

May 2015

Pope Francis Meets with LCWR Representatives



Photo by L'Osservatore Romano

Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; LCWR executive director; Janet Mock, CSJ, former LCWR executive director; Carol Zinn, SSJ, LCWR past president; and Marcia Allen, CSJ, LCWR president-elect; meet with Pope Francis at the Vatican.

LCWR officials, while on their annual visit to Rome, were invited for a private audience with Pope Francis on April 16. At the conclusion of their 50-minute meeting, the LCWR officials stated, "We were honored to have this opportunity for such an extensive conversation with Pope Francis that centered on *Evangelii Gaudium*, the pope's apostolic exhortation that has so deeply impacted our lives as women religious and our mission in the world. Our conversation allowed us to personally thank Pope Francis for providing leadership and a vision that has captivated our hearts and emboldened us as in our own mission and service to the church. We were also deeply heartened by Pope Francis' expression of appreciation for the witness given by Catholic sisters through our lives and ministry and will bring that message back to our members."

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From the LCWR Presidency

A Global Heart in a Global Church for a Global World

by Carol Zinn, SSJ — LCWR Past President

Usually when we sit down to put our thoughts on paper, we are sitting at a desk in an office on the actual ground of our home planet, Earth. I am sitting at a tray table on a flight at an altitude of 42,000 feet over the Atlantic Ocean on my way home from the LCWR annual visit to Rome. Quite a different venue, offering quite a distinct vista to say the least!

However, the venue and vista do provide a framework for reflection on much of the experience of the 2015 LCWR conversations with the many and varied Congregations and Pontifical Councils we visited. The pastoral care of migrants and refugees, justice and peace issues of unprecedented proportions, social communications with the inherent complexities of human excellence as well as exploitation, promoting the new evangelization of peoples rooted in the Gospel message of inclusion and reverence, the realities of religious life in the United States and around the world, the necessity of inter-religious dialogue in service of reconciliation and unity, and the depth of faith brought to bear on the lives of God's People, all living beings and God's Holy Creation—all of these conversations touched the very heart of what it means to be part of a Global Church in a Global World.

The persons with whom we met and shared in these conversations, though, made flesh the very Heart of God and evoked within me the emergence of a Global Heart at a new, Easter-like depth; the kind we read about in the post-Easter encounters with the Risen One. In each conversation I found myself surrounded by grace and deeply moved by the passion and compassion with which the many people who minister in these offices spoke. Such was the power of the presence of a Global Church for a Global World. Such was the power of the passion of a Global Heart palpably present within



We are called to tend the sorrow and suffering of all peoples, to temper the polarization and politics in all ways possible, to tender the hurt and hatred wherever we find it, and to transform the anguish and anger whenever we experience it.

and among the persons we met. Such was the power of the prophetic role of religious life, called always and everywhere to the periphery, the margins, the vulnerable, and the marginalized.

Nowhere was the heart, church and world more global than in the person and presence of Pope Francis. Our encounter with him was truly that—an encounter. I left that encounter transformed in ways that are yet to be realized, I'm sure. I heard the vocational call again, anew. I felt the baptismal promise and profession commitment to live this life for the life of the world again, anew. And I recognized in Francis the fullness of the messages shared in all the other conversations throughout our 2015 annual visit: we are each called to "BE" a global heart in a global church for a global world. We are called to tend the sorrow and suffering of all peoples, to temper the polarization and politics in all ways possible, to tender the hurt and hatred wherever we find it, and to transform the anguish and anger whenever we experience it.

I am halfway across the pond, as they say about the transatlantic flights, but I have not really left Rome yet. There remains much to pray, ponder, and practice as I prepare to arrive home. I am grateful that the Easter season continues to offer itself as we, together, journey towards Pentecost. Surely the gifts of the Spirit will come on all of us again, anew this Pentecost. May we, the members of LCWR, prepare ourselves to receive the gifts we most need to "BE" a global heart in a global church for a global world. May we help one another maintain the venues and vistas needed to respond to the vocation we so love and that the church and world so needs. Truly, we have been cleared for landing! And the journey begins for the life of the world!

Pope Francis Meets with LCWR Representatives



◀ Pope Francis and Marcia Allen, CSJ
▼ Pope Francis with Carol Zinn, SSJ

Photo by L'Osservatore Romano



Photo by L'Osservatore Romano



Photo by L'Osservatore Romano

Photo by L'Osservatore Romano



▲ Pope Francis with Joan Marie Steadman, CSC
▶ Pope Francis with Janet Mock, CSJ

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Concludes Assessment of LCWR

On April 16, the Vatican press office and LCWR issued the following press release.

Officials of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), Archbishop Peter Sartain and officers of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) met April 16. Archbishop Sartain and LCWR officers presented a [joint report](#) on the implementation of the CDF doctrinal assessment and mandate of April 2012. The joint report outlines the manner in which the implementation of the mandate has been accomplished. The Congregation accepted the joint report, marking the conclusion of the doctrinal assessment of LCWR. Present for the April 16 meeting were His Eminence Gerhard Cardinal Müller; Archbishop Peter Sartain; Sr. Carol Zinn, SSJ; Sr. Marcia Allen, CSJ; Sr. Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; and Sr. Janet Mock, CSJ; and other officials of CDF.



Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Archbishop Joseph Augustine Di Noia, OP; CDF general secretary; Monsignor Steven Lopes, CDF staff; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Marcia Allen, CSJ; Archbishop J. Peter Sartain; and Janet Mock, CSJ outside of the CDF offices following their meeting on April 16, 2015

During the meeting, Archbishop Sartain and the LCWR officers outlined the process undertaken by the bishop delegates and LCWR over the past three years, noting the spirit of cooperation among participants throughout the sensitive process. Cardinal Müller offered his thoughts on the doctrinal assessment as well as the mandate and its completion. He expressed gratitude to those present for their willing participation in this important and delicate work and extended thanks to others who had participated, especially Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki, and the past officers and executive directors of LCWR.

Following the meeting, Cardinal Müller said: "At the conclusion of this process, the Congregation is confident that LCWR has made clear its mission to support its member institutes by fostering a vision of religious life that is centered on the Person of Jesus Christ and is rooted in the Tradition of the Church. It is this vision that makes religious women and men radical witnesses to the Gospel, and, therefore, is essential for the flourishing of religious life in the Church."

Sr. Sharon Holland, IHM, president of LCWR, was unable to be present for the meeting but commented, "We are pleased at the completion of the mandate, which involved long and challenging exchanges of our understandings of and perspectives on critical matters of religious life and its practice. Through these exchanges, conducted always in a spirit of prayer and mutual respect, we were brought to deeper understandings of one another's experiences, roles, responsibilities, and hopes for the Church and the people it serves. We learned that what we hold in common is much greater than any of our differences."

Archbishop Sartain added, "Over the past several years, I have had the honor of working with LCWR officers and meeting a large number of LCWR members through the implementation of the mandate. Our work included the revision of LCWR statutes; review of LCWR publications, programs and speakers; and discussion of a wide range of issues raised by the doctrinal assessment, LCWR, and the bishop delegates. The assistance of CDF officials was essential to the great progress

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Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Concludes Assessment of LCWR

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we made. Our work together was undertaken in an atmosphere of love for the Church and profound respect for the critical place of religious life in the United States, and the very fact of such substantive dialogue between bishops and religious women has been mutually beneficial and a blessing from the Lord. As we state in our joint final report, 'The commitment of LCWR leadership to its crucial role in service to the mission and membership of the conference will continue to guide and strengthen LCWR's witness to the great vocation of religious life, to its sure foundation in Christ, and to ecclesial communion.' The other two bishop delegates and I are grateful for the opportunity to be involved in such a fruitful dialogue."

Media coverage and analysis of the conclusion of the doctrinal assessment occurred worldwide. Links to some of the coverage follow:

- [New York Times](#)
- [New York Times editorial](#)
- [PBS NewsHour](#)
- [National Public Radio](#)
- [NBC News](#)
- [Wall Street Journal](#)
- [Washington Post](#)
- [US News and World Report](#)
- [Aljazeera America](#)
- [Religion News Service](#)
- [America Magazine](#)
- [National Catholic Reporter \(1\)](#)
- [National Catholic Reporter \(2\)](#)
- [Commonweal](#)
- [Crux](#)

Other Events During Annual Visit to Rome

In addition to their visit with Pope Francis and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, LCWR president-elect Marcia Allen, CSJ; past president Carol Zinn, SSJ; and executive director Joan Marie Steadman, CSC had the opportunity to meet with representatives of various Vatican offices, as well as with other religious and officials. Present in Rome at the same time were the officers from the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, who joined LCWR in some of the meetings. Their visits included time with:

- The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life
- The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
- The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
- The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Immigrants
- The Pontifical Council for Social Communications
- Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
- Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization
- The US Ambassador to the Vatican
- The leadership of the International Union of Superiors General
- The leaders of religious institutes with members in the United States

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At the CICLSAL offices: Sebastiano Paciolla, O.Cist., undersecretary; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, prefect; Nicoletta Vittoria Spezzati, ASC, undersecretary; Marcia Allen, CSJ; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, secretary; and Hank Lemoncelli, OMI, study assistant



Other Events During Annual Visit to Rome

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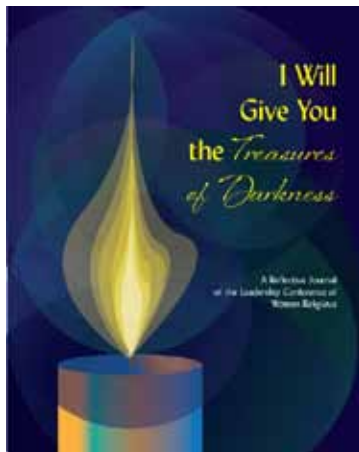
The CMSM and LCWR delegations met with Ken Hackett, US ambassador to the Holy See. Shown here are: John Puodziunas, OFM; William Boslet, OSF; Carl Chudy, SX; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Ambassador Hackett; Carol Zinn, SSJ; James J. Greenfield, OSFS; John Pavlik, OFM Cap; Marcia Allen, CSJ

Janet Mock, CSJ; Carol Zinn, SSJ; and Marcia Allen, CSJ at St. Peter's Square



Additional Copies of 2015 LCWR Reflection Books Available for Purchase

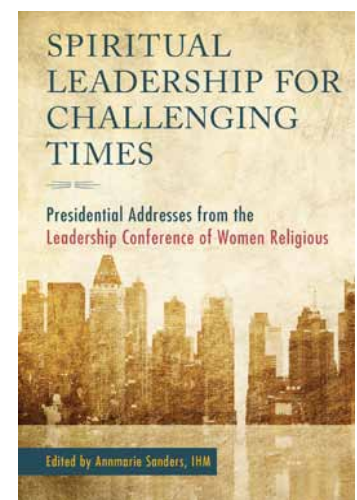
Due to a printer overrun, copies of the 2015 LCWR reflection book, *I Will Give You the Treasures of Darkness*, are available for purchase. The books sell for \$5.00 each, plus shipping and handling. Discounts are available for orders of more than 10 books. Books may be purchased at lcsr.org/publications/i-will-give-you-treasures-darkness.



Spiritual Leadership for Challenging Times Chosen as Award Finalist

Spiritual Leadership for Challenging Times, a collection of LCWR presidential addresses, is among the finalists selected for an Excellence in Publishing Award given by the Association of Catholic Publishers. The goal of these awards is to recognize the best in Catholic publishing.

Spiritual Leadership is one of the finalists in the category of resources for ministry.



The awards will be given at the 2015 Religious Booksellers Trade Exhibit in May.

THE Occasional Papers

Exploring the Great Deep

The focus of the Summer 2015 issue of *Occasional Papers* springs from a concept put forward by Jesuit superior general, Adolfo Nicolás, SJ. While addressing those working in Jesuit higher education, Fr. Nicolás noted a phenomenon he named the “globalization of superficiality” that has risen due to our new capacities to access information; publish our opinions; be exposed to multiple options, values, and visions of life; and become “friends” with mere acquaintances or total strangers on social networks. These realities, he says, can lead us away from the painstaking work of serious, critical thinking; of forming communities of dialogue in search of truth and understanding; and of building true and meaningful relationships. To counter this globalization of superficiality, Fr. Nicolás speaks of a strong need to promote depth of thought, as well as imagination and creativity.



The authors in *Occasional Papers* explore this phenomenon through a variety of perspectives and suggest what this reality may mean for those in religious life today. This issue also includes interviews on this topic with both Dewitt Jones, a former *National Geographic* photographer who now teaches creativity and vision, and Peggy McAllister, an executive coach and leadership development consultant.

This issue is also intended to serve as a preparatory resource for LCWR members as they look ahead to the August 2015 LCWR assembly entitled, “Spirings of the Great Deep Burst Forth: Meeting the Thirsts of the World.”

Although all LCWR members, associates, and subscribers will receive a copy of *Occasional Papers*, many leaders order additional copies for their own members and associates. Orders and payment must be received by **May 31, 2015**. Orders may be placed online at lwr.org/item/summer-2015-exploring-great-deep.

2015 LCWR Assembly



Spirings of the Great Deep Burst Forth: Meeting the Thirsts of the World

August 11- 14, 2015

(Travel day: August 15)

Houston, Texas

Registration materials are in the Members' section of the LCWR website (lwr.org)

Registration for the assembly and for the hotel must be completed online.

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

LCWR is aware that attendance at the national assembly is financially challenging for some members. Any congregation that has the means to enable the attendance of another member 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 wishes to attend the conference, but needs assistance is asked to contact Grace (ghartzog@lwr.org) to request a partial scholarship. Partial assistance with registration and/or hotel accommodations is available through the LCWR scholarship fund.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Assembly
Houston, Texas
August 11—15, 2015

Leading from Within Retreat
Redemptorist Retreat Center
Tucson, Arizona
January 17 — 22, 2016

Imagining Justice
Bethany Center
Lutz, Florida
March 7 — 10, 2016

LCWR New Leader Workshop
Conference Center
University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois
April 7 — 10, 2016

LCWR Assembly
Atlanta, Georgia
August 9—13, 2016

LCWR Assembly
Orlando, Florida
August 8—12, 2017

LCWR Assembly
St. Louis, Missouri
August 7—11, 2018

Change of Date for 2016 LCWR New Leader Workshop

Due to a conflict in scheduling with the plenary session of the International Union of Superiors General, LCWR has changed the dates for the next New Leader Workshop to April 7 to 10.



New Cohorts Forming For Leadership Pathways

This September new learning cohorts will be forming for the Leadership Pathways module, *Becoming the Leaders We Hope To Be: The Foundations of Transformational Leadership*. This is an opportunity for interested members to join an online learning cohort, facilitated by a group mentor, to explore and integrate more deeply the dispositions and skills needed to be a transformational leader.

The module explores the role of self-knowledge and vulnerability in effective leadership; the art of seeing things whole and thinking and acting from a systems perspective; how to lead from a contemplatively grounded place; and how to build a collective, collaborative congregational vision.

Group members work at their own pace and on their own time. All materials are available online. At the end of each of the six units the group meets together online for in-depth conversation and sharing. It generally takes a group approximately nine to twelve months to complete the six units.

Members may sign up as individuals or as teams to participate in this experience. Thus far three pilot groups have completed the entire six units and another five groups are working with the material. Feedback from the participants indicates that the experience is genuinely helpful to them in their ministry of leadership.

Faith Groups Challenge Fifth Circuit Court Injunction on President's Immigration Actions

LCWR joined 19 Catholic, Evangelical, and Protestant faith-based organizations in filing an amicus brief in support of the Obama Administration's executive actions on immigration with the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The amicus brief, also known as a "friend of the court" brief, supports the Administration's appeal of Texas Judge Andrew Hanen's injunction that has temporarily blocked deportation relief for close to five million undocumented immigrants. The amicus brief details the disservice that the injunction poses not just to immigrant communities but also to faith-based organizations and the public at large.

Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, executive director of LCWR, explained the conference's commitment to immigration justice. "As people of faith, we take seriously the Gospel call to welcome the stranger and care for those in need. Catholic sisters began coming to these shores more than 250 years ago as immigrants to serve immigrant populations. To this day sisters continue to minister to new immigrants," said Sister Joan. "We know the suffering of families torn apart by needless detentions and deportations and children who live in fear that their parents will be taken from them. That is why we are committed to ensuring the implementation of the expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the Deferred Action for the Parents of Americans (DAPA) programs."

The filing with the court broadly supports the Administration's fully constitutional use of prosecutorial discretion through the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) and expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) application processes.

The legal brief may be viewed in full at: tiny.cc/faith-amicus-brief.

NRRO Offers Education and Resources on Property Issues

Tending the Vineyard: Stewardship of Religious Property is a project of the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) and funded by the Conrad Hilton Foundation. This project will provide ongoing education and resources for leadership of religious communities in dealing with the myriad and complex issues regarding property.

The stewardship of property is a major component in planning for the future viability of the mission of the congregation and the care of the members. Workshops will be designed to demonstrate processes and best practices regarding prudent stewardship and decision-making.

The "Tending the Vineyard" project is housed in Philadelphia, PA. Stephen Glodek, SM is the project director, assisted by Margaret Wick, OSF from Dubuque, IA. They presently are researching and reviewing materials to gather resources and best practices. In the next couple of months two think tanks will bring together religious experts. The conversations from the think tanks will contribute to syllabi for workshops that will be offered to community leadership. These workshops will include technical expertise as well as decision-making and emotional components.

Any community that is currently in the midst of property planning is asked to notify Stephen (smglodek@aol.com) of its most pressing needs. This information will assist the organization in identifying the educational components and resources that are desired. Additional information about resources and workshops will be forthcoming by the end of the summer.

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.



NRVC Hosts International Vocation Conference in Rome

As part of the celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life, NRVC hosted from February 23-27 in Rome the first-ever International Vocation Conference for religious and vocation leaders from nine countries in the developed, Western world. In addition to the United States, representative countries included Canada, England/Wales, Ireland, Germany, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji. Also attending was an official from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), the secretaries general of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and the Union of Superiors General, and the vice-president of the Union of the European Conferences of Major Superiors (UCESM).

The purpose of this meeting was to identify the common opportunities and challenges in contemporary vocation ministry and to explore ways in which all can work together globally to promote religious life. The conference culminated with an open and frank discussion with various representatives from CICLSAL.

The final statement from the delegates, titled Religious Life at the Very Heart of the Church, can be accessed nrvc.net/285/article/consecrated-life-at-the-very-heart-of-the-church-7255.



Vocaciones sin Fronteras en un Mundo Cambiante/Vocations without Borders in a Changing World

NRVC is collaborating with Catholic Extension to provide a one-day workshop entitled, *Vocaciones sin Fronteras en un Mundo Cambiante/Vocations without Borders in a Changing World*. The workshop's aim is to assist Spanish-speaking Sisters from Latin America in becoming relevant, proficient, and credible pastoral ministers who are also confident vocation promoters.

This one day workshop will be offered on June 2, 2015, at the Sacred Heart Retreat House in Alhambra, California. A limited number of spaces are available for NRVC members who are Spanish-speaking sisters to participate. There is no workshop fee; however, transportation and lodging are the responsibility of the participant. Registration information may be obtained from Erika Cedrone, Catholic Extension, director of mission, at ecedrone@catholicextension.org.

NRVC/CARA Study on the Role of the Family in Nurturing Vocations to Religious Life and Priesthood

NRVC would like to thank those LCWR congregations that participated in the NRVC/CARA Study on the Role of the Family in Nurturing Vocations to Religious Life and Priesthood. The study results will be made available in time for the 8th World Meeting of Families and the 2015 Synod on the Family in Rome. The findings will help to educate the church on the important role of parents and families in the promotion of vocations at the time when the church is placing an intentional, stronger focus on families and their faith life.

More information about the study process may be obtained from Mary L. Gautier, CARA senior research associate at gautierm@georgetown.edu or by phone at 202-687-8080.



RCRI's 2015 National Conference October 27-30 Caribe Royale Hotel and Conference Center Orlando, Florida

The theme of this year's conference will be a celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life. Keynote speaker, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin of Indianapolis and former secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, will open the conference on Tuesday evening, October 27.

Prior to the opening, RCRI will offer three pre-conference workshops: an all-day session on Impact Investment sponsored by Catholic Relief Services (CRS); an all-day session for new treasurers and finance personnel, new leaders, and leadership councils on management of religious institutes in the areas of finance and civil and canon law; and a half-day session (afternoon) on TRENDS for new users.

Among the features this year will be 35 workshops, plus a general session for the Legal Update, including updates from NRRO, RCRI and LCWR; and a conference liturgy to be celebrated on Thursday afternoon, October 29.

The full program and other materials will be available in early June at trcri.org/events/2015-national-conference.

US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking Seeks Members

US Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) is a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor services, and engages in advocacy in an effort to eradicate modern-day slavery.



Membership in USCSAHT is open to congregations of women religious, coalitions working against human trafficking in which women religious participate, individual sisters, lay associate members of congregations, and lay colleagues that have demonstrated their commitment to end human trafficking. Ideal members are those who seek to extend their current work against human trafficking by joining in common efforts to create educational resources, serve survivors, or advocate for policy and legislative change.

USCSAHT provides members with a public, corporate voice on the issue of human trafficking and the opportunity to share resources, experience, and expertise with others.

USCSAHT is a member of the Talitha Kum international network of consecrated religious working on the issue of human trafficking which enables members to access information, explore cultural concerns, and share promising practices on a global level.

General information on the organization can be found at: sistersagainstrafficking.org/, while membership information is at: sistersagainstrafficking.org/join-us/.



SOLIDARITY with South Sudan

by Joan Mumaw, IHM
US Regional Development Director

On the Ground in South Sudan

I arrived in Juba, South Sudan on April 15 in the midst of a driving rain. The rainy season has begun. I was introduced to Ebola screening, as all coming off the Rwanda Air flight were ushered to a large white Red Cross tent to have temperatures taken prior to passing through immigration and customs inspection. Prevention is the best way to deal with Ebola.

A Capacitar workshop, training diocesan leaders to deal with their own trauma and preparing them to work with their own people who have been traumatized by years of civil war and tribal conflict, was in process when I arrived. The workshop provided me an opportunity to see the organizational skills of the Solidarity Pastoral Team in action and to listen to the stories of people who are hoping for healing through body work for themselves and those among whom they minister. Participating in the workshop confirmed for me the value of healing touch, Tai Chi, Meridian therapy (finger holds) and other exercises in opening up people to the possibility of healing from trauma. Capacitar has a 20-year record of working with people traumatized by life experience working at the Mexican border, in Haiti, Rwanda, Central America, South Africa and Afghanistan, as well as, with victims of domestic violence. The exercises and gestures are simple and inexpensive to impart to others and can be integrated into most meetings and even work with children.

Mike Basson, MM, one of the Solidarity team, shared with me the Holy Week experience of the people in the UN camp in Malakal. Mike has been serving the 20,000 refugees in the camp. A large tent in the middle of the camp serves as a chapel bringing together people from three ethnic groups, Nuer, Shilluk, and a few Dinka, traditionally in tenuous relationship to the Nuer. During the Good Friday services, Mike got a call from the camp coordinator saying that 4000 Dinka, fleeing unrest in the area, were streaming into the camp and needed to be accommodated in the chapel tent. Mike asked those gathered if they were willing to shorten the service so as to receive these new Dinka refugees. He told them

that the Passion continues even as they commemorate the death of Jesus nearly 2000 years ago. The people agreed, hurriedly finished their liturgy and welcomed the new refugees into their midst.

I also listened to the trauma of those who witnessed the killing of innocent women and children by the Lord's Resistance Army and the army and militias fighting in the current unrest. One Comboni Sister spent three weeks in the bush with the people fleeing the violence. Another priest, so well respected in his diocese, has been sent by the bishop to three very demanding pastoral areas, including Dafur. He is now organizing negotiations between tribes in the border area fighting over land. This priest is overwhelmed by the demands and traumatized by what he has seen and experienced.

Many other participants are working in IDP camps which are overcrowded and without basic services. Sharing liturgy with those in a camp of 27,000 in the Juba area confirmed these reports. Even in the midst of such impoverished circumstances, people could celebrate with joy in song and dance. Most of the people, however are too fearful to return home and will not be planting during the rainy season. The humanitarian crisis continues. Solidarity staff are present with compassion and listening hearts even though, they too have shared in the trauma of the people of South Sudan.



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Editor: Annmarie Sanders, IHM
8808 Cameron Street — Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301-588-4955 Fax: 301-587-4575
E-mail: asanders@lcwr.org Website: www.lcwr.org

Update from the United Nations

International Day of the Family—15 May

The International Day of Families was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families. The day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic, and demographic processes affecting families. More information is available at: www.un.org/en/events/familyday/



World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development—21 May

Three-quarters of the world's major conflicts have a cultural dimension. Bridging the gap between cultures is urgent and necessary for peace, stability, and development. In 2002 the UN General Assembly, declared May 21 to be the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. The day is an opportunity to deepen understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together better. Learn more at: www.un.org/en/events/culturaldiversityday/.

UNESCO Releases the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report

Just one third of countries have achieved all of the Education for All (EFA) goals set in 2000. At current rates, only half of all children in low-income countries are expected to complete lower secondary education by 2030. In many countries even the core goal of achieving universal primary education will remain out of reach.

It is estimated that an extra \$22 billion a year is needed on top of already ambitious government contributions in order to ensure all countries are able to provide:

early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable children; universal primary education, particularly for girls, ethnic minorities, and marginalized children; equal access to learning and life skills for youth and adults; a 50 per cent reduction in levels of adult illiteracy; gender parity and equality in education; and quality education and learning outcomes for all.

These are the findings of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) "Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges", produced by UNESCO which has tracked progress on these goals for the past 15 years.

"The world has made tremendous progress towards Education for All," said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. "Despite not meeting the 2015 deadline, millions more children are in school than would have been had the trends of the 1990s persisted. However, the agenda is far from finished. We need to see specific, well-funded strategies that prioritize the poorest, especially girls, improve the quality of learning and reduce the literacy gap so that education becomes meaningful and universal."

Since 2000 many governments have significantly increased their spending on education: 38 countries increased their commitment to education by one percentage point or more of GNP. However, funding remains a major obstacle at all levels.

"Unless concerted action is taken and education receives the attention that it failed to get during the past 15 years, millions of children will continue to miss out and the transformative vision of the new Sustainable Development agenda will be jeopardized," said GMR Director, Aaron Benavot.

The full report may be downloaded at en.unesco.org/gem-report/.