \$780,000 Grant to Support Leadership Development Services

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation awarded a \$780,000 grant to LCWR to support the expansion and strengthening of the Leadership Pathways program. The grant places particular emphasis on the dramatic transitions and transformations that are facing religious life today.

Specifically, this grant will allow the conference to develop materials and presentations which can assist LCWR members in deepening their own capacity for contemplative engagement as well as providing resources members can use with their own congregations. In addition, it will allow LCWR to offer more resources to the regions and to create some processes and structures that will assist interested members to form ongoing deepening groups.

A particularly exciting aspect of the grant is the opportunity to strengthen and deepen the intercultural resources and capacities of the members. Over the next three years LCWR intends to create a version of Leadership Pathways specifically designed for women religious whose first language is Spanish, expand the

*(continued on page 3)*

## Save the Dates for the 2017 LCWR Assembly

August 8 -- 11, 2017  
(departure date: August 12)  
Orlando, Florida

### Featured Speakers

#### Dr. Christopher Pramuk

Christopher teaches theology and spirituality at Xavier University, and has particular interest in the intersection of spirituality, race, the arts, theology, and social justice. He is the author of five books, including *At Play in Creation: Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine*, *Hope Sings*, *So Beautiful: Graced Encounters Across the Color Line*, and *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton*.



#### Jan Richardson

Jan, an artist, writer, and ordained minister in the United Methodist Church, serves as director of The Wellspring Studio, LLC, and has traveled widely as a retreat leader and conference speaker. She is the author of several books including: *In the Sanctuary of Women: A Companion for Reflection & Prayer*, *In Wisdom's Path: Discovering the Sacred in Every Season*, *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*; and her most recent, *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*



*From the LCWR Presidency*

## A High and a Low Way ...

by Marcia Allen, CSJ — LCWR Past President

Amid the chaos of over-the-top optimism and dire prophecies in the aftermath of the November elections a single question keeps nagging at me. Everywhere we read about the need for contemplation, stillness, presence, silence, as well as alarming predictions regarding the new presidency. Amid these two “horns” it seems to me that our dilemma lies in the realm of moral agency. What, exactly, is moral agency in this cacophony of opinions?



My question over the years has been not just my own hidden flaw, but my community’s, our nation’s. What is our weakness-become-habit, the flaw that obscures the creeping subversion of a people into being less than they are meant to be: contributors to devolution rather than to evolution? Teilhard, of course, consistently reminds us in his voluminous writing that our chief work is to contribute to the evolution of the Christ project in which we participate through the daily opportunities of grace that present themselves to us. John Oxenham says it well:

*To every [one] there openeth a way, and ways, and a way  
The high soul climbs the high way, and  
the low soul gropes the low,  
And in between on the misty flats, the rest  
drift to and fro.*

*But to every [one] – to every nation, to  
every civilization –  
There openeth a high and a low way.  
every soul decideth which way it shall go.*

Every soul. Every Community. Every nation.

The high way that comes of nurturing personal and communal moral capacity and agency: a mystical life of contemplative action. The call for this kind of leadership has never been so urgent!

Moral agency. The late street monk, Wayne Teasdale, suggests in his nine elements of inter-spirituality that the first element is “actual moral capacity.” This moral capacity – actualized by our agency – keeps coming to mind as I anticipate the coming year(s). For Teasdale this means to lead a real and earnest and actual mystical life in our global world. This element emerges from our contemplative life stance, a life firmly rooted in contemplation of the Really Real, whatever one’s spiritual tradition. It matures in an active life in the real world where one’s feet are firmly planted in the streets where one lives. This contemplative life stance deepens our inner self and broadens our awareness in our world. It softens our hearts with compassion and develops our consciences. It emerges from within us as actual moral capacity and unfolds as effective moral agency.

Why am I belaboring something so obvious to most of you?! I suppose that thoughts on cultural sin have a lot to do with it. We live out of a cultural inheritance, evolved over time in such a way that our corporate sin is hidden from our everyday habitual lives. It is a hidden flaw woven into the fabric of life that we fail to see because of its normalcy.

What is our  
weakness-become-habit,  
the flaw that obscures the  
creeping subversion  
of a people into being  
less than they are meant  
to be:  
contributors to devolution  
rather than to evolution?

**Endnote:**

Quoted in *The Radical King*, edited and introduced by Cornel West, Boston: Beacon Press, 2015; pp. 37-38.

## LCWR and CMSM Presidents Advocate for Justice and Mercy in Letter to President Trump

LCWR president Mary Pellegrino, CSJ and CMSM president Brian Terry, SA wrote a joint letter to Donald Trump prior to his inauguration calling his attention to some of the most critical needs in the United States. The letter, which was sent on January 18, states in part:

“We are deeply concerned by the fractures and divisions—seen so clearly during this past election season—which continue to threaten the well-being and freedom of all Americans and those who have fled in fear to our shores and borders. We remember with gratitude how our country’s very foundation was established by strangers and pilgrims in this new land. From this humble beginning, we celebrate how the United States of America has often been a beacon of hope and unity to a broken world. We rejoice in how our diversity has been our strength. America is at its best when its people come together to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles with ingenuity and creativity even going so far as to courageously risk their lives to transform conflict into peace.

“Jesus Christ’s Gospel of Love is the charter that moves us to action. In order to be “one nation under God,” we believe we are all called to live as true ambassadors of reconciliation, in all places and all times, so “that all may be one” (John 17:21). We believe that we need a President who transcends party politics and personal agendas in order to heal deep divisions that threaten the stability of our nation. We strongly believe that we all need to be dedicated to respectful and dignified civil discourse with those whose positions differ from our own.

“We pledge our own efforts toward this end. To the extent that the new administration seeks to promote the common good through its policies, practices and people, we stand ready to collaborate. We will actively work for the preservation of the dignity of all whose home is here in America and to welcome those who come to our shores in search of safety, freedom and a life worthy of their dignity. We will also actively ad-

vocate against promoting the privilege of some over the needs of others and turning away from our shores those who are in need. Together, we have the opportunity to advocate for and build a just, merciful and humane society worthy of the dignity of all.

“We invite you to join us in our constant prayer and hope that God might act in our hearts and through our actions as leaders. We urge you to join us in accepting Pope Francis’ challenge to political and religious leaders to apply the Beatitudes in the exercise of our respective responsibilities. (World Day of Peace Message, January 1, 2017) ‘It is a challenge,’ he writes, ‘to build up society, communities and businesses by acting as peacemakers. It is to show mercy by refusing to discard people, harm the environment, or seek to win at any cost.’

“We pledge the service of our leadership and urge you to pledge yours toward this great endeavor of building a truly good and just society.”

LCWR members are urged to express their own hopes for the country to President Trump, and consider publishing their ideas in their local media outlets as op-eds or letters-to-the-editor.

## LCWR Grant Receives Grant to Support Leadership Development Services

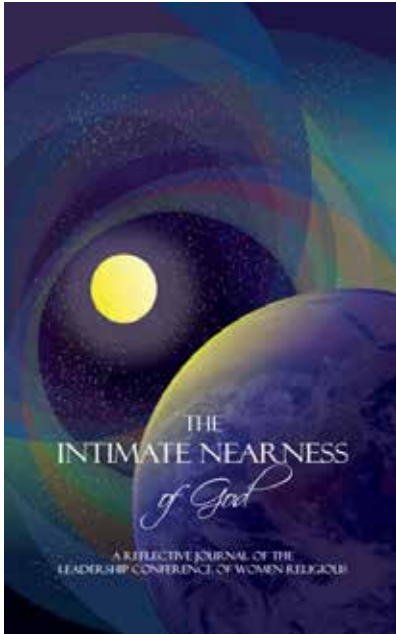
*(continued from page 1)*

outreach of LCWR programs internationally, and provide resources for LCWR members to strengthen their capacities as intercultural, transformational leaders.

In addition to the above undertakings, this grant will provide scholarship assistance for members to participate in LCWR programs and will help support LCWR’s emergent planning process.

In the months ahead LCWR members will hear more about specific aspects of these initiatives. The leadership and staff of LCWR are profoundly grateful to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for their support and encouragement of LCWR and for their assistance in helping to create a vital and vibrant future for women religious.

## LCWR Offers The Intimate Nearness of God a New Reflection Journal Orders Due by March 10



LCWR presents a new book, *The Intimate Nearness of God: A Reflective Journal Exploring Contemplation and Transformation*. The phrase, “intimate nearness of God,” comes from the keynote address by Pat Farrell, OSF at the 2016 LCWR assembly where she spoke of the contemplative impulse that has been stirring in and among women religious for some time. She noted that this contemplative focus is positioning religious to respond to a future impossible to anticipate. She posited that “we are being led in this direction for the sake of the church and the world.”

*The Intimate Nearness of God* is a collection of reflections written by 30 LCWR members about how they are reclaiming and deepening the contemplative dimensions of their lives and how this focus is leading them to an even fuller embodiment of love. They consider questions such as:

- How are you sensing that your own efforts to pray and live from a contemplative space are making you more open and available to the needs of the world and those you serve?

- How have you experienced a yearning for God, a stretching toward Love? How have you responded to that yearning? Where has that yearning led you?
- How has living and leading from a more contemplative place affected your relationships – with the world, with others, with the Divine, with yourself?

Artwork by Catholic sisters, as well as questions and suggestions for deepening the readers’s own prayer, accompany the reflections.

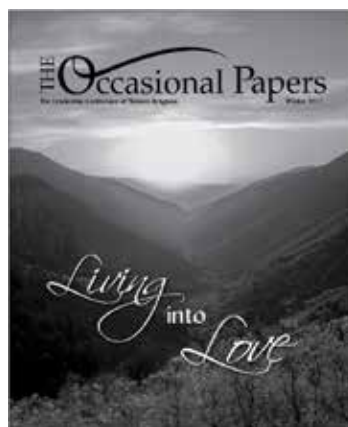
The cost of each book is \$6.00, plus shipping and handling. Discounted prices are available for orders larger than 10 copies.

Orders may be placed online at [lcwr.org/item/intimate-nearness-god-daily-reflection-book](http://lcwr.org/item/intimate-nearness-god-daily-reflection-book). Although LCWR members, associates and subscribers will receive their own copies of the book, many leaders purchase additional copies for their members, associates, staffs, boards, benefactors, and friends. Some also sell the books in their motherhouse and retreat center gift shops.

LCWR will print only the amount of copies that are pre-ordered. Orders must be received with payment by **March 10, 2017**. Revenue from this LCWR project helps defray the costs of the resources and programs the conference provides its members.

Questions about orders may be directed to LCWR’s administrative assistant, Carol Glidden, at [cglidden@lcwr.org](mailto:cglidden@lcwr.org) or at 301-588-4955.

## Order Additional Copies of Winter 2017 Occasional Papers



A limited number of copies of the Winter 2017 edition of *Occasional Papers* may be purchased at [lcwr.org/item/winter-2017](http://lcwr.org/item/winter-2017).

## Catholic Nonviolence Initiative Meets with Vatican Officials

**L**CWR associate director for social mission Ann Scholz, SSND was among the leaders of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative gathered in Rome from December 19-20 to reflect on and discuss Pope Francis' 2017 World Day of Peace message, "Nonviolence: A style of politics for peace," and to strategize about next steps for this critical movement. The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative grew out of the landmark April 2016 Nonviolence and Just Peace conference, co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International, and is focused on affirming the vision and practice of active nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative is moved and inspired by this 50th World Day of Peace message, particularly the conclusion by Pope Francis: "May we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home. 'Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace.'"

"We are committed to following up on this statement on a deep level," said Marie Dennis, co-president, along with Bishop Kevin Dowling (Rustenburg, South Africa), of Pax Christi International. "It has raised many topics that deserve much reflection, and we are ready to help spread this message of nonviolence in whatever way we can."

The group met with Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States within the Holy See's Secretariat of State, and with Archbishop Silvano Tomasi of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In both meetings, the group shared their deep appreciation for the World Day of Peace message and spoke of their plans to continue the implementation of both that message and the Appeal to the Catholic Church to recommit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence, the final statement of the April 2016 Nonviolence and Just Peace conference.

"Ongoing tragedies such as Aleppo and the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo make our time together all the more significant. As the Holy Father

notes, 'violence is not the cure for our broken world,'" said Bishop Dowling. Additional information is available at [www.nonviolencejustpeace.net](http://www.nonviolencejustpeace.net).



## Materials for LCWR New Leaders Workshop Participants

**T**he annual LCWR New Leaders Workshop will be held at St. Mary of the Lake University Conference Center in Mundelein, Illinois from 3 PM on Thursday, March 30 to noon on Sunday April 2. Anyone who has registered for the workshop has received log-in information for materials that are available on the Leadership Pathways Site of LCWR. These materials contain a wealth of information on a range of topics including canon and civil law, team-building, and working with congregation members. Participants are encouraged to go to the site and work with the materials in advance of the workshop. If a leadership team can work together with the materials this will be particularly valuable in preparing for the workshop.

The workshop, itself, is situated in the broader context of spiritual leadership and will include presentations, role-playing, and small and large group interaction. While it is not necessary to have reviewed or worked with the online materials prior to the workshop having done so will enhance the workshop experience. All the online materials will continue to be available for participants to work with following the workshop.

Currently the workshop is full. However, LCWR is in the process of negotiating for additional rooms. Anyone who is interested in attending and has not yet registered can be placed on a waiting list and will be notified if additional space opens.

Questions about the workshop or about the online materials may be directed to the associate director of programs, Marie McCarthy, [mmccarthy@lcwr.org](mailto:mmccarthy@lcwr.org).

## Upcoming LCWR Dates

### LCWR New Leader Workshop

Conference Center  
University of St. Mary of the Lake  
Mundelein, Illinois  
March 30 — April 2, 2017

### LCWR Assembly

Orlando, Florida  
August 8 — 12, 2017

### Imagining Justice Workshop

Redemptorist Renewal Center  
Tucson, Arizona  
March 12 – 18, 2018

### LCWR New Leader Workshop

Conference Center  
University of St. Mary of the Lake  
Mundelein, Illinois  
April 11 — 15, 2018

### LCWR Assembly

St. Louis, Missouri  
August 7— 11, 2018

### LCWR Assembly

Scottsdale, Arizona  
August 13 — 17, 2019



*Participants at the 2016 LCWR assembly processed their experience in deepening groups where they had the opportunity to engage in contemplative dialogue. Important insights arose from those dialogues which were collected and shared briefly during the assembly.*

*Throughout the next year, LCWR will share some of these insights in various ways so that all members may utilize these thoughts and ideas for their own reflection. Individuals may wish to spend time with the insights personally, and leadership teams may want to consider them communally.*

### Embracing the Mystery: Living Transformation

- As leaders we are seeing life as a whole. We will fan the sparks of contemplation within our communities for the sake of the world.
- Contemplation is essential for transformation leadership. Through contemplation we are hollowed out. We enter spaciousness and we are filled with God for the world.
- There are things that we can do now that we could not do when our numbers were larger and we were younger. We bring a deepened consciousness as we walk on the edge of mystery.



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## 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](http://lcwr.org/members/lcwr-membership-information).

## February 8 Designated Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking

February 8 has been designated by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General as an annual day of awareness raising and prayer against human trafficking.



February 8 is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita, who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. She learned from Canossian nuns that she was created in the image of God and possessed human dignity. Once she asserted herself and refused to be enslaved, Josephine became a Canossian sister and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering. She was declared a Saint in 2000.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis challenges all people to reject the evil of human trafficking. “How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry: ‘Where is your brother?’ (Gen 4:9). Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved? Where is the brother and sister whom you are killing each day in clandestine warehouses, in rings of prostitution, in children used for begging, in exploiting undocumented labour? Let us not look the other way. There is greater complicity than we think. The issue involves everyone!” Pope Francis wrote.

USCCB’s Migration and Refugee Services’ Anti-Trafficking Program has created materials for use during January—National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month and for the February 8 Day of Prayer. The toolkit is available at [tinyurl.com/huxq5pg](http://tinyurl.com/huxq5pg).



## Catholic Social Ministers Prepare for Legislative District Visits in 2017

In 2017, the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (CSMG) will not hold its usual national meeting in Washington, DC, due to the larger national convocation that USCCB will lead in Orlando, FL from July 1-4, 2017. During 2017 the Catholic Social Ministry community will continue to raise a collective voice on behalf of those made poor and vulnerable by the policies of this country.



On February 7 at 2 PM EST, USCCB will host a special Legislative Advocacy Issues Briefing webinar. The briefing and accompanying resources will prepare advocates to share their concerns with their senators and representatives in their home district offices during the congressional recess, February 20-24, 2017. Registration is at [tinyurl.com/h2k8trg](http://tinyurl.com/h2k8trg).

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days Scheduled for April 21-24

Participants at the 2017 Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) will explore the theme: “Confronting Chaos, Forging Community: Challenging Racism, and Militarism.” The conference theme builds upon the opening of Dr. Martin Luther King’s final book and commemorates the 50th anniversary of his historic, final speech at Riverside Church in New York City.

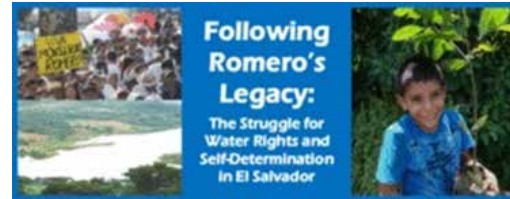


The gathering marks the 14th annual event where nearly 1,000 Christians come to Washington, DC to learn, network, and advocate about federal policy issues of concern to the ecumenical community. EAD provides participants an opportunity to make a faithful witness to the new congress and the new administration.

The meeting will again be held at the DoubleTree Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, VA, just across the Potomac River from the US Capitol. Registration is now open at [advocacydays.org](http://advocacydays.org).



- Letter to President Obama asking him to dismantle six pieces of the detention and deportation machinery before he leaves office. LCWR (12/20/16)
- Letter to President-elect Trump asking him to continue Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which provides employment authorization and protection from deportation for certain undocumented immigrants who entered the United States before the age of 16 and have deep familial, economic, and social ties to this country. LCWR (1/6 /2017)
- Letter to President-elect Trump from faith-based organizations committed to ending extreme poverty and promoting the dignity of each human life offering prayers, best wishes, and collective expertise as the transition team prepares the Administration's policy agenda and funding priorities. LCWR (1/6/17)
- Letter to President-elect Trump sharing the clear message of Pope Francis about the immorality of nuclear weapons and the commitment of Catholics in the United States to work for nuclear abolition. Ann Scholz, SSND (1/13/17)
- Faith leaders letter to members of Congress expressing concern about the nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions for U.S. Attorney General. Ann Scholz, SSND (1/14/17)
- Letter to President Trump from U.S. religious institutions and faith-based organizations in support of the State Department's Office of Religion and Global Affairs. LCWR (1/14/17)
- Letter from the faith community to members of Congress asking them to support the "Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act," bipartisan legislation to provide temporary relief to the individuals who are currently protected from detention and deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. LCWR (1/17/16)



## SHARE El Salvador Planning Delegation for March 21-28

**S**HARE El Salvador is inviting supporters to join their 2017 delegation and, "Become part of the thousands of drops of water that build the many strong waves that create a more just society." The delegation will honor Monsignor Oscar Romero's legacy in the struggle for water rights and self-determination of the people of El Salvador. Participants will visit the route of the martyrs and meet with inspiring leaders fighting for water rights and promoting women's leadership.

March 2, 2017 is the first anniversary of the murder of Honduran water rights activist Berta Caceres. The delegation will meet with Salvadoran and Honduran water rights activists to learn more about their struggle for self-determination and access to water as a human right. March 24, 2017 is the anniversary of the assassination of Monsignor Oscar Romero. Delegation participants will join the celebrations of his life and legacy during this year of celebration of the 100th anniversary of his birth. More information as well as the itinerary are available at [tinyurl.com/jrvwqe6](http://tinyurl.com/jrvwqe6).

## LCWR National Board to Meet in Jacksonville in February

**T**he members of the LCWR national board will meet from February 19 to 23 at Marywood Retreat and Conference Center outside of Jacksonville, Florida.

The board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men will meet at the same location so that the two boards can share together in daily prayer, Eucharistic liturgies, meals, and socials, as well as hold a joint session.

All members are asked to keep the board meeting in their prayer.



## News from the UN

### February 6—International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM

Ending the practice of female genital mutilation would have profoundly positive effects across societies as girls and women reclaim their health, human rights, and vast potential. Information about what is being done to end this practice which reflects deep-rooted inequality and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls is available at [tinyurl.com/ou3nbe3](http://tinyurl.com/ou3nbe3).



### February 20—World Day of Social Justice

The United Nations recognizes that social justice is essential for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. For the UN, the pursuit of social justice for all is at the core of its global mission to promote development and human dignity. “We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or disability.” More information about this principle that lies at the heart of the UN’s mission can be found at [tinyurl.com/n8ta2oc](http://tinyurl.com/n8ta2oc).

## Repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) Set in Motion

Congressional Republicans are rushing to keep their promise to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) within weeks of the inauguration of President Donald Trump.

On January 11 the Senate laid the ground work for the repeal with the approval of its FY2017 budget blueprint which included language known as “reconciliation instructions” and that will allow the Senate to pass any legislation with budgetary implications by a simple majority rather than the filibuster proof 60 votes. On January 13 House Republicans passed legislation that began the repeal process.

President-elect Trump and Republican congressional leaders have said that they prefer that the repeal and replacement of ACA happen as simultaneously as possible. However, the scope and substance of replacement legislation remains largely unknown.

What is clear is that the repeal of ACA without an immediate replacement will have devastating effects on citizens and their communities. An estimated 29.8 million people could lose access to health insurance. States will be forced to reduce Medicaid coverage eligibility. The insurance market would come under enormous stress. Health care delivery systems would be stretched to deliver more care with fewer resources to patients who are more often seriously ill. Most congress watchers expect work on the bills to repeal and replace ACA to stretch well into February.

## Sign Up for the LCWR Resource Sharing Forum

LCWR offers a listserv that is open only to LCWR members and associates. Called the LCWR Resource Sharing Forum, the listserv provides a means for LCWR members to communicate with one another online with a question or to share information. Topics around which members have shared information in the past include: new sponsorship models, chapter facilitators, bilingual speakers on religious life, psychological testing for candidates, canon lawyers who deal with property issues, treatment centers for religious, restructuring buildings for assisted living, and much more.

LCWR members who have not signed up yet for this listserv are encouraged to do so. More information on the forum and how to sign up for it is available on the [LCWR website](http://LCWR website) in the “Members” section. Members must enter their username and password to access this part of the site. Anyone who does not have her username or password may contact Carol Glidden at [cglidden@lcwr.org](mailto:cglidden@lcwr.org). Carol can also guide members through the process of signing up for the forum.



### Vocation Ambassadors Program

NRVC will once again be offering the Vocation Ambassadors Program for teams of vocation ministers, communicators, and single, Catholic young adults (ages 20-30), to work together to develop a consistent message that a vocation to religious life is a viable option in the Catholic Church. Teams work together to bridge gaps of knowledge and experience to create a collaborative communications strategic plan for vocations that involves a minimum of 100 team hours beyond the workshop. All program materials, accommodations, meals, and presenter fees will be underwritten by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Selected participants will be responsible for personal expenses and travel to and from Holy Cross College for this workshop.

This program requires an application to participate. Participants in the Vocation Ambassadors Program will be selected as a team from an application submitted by an NRVC member who has a single membership or is part of a license. The vocation minister must be an NRVC member who has some experience in social media and has previously attended the NRVC Orientation Program for Vocation Directors workshop. The communicator and young adult do not have to be NRVC members. This workshop commences at 5:00 PM. on June 9 and ends at noon on June 12, 2017. More information can be found at [NRVC.net](http://NRVC.net). Applications will be accepted February 1 - March 25, 2017. For more information, call Deborah Borneman, SSCM at 773.363.5454 or email her at [debbiesscm@nrvc.net](mailto:debbiesscm@nrvc.net) with any questions.

### National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations

The application process to request college debt assistance for candidates to religious life is officially open until March 13, 2017. Grant requests will be considered at the May NFCRV Board meeting and will be announced in June 2017. All NRVC 2017 members, both men and women religious orders/institutes, are eligible for these grants. Guidelines and an online application are available at [nfcrv.org/application](http://nfcrv.org/application). Additional information may be obtained from Mark J. Teresi, NFCRV Director for at 773-595-4028 or [mjteresi@nfcrv.org](mailto:mjteresi@nfcrv.org).

### New Program Director

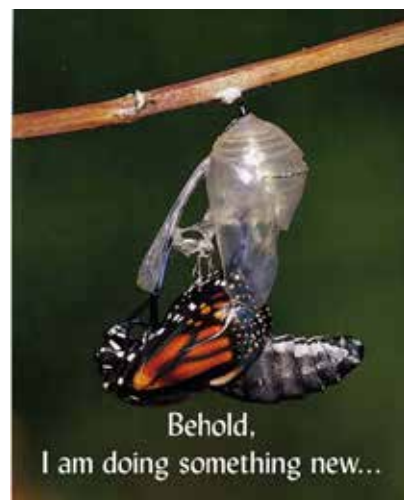
The Religious Formation Conference is pleased to welcome Connie Schoen, OP, who began her new ministry as its program director in early January.

### Life Commitment Program

The Life Commitment Program for women and men religious approaching perpetual profession will be held at Marillac Spiritual Center in Leavenworth, Kansas, July 5-13, 2017. Program components include presentations on religious life as a prophetic undertaking, the vows, and communal life, ample time for personal and communal prayer and reflection, daily Eucharist, and a day of retreat and integration. More detailed information and registration materials will be available at [www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org) in mid-February.

### Spring 2017 Workshops

Registration is now open at [www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org) for the spring workshop series Continuing the Conversations.



Behold,  
I am doing something new...



by Joan Mumaw, IHM  
 President  
[joanmumaw@solidarityfriends.org](mailto:joanmumaw@solidarityfriends.org)

## What You Did Not Hear on the Nightly News

The people of Riimenze near Yambio in South Sudan had a violent start to the New Year. On New Year's Day the army began an offensive against the "rebels" and began burning homes of people in the area. Two local staff of the Solidarity Agricultural Training Project were burned alive in their homes. Their bodies were taken immediately to the local cemetery for burial. The local people are traumatized by all that is happening and are bringing their possessions to the parish grounds. There is no one left in the village and stories of more burned houses and violent deaths are many.

Solidarity with South Sudan, in the person of Vietnamese Rosa Thi Bong, RNDM, is present with the people, and sharing produce from the farm with the 4200 people, mostly women and children, gathered in the parish grounds. The Solidarity Agricultural project, managed by Sr. Rosa, is focused on training local farmers, many of whom have been displaced in an earlier civil war. Josephine Murugi, RNDM, works with the women and the pre-school on the parish grounds. Gradually a community is coming into being. Br. Christian Mbam, Marist from Nigeria, completes the team.

The greatest challenge at the moment is to supply food, medicine, and clean water for this growing crowd of refugees. If you would like to support the staff of Solidarity with South Sudan in their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the refugees, go to our website, [www.solidarityfriends.org](http://www.solidarityfriends.org) and make a tax deductible contribution or send a check made out to: Friends in Solidarity, 8808 Cameron St. Silver Spring, MD 20910.

We so appreciate your support and prayers for peace in South Sudan. Solidarity with South Sudan is an initiative of the International Union of Superiors General

(women and men) in response to a plea from the Bishops of Sudan to the religious of the world to build the capacity of the people of that war ravaged nation. Friends in Solidarity, Inc. a tax exempt not for profit organization, is the US partner for Solidarity with South Sudan.



*Photos of the refugees taken by Rosa Thi Bong, RNDM*

**#southsudanwecare**