

April 2017



Members of the LCWR board and staff: (front) Grace Hartzog, SC; Maria Hughes, ASC; Mary Pellegrino, CSJ; Jan Ginzkey, OSB; Judith Dieterle, SSL; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; Marian Durkin, CSA; Marie McCarthy, SP; Tere Maya, CCVI; (back) Mary Hughes, OP; Rosemary Brennan, CSJ; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Cathy Sheehan, DW; Theresa Sandok, OSM; Ginger Downey, OLVM; Kathryn Clauss, IHM; Pat Eck, CBS; Leona Bruner, SSF; Mary Beth Gianoli, OSF; Marilyn Springs, IWBS; JoAnn Showalter, SP; Marcia Allen, CSJ; Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS; and Marilyn Geiger, OSF

LCWR National Board Proposes Governance Changes for Members' Consideration

At its February meeting in Florida, the LCWR national board affirmed a proposal designed to adapt LCWR structures to the changing realities in US religious life today. The proposal takes into consideration the radical change occurring in religious congregations, as well as the decreasing availability of LCWR members for leadership at both regional and national levels, and the increasing reliance of LCWR on dues as a major income source. As noted by the board, rapidly changing times require a flexible and creative approach to how the conference organizes and operates.

The proposal suggests a plan for incremental change which begins with the configuration of the board of
(continued on page 3)

**Register Now
for the 2017 LCWR Assembly**
August 8 -- 11, 2017 -- (departure date: August 12)
Orlando, Florida



Registration for the assembly and the hotel must be done online at lcwr.org. More information on the assembly can be found on page 4.

From the LCWR Presidency

Leveraging Our Influence in Service of the Gospel

by Mary Pellegrino, CSJ — LCWR President

There's an unread note on my desk, half-folded with the elderly man's determined handwriting visible but not quite legible unless I were to pick it up to read . . . which I don't want to do. I already know what it says – generally. It's a follow up to four voice mail messages from a retired doctor and former donor who was irate with our Leadership Team's statement in response to the administration's first executive order in January closing our country's borders and establishing a travel ban on persons from particular countries.

He was irate for a long list of reasons illustrated to him by the fact that the dental clinic provided through our local Catholic Charities began to treat Bangladeshis and Indians and Pakistanis, while the people he was supposed to be treating – uninsured Americans – weren't allowed to come there anymore. They got insurance through the Affordable Care Act. So he quit in disgust and anger. And our support of refugees and immigrants coming to this country now is naïve. We, the Sisters, should stick to schools and stay out of politics, especially with our liberal agenda.

I have to admit that there's some truth to what he says, not the part about sticking to schools, but the part of about being naïve. There really is a certain naïveté about the Gospel. It's those simplistic imperatives that do it. Love one another as I have loved you. Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. You cannot serve two masters. . .

To be fair, I've also received a handful of supportive comments or emails. Some, as happy as the dentist is



unhappy, are grateful that we're championing a more progressive agenda.

But really both the dentist and our supporters have missed the point altogether. And in the fervor of the moment, I realized that I could miss it, too. The point being that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is neither liberal nor conservative, progressive nor regressive. We don't leverage our influence in service to the Gospel because we belong to a political party. We leverage our influence because we belong to the Body of Christ, and that identity transcends even our most basic allegiances.

As leaders of religious communities we don't raise our voice in the public square to champion a political agenda or a party platform. We raise our voice to champion Jesus' agenda of the fullness of life for all. In doing so

we have to expect and be prepared for our motives and actions and words in service to the Gospel to be politicized and judged according to other more narrow standards.

We know that there's no political party or party platform that reflects the fullness of Jesus' Gospel, nor is it the function of politics to align itself with any religion's moral code. Rather, it's the responsibility of politics and government to mediate and ensure the common good for all its people. The common good then becomes the common ground for our public voice. Sadly, it's a battleground right now. Still we unapologetically weigh in bringing the fullness of the Gospel. Not because we're political people, but because we're ecclesial women.

We raise our voice

to champion

Jesus' agenda of the

fullness of life for all.



The board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men held their meeting at the same time as the LCWR board so that the two could share prayer, Eucharistic liturgy, meals, and socials together. The two boards and staffs also had one joint meeting while together at Marywood Retreat and Conference Center in St. John's, Florida.

LCWR National Board Proposes Governance Changes for Members' Consideration

(continued from page 1)

directors. Later changes will include a redesign of the presidency, executive director, and staff roles and the structuring of the regions.

The hoped-for outcome in the restructuring of the board will be to create a body of women with specific skills sets who can move competently and effectively as situations demand so that LCWR will be able to respond to needs. As board reconfiguration occurs, structures for qualitative communications with and among regions will also be developed.

Regions are now examining this proposal at their spring meetings and providing feedback. Based on the feedback, an edited proposal will be presented at the LCWR assembly for the members' approval.

The board meeting was set in a contemplative context designed to keep the business of the conference well connected to the realities of the larger US and global communities. Other topics during the meeting included a review of the current statistics of LCWR membership and the implications for the future, the conference dues structure, an invitation for LCWR to

send 20 members to the USCCB National Convocation for Church Leaders, as well as various reports from the LCWR officers and staff.



A session of the LCWR national board meeting

Appointed to USCCB National Advisory Council

Mary Kathryn Dougherty, OSF and Jenny Howard, SP have been appointed by LCWR to serve on USCCB National Advisory Council. The council, which is comprised of laity, priests, religious, and bishops from throughout the country, reviews, discusses, and advises the bishops on the agenda items that may be coming before the full USCCB for action.



2017 LCWR Assembly Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Transformation

August 8 - 11, 2017
Orlando, Florida

Highlights

Keynote Address: “Will the Circle Be Unbroken? Leaning into the Mystery of Resurrection Faith”
-- Dr. Christopher Pramuk

Keynote Address: “We Stood in the Place of Death and Heard the Living Call Our Name”
-- Jan Richardson

Presidential Address -- Mary Pellegrino, CSJ

Young Leaders Conversation

Keynoters Conversation

Deepening Groups

Contemplative Processing

Outstanding Leadership Award Presentation

Discounted price is available
for all who register before June 21



LCWR to Honor Constance FitzGerald, OCD with 2017 Outstanding Leadership Award

The 2017 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award will be given to Constance FitzGerald, OCD at the close of the LCWR assembly. A contemplative theologian, she is a former prioress of the Carmelite Community in Baltimore, a founder of the Association of Contemplative Sisters in the US (1969), and a founding member of the Carmelite Forum (1982-2013), a group of scholars dedicated to opening contemplative prayer and life to people through the contemporary interpretation of the Carmelite classics.

Constance’s many contributions to religious life and the spiritual life include her classic essay, “Impasse and Dark Night,” first published in 1984. Much of her scholarship, writings, and lectures has been dedicated to the relationship between contemplative prayer and the evolution of consciousness.



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LCWR Attends Convenings on International Sisters in US

LCWR president Mary Pellegrino, CSJ and executive director Joan Marie Steadman, CSC represented LCWR at a convening in Washington, DC to unveil the first national study of the 4,000 international sisters living in the United States. With support from the GHR Foundation, researchers from Trinity Washington University and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate conducted the report in order to better understand the experiences and contributions of international sisters.

Currently, there are women religious in the United States from at least 83 countries who have come here for formation, education, or ministry, reflecting the global nature of women's religious life. According to the researchers, "International sisters are not exempt from the strains of migration and, in some cases, of separation from their own religious communities for extended periods. Their presence calls us to consider how international sisters have been welcomed and sustained in their vocations and ministries."

Mary Johnson, SNDdeN and her team of researchers will publish their findings in a forthcoming book. A summary of the initial findings is available online at www.ghrfoundation.org/uploads/3/1/3/1/31315939/international_sisters_study_-_ghr.pdf.

On May 4, following the annual visits of the three LCWR presidents and executive director to the Vatican, they will discuss this study in another convening in Rome sponsored by GHR and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG).



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 year, LCWR is sharing 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

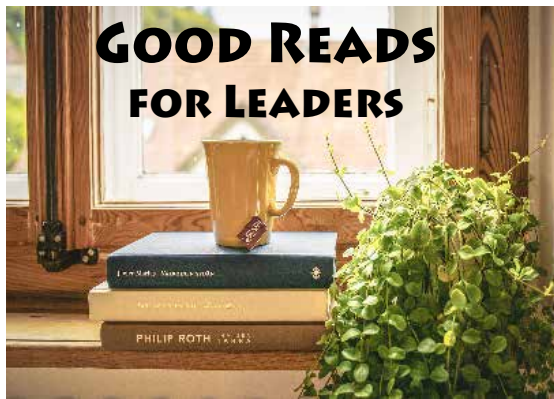
- We are willing to walk with those in pain without a need to fix it, making our riches of consecrated life available beyond ourselves. We believe this is the evolution of love.
- The call to contemplation is clear. Our challenge is to stay with the questions, the uncertainty, the struggle within our congregations and our world trusting that our God is our creator and our strength.
- Being grounded in a contemplative stance gets us out of the ego mode so that we can listen with hearts and see with soft eyes, to provide a presence that is not fixing but bearing up one another.

Looking for Easter or Jubilee Gifts?

Consider supporting LCWR and purchasing sets 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 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.

Cards may be purchased online at lcwr.org/item/contemplative-greeting-cards. For more information, contact Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org.





LCWR is initiating a new column in *Update* for short reviews of books, videos, or other resources written by LCWR members. **Any member who finds a resource that she believes might be useful to other women religious leaders is welcome to submit a review of no more than 250 words.** Reviews may be sent to Annmarie Sanders, IHM at asanders@lcwr.org. Many thanks to LCWR past president Marcia Allen, CSJ for submitting the first review.

Emerging US Communities of Consecrated Life Since Vatican II [1]

Recommended by Marcia Allen, CSJ

We might think that religious life in the United States is on the verge of collapse; however, CARA's latest research in collaboration with Sister Patricia Wittberg, SC, sociologist, shows an "incredible amount of robust human energy...fermenting under the troubled surface." [2] The research concentrates on emerging institutes of consecrated life who are in good standing with Rome or a US diocese. It does not include branches of foreign communities founded outside the United States.

This research shows that there is an amazing amount of energy around religious life today. Small new communities are springing up everywhere. A response rate of 95.6 percent of communities located by diocese testifies to the energy, diversity and complexity of religious life today. The overall conclusion is that "the Catholic Church in the United States may be on the threshold of another cycle of rebirth in consecrated life...." [3] Long-standing communities can gain useful insights into their own future through the CARA conclusions. [4]

In addition it might be said that CARA could contribute a great deal to religious life by broadening its scope to

include new expressions of charisms within traditional communities.

Endnotes

1. Ed. by Patricia A. Wittberg, SC and Mary L. Gautier, Ph.D. *Emerging US Communities of Consecrated Life Since Vatican II*, Third Edition. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate: Washington, DC. E-mail: CARA@georgetown.edu, 2017.
2. Carlo M. Cipolla. *Clocks and Culture*. London: Collins, 1967. Cipolla was a 20th century economic historian commenting on the appearance of "final collapse" of French culture during the 17th century.
3. *Ibid*, p. 23.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 22-23.

Resources Available on How to Best Assist Immigrants Today

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) is preparing resources to assist those who are discerning ways to respond to the current immigration situation in the United States. The materials will highlight the various ways to support those who are suffering in the current climate toward immigrants. Information about the implications and potential consequences of various responses will be included. These resources will be helpful to leadership teams as they discern choices they may be considering to support immigrants.

The resources available on the following websites are helpful and more resources are being developed by CLINIC, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Interfaith Immigration Coalition.

- www.justiceforimmigrants.org (USCCB)
- cliniclegal.org/resources (CLINIC)
- www.interfaithimmigration.org

Leaders may also want to check with Catholic Charities which, in many cities, has offices that provide legal services to immigrants.

Personal letters to senators and representatives continue to be an important way to raise up our concerns. Since local situations vary greatly there is no one response that fits all situations. There is a concern that actions taken be done in a way that does not put the very persons one may be trying to assist at greater risk.

Forty Faith Organizations Send Message to Healthcare Markup Committees

LCWR was among the 40 national, faith-based organizations which sent a letter to the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees urging that any legislation that changes, repeals, or repairs the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) meet 10 priorities for a faithful healthcare system.

The signers crafted these priorities from, “a shared commitment to a faith-inspired moral vision of a health-care system that offers health, wholeness, and human dignity for all,” the letter states. “The scriptures of the Abrahamic traditions of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, as well as the sacred teachings of other faiths, understand that addressing the general welfare of the nation includes giving particular attention to people experiencing poverty or sickness.”

Principles include preserving the coverage gains made by the ACA, upholding the purpose of Medicaid by refraining from structural changes to how the program is funded (no block grants or per capita caps), maintaining the essential health benefits currently provided by the ACA, and preventing insurance companies from discrimination against women, the elderly, and people in poverty. The letter and the ten principles can be accessed at tinyurl.com/jdp9hp3.

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 lcsr.org/members/lcsr-membership-information.

National Catholic Organizations Deliver Letter to DHS Secretary Kelly

On February 24 representatives from 12 national Catholic religious congregations and advocacy organizations delivered a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary John Kelly. The letter states that Catholic faith leaders are deeply troubled by the recent changes in immigration policy. These policies have resulted in patterns of arrests, detentions, and deportations of undocumented immigrants across the nation by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Officials and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The letter states:

We [Catholic leaders] view President Trump’s recent executive orders on immigrants and refugees, as well as the actions of ICE and CBP agents, as sowing seeds of conflict between our nation and our churches, synagogues, and mosques, threatening our religious freedom, and criminalizing and penalizing acts of charity toward immigrants and their families, recent arrivals as well as those who have been here for decades.

According to LCWR executive director Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, “Women religious will continue to heed the gospel call to welcome refugees and minister to immigrants, whatever their status. LCWR will continue to press for relief for families and an end to needless deportations, and we will persist in our advocacy for compassionate, bipartisan legislation that fixes our broken immigration system.” The full letter can be found here: tinyurl.com/zknvqk5.



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

125 US Catholic Leaders Sign Letter In Support of the Clean Power Plan (CPP)

One hundred and twenty-five US Catholic leaders have signed a letter organized by the Catholic Climate Covenant in support of the Clean Power Plan (CPP). The CPP is the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) effort to reduce carbon pollution from existing power plants 30 percent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. The CPP, the nation's most ambitious effort to reduce climate-changing greenhouse gas pollution, faces an uncertain future in the Trump administration. The letter has been delivered by the Catholic Climate Covenant to the new EPA administrator as well as President Trump, top congressional leaders, and state governors.

The group of Catholic leaders, which includes college and university presidents, women and men religious, theologians, and Catholic non-profit directors, stresses that church teaching on the care of creation is deeply connected to the protection of human life and dignity, especially of the poor and vulnerable. The leaders also highlight Pope Francis's emphasis on the "urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy" (*Laudato Si'* 26). The letter may be downloaded at tinyurl.com/j93otk7.

Earth Day Network Plans for Earth Day 2017

The Earth Day Network's mission is to mobilize the environmental movement to build a healthy, sustainable environment, address climate change, and protect the



Earth for future generations. Born of the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, the Earth Day Network is the world's largest recruiter to the environmental movement and continues to play a leading role in organizing Earth Day events. Today, more than 1 billion people now partici-

pate in Earth Day activities, making it the largest civic observance in the world.

Earth Day 2017's campaign is focused on environmental and climate literacy. Believing that education is the foundation for progress planners hope to build a global citizenry fluent in the concepts of climate change and aware of its unprecedented threat to planet Earth. Resources are available at www.earthday.org/earthday.

Catholic Climate Covenant Prepares to Celebrate Earth Day 2017

Although Earth Day began in 1970 as a secular observation, the faith community has found much to celebrate on a day dedicated to care for creation's common home. Many churches, schools, and religious communities around the world plan Earth Day programs and activities.



The Catholic Climate Covenant (CCC) will join the April 22 celebration as Catholics recall their responsibility to be caretakers of the earth. The covenant's contribution will complement the Earth Day Networks' 2017 focus on climate literacy. Focusing on the theme "Know the Creator through Creation," the CCC program is designed for inter-generational parish programs, schools, and any group interested in exploring how a deeper connection with creation can draw one closer to the Creator of the universe. Each program includes prayers, scripture readings, a short video, discussion questions, and suggested activities to help the group learn about climate change and Catholic Social Teachings. The program is available at www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/EarthDay.



News from the UN

April 22—International Mother Earth Day

In 1972, the United Nations organized the first UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. It marked the beginning of a global awareness of the interdependence that exists among human beings, other living species, and the planet.



In 2009, the United Nations General Assembly recognized that Earth and its ecosystems is home to the global community and acknowledged that in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social, and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with Earth. The UN General Assembly designated April 22 International Mother Earth Day. The day promotes a view of the Earth as the entity that sustains all living things. More information can be found at www.un.org/en/events/motherearthday.

People's Climate March Slated for April 29

On Saturday, April 29 in Washington, DC and around the country, people will come together for one massive march for creation. The organizations that brought the People's Climate March to New York City in 2015, now known as the People's Climate Movement, hope to mobilize citizens across the nation.



The People's Climate platform calls for rapid reduction in greenhouse gas and toxic pollution to successfully combat climate change and improve public health; a mandatory transition to an equitable and sustainable energy and economic future; a just transition for communities and workers that includes targeted economic opportunity and provides stable income, healthcare, and education; jobs that pay a wage of at least \$15 an hour; targeted investments to create pathways for low-income people to access good jobs; bold investments in the resilience of states, cities, tribes, and communities that are threatened by climate change; reinvestment in a

domestic industrial base that drives towards an equitable and sustainable new energy and economic future; and market- and policy-based mechanisms that protect human rights and critical, native ecosystems and reduce pollution. Details are available at peoplesclimate.org.

Both the Global Catholic Climate Movement and the Catholic Climate Covenant will be coordinating Catholic participation in the march. Those who hope to participate or would simply like more information are encouraged sign up at tinyurl.com/jzljt23.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR New Leader Workshop

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

LCWR Assembly

Orlando, Florida
August 8 — 12, 2017

Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona
January 14 — 19, 2018

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 12 — 15, 2018

LCWR Assembly

St. Louis, Missouri
August 7 — 11, 2018

LCWR Assembly

Scottsdale, Arizona
August 13 — 17, 2019



- Amicus Brief filed in United States District Court, Eastern District of New York in opposition to the January 27, 2017 Executive Order barring entry to the United States by all refugees as well as by citizens of seven predominantly Muslim nations. LCWR (2/16/17)
- Letter to leaders of the Senate Committee on the Budget from faith-based organizations expressing support to protect the base and Overseas Contingency Operations levels for FY2018 international affairs budget. LCWR (2/17/17)
- Letter to members of Congress expressing support for the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development (READ) Act in the US Congress. Ensuring children around the world have access to a quality basic education because it is an essential element to the success and sustainability and directly supports US national and international interests. LCWR (2/20/17)
- Letter to Speaker Paul Ryan urging him to promote a fair and balanced immigration policy and asking him to tell President Trump that a deportation force that targets 11 million people, including families with US citizens, is not welcome. LCWR (2/22/17)
- Organizational statement in opposition to the Executive Order on Public Charge which threatens the entire health care and safety net system that helps all, including immigrants, be healthy, productive and successful members of America's communities and families. LCWR (2/22/17)
- Endorsement of a bill to be introduced into the US House of Representatives to discontinue a federal program that authorizes state and local law enforcement officers to investigate, apprehend, and detain undocumented immigrants in accordance with a written agreement with the Director of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and to clarify that immigration enforcement is solely a function of the Federal Government. LCWR (2/24/17)
- Letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kelly from leaders of national Catholic advo-

cacy organizations and religious orders expressing concern about the pattern of arrests, detentions, and deportations of undocumented immigrants across the nation— including violating the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)'s previous policy not to conduct enforcement actions at or near "sensitive locations," including churches and their ministries to the poor and vulnerable. Joan Marie Steadman, CSC (2/24/17)



Ecumenical Advocacy Days Scheduled for April 21-24

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

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

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



RCRI Workshop: Fidelity to the Journey: Transition Planning for the Future

Through the generosity of the GHR Foundation and building on its 2016 workshop experience, RCRI again will host a three-day workshop for leaders of religious institutes that have made important decisions regarding their institute's future and are in the process of transition planning and perhaps moving into their last generation.

The three-day event will be held at the Carmelite Spirituality Center in Darien, IL on May 23-25, 2017.

The program includes presentations, reflection and discussion time, prayer, and opportunities for socializing. Speakers for the workshop include Nancy Schreck, OSF; Jean Bartunek, RSCJ; Paula Cooney, IHM; and Sharon Holland, IHM. Susan Schorsten, HM will serve as facilitator. The speakers will address topics such as transitioning to the future, legacy and preserving the charism, the community and the grieving process, and leadership and governance.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop is asked to contact Sharon Euart, RSM at seuart@trcri.org.

2017 National Conference – Save the Date

RCRI's 2017 national conference will be held from October 31 to November 3 at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch, with the theme, "Challenges in Changing Times."

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, who recently retired as president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services and who previously served as Dean of the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business. She is now the president's fellow for global development at Perdue University.

Workshops: 40 workshops covering topics related to finance, canon and civil law, and planning for institutes in transition

Pre-Conference Workshops: Three half-day pre-conference workshops on Tuesday, October 31. The topics will be "Management of Religious Institutes" (for leaders and council members); "Patrimony: Canon and Civil Law Issues"; and "TRENDS for Beginners" (and for those wanting a refresher course). Details about these sessions will be available on the RCRI website in late spring.

Conference Registration: A link will be posted in June for members and guests to register. RCRI members will receive a discount if they register before the deadline.



Two upcoming Religious Formation Conference workshops will focus on skills needed for successful interpersonal, inter-generational, inter-cultural engagement.

Religious Communal Living as an Intercultural Journey
May 6, 2017 -- Mercy Center, St. Louis, MO
Presenter: Pio Estepa, SVD, PhD

**Crossing the Border of Diversity:
Interpersonal Skills and Challenges**
May 13, 2017 -- Mother Boniface Spirituality Center,
Philadelphia, PA
Presenter: Luisa Saffiotti, PhD

ForMission

Applications for the new cohort beginning in late May are due April 12, 2017.

Detailed information about ForMission, a formation program for those who are new to or discerning a call to formation ministry is available at www.relforcon.org.



by Joan Mumaw, IHM
President
www.solidarityfriends.org

The “Alternate” News Report

We are all hearing quite a bit about South Sudan in the news these days. Famine, war, refugees... These are all words that characterize what is happening in this the newest country in the world. It is true, but tragic, the country is being torn apart by ethnic strife and over 2 million have fled to neighboring countries. Nearly one million, mostly women and children, are facing famine and 50% are food insecure. The government and army are splintering with newly formed ethnic militias taking up arms to defend their particular group against the army and each other.

The IDP camp at Riimenze, site of the Solidarity Agricultural Project, is growing and there are concerns about whether there will be enough food for the 6000+ people gathered on parish grounds. The small primary school run by the parish and overseen by a Solidarity staff person, is growing as more refugees send their children to the school. Funding for teachers is needed. In the midst of civil unrest in the Yambio area, an hour's ride from Riimenze over a very rough road with security risks, the Solidarity Teacher Training College continues to train new teachers. They were the only college in the country to graduate new teachers (26) at the end of 2016.

The Catholic Health Training Institute in Wau, another area of civil strife, continues to educate students from all ethnic groups of South Sudan and the neighboring Nuba Mountains. In November 2016, 31 students graduated from the college, representing more than half of all nursing professionals trained in the country. Student nurses are filling in for hospital staff who have fled to UN camps due to fear of the army.

Recently we received a report from Dr. Tom Catena who works in the only hospital in Nuba Mountains, an area on the border of Sudan/South Sudan, which experiences continued bombardment by the Sudanese military. Dr. Tom wrote about the impact of the work of

graduates from the Catholic Health Training Institute now working in the hospital. “Overall the quality and work ethic of the graduates has improved with each successive class.” CHTI trained nursing professionals are responsible for HIV / AIDS outreach, supervision and support of six clinics, training Community Health Volunteers, and in charge of the new health education department in the hospital. Others are taking responsibility for the male, female and children's wards in the hospital. Dr Tom writes, “We are especially happy with the new graduates, their good attitudes and work ethic.”

What is of long term significance for the country, besides the educational training, is the fact that students come from many different ethnic groups and are learning to live, study and work together in Solidarity institutions. The new South Sudan is being created from the ground up, one student at a time. These students are the leaders of the future. We are grateful for your generous support of this important work. For more information and ways you can support this work contact: jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com Visit us on our website www.solidarityfriends.org or Facebook. Tax deductible donations can be sent by check made out to: Friends in Solidarity, 8808 Cameron St., Silver Spring, MD 20910.



The National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) has appointed Sharon Dillon, S.SJ-TOSF as its new executive director, effective June 1, 2017.

A member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis, Sharon brings a wide array of experience to the position. She was vocation director for her community for 10 years and served as executive director for the Franciscan Federation for six years. In the past 25 years she also co-founded, directed, worked at, and served on the board of several nonprofits that specialize in providing hospitality and support for people with intellectual and medical/physical challenges. She has a master's in education, is certified in special education and physical education, and is a Franciscan spiritual director.