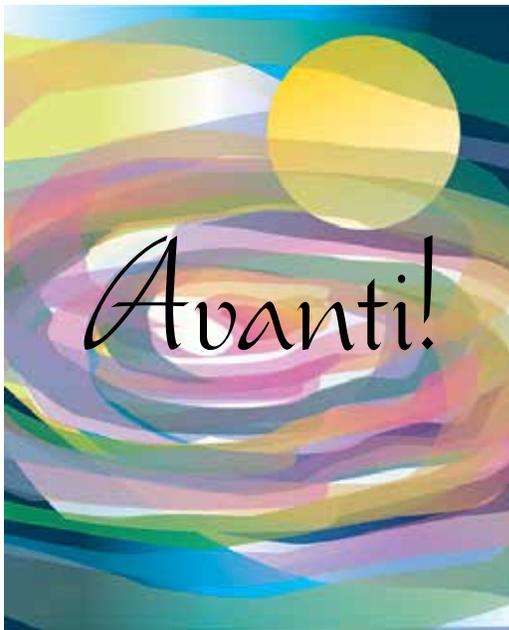




February 2016

## LCWR Offers *Avanti!*, a New Reflection Journal Orders Due by February 29



LCWR presents a new book, *Avanti!*, a reflective resource for the spiritual journey. The word *avanti* (Italian for “forward,”) was a central focus in the address delivered by LCWR president Sharon Holland, IHM, at the 2015 LCWR assembly where she spoke of the attitudes of heart and mind needed to proceed forward even when what is ahead is dark and unknown.

*Avanti!* is a collection of reflections written by 30 LCWR members about responding to God who comes to us from the future and invites us to come forward. As Catholic women religious leaders share their own interior journey, they consider questions such as:

- As you think about God already in the future and urging you forward, what has it been like for you to pray? How do you encounter God, relate to God, communicate with God?
- What images, stories, or symbols capture your understanding of God as coming from the future beckoning you forward?
- How does your understanding of God coming to you from the future affect your relationships – with the world, with others, with yourself?
- What difference is praying from an understanding of God coming from the future making in your life?

Artwork by Catholic sisters, as well as questions and suggestions for deepening the readers’s own prayer, accompany the reflections.

The cost of each book is \$6.00, plus shipping and handling. Discounted prices are available for orders larger than 10 copies.

Orders may be placed online at [lcwr.org/item/daily-reflection-book](http://lcwr.org/item/daily-reflection-book). Although LCWR members, associates and subscribers will receive their own copies of the book, many leaders purchase additional copies for their members, associates, staffs, boards, benefactors, and friends. Some also sell the books in their motherhouse and retreat center gift shops.

LCWR will print only the amount of copies that are pre-ordered. Orders must be received with payment by **February 29, 2016**. Revenue from this LCWR project helps defray the costs of the resources and programs the conference provides its members.

Questions about orders may be directed to LCWR’s administrative assistant, Carol Glidden, at [cglidden@lcwr.org](mailto:cglidden@lcwr.org) or at 301-588-4955.

*From the LCWR Presidency*  
**To Be an Oasis of Mercy**

by Sharon Holland, IHM — LCWR Past President

In this Year of Mercy, 2016, can I be an oasis of mercy?

In a publicly televised address, President Obama said that whenever he thinks of the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School, it makes him mad. But he did not look like an angry man; he looked like a father who wept at the thought of murdered children. He appeared a determined man, using all of the means at his disposal to limit access to guns by those not able to use them responsibly.

Any plan of action born of compassionate concern rather than angry retaliation surely is a sign of mercy. But mercy does not really begin with our actions. The Jubilee Year, Pope Francis states, "will be a year in which we grow ever more convinced of God's mercy.... Let us set aside all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved." Loved by God, we are made capable of mercy.

Imbedded in the news reports of floods, fires, tornados, and earthquakes, war, terrorist attacks and domestic violence, there are scenes of mercy. The horror visited upon some, awakens the depths of human and divine mercy in others. They pluck survivors from trees and house tops; they claw through rubble seeking sounds and signs of life; they place themselves between violent threats and would-be victims. Refugees arriving in overloaded boats and walking endless miles across Europe or Central America, carry children and little else. They often face frustrating obstacles at borders, but they also encounter merciful humanity. Volunteers help



Every act of caring,  
compassion,  
or mercy  
can inspire others  
to do likewise.

them to shore, through border controls, and offer human kindness along with shelter, food, and clothing.

These thoughts remind me of Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Peace: "Overcome Indifference and Win Peace." Indifference, he says has become globalized. It is indifference to God, to neighbor, and to the environment. Indifference cannot give rise to acts of mercy.

Many of us remember, years ago, when people across the country were shocked at the report of a woman being attacked on the streets of New York while dozens looked on from apartment windows high above. There seemed to be no response. The memory is a frightening reminder of how we can become paralyzed into a sense of helplessness or indifference.

In contrast, a recent newspaper story told of how a group of students responded to overt cruelty. A fast-food worker's senseless mistreatment of a homeless person was seen widely on video. The students at the local Christian academy searched for a meaningful

response. In the end, with the help of teachers and parents, they prepared and served a hot meal for some 30 homeless persons. They collected funds to help local shelters.

Every act of caring, compassion, or mercy can inspire others to do likewise. At the opening of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis provided us the challenge: "... wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy."

## Registration Still Open for the LCWR New Leaders Workshop -- April 2016

New and/or returning leaders are encouraged to attend the LCWR New Leaders Workshop to be held from April 7 to 10, 2016 at Our Lady of the Lake University Conference Center in Mundelein, Illinois. The workshop will focus on the skills and dispositions needed to grow as spiritually-grounded, transformational leaders. Through the use of input, role play, and contemplative engagement, participants will examine some of the real-life situations and challenges facing leaders today.

Resource persons for this workshop will be Nancy Schreck, OSF; Lynn M. Levo, CSJ; Sharon Euart, RSM; and Donna Miller; as well as LCWR staff members Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Grace Hartzog, SC; Mary Hughes, OP; Marie McCarthy, SP; Annmarie Sanders, IHM; and Ann Scholz, SSND.

The workshop is structured to facilitate interaction among participants in mixed table groupings, as leadership teams, and with resource persons. In addition, the resource persons will be available throughout the days of the workshop for informal conversation.

All persons registering for the workshop will receive a link to a set of online resources. 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. In addition to the recordings there are some written resources and information on organizations that provide services for elected leaders. 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, returning leaders, and new leadership teams are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. More information and a registration form can be found at: [lcwr.org/calendar/new-leader-workshop-0](http://lcwr.org/calendar/new-leader-workshop-0).



## LCWR National Board to Meet in Tucson in February

The members of the LCWR national board will meet from February 14 to 18 at the Redemptorist Renewal Center in Tucson, Arizona.

The board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men will meet at the same location so that the two boards can share together in daily prayer, Eucharistic liturgies, meals, and socials, as well as hold one joint session.

All members are asked to keep the board meeting in their prayer.

## Change of Contact Information

Mary Hughes OP, LCWR's director of transitional services, began the new year by moving. Mary is available to be of service to any religious congregation leadership team and may be contacted by US mail, phone, or email.

Mary Hughes OP  
121 Church Street  
New Rochelle, NY 10805

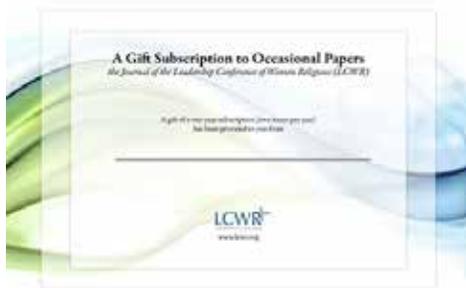
Phone: 914-738-0306

Email remains the same: [mhughesop@amityop.org](mailto:mhughesop@amityop.org)

## Subscriptions to *Occasional Papers* Now Available

LCWR is now offering subscriptions to its journal, *Occasional Papers*. Any religious or member of the public may purchase a one-year subscription, which includes two issues per year, for \$15.00 within the United States, or \$30.00 outside of the United States. Subscriptions may be purchased online at: [lcwr.org/publications/occasional-papers/subscribe](http://lcwr.org/publications/occasional-papers/subscribe).

LCWR members are asked to share this information with anyone who may be interested in subscribing. Gift subscriptions may also be purchased. Revenue from these purchases is used to defray the costs of the resources and programs LCWR offers its members.



*Gift subscriptions are also available. A certificate can be downloaded and given to the gift recipient.*



## Is Your Leadership Term About to End?

If your leadership term is ending this month, we ask you to submit a change of leadership form found in the LCWR Members' Information section (password-protected) of the website at [lcwr.org/members/lcwr-membership-information](http://lcwr.org/members/lcwr-membership-information).

## Upcoming LCWR Dates

**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



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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](mailto:asanders@lcwr.org) Website: [www.lcwr.org](http://www.lcwr.org)

## Women Religious Asked to Support Trafficking Survivors

*“Being rescued by US Immigration after four years in slavery, I am so thankful to be free. A community of Catholic sisters had a job opening for housekeeping. I worked during the day and started to go to ESL classes at night. After that I took a certified nurse assistant course, GED, computer and driving classes. These opportunities changed my life and my family’s life. The opportunity opened doors for my future and helped to make me an independent and strong woman and motivated me to give back to my community.” -- Human Trafficking Survivor*

Based on such testimony the Survivor Support working group of US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) is appealing to congregations of women religious to assist survivors of human trafficking with education and job placement opportunities. USCSAHT is establishing a Josephine Bakhita Scholarship Fund, which will assist survivors to reach educational goals: ESL, GED, BA, and BS degrees.



Congregations can contribute in several ways:

- Make annual donations to the Josephine Bakhita Scholarship Fund;
- Offer a full or partial scholarship from one of their sponsored educational institutions to a survivor.
- Offer a survivor a paid position in a setting suited to her skills.

Details on this project and an information sheet, can be found on the USCSAHT website [www.sistersagainst-trafficking.org/take-action/opportunities-for-action/survivor-assistance/](http://www.sistersagainst-trafficking.org/take-action/opportunities-for-action/survivor-assistance/).

US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking 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.

## Contact Congress February 8: International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking

US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) is encouraging women religious to take action to help end modern-day slavery.

On February 8, Catholic sisters across the country are being asked to contact their members of Congress urging them to co-sponsor bills currently pending in the 114th Congress that could help to curb the use of slave labor in the production of goods destined for the US market.

Representative Carolyn Maloney [D-NY-12] and Senator Richard Blumenthal [D-CT] have introduced identical bills in their respective chambers that will help to create greater transparency in US corporation supply chains.

The Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act of 2015 (HR 3226 and S 1968) would amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require large companies to disclose information describing any measures the company has taken to identify and address conditions of forced labor, slavery, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labor within the company’s supply chain. Both legislators are seeking co-sponsors for the bills.

Constituents are being urged to send an electronic communication to their members of Congress either thanking them for co-sponsoring or asking them to become a co-sponsor of this bill. The Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (IPJC) has prepared letters that can be edited and sent from its website: [tinyurl.com/glcrgtc](http://tinyurl.com/glcrgtc).

It is also possible to schedule visits to speak with members or their staffs while Senators and Representatives are in their district offices. Members of both the House and Senate will be working in their state offices February 15-22.

USCSAHT has posted resources to help constituents prepare for visits with their members of Congress including: talking points about the bill, legislative and policy priorities for the 114th Congress, a fact sheet on human trafficking, and a flyer describing USCSAHT at [tinyurl.com/zxt6ykr](http://tinyurl.com/zxt6ykr).

## Environmental Regulation Likely to Spark Lively Legislative Debate in 2016

The year-end omnibus appropriations bill passed by Congress before its Christmas recess included some good news for environmental advocates. The bill included funding to implement many environmental measures advanced by the Obama administration, including the “Waters of the US” rule which is meant to protect waterways from pollution, the “Clean Power Plan” which requires states to develop plans to reduce carbon emissions from power plants, and new ozone standards.



However, most Congress-watchers expect the fight between the Obama administration and Congress over these measures to continue in 2016 with President Obama dedicated to implementing them through executive action and the Republican-controlled House and Senate bent on stopping him.

The fate of the Clean Power Plan may ultimately be decided in the courts. Twenty-seven states and a number of industry groups, including the US Chamber of Commerce, utilities, and coal companies, have sued the Obama administration over the new regulations. Environmental groups are siding with the Environmental Protection Agency in defending the rules. In all likelihood the lawsuits will stretch well into the term of the next president.

The international climate pact reached in Paris earlier this month does not need approval from Congress, but Republicans could continue opposing funding that is critical to implementing the pact. They had hoped they could block US contributions to the Green Climate Fund, a UN-founded global pool of money meant to help poorer countries combat climate change, in the year-end spending bill, but that effort failed. Still, some GOP lawmakers say they could challenge the funding in the 2017 appropriations process.

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days to Focus on Race, Class, and Power

Nearly 1,000 Christian advocates from across the country are expected to meet in Washington, DC from April 15 to 18 for the 14th annual Ecumeni-

cal Advocacy Days (EAD). This year’s gathering titled, “Lift Every Voice! — Racism, Class, and Power” will explore how social, economic, corporate, and political powers have colluded to reduce and eliminate access to that most basic democratic right -- voting. Details are available at: [AdvocacyDays.org](http://AdvocacyDays.org).



- Open letter to presidential candidate Donald Trump condemning his language and proposals which serve only to divide the nation and bring comfort to ISIS and their allies. Ann Scholz, SSND (12/9/15)
- Letter to President Obama expressing opposition to the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) reported plans to conduct raids in communities nationwide to roundup and deport Central American children and their parents, most of whom are seeking asylum in the United States. LCWR (12/30/15)
- Amicus brief on behalf of young plaintiffs in a federal case in Eugene, Oregon in support of their claim that the state has a duty, under the public trust doctrine, to protect the atmosphere from excessive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that will destroy the right of future generations to a safe and livable atmosphere. Marcia Allen, CSJ (1/5/15)
- Letter from faith leaders to Senators opposing the American Security against Foreign Enemies (SAFE) Act of 2015 (H.R. 4038) and any other legislation that would stop the resettlement of Syrian refugees, Marcia Allen, CSJ (1/14/16)
- Letter from national organizations to Senators opposing the American Security against Foreign Enemies (SAFE) Act of 2015 (HR 4038) and any other legislation that would stop the resettlement of Syrian refugees, LCWR (1/19/16)
- Letter to President Obama, Secretary Johnson, and Director Muñoz in support of the sanctuary movement. LCWR (1/15/16)

## Obama Administration Ramps Up Deportations of Central American Refugees

Just as families were preparing to celebrate Christmas, there were reports that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was planning to detain and deport Central American children and adults who entered the United States seeking asylum and have had a final order of removal since January 1, 2014. This includes children and families who lost their asylum cases because they were unable to find adequate legal counsel, as well as individuals who were given deportation orders in absentia or through “rocket docket” that are meant to expedite trials but in reality deny due process.

Many of those rounded up by Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids are being sent to the family detention facility in Dilley, Texas to await deportation. Their lawyers with the CARA Family Detention Pro Bono Representation and Advocacy Project have had some success in staying deportations. “Our interviews revealed that these families have bona fide asylum claims, but were deprived of a meaningful opportunity to present them at their hearings in immigration court,” said Katie Shepherd, managing attorney for the CARA Project. She continued, “It’s beyond shameful that these families, who risked everything to seek protection in the United States, were being forcibly returned to the violence and turmoil they fled in Central America.”

Faith leaders have voiced concern over this latest move by the Obama administration. The chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Migration has written that the migration surge from Central America is a refugee crisis because children and mothers with young families are fleeing extreme violence. Faith groups have called on the Administration to offer a humanitarian response to these migrants and protect and care for children and families fleeing violence in the region which includes due process and legal assistance to adjudicate asylum and refugee claims as well as addressing the root causes of violence forcing so many individuals to flee.

Immigrant advocates are hoping to persuade the administration to abandon its inhumane policy. Advocates are compiling stories of Central American children and families in local communities who have been rounded up and deported as a result of this recent decision. Demographic information, as well as information about

their reasons for migration, and the nature of the deportation, will be extremely helpful in telling the story of the devastating impact of this misguided policy. Stories may be sent to LCWR associate director for social mission Ann Scholz, SSND at [ascholz@lcwr.org](mailto:ascholz@lcwr.org).

## President Obama Takes Action to Reduce Gun Violence

Gun violence has taken a heartbreaking toll on too many communities across the country. Over the past decade in America, more than 100,000 people have been killed as a result of gun violence — and millions more have been the victim of assaults, robberies, and other crimes involving a gun. Many of these crimes were committed by people who never should have been able to purchase a gun in the first place. Over the same period, hundreds of thousands of others in communities around the country committed suicide with a gun and nearly half a million people suffered other gun injuries. Hundreds of law enforcement officers have been shot to death protecting their communities. And too many children are killed or injured by firearms every year, often by accident. The vast majority of Americans, including the vast majority of gun owners, believe it is time to take sensible steps to address these horrible tragedies.

President Obama has said that he is committed to using every tool at his disposal to reduce gun violence. While some of the gaps in gun laws can only be fixed through legislation, in early January the President announced a series of executive actions designed to:

- Keep guns out of the wrong hands through background checks.
- Make communities safer from gun violence.
- Increase mental health treatment and reporting to the background check system.
- Shape the future of gun safety technology.

The presidential announcement was welcomed by many in the faith community including LCWR which adopted a resolution at its 2013 assembly calling for an end to gun violence. [lcwr.org/social-justice/ending-gun-violence](http://lcwr.org/social-justice/ending-gun-violence).

Additional information about the executive action is available from the White House at: [tinyurl.com/gqzya7n](http://tinyurl.com/gqzya7n).



This year, the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) is offering three workshops for professional development at its annual summer institute. Workshops are designed for those who wish to deepen their understanding of the complex theological, spiritual, psycho-sexual, ethical, and diversity issues often present in contemporary vocation ministry. Workshops are open to NRVC members at a discounted rate and for non-members at an affordable price.

Registration for summer institute will open in early February, however information on spring and summer programs is posted at [nrvc.net/292/publication/2016-spring-and-summer-events-3153](http://nrvc.net/292/publication/2016-spring-and-summer-events-3153).

Workshops offered at this year's NRVC summer institute at DePaul University in Chicago are:

- Orientation Program for New Vocation Directors, July 13-17, 2016.
- Ethical Issues in Vocation and Formation Ministry, July 18-19, 2016.
- Behavioral Assessment 1, July 21-23, 2016.

## Grant Application Process Open for the National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations

The National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations (NFCRV), established by the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) in 2014, is dedicated to increasing the number of women and men entering religious communities by:

- Offering financial assistance to religious institutes so that they may accept candidates who have student loan obligations;
- Assisting congregations in developing policies and resources so that they may work effectively with those who have educational debt;
- Inviting contributors to invest so that the vital legacy of religious life continues for Church and the world.

Last year the NFCRV issued 10 grants in excess of \$210,000 to eight religious institutes. NFCRV is now accepting grant requests for 2016. Any canonically recognized religious institute with a current member in the NRVC may apply for a grant to service a candidate's educational debt during formation.

Additional information is available from Mark Teresi, NFCRV director, at [mjteresi@nfcrv.org](mailto:mjteresi@nfcrv.org) or at 773-595-4028.

## Leaders Are Encouraged to Complete Surveys on Use of Social Media

All congregation leaders are encouraged to attend to two surveys they will be receiving from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to study the use of the Internet and social media by US Catholic sisters and nuns. The study is sponsored by A Nun's Life Ministry and funded by a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. The study is designed to provide insights to help women religious strengthen their online presence in service to mission, ministry, and membership. The results will be used to develop educational and other resources to assist women religious in moving forward.

Leaders will be asked to complete a survey on their institute's online presence, and to make the second survey on the use of social media available for completion by all the institute's members.



## A Message from the New Executive Director of the Religious Formation Conference

On January 4, the Feast of Elizabeth Ann Seton, foundress of the Sisters of Charity, I began this new ministry as executive director of the Religious Formation Conference. I look forward to serving both women and men religious as they seek to incorporate new members, plan for ongoing formation of all members, and prepare new formation ministers. This involves collaborating with congregational leaders and members as well as the organizations that serve them, particularly LCWR and CMSM. As the days unfold, I hope you will share your hopes and dreams for initial and ongoing formation with us.

-- Ellen Dauwer, SC

## ForMission Applications Now Accepted

ForMission, a formation program for perpetually professed religious preparing for or newly engaged in formation ministry, engages participants in four week-long residential sessions held over a two-year period as well as reading, reflection, and supervision between sessions. A unique feature of the program is the reading group each participant forms; composed of members of her/his own congregation, which contributes to the lifelong formation of other members of the province/congregation.

A new ForMission class is forming now and will meet in Chicago June 8-16, 2016.

Applications are due April 15, 2016; more information is available at [www.relforcon.org](http://www.relforcon.org).

## NRRO Requests Assistance from All Religious Institutes

On January 4, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) mailed its Direct Care Assistance applications to the treasurers of record of all religious institutes in its database. NRRO asks that every religious institute submit data even if not requesting funds from NRRO. The Retirement Fund for Religious collection currently is approved through December 2017. The Commission for Religious Life and Ministry (CRLM) is working with NRRO to prepare a request for an extension of the collection. CRLM hopes to present that request to the US bishops in November 2016, and they want to show progress as well as continuing need. To do that, NRRO relies on the help of all religious institutes and asks that all complete and return the Direct Care Assistance application by March 31. Institutes are encouraged to contact the NRRO office if they need assistance with the application.

The first Tending the Vineyard property planning workshop, funded by a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, will be held in Baltimore on March 14-15, 2016. Due to the overwhelming response, NRRO regrets that it has had to close registration. NRRO will keep LCWR members apprised as plans for future opportunities take shape.

## Sign Up for the LCWR Resource Sharing Forum

LCWR offers a listserv that is open only to LCWR members and associates. Called the LCWR Resource Sharing Forum, the listserv provides a means for LCWR members to communicate with one another online with a question or to share information. Topics around which members have shared information in the past include: new sponsorship models, chapter facilitators, bilingual speakers on religious life, psychological testing for candidates, canon lawyers who deal with property issues, treatment centers for religious, restructuring buildings for assisted living, and much more.

LCWR members who have not signed up yet for this listserv are encouraged to do so. More information on the forum and how to sign up for it is available on the [LCWR website](http://www.relforcon.org) in the "Members" section.

## FRIENDS IN SOLIDARITY

by Joan Mumaw, IHM  
US Regional Development Director

**F**riends in Solidarity, Inc. the new US organization established to raise awareness of the situation in South Sudan and the work of Solidarity with South Sudan, is now operating as a not-for-profit awaiting the letter of determination from the IRS. This is a major accomplishment supported by religious congregations who are members of the corporation and by the newly appointed board of directors. (See December LCWR newsletter for details.) A new logo and website for the organization is being developed thanks to assistance of volunteers.

Many of you have heard and/or read of the recent traumatic incident which impacted Solidarity staff. On the evening of December 28, armed men confronted three sisters at the Solidarity Teacher Training College in Yambio. The men were threatening and aggressive. The sisters handed over two vehicles, money, cell phones, and computers. The bishop, local clergy, local people, and religious, while outraged at the attack, have been most supportive of the sisters and the whole Solidarity community.

We are pleased to report that the sisters are doing well. Two of the sisters are doing in-service training for teachers in other areas of the country. Four staff members have returned to the college from their holidays. Solidarity remains committed to capacity-building in South Sudan. Due to unrest in the Yambio area, the two-month, in-service program at Yambio has been cancelled. The two-year, pre-service program is scheduled to resume in early March. Additional security measures are being taken and the United Nations has added the school to its daily patrol route. We ask your continued prayer for peace in this, the newest of nations on the continent.

Friends in Solidarity is committed to supporting the work in South Sudan and it is now a vehicle for tax exempt contributions. For further information on how you can support this work, please contact Joan Mumaw, IHM, President and CAO of Friends in Solidarity at [jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com](mailto:jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com). Our office continues to operate from 8808 Cameron St, Silver Spring, MD 20910 with the support of the LCWR.

## News from the UN

### Security Council Must Speak up for Girls' Rights

"The rights of girls to education and freedom from persecution can't be overlooked any longer", writes Gordon Brown, the United Nations secretary-general's special envoy for global education. The Security Council needs to act as a children's rights council to speed up girls' empowerment. "Girl power will achieve its goals only when the rights of the world's most vulnerable and the most desolate girls are championed and made real," he argues. More information can be found at: [tinyurl.com/nhtrtau](http://tinyurl.com/nhtrtau).



### February 6: International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

Over 140 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of female genital mutilation (FGM). If current trends continue, about 86 million additional girls worldwide will be subjected to the practice by 2030. FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15 and causes severe bleeding and health issues including cysts, infections, and infertility as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths. FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women. Information is available at: [tinyurl.com/ou3nbe3](http://tinyurl.com/ou3nbe3).

### February 20: World Day of Social Justice

According to the United Nations, social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. Social justice is advanced when barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or disability are removed. For the United Nations, the pursuit of social justice for all is at the core of their global mission to promote development and human dignity. Additional information is available at: [tinyurl.com/9dn8dsn](http://tinyurl.com/9dn8dsn).