

Update

*A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

January 2017

Christmas Greetings from LCWR



Listen intently for the voice of God
in the stillness,
a voice speaking of
love, tenderness, and compassion.

Many blessings to all this Christmas.

-- LCWR Presidents, Board, and Staff

LCWR Presidents and Executive Directors Meet in Maryland

The LCWR presidents and executive directors who were in office during the time of the doctrinal assessment of and mandate to the conference by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith met from December 14 to 16 at Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center in Maryland. The purpose of the gathering was to discern if there might be a value in sharing the learnings that came from LCWR's experience of working through the assessment and mandate with an audience that goes beyond LCWR members.

Led by their concern for the increasing presence of violence and conflict throughout the world and in this nation, the leaders concluded that articulating what they had experienced and learned may indeed be of help to others charged with leading organizations through situations of conflict and polarized thinking. They committed to writing reflections on what they believe are key factors for successfully navigating such situations, drawing upon their collective experiences leading LCWR at the time of the assessment.

LCWR will be seeking funding for this writing project. It also expresses gratitude to the three religious institutes that funded this December meeting.



Gathered in Marriottsville were: (top row) Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; Cathy Bertrand, SSND (facilitator); Florence Deacon, OSF; Sharon Holland, IHM; J Lora Dambroski, OSF; Carol Zinn, SSJ; (bottom row) Annmarie Sanders, IHM (staff); Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Pat Farrell, OSF; Janet Mock, CSJ; and Mary Hughes, OP. Marcia Allen, CSJ was unable to attend.

From the LCWR Presidency

Standing in the ‘Tragic Gap’

by Mary Pellegrino, CSJ — LCWR President

There were 11 of us. Some were Protestant, some were Catholic, one was Muslim. Most were American-born, others not. Some were graduate students, others were long-term volunteers, some were sisters. Most were millennials; there was one Gen-Xer and two baby boomers. Everyone knew someone. Only a few knew everyone. We were invited to come together to share about things that were important to us, and to listen to one another’s hopes, dreams and aspirations, particularly those of the youngest among us as they consider their future in the midst of our world.

The conversation was deep and honest. There was no pretense, no play book. The woman whose boyfriend is undocumented spoke freely and tearfully of her fear for him. A graduate student spoke angrily about the black figure found hung in effigy on the campus of her undergraduate Catholic alma mater. A volunteer spoke honestly about her desire – and her struggle - to stay in respectful dialogue with a friend whose politics and views are the polar opposite of her own, and the Muslim woman announced unabashedly that she is nowhere near being able to listen respectfully to the views of those who demonize her and people of her faith, and conceded the good that she experiences in desires and actions to build solidarity among what had once been divergent voices.

I continue to return to the memory and the graces of that evening. Eleven women with varied array of life experience gathered together in a circle by a common hope and vision for our world, and yet certainly not naïve about its reality. Together we created a safe space during a very frightening time, where speaking hon-



estly and freely made room for hope to take root. For me it was an experience of finding a way to stand in what Parker Palmer calls the “tragic gap.”

It’s the gap between the hard realities around us and what we know is possible. When we stand in that space we’re tempted to jump to either side. Too much on the side of hard reality we become corrosively cynical; too much on the side of possibility and we become irrelevant idealists. While the two extremes sound very different, in essence

they bring about the same result: we take ourselves out of the gap. And the gap, Palmer asserts, is where all the action is. Its tragedy, he says, is that it will never close; an inevitable flaw in the human condition.

We live and lead in times during which the flawed human condition is perpetually on display in increasingly alarming ways. The gaps are widening and becoming more tragic each day. There’s no denying the new reality that is upon us in the new year that is ahead of us. I look to that small circle of women I gathered with several weeks ago for clues to how we might stand and stand with others in the tragic gaps of our day.

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In addition to our advocacy and direct service to illumine gospel values, our contemplative energies and practices are also desperately needed and longed for by so many. Could it be that in this season when we recall that Mary’s womb expanded and stretched to create safe space for Christ, the divine revelation, we are being offered

a similar grace to expand and stretch our contemplative spaces to make room for Christ’s next Incarnation among us?

Registration is Underway for LCWR's New Leaders Workshop

From March 30 to April 2, 2017 LCWR will hold its annual New Leaders 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.

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



Leaders meeting as teams during the 2016 LCWR New Leaders Workshop

One Space Available for LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

Due to a cancellation, there is one space now available for the 2017 LCWR Leading from Within Retreat to be held from January 15 to 20 at Bethany Retreat Center in Lutz, Florida. More information is available at lcwr.org/calendar/leading-within.



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

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

- Our call to leadership includes a call to contemplative listening so that we are then able to engage and deepen with our members in this transformational moment as we walk into the unknown future.
- Embrace the darkness that reveals the God who yearns for our reciprocity and communicate that radical hospitality to ourselves, our communities, and the broader world.
- Contemplation and contemplative listening to and reverence for diversity helps us transcend our differences and biases in searching for the deeper common ground.



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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.



- Letter to Jeh Johnson, secretary of Homeland Security, urging acceptance of the recommendations of two independent advisory committees, commissioned directly by DHS and ICE to discontinue family detention, terminate the use of county jails for immigration detention except as brief staging sites, and undertake a deliberate shift away from reliance on private prisons. LCWR (12/15/16)
- Letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson asking him to do the right thing before leaving office by making urgent changes to the detention system to reduce the number of those detained and shut down the “worst of the worst” facilities. LCWR (12/15/16)
- Letter to members of Congress urging them provide a replacement plan that would protect the coverage and dignity of all Americans before voting to repeal the Affordable Care Act. LCWR (12/15/16)

Pope Focuses His Message on Child Migrants

Pope Francis has chosen the theme “Minor Migrants, Vulnerable and Voiceless” for the celebration of the 103rd World Day for Migrants and Refugees on January 15, 2017.

As is customary, Pope Francis has published a pontifical message to mark the occasion. In his 2017 message to the world, Pope Francis draws particular attention to the reality of child migrants, especially those who come alone, because, “they are defenseless: they are children, they are foreigners, and they have no means to protect themselves.” He points out that today migration is a global phenomenon. People around the world are being forced from their homes by poverty, violence, and insecurity of various types and he reminds the church that their defense, their care, is the responsibility of all people. The pope’s message is available at tinyurl.com/zejckwk.

Pope Francis Releases World Day of Peace Message

In his January 1st World Day of Peace message, “Non-violence: A Style of Politics for Peace,” Pope Francis urges people everywhere to practice active nonviolence and notes that the “decisive and consistent practice of nonviolence has produced impressive results.”

Last spring at the Nonviolence and Just Peace gathering in Rome, Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, asked conference organizers to submit a proposal for the World Day of Peace message. Participants were thrilled this summer to learn that the suggested theme had been accepted and honored to be invited to contribute background information for the text.

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, of which LCWR is a founding member, is deeply grateful for the Holy Father’s call to political and religious leaders, heads of international organizations, and business and media executives to “apply the Beatitudes in the exercise of their respective responsibilities. It is a challenge 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. . . . Active nonviolence is a way of showing that unity is truly more powerful and more fruitful than conflict,” he said.

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a global effort to affirm the vision and practice of active nonviolence at the heart of the Catholic Church, was formed to advance the requests made in the “Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-commit to the Centrality of Gospel Non-violence.” This was the final statement of the landmark April 2016 Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference held in Rome and co-sponsored by the Holy See’s Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Pax Christi International, and other organizations including LCWR.

A link to the Pope’s message and resources for prayer and education around the World Day of Peace are available at tinyurl.com/zbhfm9. Additional information about the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and the “Appeal” is available at nonviolencejustpeace.net.

Commemorate National Migration Week: January 8-14, 2017

For nearly a half century, the Catholic Church in the United States has celebrated National Migration Week. It is an opportunity to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrants, including immigrants, refugees, children, and survivors of human trafficking. The theme for National Migration Week 2017 draws attention to Pope Francis' call to create a culture of encounter and, in doing so, to look beyond personal and parochial needs to those of others.



In the homily given during his first celebration of Pentecost as pontiff, Pope Francis emphasized the importance of encounter in the Christian faith, "For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others."

USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services has developed a toolkit that contains talking points, tips and samples for writing letters to the editor, suggestions for social media, prayer petitions, pulpit announcements, and homily helps. It is available at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

News from the UN

Guterres Set to Become Ninth UN Secretary General

Antonio Guterres, former prime minister of Portugal and more recently United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, was sworn in as ninth secretary-general of the United Nations on December 12. Mr. Guterres was elected to lead the international body by acclamation by the General Assembly in October. He takes over from Ban Ki-moon on January 1, 2017.



After 10 years of serving the most vulnerable refugees fleeing from all conflicts around the world, Mr. Guterres is poised to take on an even greater challenge, stating, "I believe it is high time to reconcile the people with

political leaders and international organizations, to rebuild trust in our international community." Information about the agenda he has planned can be found at tinyurl.com/z636kc6.

News from Congress

Senators Introduce BRIDGE for DREAMers

US senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) have introduced bipartisan legislation to ensure that the young undocumented immigrants known as DREAMers remain shielded from deportation under a Trump Administration. Like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act would provide temporary relief from deportation and work authorization to young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children.

The BRIDGE Act would provide "provisional protected presence" and employment authorization to DACA-eligible individuals. A current DACA recipient would receive provisional protected status until the expiration date of his or her DACA status and could apply for provisional protected presence prior to this expiration. An individual who is not a DACA recipient but who is eligible for DACA could also apply for provisional protected presence. Applicants would be required to pay a reasonable fee, be subject to criminal background checks, and meet a number of eligibility criteria indicating that they came to the United States as minors, grew up in this country, have pursued an education, have not committed any serious crimes, and do not pose a threat to the country. More information is available at tinyurl.com/jj33h46.

Religious Worker Visa Program Extended

On September 29 the US congress extended the religious worker visa program as part of the continuing resolution to fund the government until December 9. Before leaving for their Christmas break, congress passed, and the president signed into law, legislation that extends the program as part of another continuing resolution. This time it was extended through April when congress must deal with the question yet again. Senator Orin Hatch (R-UT) has introduced legislation to remove the sunset date and make the religious worker visa program permanent. Sources suggest that the legislation may move forward in the 115th congress.

Prepare Leaders for the Future

Applications are now being accepted from leaders who wish to empower younger vowed members, co-members, or associates of their communities to:

- Prepare to meet the demands and challenges of leadership in church, community, and society
- Develop skills to lead from a spirituality attuned to global and local realities
- Communicate and embody their congregation's charism and mission
- Partner with others in emerging leadership roles

The Collaborative Leadership Development Program (CLDP) is an 18-month integrative process with a multi-cultural perspective, designed to prepare women religious, associates, and co-members with the skills, knowledge and confidence to assume leadership positions in community and ministry. The CLDP is a program sponsored by The Leadership Collaborative, in partnership with LCWR, RFC, and others.

The CLDP blends contemplative practices and relationship-building with self-growth and spiritual development, through prayerful study and interaction, online forums, mentoring, and coaching.

Vowed members, co-members, and associates of congregations based in the United States with ministries outside this country are also eligible. Applicants must be no older than 60 years of age as of January 1, 2017. They must commit to attend three 4-day sessions: August 6-11, 2017; April 8-12, 2018; and November 8-23, 2018. Applicants must be recommended by their congregational leadership. Applications are due April 1, 2017.

An invitational letter, brochure, and application form will be emailed directly to leaders by contacting Rita Waters, program assistant, at rwaters@sistersofmercy.org, or Kathleen Wade, program director, at kwade42@gmail.com or by calling 301-587-0423 x 2310.

Leadership Collaborative Position Opening

The Leadership Collaborative is searching for a new program director whose primary area of responsibility will be the full-time management of the Collaborative Leadership Development Program -- an 18-month long program and process designed to enhance and support the leadership capacities of women religious and associates under the age of 60. More information about this position is available at thecldp.org.

Questions about the position may be directed to Kathy Wade at kwade42@gmail.com or 513-919-0293. Questions about the application process may be directed to Maureen O'Connell, SL at maureenocconnell75@gmail.com.

Justice Promoters to Meet in Chicago March 5-7, 2017

The second convocation of justice and peace promoters for congregations of women religious will be held March 5-7, 2017 at Techny Towers in Chicago. All those ministering on behalf of congregations of women religious to establish justice are welcome. The convocation will refresh and challenge justice ministers and provide ample opportunity to meet and network with colleagues from across the country.



Keynote speaker Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, will address the conference theme, "Which Roots Will We Water? Systemic Change and JPIC Ministry," and explore the root causes of the injustice that plagues society. Participants will also have the opportunity to interact with their peers in a number of workshops.

The convocation registration fee is \$195.00 plus housing. Space is limited and filling quickly. Additional information is available at tinyurl.com/gox9cy9 or by emailing jcwrteam@gmail.com.



Consecrated Life Resources

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

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.



Upcoming Webinar

**The Transformation of Religious Life:
Reflections from Younger Members**
February 17, 2016 -- 2:00 PM CST
Presenter: Ted Dunn, Ph.D.

Dr. Dunn will present the findings of his recent survey of sisters under 50 on the transformation of religious life. The results of their reflections will be shared in this webinar in order to amplify the voices of younger members, share what they see emerging on the horizon, and enrich our collective understanding of the ongoing transformation of religious life. Registration for this webinar will open in January.

ForMission Program

ForMission, a formation program for perpetually professed religious preparing for or new to formation ministry which engages participants in four week-long residential sessions over a two year period as well as reading, reflection, and supervision, is now accepting applications for a new cohort which will meet in Chicago May 27-June 4, 2017. Detailed information is available at www.relforcon.org.

Spring 2017 Workshops

Following the successful fall 2016 series, Conversations at the Well: Crossing Over to Meet the Other and Oneself, the Religious Formation Conference will offer a spring series on skills for successful border crossings in religious life today: communal discernment, inter-cultural communication, and the psychological invitations and challenges of border crossings in community and mission. Further details are available at www.relforcon.org.



by Joan Mumaw, IHM
President
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It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas ... in South Sudan

No, this is not Christmas as we know it. But for the graduating teachers, nurses, and midwives and their families in South Sudan it is the day of the greatest gift of all: an education!

At the end of November, the Solidarity Teacher Training College (STTC) in Yambio graduated 26 new elementary school teachers, the only TTC in South Sudan to remain open and matriculate students during this time of ethnic strife that has engulfed the entire country. In Wau, the Catholic Health Training Institute graduated 31 new nurses and midwives, more than half of all graduates in the country.

This gift to South Sudan is made possible through the generosity of religious congregations, individuals and Catholic organizations. Yes, your contribution, whether small or large, whether through the gift of personnel and/or prayers has helped to make fruitful the work of Solidarity with South Sudan.



The challenges are many in this new country: lack of political structures and good leadership, an economy on the brink of disaster; ethnic violence bordering on genocide resulting in massive flows of refugees both within and to surrounding countries, and the threat of famine for those who remain.

Still the work of Solidarity continues with dedicated and courageous staff from around the globe, and with the support of so many good hearted people, like you. At this time of the year when we celebrate God's coming among us in human form, we take time to thank each of you in a special way for your support of Friends in Solidarity as we work to support our religious brothers and sisters working with Solidarity with South Sudan. You are helping to make God present wherever we are working. Thank you!

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](#) 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. Carol can also guide members through the process of signing up for the forum.