



January 2021

Christmas Greetings from LCWR



All of us are called to give hope to our world by proclaiming with words, and above all by the testimony of our lives, that Jesus, our peace, is born.
-- Pope Francis, December 25, 2019

Our best wishes for a blessed Christmas.
The LCWR Board, Regional Chairs and National Office Staff

Exploring Possibilities in Service of Mission LCWR Receives \$967,00 Grant

With great joy and deep appreciation to the Gerald and Henrietta Rauenhurst Foundation (GHR), LCWR announces that it received a grant in the amount of \$967,000 to further its mission and services to its members and to religious life of the whole. The 30-month exploratory grant supports a three-fold direction as LCWR continues to discern a future filled with hope.

The grant focuses on these areas:

- dismantling white privilege and racism at the organizational, systemic level
- furthering the national discernment on the emergent future of religious life
- continuing efforts towards national and international collaboration for mission and religious life.

The grant spans the timeframe of January 2021 – June 2023. LCWR looks forward to the breadth and depth of this work as it moves forward. LCWR expresses its deepest gratitude to GHR for its partnership.

From the LCWR Executive Director

A Year to Remember — A Year to Anticipate

by Carol Zinn, SSJ — LCWR Executive Director

I stare at my computer on this Advent Sunday pondering the feelings of Advent: hoping, waiting, and longing for the One-Who-Arrives, Emmanuel, God-with-Us. I wonder about the millions of our sisters and brothers, near and far, whose lives have been upended by the events of the year 2020: the layered crises of a global pandemic, economic stress, racial unrest, government breakdown, and climate urgency to name but a few. I try to imagine their hopes and longings. I feel my own heart and mind in sync with theirs as, together, we hope and long for health of all kinds: physical, financial, relational, political, cultural, social, and ecological. And I hum the melody: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*.

I look at my Christmas tree trimmed only in small white lights this year as my prayer for the light needed by the human family to move forward as a single community of life on Earth, our common home. I think of the many hearts and homes where light shines even amid loss, grief, and ache. I envision the strength of faith, hope, and love so alive in so many places. I try to imagine the light of my own presence and spirit adding to the growing light of fidelity and commitment of others who give of themselves in countless ways to share their light. And I hum the melody: *Joy to the World*.

I gaze at my 2020 calendar and eagerly anticipate replacing it with my 2021 calendar in the hopes that the coming year will be different and stand in testimony to the anomaly of 2020. I consider each month of 2020 in prayerful meditation noticing the blessings and graces in the gift of hindsight. I recall March 2020 and its abrupt shift of life as I knew it and I realize that there



will be no return to life as I knew it. The gift in that realization is still dawning on me but I am increasingly confident that very few new year's resolutions will be needed this year. I try to imagine the birthing of my daily life, prayer life, social life, ministry life as it emerges anew from the fertile soul of God's vision and ready myself for a way of being that truly celebrates a new beginning. And I hum the melody: *Auld Lang Syne*.

I peek at the Wise Ones waiting to take their nativity-scene place on the feast of Epiphany and I focus on their commitment to an unknown journey by an unknown path to an unknown destiny. As I notice their gifts, I remain amazed at the self-giving of many wisdom figures in my life: elders, peers, young people,



children, and newborns. Who is Wisdom today, here, and now? Where is Wisdom beckoning me to follow? How is Wisdom manifesting Herself in these ending days of 2020 and the beginning days of 2021? What gifts am I bringing to this new beginning? I try to imagine the pilgrim path of this coming year and ready myself for its companions and learnings. And I hum the melody: *Star of Wonder...Still Proceeding...Guide Us....*

I invite you to consider the extraordinary experiences of 2020 through the eyes of Advent, Christmas, New Year's, and Epiphany as we look, together, towards a new beginning. As we step into 2021 there may yet be the presence of 2020 realities for months to come. While it only takes a moment to change the calendar page to 2021, we know that the transformation to which we are called will take a lifetime. Let us begin anew, together, as we look to a future filled with hope.

LCWR Changes Business and Finance Staffing

LCWR's business and finance functions will be attended in a new way beginning in January 2021 as the conference bids farewell to **Chris Beckett, SCN** and welcomes two new staff members.

Chris has served as LCWR's associate director for business and finance since 2017 and will conclude her ministry on December 31. She brought great expertise to the work of strengthening the organization's financial foundation and much enthusiasm to securing the resources needed for LCWR's mission to flourish. The conference owes a debt of gratitude to Chris for her generous service.



The position held by Chris has been redesigned as two new positions – finance manager and business office manager.

Kate Katoski, OSF will assume the finance manager role beginning January 1. A member of the Dubuque, Iowa Franciscans, she served in congregation leadership from 1992-2000 and 2014-2020. Since 1996 she has also served as director of development and was congregational treasurer from 2010-2014. Her previous ministries were in administration at the university, diocesan, and national organizational levels. Kate is a member of the LCWR Finance and Audit Committee and served as LCWR treasurer from 2018-2020. Kate will work for LCWR part-time from Dubuque.



Kesha Fitzhugh began her position as the on-site business office manager on December 1. Prior to obtaining her MBA with a concentration in public administration from Columbia Southern University in February 2020, Kesha was the senior administrative assistant for the Pew Charitable Trusts.

An alum of Public Allies Service Corps and a current member of The National Society of Leadership and Success, she is excited to continue supporting the efforts of the non-profit work force and fulfilling her aspirations as a change leader.

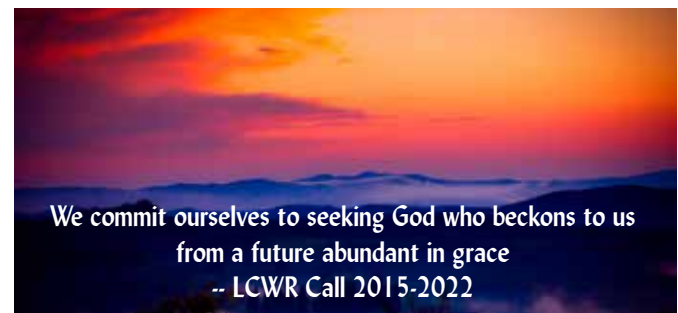


Nominations Begin for LCWR President and Board

LCWR has begun the process of nominating members to serve in the LCWR presidency and on the national board. All members are asked to begin discerning who they might nominate for these key roles in the life of the conference. Nominations may be submitted by leadership teams or individuals from December 11 – February 5.

Important information on the LCWR nomination and election process was sent to all LCWR members in mid-December and is available on the members' section of the LCWR [website](#) at LCWR nomination and election process. Included with the materials are an eligibility list, the responsibilities of the president and board members, and a prayer for discernment for use by leadership teams as they prepare to nominate members for these positions. The conference is dependent upon the members' participation in the nomination process.

The nomination and election process is overseen by the LCWR Governance Committee whose members are: **Theresa Sandok, OSM**, chair; Sangeeta Ayithamattam, SCN; Kathy Brazda, CSJ; Vicki Bergkamp, ASC; Maureen Geary, OP; Jayne Helming, CSJ; Maria Iannuccillo, SSND; Donna Pollard, OP; and Carol Zinn, SSJ.



Were Not Our Hearts Burning Within Us?

by Rebecca Gemma, OP, LCWR National Board Member

The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Rayshard Brooks – and the countless others who have lost their lives to racist violence and police brutality, have awakened within us the truth that the “beloved community” remains an aspiration; for not all persons experience the freedom and joy of the children of God. During the 2020 LCWR assembly, members, and national office ministers responded to this reality with a commitment to address individually and collectively systemic racism as it intersects with immigration and climate change.

Josita Colbert, SNDdeN, National Black Sisters Conference (NBSC) president, and Carol Zinn, SSJ LCWR executive director, convened two virtual gatherings of their respective boards and support members to engage in study, dialogue, faith-sharing, and discernment related to racism in society and religious life. Barbara Spears, SNJM facilitated the conversations with wisdom, grace, and delight. LCWR president Elise Garcia, OP captured the shared dispositions of those gathered in these three-hour sessions, “Our coming together holds the promise of helping to bring about transformative change in and through us. I was deeply moved by our willingness to be sister to one another in all honesty, humility, courage, and love for the common good of God’s people and planet.”

Previous to the sessions, participants were invited to read *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo and Michael Eric Dyson. This set the stage for further learning about white privilege, microaggressions, and systemic racism. Yet, nothing in writing compared to the heart-wrenching

stories told by sisters from NBSC, who throughout their lives have experienced racism within the church, their own congregations, and society. Theresa Sandok, OSM stated, “Their stories were painful to hear, but certainly not as painful as they were to endure.” Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ added, “As I take in each face on the screen before me, I wish I could paint or sculpt each sister present. The life stories behind each beautiful face reflect the paschal mystery unfolding over time. Together we find ourselves in this sacred space of journey; a journey that is filled with grace, poignancy, invitation, and hope.” “There is no going back,” states Marcia Ann Fiutko, FSSJ, “we are called to walk this heart journey together.”

Many of us have begun anti-racism movements within our own congregations or in collaboration with other entities fighting this insidious reality. Gathering with our NBSC sisters took on a distinctive character however, for much of what was shared focused directly on racism, oppression, disunity, and prejudice within religious life itself; within the very congregations from which these sisters professed their lives to Christ.

Stories were not exclusive to past experiences, but some remain present in the sisters of color today. I was personally moved in hearing one sister say that although they are an international community, the black sisters from the United States remain the most invisible members of her congregation. *Invisibility*, a product of the privileged not able or willing to see Christ fully alive and present within the other. How might we be open to the transformative power of the Spirit to truly see, acknowledge, welcome, and embrace one another

(continued on page 5)



Were Not Our Hearts Burning Within Us?

(continued from page 3)

in our shared vocation? This is not something that can be educated away, nor can we, who are white, do this on our own. We need our sisters of color to encircle us with their sufferings, joys, wisdom, and *forgiveness*.

All participants expressed a deep desire to continue this dialogue. Michelle Stachowiak, CSSF noted that this opportunity to share with the NBSC members was invaluable, and Maureen O'Connor, OSF noted that she now often brings the sisters to mind and to prayer. Jocelyn Quijano, PBVM summarized her experience with the following: "The image that came to mind is that it was like a meeting of hearts — with great openness and willingness to encounter the other. And by beginning to know one another, there is a longing to continue to become more and more sisters together, for the good of the whole community of life." Vicky Larson, PBVM attested to wrestling inside with her own white fragility. "At the end of the day, I was surprised to hear black sisters thank me for listening because this seemed like such a small offering to the circle. As I reflected on it, maybe my inner wrestling to restrain my white fragility was something?" "The experience drew each of us to commit to walking with one another into the future, joining hands to address systemic racism within our Church and society," added Mary Jane Herb, IHM.

Are not our hearts burning within us? Do we not see this offering as a Spirit call within a call? What will be the visible sign at the end of this five-year journey? My prayer is that we will find ourselves on the road together, being transformed into the "beloved community" where all are one in the fullness of Christ. May five years evolve into a lifetime of shared grace and communion!

Global Sister Report Discusses UISG and LCWR Priorities at Annual Summit

In recent years, Global Sisters Report staff has held an annual virtual summit with the leaders of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and LCWR to discuss each organization's priorities and concerns for the upcoming year.

This year, the summit was held on December 9 with Jolanta Kafka, RMI, UISG president; Pat Murray, IBVM, UISG executive secretary; Elise García, OP, LCWR president; and Carol Zinn, SSJ, LCWR executive director. Discussion centered on the impact of the pandemic on women religious and their ministries, various justice projects of both organizations, and other topics.

[An edited transcript of the summit conversation is online.](#)



2021 LCWR Annual Membership Renewal Reminder

All LCWR members are encouraged to renew their 2021 membership now.

Any congregation that needs financial assistance for membership is asked to contact [Christine Beckett, SCN](#) as soon as possible. Because of the generous gifts of LCWR members, the conference has a membership assistance fund that can be used for such requests. The conference encourages any congregation needing assistance for the 2021 membership to take advantage of this opportunity.





by Mary Hughes, OP

Stimulating. Intriguing. Thought-provoking. All are words or phrases that serve as descriptors for the listening sessions that occurred in November and December. Each session invited sisters from communities of differing sizes, realities, geographic locations, and ages to share with one another and the Discernment Initiative Planning Group (DIPG) about what they are seeing and creating for religious life. Several participants have joined multiple sessions to learn more. Each session has provided LCWR with approaches to further support members. In January, the DIPG will study the feedback and identify trends to further the discernment planning initiatives.

During these past weeks, the DIPG also spent time consulting with various individuals and groups to understand their plans, needs, and hopes for religious life including:

- Efforts in process for a possible canonical leadership association among the Dominicans in the Northeast
- Prospects of sharing managerial aspects of leadership within multiple contemplative communities
- Opportunities among leaders of Giving Voice to share their love, hopes and dreams for religious life
- Endeavors of the Leadership Collaborative on programming and networking of younger members to develop leadership gifts
- Learnings on the transformation of religious life from Ted Dunn, author of *Graced Crossroads*

Participants in one of the 27 listening sessions



The planning group will continue consultations with others in the new year.

The DIPG has clearly heard the request of the LCWR members for more information and easy access to it. As the group continues to assimilate feedback from the listening sessions, the LCWR region meetings, institute meetings with religious community members, as well as insights from these additional consultations, it will seek the blessing of wisdom as it explores ways to share all that has been heard and make it available to members.

LCWR Seeking Information on Significant Changes

Any institute that either recently has undergone or is in the process of undergoing a significant leadership model change is asked to share with LCWR the following:

- A concise description of the changes made to date as well as of any further changes that may be anticipated.
- A listing of consultants, facilitators, organizations, etc. that proved helpful to the process. Both contact information for these persons and their areas of expertise are requested.

All information may be sent to the planning group c/o Janette Cahill jcahill@lcur.org by or before **January 6, 2021.**

The dates below are tentative due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members will be kept up to date on plans as they progress.

At this time, all LCWR activities will take place virtually through the end of May 2021.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

**Co-Sponsored Virtual Event:
Consecrated Life
Through the Lens of Fratelli Tutti**
February 2, 2021
7:00 - 8:00 PM ET

**LCWR Webinar:
Accepting and Embracing Sexual Diversity**
February 18, 2021
1:30 - 3:00 PM ET

LCWR Assembly
Orlando, Florida
August 10 - 13, 2021

Leading from Within Retreat
Redemptorist Renewal Center | Tucson, Arizona
January 16 - 21, 2022

LCWR New Leaders Workshop
Location to be determined
March 31 - April 3, 2022

LCWR Assembly
St. Louis, Missouri
August 9 - 12, 2022

Save the Date for Two Events

Both will be offered in English and Spanish

Registration information for both will be sent to members in early January



25TH WORLD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE

**CONSECRATED LIFE THROUGH
THE LENS OF FRATELLI TUTTI**

PRAYER | PANEL | DISCUSSION

SAVE THE DATE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2
6:00-7:00PM CENTRAL
ONLINE

SPONSORED BY



LCWR Webinar

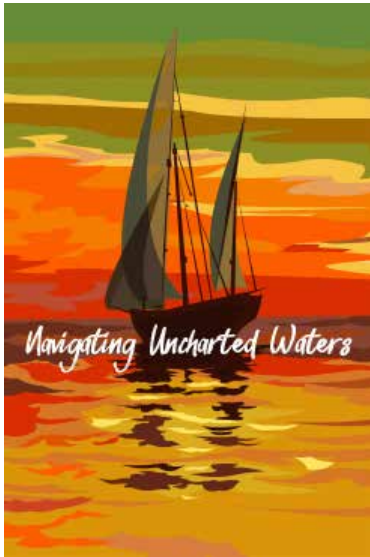
Accepting and Embracing Sexual Diversity

Presenter: Lynn M. Levo, CSJ

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Time: 1:30 - 3:00 PM ET

*The webinar will include breakout sessions where
template case studies will be discussed
in small groups*



Order the 2021 LCWR Reflection Book

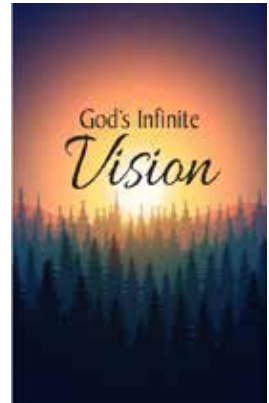
The focus of the 2021 LCWR reflection book is **Navigating Uncharted Waters**, which draws from the theme of the 2020 presidential address of Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ. In her address, Jayne invited people to consider what type of vessels they need as they set “sail into deep, uncharted waters that await us.” Sea navigation is an apt metaphor for living in the world today when so little in life is clear, simple, or risk-free. Reference points, landmarks, and navigation tools that may have been helpful resources for traversing life in the past often seem much less effective today as people face complex choices and decisions in life and in leadership.

In this reflection book, 40 LCWR members explore what it means to be in uncharted waters. Their writing will be accompanied by artwork by women religious as well as questions and suggestions for deepening the reader’s own prayer.

The cost of each book is \$6.00, plus shipping and handling. Discounted prices are available for orders larger than 10 copies. Revenue from this LCWR project helps defray the costs of the resources and programs the conference provides its members. [Orders may be placed here](#) and are due by February 16, 2021.

Winter 2021 Occasional Papers

The Winter 2021 issue of LCWR’s journal, *Occasional Papers*, entitled **God’s Infinite Vision**, will be in the mail in early January.



[Subscriptions for Occasional Papers](#)
may be purchased here.



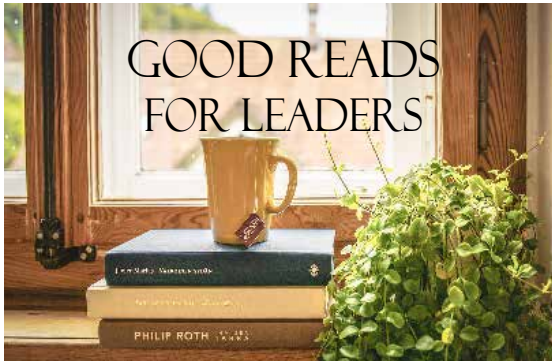
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Choosing Earth: Humanity's Great Transition to Mature Planetary Civilization

by Duane Elgin

Recommended by Cecilia Hudec, SC

One of the ways of understanding humanity's great transition is by viewing our journey through the lens of our level of collective maturity. As Duane Elgin spoke with audiences in the last 30 years, he would ask them what life-stage the human family is in. Three-quarters of them at home, across Europe, and internationally said that humanity, taken as a whole, is in its adolescent years!

This explains much of our current behavior. In the coming decades, we will need to shift from division to reconciliation, from reckless consumption to conscious stewardship, from a human-centered perspective to a life-centered one, from rebelling toward nature to designing ourselves back into nature as an integral part of the natural world, from feelings of immortality to that of vulnerability and humility, from passivity and tolerance of exploitative media to seeking of accountability, from desiring government to "fix" it to greater self-reliance at the local level.

Choosing Earth looks a half-century into the future to explore our world in a time of unprecedented transition to a mature, planetary civilization. It offers a new and large context for understanding what is happening in our world. It also looks deep into the psychological and spiritual dimensions of change and describes a new paradigm emerging from the convergence of science and spirituality.

Duane Elgin explores our great turning as a time to choose, together, a future of surpassing ourselves, becoming more fully alive. As we awaken aliveness at the core of our being, we are simultaneously connecting with the aliveness of the universe.

Religious Organizations Urge President-Elect Biden to Rejoin the Paris Agreement

On the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, an historic global accord to address climate change, 22 national religious organizations together with a dozen faith leaders urged President-Elect Biden to rejoin the international agreement and work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Citing the need to care for Earth and protect human health, the letter applauded President-Elect Biden for his commitment to rejoin the Paris Agreement and urged him to increase the ambition of the United States' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) by COP26, so that the country can get back on track in addressing climate change.

The letter states, "The United States must implement the necessary measures to ensure that this country does its part in lowering greenhouse gas emissions by investing in more clean energy and electricity, and preventing the global temperature from rising by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius."

"Rejoining the Paris Agreement complements the work of religious communities, businesses, educational institutions and the health care sector in addressing climate change. These efforts to address climate change across multiple sectors must include increasing the U.S.' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)."

In the press release accompanying the letter Carol Zinn, SSJ, executive director of LCWR noted: "As we approach the fifth anniversary of the historic Paris Climate Agreement, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious urges President-Elect Biden to immediately rejoin the accord and to demonstrate US determination to lead by increasing our Nationally Determined Contribution. We believe with Pope Francis that all nations have 'a clear, definitive, and ineluctable ethical imperative to act' on climate change. As women religious who have dedicated our lives to building God's beloved community we know firsthand that we are not faced with two separate issues one environmental and the other social, but rather one complex crisis that requires exceptional global leadership and profound concern for the common good. We have heard the cries of Earth and God's people. The time to act is now."

Faith Community Lays Out Immigration Priorities for New Administration and 117th Congress

Over the course of the past couple of months the DC-based faith community has been hammering out its immigration recommendations for the Biden-Harris

administration and the new Congress. LCWR's associate director for social mission has contributed to three that readers might find useful in their own advocacy for justice for immigrants.



Root Causes Initiative Policy Framework

LCWR partnered with more than 315 faith-based and civic groups and leaders, including 20 Catholic and Episcopal bishops from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States, in calling on President-Elect Biden to fundamentally change US policy toward Central America in order to address the root causes of unemployment, climate change, corruption, and violence forcing people to migrate north. The report makes policy recommendations in seven areas: development; work; democracy; human rights and public safety; the environment; demilitarization; and legal immigration pathways. Policy recommendations are available [here](#).

Interfaith Immigration Coalition Priorities for the New Administration and Congress

The Torah, the Christian Bible, the Qur'an, and the Hindu Taittiriya Upanishad are all clear: welcoming the "wayfarer" and recognizing every person's God-given humanity are values to defend and extend. The [Interfaith Immigration Coalition \(IIC\)](#) released "The Interfaith Framework for Welcoming and Supporting Migrants, Immigrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees," a [set of recommendations](#) on immigration-related policy for the Biden-Harris administration. If implemented they would reverse the Trump administration's anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, anti-Muslim, and racial bias and begin to restore fairness and welcome to immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and their loved ones.

[Justice for Immigrants \(JFI\)](#) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), a coalition of diverse Catholic organizations with national networks united to mobilize support for immigration reform, is also offering a set of policy recommendations for the incoming administration and the 117th Congress. Members of the JFI Core Group have crafted a series of documents which propose policies to address the root cause of forced migration; ensure access to lawful status and citizenship for migrants; guarantee just and humane border policies; and reform immigration enforcement and end mass detention. The documents are available [here](#).

Roses in December Commemorations Attract Thousands

Religious congregations, school and university communities, Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran parishes, and the Vatican gathered on December 2 to mark the 40th anniversary of the martyrdom of the four churchwomen, Dorothy Kazel, OSU; Maura Clarke, MM; Ita Ford, MM; and Jean Donovan. Organizers estimate that the more than 40 virtual events gathered nearly 2,000 people to remember and to recommit to their work for justice.



The Roses in December Toolkit is still available for download [here](#).

All are invited to the national celebration on Saturday, January 16, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET). The evening will include a reprise of the December 2 events and a thank you to all those who helped to organize the many commemorations.



LCWR exercised its voice in the public square through the following actions:

- Contributed to the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's 2020 Transition Report, LCWR (11/23/20)
- Framework for action to address the root causes of migration from grassroots and faith-based organizations, with the support of religious leaders in Central America, Mexico, and the United States. LCWR (11/25/20)
- Comment urging the Trump administration to withdraw its plan to change the citizenship test as stated. Ann Scholz, SSND (11/30/20)
- Letter to President Trump and President-Elect Biden urging an immediate grant of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala as a consequence of the severe devastation caused by hurricanes Eta and Iota. LCWR (12/1/20)
- Letter to the Biden-Harris administration detailing federal transition recommendations focused on priorities for COVID relief and early action across immigration enforcement, health, education, nutrition, and economic security for the children of immigrants. LCWR (12/1/20)
- Letter to the Trump administration, Biden transition team and Congress calling for an immediate and robust United States humanitarian response to the devastation left behind by hurricanes Eta and Iota including: (1) swift and effective humanitarian aid; (2) the restoration and application of TPS for people currently residing in the United States from the impacted region; and (3) a long-term plan to support a recovery and reconstruction. LCWR (12/1/20)
- Letter to President-Elect Biden urging him to establish a White House Task Force on Black Immigrants in the first 100 days of his administration. LCWR (12/1/20)
- Letter to President-Elect Biden from the DC Catholic Coalition urging him to take decisive and clear action to deconstruct systemic racism. LCWR (12/1/20)
- Letter to Senate and House appropriators and Congressional Leadership urging them to cut funding to agencies that increase family separation and invest in supporting a compassionate, just, and humane immigration and refugee resettlement systems that uphold the nation's values. LCWR (12/1/20)
- Letter to members of Congress urging them to support suffering families by passing a robust COVID-19 relief package. LCWR (12/1/20)
- Letter to House and Senate leadership in support of H.R. 1, *For the People Act*, the transformational democracy reform bill that would help return political power to everyday Americans. LCWR (12/4/20)
- Letter to President-Elect Biden encouraging the next administration to uplift the importance of human life and human dignity by adopting recommendations for limiting the use of lethal drone strikes. LCWR (12/4/20)
- Letter to President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris asking them to restore The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. LCWR (12/4/20)
- Quote in press release accompanying the delivery of the IIC's *Framework for Welcoming and Supporting Migrants, Immigrants, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees* to the Biden-Harris transition team. Ann Scholz, SSND (12/8/20)
- Letter to President-Elect Biden expressing appreciation for his commitment to rejoin the Paris Agreement and encouraging him to increase the ambition of the United States NDC by COP26, so that the United States can get back on track in addressing climate change. LCWR (12/10/20)
- Quote in press release accompanying release of the Paris Agreement letter. Carol Zinn, SSJ (12/11/20)
- Letter to President-Elect Biden urging him to issue an Executive Order on day one of his administration ending the Muslim Ban, the African Ban, The Asylum Ban, the Refugee Bans, the Health Care Proclamation, the Presidential Memorandum Enforcing, and any expansion of the Immigration Ban, and to restart our immigration and refugee system by processing visas expeditiously and increasing the refugee admissions goal. LCWR (12/14/20)

New Report Outlines Public Health Approach to Gun Violence Prevention

The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (Ed Fund) recently released a report outlining how a public health approach, the same method successfully used to reduce smoking deaths and car accident fatalities, can be applied to reducing the nation's epidemic of gun violence. In recent years, nearly 40,000 people have been killed and more than 71,000 injured by firearms annually in the United States. The Ed Fund uses a public health and equity lens to identify and implement evidence-based policy solutions and programs to reduce gun violence in all forms.



The report, "The Public Health Approach to Gun Violence Prevention," lays out a means of reducing the epidemic of gun violence by addressing both firearm access and the factors that contribute to and protect from gun violence.

The report compares the public health successes of car safety regulations with similar policy measures that could reduce gun violence. By using a comprehensive public health approach to car safety, the United States reduced per-mile driving deaths by nearly 80% from 1967 to 2017, saving 3.5 million lives. A similar approach to prevent gun violence would include allocating funds to research gun violence, allowing federal agencies to regulate firearm manufacturers and ensure gun safety, and requiring firearm purchasers to submit an application, undergo a background check, and complete a safety course to obtain a license to own a firearm. It would also include investing in community-based violence intervention and prevention initiatives that interrupt cycles of retaliatory violence and provide wraparound support to those at risk for violence.

2021 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering is Going Virtual

Once again, Catholic social ministry



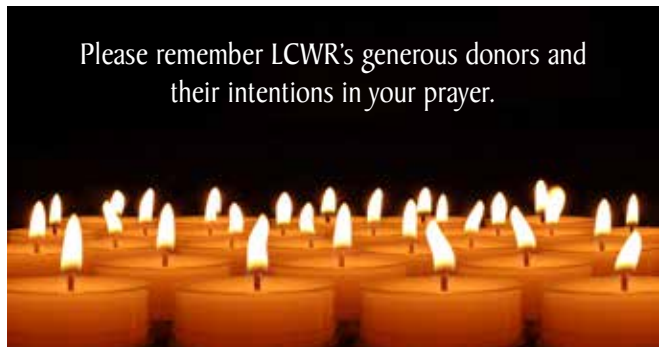
leaders from across the country are invited to gather virtually February 6-9, 2021 to learn, pray, and advocate for justice. This year's gathering, *Make Justice Your Aim: Rebuilding Together*, will explore the disparities revealed by COVID-19 and new models of justice and solidarity.

For more than 30 years, the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (CSMG) has served as the major annual gathering organized by the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development (JPHD) in collaboration with 10 other USCCB departments and 18 national Catholic organizations. This central gathering of Catholic social ministry leaders usually draws over 500 participants whose faith inspires them to respond to pressing current domestic and global challenges.

This year's virtual gathering will include inspiring leading voices in Church and society; workshops with policy experts and grassroots community leaders; intentional opportunities for best practice-sharing among participants; resources from dozens of Catholic social ministry organizations; and virtual advocacy visits with elected officials.

The cost for this four-day event is \$50 and scholarships are available to cover a portion of the registration fee. The application deadline is January 19, 2021. More information and registration may be found [here](#).

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



JCWR Announces Plans for 2021 Convocation

The steering committee of Justice in a World in Transition (JCWR), a coalition of justice promoters for women's congregations, has announced plans for its 4th biennial convocation, entitled

Justice in a World in Transition: Revolutionary Love at the Intersection of Racism, Climate Crisis and Migration. Justice promoters will gather virtually on four dates in February and March of 2021. Each session is scheduled for 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM ET.

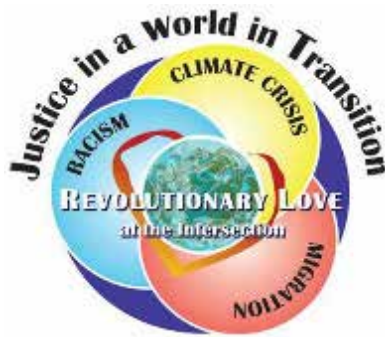
American activist, documentary filmmaker, lawyer, educator, faith leader, and founder of the [Revolutionary Love Project](#) Valerie Kaur will keynote the event on February 2. The opening session will be followed by meetings on February 25, March 11, and March 25 which will deepen the exploration of the 2019-2022 LCWR assembly resolution, "[Creating Communion at the Intersection of Racism, Migration & Climate Crisis.](#)" Registration is open to all justice promoters for women's congregations and will begin in early January. All zoom events are free of charge.

News from the UN

January 24 —[The International Day of Education](#). The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes even further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.



January 27 —[International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust](#). The world remembers the horror of the Holocaust that resulted in the murder of nearly two-thirds of European Jews. The purpose of remembering this day is to prevent future tragedies.



NRVC Team Leadership Expansion

Charlene Herinckx, SSMO will return January 11 to the NRVC leadership team as director of membership. Marge Argyelan, who currently holds that position, will become the director of database administration. It is a homecoming for Charlene, as she was the NRVC coordinator of programs and projects from 1999 to 2005. Most recently she served as superior general from 2010-2020 for the Sisters of Saint Mary of Oregon. Further information on membership can be obtained by contacting [Charlene](#).

Abundant Hope Video Series

Throughout the NRVC Convocation, 19 newer entrants to religious life were featured in two-minute videos about their experiences in intergenerational and intercultural community life. Because of the positive feedback, NRVC is expanding this series to include 30 additional newer entrants and 30 senior members. The series can be used in community conversations with the [reflection and study guide](#) for deeper dialogue about the impact of invitation and innovation amid changing demographics in religious life. More information is available by contacting [Deborah Borneman, SSCM](#).

Membership Renewal

As the calendar year ends, NRVC extends gratitude to membership representing 22 countries. Annual membership renewal may be completed at [renewal signup](#) or by calling Marge Argyelan at 773-490-6556.



by Joan Mumaw, IHM
 President
jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com

As a new year begins, we continue to celebrate the coming of Christ into our world. Our faith tells us that, “the Light has come into the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome the Light.” (John 1:3) We know that we, gifted by the Spirit, continue to be light for our world by our response to those overwhelmed by the darkness and death of COVID-19, the economic situation, and by all those struggling to survive the ravages of disease, violence, poverty, and hunger.

Richard Rohr recently commented in one of his meditations, “The fruit of our labor is a gift from God for the world.” Friends in Solidarity, the US partner to Solidarity with South Sudan, takes this opportunity to thank all of you who, in sharing your resources and personnel, are a “gift from God” for the people of South Sudan.

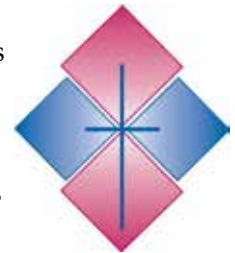
The whole world rejoices as the possibility of a vaccine becomes a reality, at least for those in developed countries. Countries like South Sudan confront nearly impossible barriers to receiving the vaccine due to poverty, poor health care systems, and the capacity to hold vaccines at temperatures needed to secure their safety. If anything, this pandemic, has illustrated the inequity, not only in our own society, but in our world.

Education may be the most effective, systemic response to global inequality and poverty. Solidarity continues to be on the forefront in South Sudan building the capacity of people as primary teachers, registered nurses, midwives, and farmers. The International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and Union of Superiors General (USG) remind us that this initiative is a response of congregations of men and women religious to a plea from the bishops of Sudan to assist in rebuilding this newest and poorest country.

We invite your continued support for these efforts during the coming year through sharing personnel, resources, and prayerful support. Contributions may be made online at [Solidarity](#) or by check to Friends in Solidarity, 8737 Colesville Rd, Ste 610, Silver Spring, MD 20910. For additional information contact [Joan Mumaw](#).

Update from NRRO

The National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) will mail applications on January 4 for [Direct Care Assistance](#), which is distributed annually to eligible religious institutes. Completion of this form is the doorway to NRRO funding and consultative services. Applications are due by March 31, 2021, and assistance will be awarded in June.



All institutes are urged to complete the Direct Care Assistance application, even if not applying or eligible for financial assistance. The information provided enables the NRRO to develop a more comprehensive assessment of retirement funding and needs nationally. This data advances the NRRO’s collaboration with other national organizations that support religious life, including LCWR. Any institute that did not receive the application or is in need of assistance, may call the NRRO office at 202-541-3215 or contact NRRO grants specialist [Monica Glover](#).

