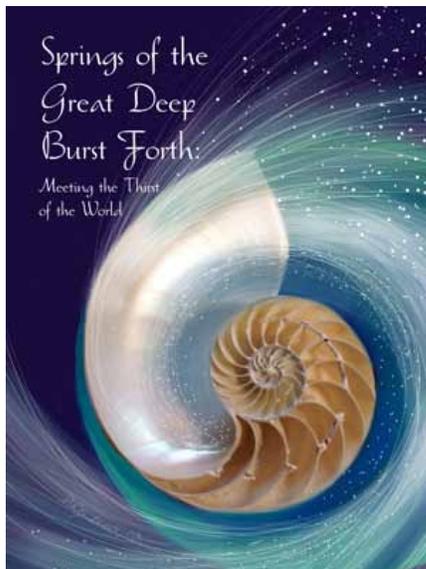


March 2015



2015 LCWR Assembly Spirals of the Great Deep Burst Forth: Meeting the Thirsts of the World

August 11- 14, 2015
(Travel day: August 15)

Houston, Texas

Keynoters:
Stephen Bevans, SVD
Janet Mock, CSJ

All members and associates will receive an email notification when registration materials are available.

Registration for the assembly and for the hotel will be online.

Doris Klein, CSA created the assembly logo

Janet Mock, CSJ to Receive 2015 LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award

The contemplative process for raising names of potential recipients of the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award at the LCWR fall regional meetings resulted in the choice of Janet Mock, CSJ as this year's awardee. The Outstanding Leadership Award honors a person whom the conference members wish to recognize and thank for modeling extraordinary leadership.



Janet, a Sister of St. Joseph of Baden, Pennsylvania, recently completed her term as LCWR executive director where she gave extraordinary service to the conference in the midst of challenging times. Her many other leadership experiences have included 10 years as formation director and 10 years in leadership for her community, as well as service as executive director of the Religious Formation Conference and as director of the Institute for Leadership and Catholic Mission at Washington Theological Union. Her commitment to fostering religious life, creating formation programs for religious and laity, and providing utterly selfless service in leadership have made her contributions to the world and the church invaluable.

The conference will celebrate Janet's life and acknowledge her contributions on the last evening of the 2015 LCWR assembly in Houston.

From the LCWR Presidency

At the Still Point – the Dancing!

by Marcia Allen, CSJ — LCWR President-Elect

I want to write about Lent! But first let me congratulate the authors of the Winter 2015 issue of *Occasional Papers*! You inspire and lead us with your reflections that show experience well integrated. Thank you!

Those middle time reflections seem perfect for this liturgical season -- long weeks of waiting for winter to turn into spring; a season of impatience and anticipation. A boring season with the familiar readings and urgings to fast, to be attentive, to be generous, to get out of the rut, to make a new start at this work of being a Christ-follower. Time seems to stand still.

T.S. Eliot would say: "And do not call it fixity, where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards.... Except for the still point, there would be no dance...." (1) In the still point is the dancing? Our world gone amok in struggles with ISIS, Obama Care, Boco Haram, and racism right in our own back yards and we speak of dancing?! Every new act of horror and every new cataclysm causing despair is yet another signal that our faith is waiting to be renewed.

Faith. Faith is a relationship, said a wise mentor to me once. It is the absolute and utter abandonment to God for the sake of a relationship that we do not see, hear, or feel in any consoling and real sense most of the time.

And especially, not when tragedy on a world-scale dogs our footsteps. The mystery deepens. We see needs that we cannot meet. We reach out from our own poverty



**In this darkness
there is action aplenty.
God is doing God's thing
– in us and
in the world around us.
We need only that strong
a faith to see it,
believe it, and act on it.**

and cannot assuage the heart ache of others. Here is the stark reality of the in-between time. We, ready and offering; the future hidden and silent. In this darkness is where life is. It is where the seed breaks apart and takes root. It is where the shoot finally rises and becomes a flourishing plant. In this darkness there is action aplenty. God is doing God's thing – in us and in the world around us. We need only that strong a faith to see it, believe it, and act on it.

So where does that leave us and Lent? Let's join the dance with complete givenness to the rhythm of life in our world; givenness in contemplation and in small and large actions – not because they will cure the ills of the world, but because they are the act of hope that we fling onto the dance floor, picking up the rhythm, encouraging the music, freeing God to do the God-thing with us in the dance where God is the lead.

This takes such humility, such abandonment, such faith, such attentiveness, such self-offering. It takes a willingness to be crucified to the world and the world to us – out of such love as God has for this precious world. It seems that this Mystery is the only way to make our way toward Easter.

1. "Burnt Norton" in *Four Quartets* by T.S.Eliot

LCWR National Board Meets in Florida



◀ The LCWR national board and administrative staff members met at Bethany Center in Lutz, Florida from February 15-19.

▶ The LCWR presidency led the board in conversation about recent developments with the mandate from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.



◀ The board spent time reviewing Leadership Pathways, a process designed to engage the LCWR membership in the ongoing process of becoming transformational leaders. After affirming the excellence of the program's content and its potential to assist members in further developing their capacities for leadership, the board offered suggestions for increasing the accessibility and use of the modules.



In addition to reports from the president, treasurer, and staff, the board discussed the various ways US women religious are commemorating the Year of Consecrated Life.

(continued on page 4)

LCWR National Board Meets in Florida

(continued from page 1)

► The boards of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and LCWR annually schedule their winter board meetings at the same time so that the members can meet jointly for some sessions, as well as pray and share meals together. This year the boards reflected together on Pope Francis' letter to those in consecrated life.



Contemplative Insight into the Call to the Future

The LCWR board concluded its meetings by engaging in a contemplative process to name what it sees as women religious live into the unknown future. The following is the board's insight:

We have been graced to live in generative times, living beyond boundaries, and joined in relationships of gratuitous love. We believe we are being called to a realignment of religious life which will be carried out through a contemplative approach and in a spirit of joyful collaboration across congregations. We hope that this journey through these challenging times will continue to deepen our lives, and perhaps offer a word of hope to the wider world.



▲ Bishop Robert Lynch of the St. Petersburg diocese joined the two boards for a social and dinner, after expressing his appreciation for the ministries and presence of men and women religious in the church.



Religious Invited to Provide Educational and Inspirational Materials for Social Media Sites

The US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) is collaborating with the women and men religious in the United States to provide the public with materials on religious life that are both educative and inspirational.

Working closely with the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR), the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), and LCWR, the USCCB is posting information about religious life on its various social media platforms for the duration of the Year of Consecrated Life.

LCWR is asking its members to encourage their communications personnel to make their materials available for this project. Postings may include links to items already on congregation websites that provide insights into the life and works of Catholic sisters today. Links to short videos on women religious, vocation stories, prayer and reflective materials, and many other informative pieces have already been shared.

The Communicators for Women Religious (CWR), the professional organization for communicators working with Catholic sisters, is assisting LCWR in collecting, selecting, and editing submissions for this project. Members of CWR receive instructions monthly for submitting materials.

Members are encouraged to follow the postings at:

- USCCB Facebook: www.facebook.com/usccb
- Twitter: #YCL15 #YCL2015
- Instagram: instagram.com/usccb

Upcoming LCWR Dates

Imagining Justice

Presentation Center
Los Gatos, California
March 2 — 5, 2015

LCWR New Leader Workshop

Conference Center - University of St.
Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois
March 19 — 22, 2015

LCWR Assembly

Houston, Texas
August 11—15, 2015

Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Retreat Center
Tucson, Arizona
January 17 — 22, 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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LCWR Identifies Legislative Priorities for 114th Congress

The justice concerns identified in past assembly resolutions and enumerated in the LCWR Call for 2015-2022 will be the focus of the education, advocacy, and organizing efforts of the Office for Social Mission and will direct its legislative action.



Efforts to effect just comprehensive **immigration reform** continue. In January, LCWR president Sharon Holland, IHM joined a group of Catholic leaders sending a letter to Catholic members of Congress emphasizing that migration is a pro-life issue, writing in their letter that the deaths of thousands of migrants is an example of what Pope Francis called the “globalization of indifference” and urging them to support comprehensive immigration reform.

The House of Representatives already has signaled its intent to introduce a number of immigration bills in the first session of the 114th Congress. Observers expect that most will be clearly anti-immigrant and pose real threats to immigrant families, border communities, and the nation as a whole.

The national office staff has also authored a letter to members of Congress and submitted written testimony to the House Judiciary Committee calling for reform legislation that protects the dignity and human rights of all people; creates an achievable path to citizenship; fixes the immigration visa system and reunites families; protects the rights of all workers; promotes the full integration of newcomers; respects the special needs of the most vulnerable; and addresses the violence, persecution, and poverty that force migrants from their homes.

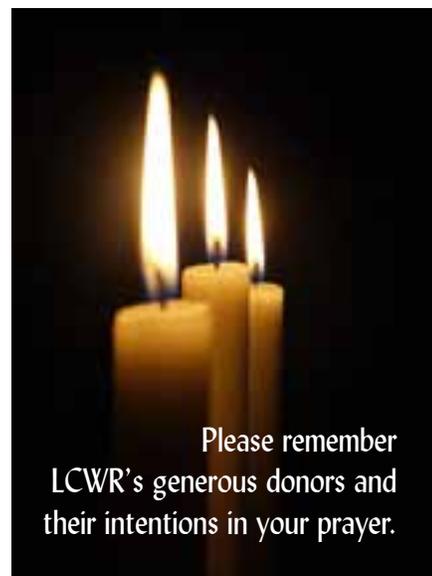
Those working to **abolish modern day slavery** expect to see a number of human trafficking bills introduced during the first session of the 114th Congress. LCWR will be supporting legislation to protect workers by strengthening oversight of foreign labor recruiters;

require large companies to report on how they are addressing human trafficking so American consumers can make informed and ethical purchases; increase funding of victims’ services and ensure that survivors of exploitation have the support they need.

The primary focus of **economic justice** efforts at the national level will be on the Congressional budget process and trying to ensure adequate funding for social safety net programs and poverty-focused foreign development assistance. Every budget decision will be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity; how it affects the lives and dignity of those who are hungry and homeless, without work or living in conditions of poverty; and to what extent it promotes the common good of all, at home and abroad.

The interfaith community would like to see legislation to increase the federal minimum wage, require paid sick days and family leave, and provide greater access to quality education for all. All of LCWR’s budget work will highlight the moral issues that lie at the heart of the debate about deficits, budget cuts, revenue, and spending.

LCWR will monitor national legislation and international treaties that impact the **integrity of creation**. Together with a number of faith-based coalitions, LCWR will continue to advocate for national legislation that limits carbon pollution and will encourage US leadership in the run-up to the UN Climate Change Conference to be held in Paris in December 2015.



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

Catholic Social Ministers Gather in Washington, DC

More than 500 Catholic leaders from across the country met in Washington DC from February 7-10 for the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in collaboration with 16 national Catholic organizations, sponsored the annual event which explores contemporary Catholic social engagement and the current political landscape.



The gathering's theme this year, *To Go Forth: Encountering Christ in the Heart of the World*, took its inspiration from Pope Francis and the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. Participants prayerfully considered Catholic social teaching and its implications for faith and public life today.

LCWR co-sponsored the policy workshop, *Weighing the Risks: Drivers of Migration*, which explored the root causes of the migration of tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors and families travelling to the United States from Central America and examined policy proposals aimed at addressing the systemic injustice that forces them from their homes. Ann Scholz, SSND, LCWR associate director for social mission, moderated the panel discussion which featured Ivone Guillen, immigration campaign and communications associate for Sojourners and herself a DREAMer and Richard Coll, policy advisor, international justice and peace for USCCB, and an expert in the area of Latin America, focusing in particular on extractive industries and trade concerns.

The panelists challenged those present to look beyond popular diagnoses and simple solutions, and ask difficult questions about US policies and practices which have created the political instability, violence, and endemic poverty that forces families from their home.

Supreme Court to Rule Again on ACA

The US Supreme Court is expected to rule on the *King v. Burwell* case in June. The court will decide whether qualified individuals who purchase health insurance in the federally facilitated marketplaces (FFMs) are eligible for tax subsidies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In the 37 states where the federal government operates the marketplace, the court's decision could make everyone ineligible for subsidies and make health insurance coverage unaffordable for most.

The Catholic Health Association has joined with the American Hospital Association and the Federation of American Hospitals to develop resources to assist constituents in educating their communities and state legislators about the potential impact of the Supreme Court decision. The tools, designed to build public awareness of and communicate strong support for the subsidies to community leaders and state legislators, include: Sample Talking Points in Support of Health Insurance Subsidies at: tinyurl.com/mbrqopf and Facts and Figures for Drafting an Op-ed at: tinyurl.com/musdpr5.



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 @LCWRjpic

Catholic Climate Lenten Fast To Be Held in 45 Countries

The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) announced that more than 45 countries will take part in a 40-day Lenten fast for climate justice, from Ash Wednesday, February 18, to March 28. Participants in the Lenten fast are praying for unity and asking world leaders to take all steps possible to meet the goal of a global temperature increase of less than 1.5 degrees Celsius (relative to pre-industrial levels), by means that include a fair, ambitious, and legally-binding global agreement in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris.



Fast organizers are encouraging participants to fast from food as well as to reduce their use of carbon by limiting their use of oil, electricity, plastic, paper, water, and toxins and pledging to recycle during Lent.

Yeb Saño, Climate Commissioner from the Philippines who captured the world's attention with his own fast during UN meetings following Typhoon Haiyan, said: "The power behind fasting lies in its purity of purpose and the sense of selflessness necessary to embark on fasting. This is the power of the fast—because it is meant for our aspirations of a better world."

Ciara Shannon, coordinator of Our Voices in Asia stated: "Amidst our busy, consumption led lives, fasting during Lent is a great opportunity to reflect and abstain. The GCCM Lenten Fast also includes the option to do a carbon fast. This gives us a great opportunity to think about the food itself, how it is grown, how much water is used, how it is transported and then packaged. It always shocks me the amount of emissions that are involved."

The GCCM 40 day Climate Justice Fast is part of the 365 day #FASTFORTHECLIMATE which has began December 1, 2014, the start of COP20 in Lima, and will continue until November 30, 2015, at the beginning of COP21 in Paris.

News from the UN

International Women's Day— March 8

International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change, and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities. It is a time raise up the importance of dignity and equality for all and the vital role of women and girls as agents of development. Additional information is available at www.un.org/en/events/womensday/.



Girls Grade Beijing Survey

Twenty years ago, the United Nations convened the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. The result was the landmark Beijing Platform for Action which identified 12 strategic areas for the empowerment of women and girls. Since 1995 the Beijing Platform for Action has served as the gender equality roadmap for communities around the world. The Working Group on Girls has designed Girls Grade Beijing Survey to help assess progress and identify continuing needs. Girls, ages 18 and younger, are invited to complete the five-minute survey which is available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Arabic. Findings will be used to help shape the global movement for girls' rights. The survey is available at: tinyurl.com/qa38cbx.

Attacks against Girls Seeking an Education

The United Nations Human Rights office has issued a report detailing the myriad barriers that have prevented girls in dozens of countries from getting an education during the past five years. The report discusses the consequences when girls are denied their right to education including the increased likelihood that they will be victims of human rights abuses such as early marriage and sexual exploitation. The study is available at: tinyurl.com/mh22ush.

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.

Leadership Development Program Applications Being Accepted

The Collaborative Leadership Development Program (CLDP-3) will begin a new session in August 2015. The CLDP is an integrative process designed to prepare women religious, associates, and co-members 60 years of age or younger with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to assume leadership positions in community and ministry. Its multi-congregational, multi-national approach broadens perspective and awareness in a changing church and global society.



Over an 18-month period, including three 4-day gatherings in St. Louis, the CLDP blends relational and contemplative practices, while fostering self-growth and spiritual development through various study and interaction methods. One participant wrote: "How good it is to share our hopes, fears, doubts, and dreams together. I knew the program would be good...I didn't realize it would be life-changing!"

Applications for 2015 are currently being accepted and are due by April 23. This program filled up quickly in its first two offerings in 2013 and 2014. More information, applicant criteria, and application form are available at www.TheCLDP.org or by contacting program director Kathy Wade (kwade42@gmail.com, 301.587.0423 x 2314) or Rita Waters, RSM (rwaters@sistersofmercy.org, 301.587.0423 x 2310).

Giving Voice Seeks Consultant to Assist with Strategic Planning

Giving Voice, in partnership with Catholic Theological Union (CTU), is seeking to engage a consultant who will help the organization define and establish a realistic five-year strategic plan. The plan will include concrete and practical ways to expand the Giving Voice digital network, enhance communications across the nation, learn and use related software and technologies for instant translation, build relationships,

grow leadership through training among younger women religious, and expand funding sources. CTU is the fiscal sponsor of Giving Voice for this opportunity. Information on the position is available at www.ctu.edu/sites/default/files/gv_consult_rfp_2-4-2015_final.pdf. Consultant candidates with experience and knowledge of women religious, especially younger women religious, will be given preference.

Giving Voice is a peer-led organization that creates spaces for younger women religious to give voice to their hopes, dreams, and challenges in religious life. Further, it is a network of relationships that seeks to open spaces for younger women religious to build relationships, learn from one another, and build skills for the future with peers across religious congregations.

New Date Set for NRRO Planning and Implementation Workshop

Due to the recently announced papal visit to the United States, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) has re-scheduled the fall Planning and Implementation Workshop from September 22-24, 2015 to October 6-8, 2015. The workshop will be held at the Bethany Center in Tampa, Florida. Space is still available. NRRO urges eligible institutes (1) to avail themselves of the consultative and financial assistance available through this program. More than \$19 million in funding has been distributed through this program over the past six years along with countless hours of free consultative services by the NRRO volunteer consultants and staff.

Anyone interested in participating in the Planning and Implementation Assistance process and this October workshop is encouraged to contact NRRO as soon as possible. An application form is available at www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office/financial-assistance/index.cfm.

1. *Eligible institutes are those with 25 or more members and an unfunded past service liability of 40 percent or higher. Institutes with a higher level of retirement funding are eligible to participate and receive the educational and consultative assistance, but they are not eligible for funding through this program.*



SOLIDARITY with South Sudan

By Joan Mumaw, IHM

Holy Week Webinar "Prayer in Times of Suffering"

Monday March 30, 2015
3:00 PM EDT

Presenter: Rev. Robin Ryan, CP, PhD.
www.relforcon.org/webinars

Year of Consecrated Life Programs

Hope: Invitation and Impetus to Transformative Life and Mission

Dates, Locations and Presenters:

Saturday March 28, 2015 Loras College, Dubuque, IA
Lynn Levo, CSJ, PhD

**Hope is A Choice that Matters:
A Psycho-Spiritual Perspective**

Saturday April 18, 2015 Regis College, Weston, MA
Michael Downey, PhD

Hope: The We(e) Virtue

Saturday May 2, 2015 University of St. Thomas,
Houston, TX
Eduardo Fernandez, SJ, PhD

**Revivifying Mission: Religious Life,
Prophetic Dialogue and the Signs of the Times**

Saturday May 16, 2015 The Flaget Center,
Louisville, KY
Mary Schneiders, OP, PhD

The Scriptures: Living Source of Hope

www.relforcon.org/consecrated-life

In addition, applications are being received for the
Life Commitment Program

www.relforcon.org/programs/life-commitment
and **ForMission Program**

www.relforcon.org/programs/formission

Solidarity with South Sudan is embarking on the task of forming a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization in the United States. This has been in the plans for some time and now the "ball is in our court." Think spring!

In December 2014 the Solidarity board of directors in Rome agreed that a "partnership" be formed with a US organization. The US organization must be a separate and independent entity in order for it to comply with IRS regulations. There is a need for religious congregations involved with Solidarity and listed in the Official Catholic Directory to step forward and assume responsibility for an organization in this country which is dedicated to raising awareness of the plight of the people of South Sudan and the work of Solidarity, as well as raising funds to support this work.

US religious congregations have been very supportive of Solidarity with South Sudan, a project initiated by the UISG and USG. LCWR has graciously supported the new US office and sees the work of Solidarity as fulfilling what they desire as a conference: to "actively seek to strengthen bonds with women religious throughout the world." (LCWR Assembly Resolution 2010) and "to identify ways to strengthen our mutual support in living out the Gospel mission." (LCWR Assembly Resolution 2011)

We now seek to formalize Solidarity as an organization in this country. This will enhance our credibility and enable us to reach out to foundations and individuals for support. Peace is illusive in this new African country, but Solidarity with the support of religious throughout the world, is preparing future leaders to assume their role in church and society.

If you would like more information about how you can be involved in this new and creative endeavor contact: Joan Mumaw, IHM, the US Regional Development Director for Solidarity at the Cameron St office: jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com or 734-731-3726 and check out the renewed website: www.solidaritysudan.org.