

# Update

A Publication of the  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

December 2016

## LCWR Promises Commitment to Gospel Values in the Post-Presidential Election Season

The LCWR presidency and staff issued a statement following the US presidential election that reads in part:

“... Now is the time to heal the deep divisions laid bare by this bruising political campaign and to tear down the walls, real or imagined, which divide us by gender, race, class, geography, lifestyle, political party, and belief. This moment, these times, require us to engage in deep contemplative prayer and to risk courageous action for the sake of all who call these United States their home.

“Now is the time to make space in our hearts and our homes for the needs and concerns of all God’s people, the undocumented mother, the unemployed steel-worker father, and those children and elders consigned to live in poverty. It is long past time to make room in our politics for those who have been disaffected, disenfranchised, and discarded.

“We recall the many times that Catholic sisters in the United States and around the world have been called upon to exercise courage in the face of fear and division. We promise once again to be the healing hands of God. We pledge to hold the needs and concerns of all in a contemplative space, in the heart of a loving and ever faithful God.

“We recommit ourselves to the Gospel call to welcome the stranger, care for creation, establish economic justice, abolish every form of modern-day slavery, and promote nonviolence and just peace and we pledge to continue to work together with all people of good will to build God’s beloved community in this place we call home.” The full text of the statement may be found at: [tinyurl.com/zngd8ev](http://tinyurl.com/zngd8ev).

## LCWR Executive Committee and Staff Participate in Governance Workshop

Consultant and facilitator Marisa Guerin led the members of the LCWR executive committee and staff through a governance workshop during the committee’s meeting in Washington, DC from November 9 to 10.

The workshop was designed to look at how LCWR might adapt its governance to the demographic realities of the conference and the ongoing transformations characterizing religious life. The group explored ideas for how a revised governance structure would assure that LCWR can both provide services to its members and be a collective public voice on various world and church issues. In addition to generating ideas for adjustments, the group identified some of the questions, concerns, or difficulties such changes might entail for the organization. The executive committee and staff will now collaborate with Marisa in refining ideas so that the LCWR national board can work with them further at its February 2017 meeting.

*(continued on page 4)*

### Looking for Affordable Christmas Gifts & a Way to Spread the Gospel Message, as well as Support LCWR?

Consider giving

- A Set of LCWR Contemplative Greeting Cards (\$10/set of 10)
- A Subscription to LCWR’s Occasional Papers (\$15.00/year)

*(See details on page 7)*



*From the LCWR Presidency*  
**Bridging the Divides ...**

by Teresa Maya, CCVI — LCWR Past President

One of the most divisive elections in recent US history is over, or is it? The fallout surrounds us: deteriorated civil discourse, fear of strangers, a disenfranchised electorate ignored by the government establishment, divided families, racism, sexism... and on and on. What happened to American democracy? How did we get here? Meg Wheatley's caution at our assembly that "things will get worse before they get better" keeps surfacing in my reflection.



of the old bridge were still in service as the new one was being completed. Sound familiar?

Our leadership must tend to religious life as a bridge in progress! One of my wisdom sisters mused that I shouldn't worry about reconfiguration, after all it would take 20 years. The tension we must hold, the flexibility we are called to test, and the strength to endure earthquakes needs to be ours. But it takes time.

We have been called to "this time of ours," as Meg reminded us. What is ours to do as religious leaders? How do we approach this time of uncertainty? We could, of course, fall into the temptation of simply addressing our challenges with aging, and property and sponsorship -- they give us full days. But our time requires one more effort, one more prophetic word -- it may just be the most significant contribution we will make. We have committed to stay in the heartbreak of the world with people who suffer, who clamor for a signifying presence of true hope.

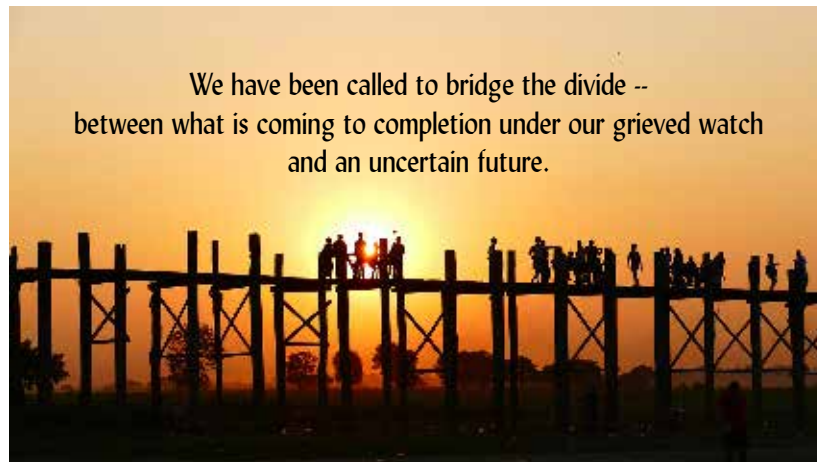
We have been called to bridge the divide -- between what is coming to completion under our grieved watch and an uncertain future. And bridging is no simple thing. Good bridges are both flexible and strong. Consider the collapsed section of the Bay Bridge after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989 in California. The bridge's structure, steel and all, was old and not flexible enough to withstand the movement. But incredibly, it took more than 20 years to build the new one and completely demolish the old one. Parts

And how do you build a bridge to parts unknown? Perhaps we need to look sideways as much as we need to look forward. First, we must build bridges to connect with what we know. After Shannen Dee Williams finished her history of the dangerous memory of our own racism, we fell into stunned silence. We knew we had to bridge our denial and complicity with

intentional work to address systemic racism. And there are so many bridges we know we must build to address the divides that surround us. The measure of our leadership will not be in our redeemed portfolios, the conversion of the motherhouse property, or our finalized provincial merger.

The measure will be in how well we connected, we bridged, with the organizations, the people, the "movements" that are struggling to respond to the urgent and pressing needs of our time. We may not have full clarity, but we have each other and we have the leverage to network.

It is our time.



We have been called to bridge the divide --  
between what is coming to completion under our grieved watch  
and an uncertain future.

## Registration Now Open for LCWR's New Leader Workshop

From March 30 to April 2, 2017 LCWR will hold its annual New Leader Workshop in Mundelein, Illinois. With a team of outstanding resource persons, the workshop provides input and a number of opportunities to explore and apply new learnings with others.

Using role play, journaling, conversation, and contemplative engagement, the workshop assists participants in deepening their knowledge, skills, and capacities as transformational leadership teams.

All persons registering for the workshop will receive a link to a set of online resources created for this workshop. These resources include in-depth presentations by Lynn M. Levo, CSJ; Janice Bader, CPPS; Lynn Jarrell, OSU; and Simone Campbell, SSS. The presentations focus on many of the issues elected leaders face on a regular basis. These resources are intended to provide a context for participants prior to the workshop and also assist with ongoing leadership development when participants return home.

New leaders and new leadership teams are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. This workshop has proven invaluable to new and returning leaders.

► Nancy Schreck, OSF will serve as a facilitator and presenter at the 2017 workshop.

▼ Participants have opportunities to meet with their leadership teams during the workshop



Additional information as well as registration materials are available at: [lcwr.org/calendar/new-leader-workshop-0](http://lcwr.org/calendar/new-leader-workshop-0).

## Catholic Organizations Call for Racial Justice

On November 15, 13 Catholic organizations, including LCWR, released a statement calling for racial justice and challenging Catholics to take action.

The document, "We Stand for Racial Justice in the US," invites Catholic communities to participate in racial solidarity training; create spaces for truth and reconciliation in their homes, organizations, and parishes; engage in training in nonviolent conflict transformation; promote programs of unarmed civilian peacekeepers in local communities; and encourage officials to require substantive ongoing de-escalation training for police officers.

Jason Miller of the Franciscan Action Network explained, "In this post-election season where we are seeing increased instances of the de-humanization of 'the other' by words and actions, we draw on our Catholic tradition of lifting up the equal human dignity of all people, including those with whom we disagree."

The document suggests that it is critically important for people of faith to stand in solidarity with those made vulnerable or threatened in these times. The full statement can be found at [franciscanaction.org/article/we-cry-out-racial-justice-united-states](http://franciscanaction.org/article/we-cry-out-racial-justice-united-states).

## LCWR Executive Committee and Staff Participate in Governance Workshop

*(continued from page 1)*

In addition to the work on governance, the executive committee conducted business that included the following:

- Presentation of the treasurer's report by Pat Eck, CBS
- Approval of revisions to the LCWR investment policy and socially responsible investment guidelines
- Finance reports

The other members of the LCWR national board joined the executive committee by videoconferencing to approve the 2017 LCWR budget and 2017 LCWR-CMSM building budget.



*LCWR treasurer Pat Eck, CBS; president Mary Pellegrino, CSJ; and staff member Grace Hartzog, SC present the LCWR 2017 budget to the LCWR national board during a videoconference on November 9*



*The LCWR executive committee and staff at the governance workshop at the Washington Retreat Center: Annmarie Sanders, IHM; Grace Hartzog, SC; Marcia Allen, CSJ; Teresa Maya, CCVI; Pat Eck, CBS; Mary Pellegrino, CSJ; Rosemary Brennan, CSJ; Marie McCarthy, SP; Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF; Ann Scholz, SSND; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; and consultant and workshop leader Marisa Guerin*

## Help Make LCWR Membership Possible Through a Donation to the LCWR Scholarship Fund

LCWR is aware that fees for membership are financially challenging for some members. Any congregation that has the means to support members is invited to consider a donation to the LCWR scholarship fund. The conference is grateful to those congregations who have already sent in contributions. 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 needs financial assistance is also asked to contact Grace ([ghartzog@lcwr.org](mailto:ghartzog@lcwr.org)) to request scholarship support.

## LCWR Attends Annual USCCB Meetings

by Joan Marie Steadman, CSC,  
LCWR Executive Director

Mary Pellegrino, CSJ, Marcia Allen, CSJ; Teresa Maya, CCVI; Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF; and I attended meetings of the Commission for Religious Life and Ministry on November 11. At the November 12 meeting of the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, I represented LCWR. The LCWR presidents and I were observers at the USCCB general assembly from November 14 to 15.

**The Commission for Religious Life and Ministry** is the USCCB's official link with conferences of women and men religious and is comprised of the of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), and LCWR. Bishop Michael Burbidge (Raleigh, North Carolina) represents the USCCB on the commission. The executive director of the USCCB Office of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, the president of the National Conference of Vicars for Religious (NCVR), and the executive director of the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) also participate in these meetings.

NRRO executive director Stephanie Still, PBVM gave a report on the work of the office in preparation for a request that would be made at the November 15, 2016 USCCB meeting to extend the national collection for religious for another 10 years. The collection has been a great support to congregations who qualify for support providing direct assistance and resources for planning. The 10-year extension of the collection was wholeheartedly approved by the bishops.

The members of the commission had a dialogue on *Mutuae Relationes*. This conversation was an experience of mutuality and the depth of the sharing was significant. The reports for each conference/organization gave a panoramic view of the focus and activities of each group present at the meeting.

The members of the CRLM thanked Bishop Burbidge for his support of the charism of religious life, his openness to dialogue, and his strong support of the extension of the NRRO national collection.

**The USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations**, which is staffed by the USCCB Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations, meets

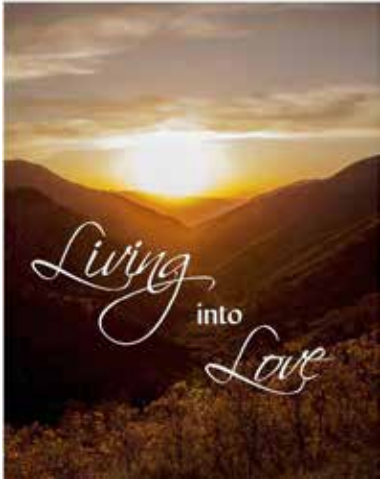
annually with the executive directors of consulting organizations related to clergy (National Federation of Priests Councils, National Organization for Continuing Education, National Association of Hispanic Priests, National Association of Diaconate Directors), vocations (NCDVD, NRVC, Serra), seminary formation (Institute for Priestly Formation, National Association of College Seminaries, National Association of Theological Schools) and religious life (CMSM, CMSWR, LCWR, consecrated virgins, secular institutes, vicars for religious). Each group – clergy, consecrated life, seminary formation, and the vocations group -- considered the theme of the meeting: The Year of Mercy. The reflection of the members of LCWR on the question: "What is the most significant fruit that has come forth from the Jubilee Year of Mercy for me as a leader of a religious congregation?" contributed a rich dimension to the sharing. The small group also gave input on how the upcoming 2018 synod and the efforts of the round table discussions with youth, young adults, campus ministry, and vocation directors might promote vocation awareness and discernment.

Cardinal-designate Joseph Tobin was welcomed as he will be the next chairperson of the CCLV.

Mary, Marcia, Teresa and Joan Marie attended the **general sessions of USCCB meeting** as observers on November 14 and 15. The concern of the bishops for the poor, the marginalized, the vulnerable, and the immigrant was very evident and clear in the public statements they made during their gathering. There were many moving moments as stories and videos shared both the pain as well as the efforts and plans to respond to and bring hope to our sisters and brothers. The situation of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East is a tragic result of violence and intolerance. Joining with the parishioners at Saint Peter Claver Parish in Baltimore was a concrete expression of solidarity with those who experience violence and the evil of racism. The spirit of hospitality and the liturgy that brought us together gave witness to a shared commitment to seek reconciliation and heal the wounds that divide us.

The LCWR leadership invited the CMSWR leadership to join them for dinner on November 14. To gather around the table, share a meal and conversation deepened our relationship with one another. A spirit of joy and mutual respect were threads that wove together a delightful evening.

## Order the Winter 2017 Issue of LCWR's Occasional Papers



The Winter 2017 issue of *Occasional Papers* on “**Living into Love**” will focus on the call to explore the mystery of Love and increase our own capacity for inclusive love that compels us toward transformative action for the life of the world. Drawing on ideas and insights raised during the 2016 LCWR assembly, the articles will probe concepts on the transformation needed in the world today and the potential that a contemplative stance in life provides for unleashing the energy of inclusive love. Included in this issue will be interviews with theologian Cynthia Bourgeault based on her book, *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three*, as well as with NPR radio program host Krista Tippett based on her latest book, *Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living*. Also included will be an article on the findings of a survey of US Catholic sisters under the age of 50 on their vision of religious life as it goes into the future.

All LCWR members, associates, and subscribers will receive a copy of this issue. Many leaders order additional copies for their members, staff, associates, boards, and others. These orders may be placed at [lcsr.org/item/winter-2017](http://lcsr.org/item/winter-2017).

Subscriptions to *Occasional Papers* are also available. More information on subscribing may be found at: [lcsr.org/publications/occasional-papers/subscribe](http://lcsr.org/publications/occasional-papers/subscribe).

## New Employee Begins at LCWR

Marissa Thomas began her employment on November 2 as an administrative assistant specialist for both LCWR and CMSM.



She says, “God has answered another one of my prayers as it was my wish to work with a Catholic organization. I feel blessed for the opportunity to work with the gracious folks at LCWR and CMSM. I was born in Manila, Philippines and immigrated to the United States when I was 11. I have resided in San Francisco and Los Angeles, but have been in Maryland for the past 20 years. I have a wonderful husband and two amazing teenage daughters who keep me on my toes. I was a stay-at-home mom for 16 years before coming to LCWR and CMSM.” LCWR welcomes Marissa to its staff. She may be reached at 301-588-4955 and at [mthomas@lcsr.org](mailto:mthomas@lcsr.org).

## Translations of Articles Available on LCWR Website

Due to the generosity of LCWR members, translations of two articles that appeared in LCWR's *Occasional Papers* are now available on the LCWR website.

“Mapping in Mystery: Communal Discernment in Our Time of Middle Space” by Carole Shinnick, SSND with Nancy Schreck, OSF (Winter 2016) has been translated into Portuguese by the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate. A translation in Spanish is also available.

“Communal Discernment: A Governance Style for Generative Adults” by Carole Shinnick (Summer 2013) has been translated into Spanish by the Carmelite Sisters of Charity, Vedruna. This article is available as well in French and Portuguese.

These translations of these articles as well as others from LCWR publications can be found at [lcsr.org/articles-pertinent-religious-life](http://lcsr.org/articles-pertinent-religious-life). Congregations that have translated other LCWR articles are asked to consider sharing the translations with LCWR so they can be made available to others. Translations should be sent to Annmarie Sanders, IHM at [asanders@lcsr.org](mailto:asanders@lcsr.org).



These affordable Christmas gifts provide a way to share ideas about religious life, transformational leadership, spirituality, contemplation, and more, while also helping to support LCWR's mission to serve its members and be a public voice.

## Contemplative Insight Greeting Cards

LCWR has produced a set of 10 greeting cards based on the insights of its members that were voiced at the 2016 LCWR assembly.

Priced at just \$10.00 for the set of 10, these folded cards make great Christmas gifts and are a means of sharing ideas about contemplation, communion, and Gospel-centered living. All proceeds from the sale of cards go toward supporting the work and mission of LCWR.

The insights on the cards (which are blank inside) came from the two sessions held during the LCWR assembly where members processed with one another the keynote addresses of author Margaret Wheatley and LCWR past-president Pat Farrell, OSF.

Cards may be purchased online at [lwr.org/item/contemplative-greeting-cards](http://lwr.org/item/contemplative-greeting-cards). For more information, contact Carol Glidden at [cglidden@lwr.org](mailto:cglidden@lwr.org).

## Gift Subscription to Occasional Papers

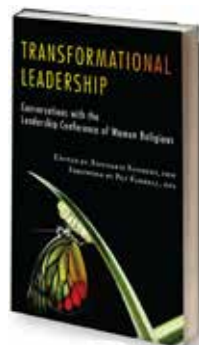
Subscriptions to LCWR's *Occasional Papers* costs \$15.00 and provides the recipient with a wealth of informative and reflective reading material on religious life, spirituality, and leadership. Gift subscriptions may be ordered at [lwr.org/publications/occasional-papers/gift](http://lwr.org/publications/occasional-papers/gift).



## LCWR Books on Leadership

*Spiritual Leadership for Challenging Times* is a collection of 10 addresses by LCWR presidents that illuminate understandings of the leadership their era demanded and needed. Available at [www.orbisbooks.com/spiritual-leadership-for-challenging-times.html](http://www.orbisbooks.com/spiritual-leadership-for-challenging-times.html) -- or through Amazon or Barnes & Noble.

*Transformational Leadership* is a collection of interviews conducted by LCWR of 18 theologians, psychologists, educators, and religious leaders from various fields and disciplines who share their wisdom about a way of leadership able to meet the deep challenges of today's world. Available at [www.orbisbooks.com/transformational-leadership.html](http://www.orbisbooks.com/transformational-leadership.html) -- or through Amazon or Barnes & Noble.



## Upcoming LCWR Dates

**LCWR Leading from Within Retreat**  
Bethany Retreat Center  
Lutz, Florida  
January 15 — 20, 2017

**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 commit with conscious intentionality to the practices of contemplation knowing that, as leaders, we are leaven for our congregations, and our congregations are leaven for the world.
- Contemplation opens us to hear the still small voices so that we can release the “I” and embrace the “We.”
- The reign of God is within us – Be still...and know it... believe it...share it...



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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).





*Members of the Pastoral Innovation delegation from Austria spent a Saturday morning with the LCWR staff*



## LCWR Hosts Delegation of Austrian Church Leaders

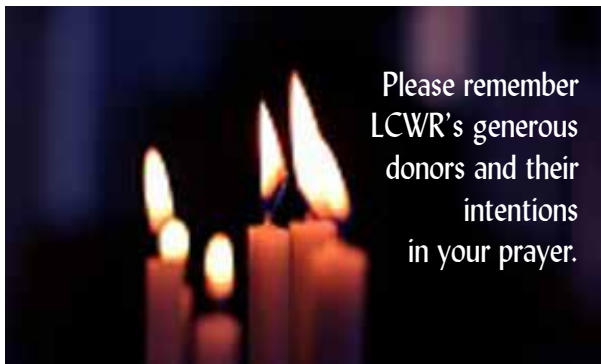
For the third year, the LCWR national office staff hosted a delegation of church leaders from German-speaking countries. Organized by Georg Plank, director of the Austrian-based organization, Pastoral Innovation, the seminar brings leaders to the United States to visit parishes and various church organizations that are responding in innovative ways to the pastoral needs of Catholics today.

The nine-person delegation discussed a variety of topics with the LCWR staff including building relationships with church leaders, contemplative practices, working for justice, and evangelization.

## SHARE to Sponsor Delegation to El Salvador in March 2017

El Salvador's Catholic Church has declared 2017 a Jubilee Year to celebrate the life of Monseñor Oscar Romero and his 100th birthday. SHARE El Salvador is inviting people of faith to join the commemoration by going with them to El Salvador March 21-28, 2017. SHARE will be celebrating a Romero that is alive in the people today by supporting their struggle for water rights and self-determination.

More details and a full itinerary are available on the SHARE website at [tinyurl.com/jrvwqe6](http://tinyurl.com/jrvwqe6).



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

## Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Scheduled for December 14-18

For the fourth year places of worship across the nation will be spending the tragic anniversary of the Newtown shooting remembering those who have been lost, praying for those who have survived, and raising awareness about what can be done to change the norm of gun violence in America.

Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence will again be partnering with Newtown Foundation and States United to Prevent Gun Violence to sponsor the National Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath. The kickoff event will be the national vigil for all victims of gun violence in Washington, DC on the evening of Thursday, December 14. Between Friday and Sunday, December 15-18, places of worship across the country will participate in a variety of ways. Ideas for prayer and worship are available at [www.decembersabbath.org](http://www.decembersabbath.org).





- Letter to President Obama from community and faith-based organizations urging him to act on the recommendation of the Department of Homeland Security Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers to end family detention. LCWR (10/19/16)
- Letter to Secretary Jeh Johnson expressing alarm over the Department of Homeland Security's record-level immigration detention rates and to request an in-person meeting to discuss concerns. LCWR (10/24/16)
- Letter to Congress urging a rapid and steady transition to an economy powered by clean, renewable resources and asking members to co-sponsor a House/Senate Resolution which sets the goal of meeting America's energy needs with 100% renewable energy and expanding access to the benefits of clean energy to all, including historically under-served and disadvantaged communities. LCWR(10/24/16)
- Letter to Secretary Jeh Johnson urging him not to renew the contract for the GEO-operated South Texas Detention Complex (STDC) in Pearsall, Texas or any other detention contracts while the Department's Homeland Security Advisory Committee reviews ICE's practice of contracting with private prison companies. LCWR (10/26/16)
- Faith leaders' letter to the new administration detailing concerns that current policies for lethal drone strikes are unnecessarily opaque, implicitly biased against efforts to capture those targeted, and cause an unacceptable number of civilian casualties. The use of drones directly harms attempts to promote human rights and the rule of law, and dangerously reduces the political and psychological costs of using lethal force. Joan Marie Steadman, CSC (10/28/16)
- Statement on racial justice by the Coalition of DC-based Catholic Organizations. LCWR (10/27/16)
- Petition to Congressional leadership urging them to support the Green Climate Fund and resist efforts to roll back EPA rules on carbon emissions. Ann Scholz, SSND (10/27/16)
- Faith leaders letter calling on the Administration and the Department of Homeland Security, in the light of the devastation of hurricane Matthew, to expand protections for Haitians, including through re-designating Temporary Protected Status (TPS), reversing the September 22 policy change that ended humanitarian parole for Haitians, expanding the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program, and immediately ending the inhumane and unjust detention of Haitians already here. Ann Scholz, SSND (11/7/16)
- Letter to the leadership of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees urging them to secure additional funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement for fiscal year (FY) 2017. LCWR (11/10/16)
- Letter to Congress urging members to complete funding for the rest of FY 2017 before the end of this calendar year in order to ensure the passage of affordable housing and homelessness programs. LCWR (11/14/16)
- Letter to members of Congress on the fourth anniversary of the Sandy Hook tragedy, asking them to pass a package of comprehensive gun safety measures to reduce gun violence in our nation. LCWR (12/1/16)

## World Day of Peace Message to Focus on Nonviolence

Inspired by the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of John XXIII and with reference to his own encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI initiated the January 1 celebration of the World Day of Peace in 1967. Each year since, the Holy Father has used the occasion to issue a message of peace that is directed to all people and sent to all the foreign ministries of the world. It serves to indicate the diplomatic concerns and peace-making priorities of the Holy See during the coming year. In his message for the 50th World Day of Peace, "Non-violence: A Style of Politics for Peace," Pope Francis urges peoples and nations to overcome the challenges of war, terrorism, and social violence of every stripe by replacing caution with courage and cynicism with hope. This year Pope Francis has asked Catholics to focus on Christian nonviolence as a style of politics for peace. He challenges citizens and diplomats alike to affirm the centrality of active nonviolence in the message of Jesus, the life of the Catholic Church, and to the calling to be part of the healing and reconciling of all people and our earth. Resources for prayer and education are available at [tinyurl.com/h85d574](http://tinyurl.com/h85d574).

## Catholic Nonviolence Initiative Offers Webinars about Nonviolence and Just Peace

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International, with the help of the Justice and Peace Commission of UISG/USG, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, LCWR, Pace e Bene, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, and the Colombarian Fathers, convened an unprecedented conference entitled “Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence” in April of 2016 in Rome.



In the hope of making the richness of the conference accessible, members of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative produced a four-part webinar series that explores the content of the gathering in some depth.

The first webinar featured conference organizers who discussed the background, purpose, process, and basic outcomes of the conference.

The second focused on experiences of nonviolence and what the latest scholarship and praxis have revealed about Jesus’ approach and practice of nonviolence and engaging conflict.

Building on the previous webinars, the third addressed nonviolence and just peace by exploring developments in theological thinking about just peace and its relationship to scriptures and the trajectory of Catholic social thought.

The fourth and final webinar about the landmark conference discussed its outcomes and, in particular, the consensus document, “An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence” that has already been endorsed by more than 1,600 organizations and individuals.

Information about the conference and a link to the webinars can be found at [nonviolencejustpeace.net/webinars](http://nonviolencejustpeace.net/webinars).

## Save the Dates for Ecumenical Advocacy Days April 21-24

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) is pleased to announce the theme for its 2017 national gathering: “Confronting Chaos, Forging Community: Challenging Racism, and Militarism.” It 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 give faithful witness to the new Congress and the new administration.

“After what we have experienced this year in our country, the witness of the Christian community is needed more now than ever,” said Douglas Grace, director of EAD. “For the past few years, we have observed how EAD’s yearly themes have built upon each other. I believe the Spirit has been leading us in a path into the present moment. EAD will not be ‘lukewarm,’ we will speak with faith and conviction. I hope our EAD national family will come and join this needed effort.”

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).





Leaders are asked to encourage vocation directors to renew their annual membership with the National Religious Vocation Conference at [nrvc.net/signup](http://nrvc.net/signup). NRVC is a professional organization of vocation ministers and those who support vocation ministry which presents religious life as a viable option in the Catholic Church. After a consistent 10-year decline in membership from 2004 to 2014, NRVC had a 6% increase in 2015 and an additional 10% increase in total paid memberships in 2016. To date, there are more than 900 members in NRVC representing more than 350 religious institutes. Of special note, 49% of NRVC members are in religious institutes affiliated with LCWR.

The NRVC Convocation, Awakened by the Spirit: Called to Discipleship was well attended by nearly 300 participants. Audio/visual recordings of the workshops and keynote presentations, may be ordered by calling 636-285-5200 or by going to [www.networkcommunicationsaudio.com/nrvc2016.html](http://www.networkcommunicationsaudio.com/nrvc2016.html).

Applications are being accepted for the position of NRVC executive director until December 16. The job description and information on how to apply can be found on the NRVC website at [nrvc.net/305/article/seeking-new-nrvc-executive-director-12404](http://nrvc.net/305/article/seeking-new-nrvc-executive-director-12404).

World Day of Consecrated Life which will be commemorated February 4-5th in parishes. Ideas for how to plan for the day are available on the NRVC.net website at [nrvc.net/292/article/world-day-of-consecrated-life-10041](http://nrvc.net/292/article/world-day-of-consecrated-life-10041). Other ways to recognize vocations to religious life can be found on the NRVC.net homepage.

The NRVC board and staff extend their prayers and greetings for peace, joy, and compassion throughout this Advent season extending to the Christmas holidays.



## Orientation to Formation

The Religious Formation Conference will offer this annual workshop at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago from December 9-11, 2016 on the topic Twenty-First Century Formation: Emergent Reality and Praxis. Presenters are Helen Cahill, OP, a staff member at the Claret Center in Chicago, and Henry Beck, OFM, director of initial and priestly studies for friar-students at CTU.

Throughout this reflective weekend for new and seasoned formators, congregations' leadership liaisons to formation teams and personnel, and members of formation communities, participants and presenters will explore the vision and context of formation today, practical helps for working with today's generation of women and men in formation, and formators' on-going need for good self-care. Registration for this workshop is now open at [www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org).

## Brothers Symposium Plans Underway

The Brothers Think Tank is hosting the Brothers Symposium, a national event at the University of Notre Dame (South Bend, Indiana), to be held on the upcoming Feast of the Annunciation, Saturday, March 25, 2017. The program, based on the Vatican document on the "Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in Church" published in December 2015, is also being sponsored by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the National Religious Vocation Conference, the Religious Brothers Conference, the Religious Formation Conference, and the University of Notre Dame.



Benedictine Brother John Mark Falkenhain, OSB will be the keynote speaker. The event is open to all and additional information may be found at [www.yearforconsecratedlife.com/brothers-symposium.html](http://www.yearforconsecratedlife.com/brothers-symposium.html).



## Reporting from South Sudan

The lush green vegetation and cool breezes of Yambio greeted me as I got off the small plane which landed on the dirt airstrip in Yambio on a Friday morning in early November. Such a welcome reprieve from the heat and humidity of Juba town!

The beauty of the area, is however, deceptive. During the current civil unrest, which erupted in December 2013 and is exacerbated by a power struggle between the leaders of the country, this area had been relatively quiet and peaceful. Since September 2015, however, it has become an area of conflict. The army, made up primarily of Dinka tribesmen loyal to the President has, in recent months, harassed the local people, stealing, kidnapping young men and raping local women. Many of the people have fled to neighboring Congo and Uganda.

The Solidarity Teacher Training College (STTC) is an oasis of peace in the midst of this troubled region. 110 students, coming from different ethnic groups and Nuba Mountains in Sudan, are currently studying to become primary school teachers. Just now most are taking exams, and the graduating class of 26 students is being monitored by representatives of the University of Juba as the students do their teaching practice. As of this writing, they all expect to graduate on November 17. Assisting these students to succeed in their studies is a capable Solidarity staff of nine religious, three brothers from Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda and five women

religious from New Zealand, Ireland, the US, and India. Margaret Scott, RNDM is an outstanding leader, providing stability, calm, and creative direction in very challenging circumstances. She worries every day about the presence of armed men in the area; is it safe to travel to the nearby Solidarity community at Riimenze and can the farm at Riimenze safely deliver food to feed the students at the STTC? Is it safe to send the students out to area schools for teaching practice? How to get the students home for the holiday break? Or do they stay here during that time? Will the bank allow us to get money from our account to pay the workers and purchase necessary items which may or may not be in the market? Can we procure construction materials to finish the new library being built on the campus? How do we make the campus more secure? The list goes on and on...and can take a toll on even the most courageous of leaders. Students and staff express gratitude to all those who are supporting the work being done here. Won't you join Friends in Solidarity in making sure that this work continues? The future leaders of this new country, struggling to become a functioning nation, are being formed and birthed by Solidarity here in Yambio. For more information on how you can support this work, contact [jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com](mailto:jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com) or check out the website: [www.solidarityfriends.org](http://www.solidarityfriends.org). Tax exempt contributions can be made online or by check, made out to Friends in Solidarity, and sent to Friends in Solidarity at 8808 Cameron St. Silver Spring, MD 20910.

## News from the United Nations

### December 10—International Human Rights Day

com-memorates the day on which, in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Disrespect for basic human rights continues to be wide-spread in all parts of the globe. Extremist movements subject people to horrific violence. Messages of intolerance and hatred prey on people's fears. It is time to reaffirm the dignity and rights outlined in the Declaration. More information is available at [www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday](http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday).



### New UN Secretary-General Promises to Focus on Peace

On October 13 the United Nations General Assembly elected former UN refugee chief Antonio Guterres of Portugal the ninth secretary-general. In his remarks, Secretary-General Ban-Ki-moon congratulated his successor and said that Mr. Guterres is perhaps best known where it counts most: on the frontlines of armed conflict and humanitarian suffering. Secretary-elect Guterres has said he will make peace his "over-arching priority." Mr. Guterres takes office in 2017.

### December 18—International Day of the Migrants

marks the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. There are over 244 million migrants in the world today. One out of every six migrants is under the age of 20. Children also comprised more than half of the world's 65.3 million refugees in 2015, statistics that are higher than at any time since UNHCR records began. Additional information may be found at: [www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday](http://www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday).

## 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://www.lcwr.org) 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.