

Update

*A Publication of the
Leadership Conference of Women Religious*

May 2020

Standing Together Through the Pandemic

LCWR stands with all of its members as they lead through this unprecedented crisis which has created widespread uncertainty and, in some cases, great pain and deep grief as members have watched their sisters, employees, family, and friends struggle with the corona virus – and/or with the financial challenges the pandemic has created. LCWR offers its heartfelt condolences as congregations experience the death of some of their own sisters – who often have died alone because of the quarantine restrictions in hospitals and other care facilities. Leadership throughout this crisis is clearly calling for skills and resources that members may never have dreamed would be needed.

Recognizing the difficulty of leading during this time, LCWR is committed to monitoring the needs of its members during the coronavirus pandemic. All members are asked to keep the officers and/or national office staff apprised of any services that LCWR might be able to provide during this critical time.

Members have been receiving weekly messages from LCWR with resources that may be of assistance. These include:

- [Weekly reflections](#) that can be used by individuals and/or groups designed to help all be conscious of the transformation occurring within themselves, their congregations, the nation, and the global community because of the pandemic and its impact on life. (Through the generosity of the Sisters of Providence, some of these reflections are now available in Spanish and French.)
- A suggested [advocacy action](#) in which leaders may invite their members to engage to assure that the needs of society's most vulnerable are being met as the world attends to the demands of the pandemic crisis.



- [Print materials](#) that offer both practical and inspirational ideas that may be useful to leaders.
 - “Practices for Coping During the Pandemic” by Lynn M. Levo, CSJ
 - “Leadership in Times of Crisis” by Prudence Bushnell
 - Template for Communicating During a COVID-19 Outbreak – prepared by LCWR
 - “Guidelines for Religious Communities for Psychological Care” by the Pontifical University Comillas in Madrid
 - “That Discomfort You’re Feeling is Grief” by Scott Berinato

In addition, many members have taken advantage of the opportunities to engage in virtual contemplative dialogue where they spend an hour with other members in prayer and conversation. Leaders report that these times of deeper reflection have helped create a sense of solidarity as they share with one another their hopes and challenges through the lens of faith and prayer.

Several important resources addressing the legal and financial questions being asked by women religious leaders are also available on the website of the [Resource Center for Religious Institutes](#).

From the LCWR Executive Director

The Lord is Risen, Indeed

by Carol Zinn, SSJ — LCWR Executive Director

As I sit at my computer committing these reflections to paper, the most recent event that has changed our world forever swirls in my body, mind, heart, spirit, and soul. I sit in solitary thought and solidarity of thought. I pray my personal prayer and our public prayer. I wait for individual return to freedom of movement and communal movement in freedom. I welcome virtual connectivity and long for real time/space human interaction. Yes, the most recent event that has changed our world forever swirls in my body, mind, heart, spirit, and soul. I imagine we meet one another in that swirl several times each day.

And I ask myself: *Which event? Which event that has changed our world forever? Which event swirls within, around and beyond me/us? COVID-19 or Easter or a combination of both?*

Between this newsletter and the next one, our global, national, ecclesial, civil, and religious life worlds seemed poised for unprecedented upheaval whether we resist or receive it. By the next newsletter we will have embraced or denied how we choose to reframe and recreate our lives. And hopefully we will have discerned our way into the first steps towards a future none of us could have imagined. Yes, there are life-changing choices to be made because life-changing events have taken hold of us.

The Easter season scriptures speak to me of such profound choices for these Easter COVID-19 times. We hear the Risen One invite the disciples, whose lives were upended by the unprecedented events they witnessed, to consider the reality set before them:



- “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (4/19)
- “What are you discussing as you walk along? Oh, how foolish you are.” (4/26)
- “I have come so that you may have life and have it more abundantly.” (5/3)
- “Do not let your hearts be troubled. I am the way, the truth and the life.” (5/10)
- “The Father will send another Advocate to be with you always.” (5/17)

And these questions arise in me:

- How is resurrected Peace with/within me? How am I being sent at this time? To whom?
- How am I discussing the Resurrection event in these times? What does it mean for me?
- Where am I finding abundance of life and with whom do I share it?
- When do I find my heart most troubled? Where is the way, truth and life in those times?
- With the promise of the Spirit, what does Resurrected hope look/feel life for me?

Perhaps Handel’s *Messiah* (1741) provides a place to sit, together, as we allow the music to hold us through these times. Written in just 24 days, this great work has 53 movements in three parts and was intended as an Easter/springtime oratorio. In 2016, [the world’s largest virtual choir performed the Hallelujah Chorus](#). Enjoy. Rejoice. The Lord is risen, indeed, here and now, in these COVID-19 times.

Which event
swirls within, around and
beyond me/us?
COVID-19 or Easter or
a combination of both?

What Does it Mean to Hear the Words, 'Peace Be With You'?

*On the evening of that first day of the week,
When the doors were locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." -- John 20:19*

Members of the LCWR national board and the LCWR regional chairs were invited to reflect on these words taken from the gospel reading for Sunday, April 19 and to share a brief reflection on the question:

As you live in this time of quarantine within your own locked doors, what does it mean for you to hear the words "Peace be with you"?

"Peace be with you ..." calms me, assures me that I will find the strength I need. This calls me to an inner space, one where I encounter the Divine. Resting in God's presence comforts me during this time of being behind locked doors. At this unique time of leadership, the call is to center ourselves within the call, this is our time of leadership. I pray that for each of us that the "grace of office" will be present as we touch into the heart of who we are as women religious.



Jane Herb, IHM – LCWR National Board Member

When I was elected to leadership, I was not afraid. I knew that I had three good women with me for whatever the journey would bring. For this journey through the corona virus, a community of good women is with me as well as many other good people. When Jesus says "peace be with you" I experience it, because like the apostles, I am not alone. Jesus is with me in the community. May all of us know in our heart and mind that we are not alone.



Rita Menart, PBVM – Chair, Region 10

God's peace always envelops us. There is space to realize God's peace when I choose to step away from the useless living out of fear and believing in a false sense of separation. Psalm 136, as written by Nan Merrill, phrases it well: "Love sustains me. Love sustains us."



Eileen Haynes, SCL – LCWR National Board Member

In the midst of great anxiety, Jesus' words "Peace be with you" come bursting into my world, jolting me and awakening me to the possibility of Resurrection hope. First, however, I must be honest with myself. Am I Thomas the Doubter or Thomas who cries out, "My Lord and My God"? I find that I have been both. Today, however, those words of Jesus call me to be unafraid, to let go, and to open the door of my heart, even if it's just a crack, to take that next step beyond my fears, reaching out, sharing that peace and hope with others.



Marcia Ann Fiutko, FSSJ – LCWR National Board Member

I am reminded of our favorite phrase from our foundress, Mother Xavier Terhmer, spoken as she landed in the hustle of New York City: "God is with us still." We've spoken for years of being in liminal time, of living on the edge. These are certainly such in-between and uncertain times. When there is so much to fear and we can control so little, our greatest gift is the peace of our God who is with us still.



Kate Katoski, OSF – LCWR Treasurer

(continued on pages 4 & 5)

As a spiritual being in earth school, I settle for nothing less than deep inner peace. It's not easy living in a Good Friday world. As a woman of color I have choice points each day as I move between 50 shades of male domination. For example, often people assume when they see me in a hotel that I am the maid and ask: "Can you bring me some extra towels?" I have learned that I can be angry and bitter -- or empathic and centered.



During this time of quarantine, the words of Jesus "Peace be with you" take on a new meaning. Jesus invites us to move beyond our fear and our concern for ourselves and trust in the peace that he promises. We are called to be signs of hope and new life for our Dear Neighbor and for our suffering world. Even though we cannot physically reach out to those in need, we encourage one another to find creative ways to share the gift of peace that we have received.



Kathy Stein, CSJ – Chair, Region 14

Peace is a cultivated practice. It's a science and an art. Meditation and prayer are scientifically proven tools for cultivating peace. Striving for creative evolution makes me a good student.

Guadalupe Guajardo, SNJM – Chair, Region 15

The words "peace be with you" bring to mind a line from the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday of Lent when Jesus says, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me." That line has comforted me many times over the last few weeks. I am confident that God hears me, and because of that, I have a feeling of peace even in this crazy time of facemasks, protective gloves and social distancing. God always hears me and so I have God's peace with me.



During this time when "doors are locked" and there are so many restrictions, and I hear Jesus' words "Peace be with you," I acknowledge that the presence of Wisdom is all around us. In the Hebrew scriptures, we read:



For Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion; she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things. She is a breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; so nothing impure can find its way into her. For she is a reflection of the eternal light, untarnished mirror of God's active power, and image of his goodness. (Wisdom 7:24-26)

Ginger Downey, OLVM – Chair, Region 7

Earlier in the Gospel Jesus spoke about God's peace as something the world cannot give. These Easter words of Jesus reside in a deep place in my soul. This peace has very little to do with the events and chaos that swirl around me. This has been true in my life through the deaths of my parents and friends, throughout the war and violence in El Salvador, and through my own times of doubts and anxieties. This peace is anchored in hope and the firm belief that God is present in every moment, including this pandemic, leading, guiding, inspiring, comforting, and loving all of us.



I am grateful for the many ways Wisdom permeates our locked doors and fills us with peace. Wisdom dwelling in us becomes a sign of peace for the world.

Catherine Sheehan, DW – Chair, Region 2

Toby Lardie, HM – Chair, Region 4



On the eve after the Resurrection, Jesus said to the disciples, "Peace be with you." In an earlier passage from John's Gospel, Jesus declared that the peace he gives is not as the world gives. During these times of pandemic, I can find myself anxious or worried when I become overwhelmed by all the unknowns we are facing. The peace from Jesus provides us a grounding that can tamp down fear. Knowing that this peace is there, not just for me but for all of us, is comforting. By itself, the world cannot give this comfort; only as one human community, in and through the Risen Christ, can we build what the world cannot give.



Jean Steffes, CSA – Chair, Region 9

Perhaps the most meaningful gift I can offer as a leader in these times is to remember that fear and death do not win the day. "Peace be with you" is not a platitude offered in subtle denial of current reality. "Peace be with you" is a resounding affirmation of life, in spite of suffering and death. It is an act of faith in what cannot be seen and does not seem possible today. May we rejoice as we recognize the Risen Christ who stands in our midst even now.



Michelle Stachowiak, CSSF – LCWR National Board Member

What a powerful image this gospel passage paints for us just now – Jesus in our midst, in spite of the locked doors of our homes, our churches, our meeting places. Jesus in our midst – in spite of the terror that threatens to lock our hearts. Jesus, here and now, present to us and especially to all who are so afraid. And those words – words we long to hear as we face our fears and the suffering of our own worlds and the whole world: Peace be with you!



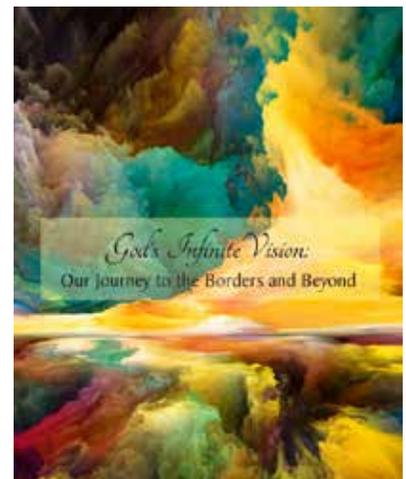
Eileen White, GNSH – Chair, Region 3



Discernment Continues Regarding 2020 LCWR Assembly

LCWR is in dialogue with a number of entities, including Nix Conference & Meeting Management, regarding the feasibility of holding this year's assembly in light of COVID-19.

All LCWR members and associates are asked to hold the assembly dates of August 11-14 on their calendars. The LCWR officers will apprise its members and other potential attendees of any information it receives as the discernment about the assembly continues.



Discernment Continues Over Launching the LCWR Geographic Gatherings on the Emerging Future of Religious Life

LCWR members are aware that this spring was to be the launch of "The Emerging Future of Religious Life: A National Conversation and Discernment," with five meetings scheduled in different geographic locations. between April and June.

These gatherings were to be the beginning of an effort to discern together the shifts unfolding in LCWR member institutes and to explore new ways for institutes to collaborate around leadership.

LCWR is aware of how important this effort is for its members and how much leaders were looking forward to beginning this exploration. As the realities of the pandemic become more clear, the conference will discern what might be the most helpful and feasible ways to move this process forward.

Rivers of Hope/Ríos de Esperanza

LCWR was pleased to receive 37 applications for the upcoming program, Rivers of Hope/Ríos de Esperanza and thanks all members who recommended sisters for the program.

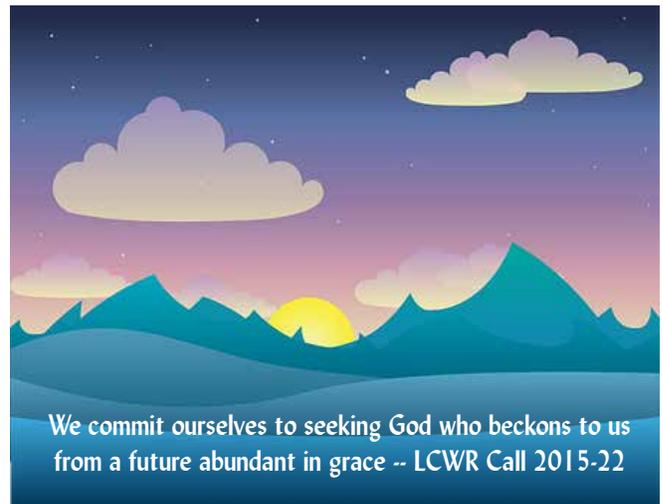


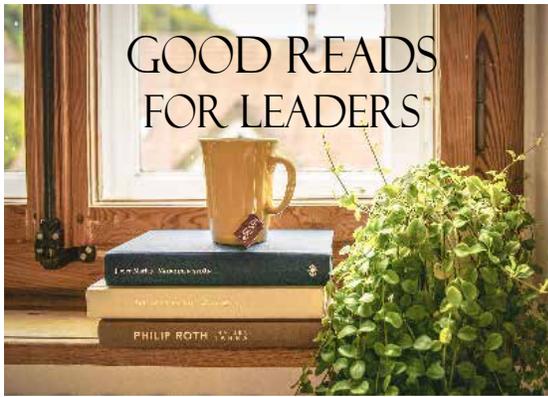
The program is scheduled to be held in both July and October. Because of the pandemic, the organizations sponsoring the program are in dialogue about whether to postpone the dates. LCWR has been in communication with all the applicants and will keep them apprised of any decisions.

LCWR Offers Alternative for 'Imagining Justice' Participants

One of the LCWR programs that was cancelled was the Imagining Justice event: "*The Beautiful Not Yet: Hope, Hard Times and Faithfulness*," with Carrie Newcomer as the major presenter. After the event was cancelled the planning committee created a virtual mini-event for all those who had registered for the program.

On the first three days when the event would have occurred (April 20-23), registrants will receive an email that focuses on the theme for the day, which includes a You Tube video of Carrie singing one of her songs and provides some reflective questions. Participants will be invited to send a word of hope or resilience to be included in a Wordle at the conclusion of the three days. In addition, on the fourth day there will be a drop-in Zoom gathering for those who wish to connect virtually. The hope is that these days of reflection will help to provide participants with firmer grounding for their work in justice and an opportunity to connect with one another.





And Morning Came: Scriptures of the Resurrection

by Megan McKenna

Recommended by Judith Wood, SSJ-TOSF

Throughout the liturgical year, the locus of our attention is more often toward the two seasons of preparation—Advent and Lent, than to the seasons of celebration, Christmas and Easter, of which the former are a prelude. Prayer services, retreats, and lecture series are common occurrences in parish and community life during Advent and Lent, but less common during the Christmas and Easter seasons.

Yet what McKenna emphasizes is our greater need “to practice” the central mysteries of our faith: “We practice the mystery of the Incarnation, of being the Body of Christ, of dwelling in the Trinity, **and we practice Resurrection.**” In this book, she lays out a path for “practicing” the Resurrection that, for us during these 50 days of Easter, can provide a rich source for reflection and for understanding what this practice requires of us.

McKenna opens with a quote from Emily Dickinson: “Not knowing when the dawn will come, I open every door.” What follows is her attempt to open every door to what the experience of Resurrection could be for us today. She reflects on the insights of the four gospels, as well as Luke’s Acts of the Apostles, “to ground” the Resurrection experience in the story of the disciples and the early church. While utilizing scholarly insights, McKenna’s book is not exegetical. Rather, at every turn, she skillfully references parables, poems, and writings from diverse traditions of faith, to elucidate an experience, rather than to provide a theological interpretation, of the Resurrection. “At root,” she comments, the New Testament writings “are stories of baptism in the community of being raised up (and

we will die again), and being fed in the presence of Jesus.” They are given, “not so much for understanding, although there is that too, as for our conversion and transformation.” In her concluding thoughts, McKenna lists 35 ways that we as religious leaders might practice the Resurrection. In the current Covid crisis that dramatically impacts are daily life and which lays bare our communal neglect of the poor and marginalized, these three practices invite me to conversion—“learn to kneel and beg on behalf of others’ lives and needs, live with as little as you can and be grateful,” and most importantly, “remember to dance resurrection in the face of death.”

Upcoming LCWR Dates

Sexuality: An Evolving Understanding
LCWR Webinar
April 30, 2020

LCWR Assembly
Dallas, Texas
August 11 — 15, 2020

LCWR Practicing Leadership: How to Embrace a Vital and Vibrant Future Workshop
Bethany Center | Lutz, Florida
September 14 — 16, 2020

Leading from Within Retreat
San Pedro Retreat Center
Winter Park, Florida
January 10 – 15, 2021

LCWR New Leader Workshop
Conference Center
University of St. Mary of the Lake | Mundelein, Illinois
March 25 — 28, 2021

LCWR Assembly
Orlando, Florida
August 10 — 13, 2021

Leading from Within Retreat
Redemptorist Renewal Center | Tucson, Arizona
January 16 — 21, 2022

LCWR Assembly
St. Louis, Missouri

COVID-19 Relief Legislation Leaves Many Behind

On March 27, Congress passed and the President signed a \$2.2 trillion supplemental appropriations measure, the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES)*, to provide needed assistance to various sectors in the economy, including hospitals, transportation, small businesses, families, and individuals. Unfortunately, relief for many of the most vulnerable, including immigrants, those experiencing homeless, and those living in poverty, was inadequate.



Negotiations in Congress are now underway for additional relief given the unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 crisis. Advocates are calling on Congress to ensure that the next COVID-19 Supplemental Relief Bill guarantees that all are safe, healthy, and have the economic means to thrive. They are calling on members to craft a legislative package that will:

- Expand healthcare coverage to all people, regardless of immigration status and ensure that COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines are fully covered;
- Increase Medicaid funding to states for expenses for community health centers that treat the uninsured;
- Extend work permits for individuals with DACA, TPS, and nonimmigrant visas;
- Provide all essential workers with protective gear, living wages, and paid leave.
- Dedicate \$60 billion in Small Business Administration loans to nonprofits and allow nonprofit workers who serve vulnerable clients to receive hazard pay;
- Increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by 15 percent;
- Provide funding for housing affordability, renters' relief, mortgage forbearance programs, and Emergency Solutions Grants for people experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure that COVID-19 cash benefits are available to all vulnerable families including the undocumented;
- Expand economic relief for laid-off workers, families facing eviction, and shuttered small businesses, including undocumented immigrants.

- Grant stays of removal for all undocumented immigrants in sanctuary or detention and reunite children in immigration shelters with their families in the United States.
- Provide funding for election security and safety including comprehensive vote by mail programs.

The pandemic has laid bare the devastating impact of racism, economic inequality, and discrimination in many forms. African Americans and Latinx people are dying at a disproportionately high rate. As the pandemic spreads to rural areas where many hospitals have closed in recent years, poverty levels are high, and older Americans are more isolated, the stark light of neglect will be seen in mortality rates.

Join the Roses in December 40th Anniversary Celebration

LCWR and the SHARE Foundation invite women religious, and members of the broader community, to join the "The Roses in December" delegation to El Salvador and Honduras (Nov. 29-Dec. 7) commemorating the 40th anniversary of the martyrdom of the four U.S churchwomen: Ita Ford, MM; Maura Clarke, MM; Dorothy Kazel, OSU; and Jean Donovan. Organizers hope that each of LCWR's 15 regions will be able to send at least one delegate on the pilgrimage.



LCWR is also encouraging religious communities to host local gatherings and prayer vigils to honor the memory of Ita, Maura, Dorothy, and Jean and to share their story with the broader community. The goal is to log 40 vigils in 40 cities to mark the 40th anniversary. Anyone who plans to hold an event is asked to send a brief description to Janette Cahill at jcahill@lcwr.org. More information and registration materials are available on [SHARE's website](#) or may be obtained by contacting Jose@share-elsalvador.org, telephone +1 510 848 8487.

LCWR Reacts to Decision to Postpone COP26

The Bureau of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), along with its UK and Italian partners, has decided to postpone the COP26 climate change conference scheduled for November. Organizers determined that in light of the worldwide effects of COVID-19, holding an ambitious, inclusive COP26 in November 2020 was no longer possible. They hope that rescheduling will ensure all parties can focus on the issues to be discussed and allow more time for the necessary preparations to take place.

LCWR was one of a number of [Catholic organizations](#) which expressed support for the decision while cautioning that delay not be used as an excuse for postponing action to address the existential threat of climate change. The LCWR statement read in part:

We trust that the leaders of the world will remember that while COVID-19 is the urgent threat facing humanity today, climate change is the existential threat facing humanity. Postponement of the COP26 event scheduled for November 2020 in Glasgow cannot mean a postponement in our global commitment to meet the challenge of climate change.

With all people of good will, women religious acknowledge that climate is a common good given to all and for which we are all responsible. Each of us is called to cooperate with God to protect our common home and to care for all of God's creation. We believe, with Pope Francis, that all nations have "a clear, definitive, and ineluctable ethical imperative to act" on climate change.

We sincerely hope that once COVID-19 is vanquished and recovery begins, nation-states, and the global community, will take the necessary steps to ensure that the right of the most vulnerable to integral human development is fully realized, and that our leaders will seize the opportunity to shape a new economy in ways that are clean, healthy, just, and green.



Dates for the rescheduled conference in Glasgow have yet to be set.

Catholic Climate Project Offers Assistance and Grants

The [Catholic Climate Project](#) (CCP) is a new initiative designed to assist Catholic parishes, schools, and religious communities commemorate the anniversaries of Earth Day, *Laudato Si'*, and the Season of Creation (Sept. 1-Oct. 4) with prayer, service, advocacy, education, and event planning. CCP is especially interested in generating intergenerational, youth, and young adult led activities.

The project is also offering assistance and modest planning grants to assist parishes, schools, religious communities, and other local Catholic institutions with organizing and mobilizing the US Catholic community to care for creation and act on climate in 2020. The project is accepting grant applications of up to \$1,000 until August 1. Additional information and grant applications are available [here](#). Further details about activities, resources, and guides are on the [website](#). Those interested may sign up for the project [here](#).



"We believe, with Pope Francis, that all nations have
"a clear, definitive, and ineluctable
ethical imperative to act" on climate change."

-- LCWR Statement

SCOTUS Set to Decide the Future of 700,000 DACA Recipients

The US Supreme Court is expected to issue a decision on the legality of President Trump's efforts to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program before it adjourns for summer recess at the end of June. The future of 700,000 DACA recipients and hundreds of thousands more Dreamers and their families hangs in the balance.



On June 15, 2012, then-Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Janet Napolitano issued a memorandum creating an administrative program that permitted individuals who were brought to the United States as children and were themselves undocumented to request deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal, and eligibility for work authorization. This program became known as DACA.

President Obama chose to initiate DACA by executive branch memorandum in part because Congress had repeatedly failed to provide relief from deportation to immigrant youth who were Americans in all respects save citizenship. The constitutionality of President Obama's action has been widely questioned since its inception and the Trump administration has made repeated attempts to end the program.

On September 4, 2017 Attorney General Jeff Sessions sent a letter to the DHS articulating his legal determination that DACA "was an unconstitutional exercise of authority by the Executive Branch." Acting Secretary of DHS Elaine Duke immediately issued a memorandum rescinding the June 2012 memo that established DACA, and setting forward a plan for phasing out DACA.

DACA has been challenged repeatedly in various federal courts with differing outcomes and a circumscribed program has remained in place as various cases made their way through the federal courts. The Supreme Court granted certiorari to hear three cases related to the DACA program, consolidated into one: *Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California*; *Trump v. NAACP*; and *McAleenan*

v. Vida. All three cases challenge DHS's authority to wind down the DACA program.

In oral arguments on November 12, 2019 the administration argued that it acted reasonably in rescinding DACA because it was likely unlawful, it had policy reasons to do so, and that the Judicial Branch lacks authority to review the administration's decision. The lawyers for the plaintiffs argued that DACA was legal and within the powers of the president to establish and that DHS failed to thoroughly explain why it was ending the program and to follow proper procedures.

The Court is expected to hand down a decision before the end of June. Legal observers expect one of three possible outcomes.

- The Court could rule that it has the authority to review the administration's decision to end DACA and it finds the program is unlawful.
- The Supreme Court could find that it has no authority to review the action, does not rule on the lawfulness of DACA and allows the administration to end DACA.
- The Court could decide it has authority to review presidential actions of this sort, rule DACA is lawful and the administration did not provide sufficient reason to rescind it, making DHS's action arbitrary and capricious and therefore null.

Even if the court finds that DACA is lawful, a permanent solution will require Congressional action. The House of Representatives has already passed the bipartisan American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (HR 6). It is currently sitting on Senator Mitch McConnell's desk awaiting action by the Senate.

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.



- Endorsed statement on the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki calling for global elimination of weapons of mass destruction. LCWR (3/17/20)
- Endorsed statement calling on Congress to ensure that the 3rd supplemental COVID-19 package include critically important requests that protect immigrant communities. LCWR (3/18/20)
- Open faith letter reaffirming the right of all people to participate in the 2020 Census and promising to help to ensure that everyone is counted. LCWR (3/19/20)
- Letter to Congress urging passage of the *Great American Outdoors Act* (S. 3422) which will address needed maintenance in national parks and other public lands and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. LCWR (3/20/20)
- Letter to Congress urging them to use economic recovery funds to lift up workers hit hard by COVID-19 and to facilitate a just transition away from dependence on fossil fuels. LCWR (3/20/20)
- Partner in Dicastery for Integral Human Development's Laudato Si' Week. LCWR (3/21/20)
- Letter to leaders of Congress asking members to provide states with the funds needed to protect the right to vote amid COVID-19 in the next economic stimulus package. LCWR (3/22/20)
- Letter to Homeland Security Acting Secretary Wolf calling on the U.S. government to clarify how actual and potential asylum seekers' rights are protected under new protocols. LCWR (3/23/20)
- Letter to Attorney General Barr calling on the DOJ to immediately: halt "Operation Streamline" magistrate courts at the southern border; drop all charges for unauthorized entry unauthorized reentry; and prioritize release of those currently being held on such charges; and agree to re-sentence people held in Bureau of Prison or private prison facilities on entry or reentry offenses. LCWR (3/23/20)
- Letter to Attorney General and James McHenry, Director of the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) urging DOJ to immediately close all 68 Immigration Courts operated by the EOIR in adherence with current public health protocols regarding the COVID-19 virus. LCWR (3/25/20)
- Letter to Alex M. Azar II, Secretary of HHS asking him to restore access to benefits under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. LCWR (3/26/20)
- Letter commending UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres for his call for a global ceasefire to allow nations to focus their collective energy on tackling the common threat of COVID-19 and urging members of the Security Council to take action. LCWR (4/2/20).
- Letter to members of Congress listing immigration priorities for COVID-19 Stimulus Phase 4 legislation. LCWR (4/2/20)
- Faith leaders letter to President Trump and members of Congress urging them to address the needs of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in their emergency response to COVID-19. LCWR (4/2/19)
- Statement by LCWR regarding the postponement of COP26 and reminding global leaders that while COVID-19 is the imminent threat facing humanity, climate change is the existential threat facing all of creation. LCWR (4/1/20)
- Letter to House and Senate leadership calling on Congress to include a robust national moratorium on electricity, water, broadband, and all other essential utilities cut-offs; and invest significant stimulus funds into long-term solutions including distributed clean energy systems and equitable water payment systems in COVID-19 Stimulus 4. LCWR (4/8/20)
- Letter to Russel Vought, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, on behalf of communities impacted by oil, gas, and mining asking him to place a moratorium on all new permitting and rulemaking, and extend all existing public comment periods until at least 60 days after the COVID-19 national emergency is lifted. LCWR (4/8/20)



NRVC joins its prayers with all who are yearning for an end to the spread of the global COVID-19 virus and for all essential workers that they receive a just salary with benefits.

2020 Study of Newer Entrants

This major NRVC/CARA study of sisters, brothers, and priests who entered religious life between 2003-2018 was released on March 25. Every major superior, vicar for religious, and NRVC member received a compendium booklet and will receive a special issue of the NRVC *Horizon Journal* to disseminate the information. The key findings about newer members include:

- An endless story of call: women and men continue to respond to the call to religious life
- Drawn by prayer, spirituality, charism, community life and mission
- Community life as embracing intercultural and intergenerational living
- Committed to living simply and in solidarity with the poor
- Filled with abundant hope for religious life amid changing demographics

The complete study along with supportive materials can be accessed through the website at NRVC.net. Additional compendium booklets can be downloaded or purchased through NRVC.net/store.

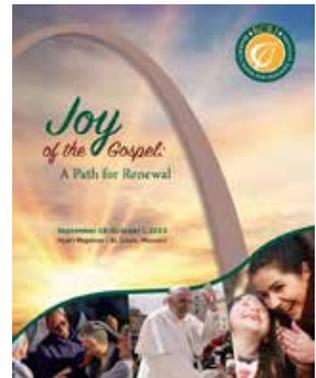
NRVC Education

Decisions regarding the Summer Institute at CTU in Chicago will be made in May. For now, [registration for all workshops](#) is open.

- Orientation Program for New Vocation Directors, July 8-12, 2020
- Ethical Issues in Vocation and Formation Ministry, July 13-14, 2020
- Behavioral Assessment 1, July 16-18, 2020
- Is it Generational, Cultural, Personality or Pathology? July 16-18, 2020
- Understanding, Assessing, and Fostering Psycho-Sexual Integration, July 20-23, 2020

Registration Opening Soon for the 2020 National Conference of the Resource Center for Religious Institutes

RCRI's 2020 national conference will be held from September 28 – October 1 at the Hyatt Regency at the Arch in St. Louis, Missouri. The theme will be *Joy of the Gospel: A Path for Renewal*.



Keynote Speaker: Helen Prejean, CSJ, director of Ministry Against the Death Penalty, known throughout the world for her tireless work against the death penalty. She has been instrumental in sparking national dialogue on capital punishment and in shaping the Catholic Church's vigorous opposition to all executions.

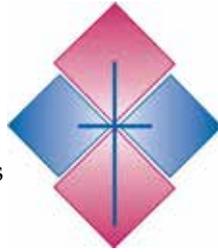
Workshops: 43 workshops covering topics related to finance, canon and civil law, and planning for institutes in transition. A track on eldercare sponsored by NRRO will also be offered. Mass will be available each day and on Wednesday afternoon, September 30, a conference liturgy will be celebrated for all participants.

Pre-Conference Workshops: Four pre-conference workshops will be offered prior to the conference: *Finance 101 for Persons in Leadership Roles* - Hertha Longo, CSA & Dana Russart; *Introduction to Government Benefits Programs* – Constance Neeson; *Legal Overview for Religious Institutes 2020* – Michael Airdo; and *TRENDS for Beginners* – Larry Lundin, SJ and Matthew Wade.

Conference Registration: The registration link will be posted on the [RCRI website](#) in mid-late May. RCRI members will receive a discount if they register before the August 16 deadline.

Updates from NRRO

Like many others, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) staff is working remotely due to the Covid-19 crisis. Though NRRO's locations have changed, its mission is constant. NRRO staff and volunteer consultants continue efforts to provide financial support, educational resources, and consultative assistance to help religious communities address retirement needs.



To this end, all are invited on May 19 to participate in NRRO's newest webinar, *The Relationship Between Staffing and Census: How to Tie Staff Levels to Your Census*. Offered in cooperation with the Avila Institute of Gerontology, the presentation will now include information on addressing staffing challenges related to the current Covid-19 crisis. [More information is available here.](#)

Especially during these uncertain days, everyone at the NRRO holds senior religious and all who care for them in heartfelt prayer.

News from the UN

International Day of Families is observed on May 15 and provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic, and demographic processes affecting families.



World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is celebrated on May 21. In 2001, UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and in December 2002 the UN General Assembly declared the day an opportunity to deepen understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together better.



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We live in a world filled with the action of God's creating love and are partners of that divine activity in a time when major social and global change creates both enormous challenge and significant opportunity.

-LCWR Call 2015-2022



by Joan Mumaw, IHM
 President
www.solidarityfriends.org

Resurrection in a World that has Stopped Spinning on its Axis

These days are unconventional to say the least. We are confronted with two ways of looking at the universe: a world which seems to have stopped spinning on its axis, and resurrection and new life all around. I am “wowed” by the beauty of nature being rebirthed which surrounds us. And yet so conscious of the shuttering of all businesses and services in the country.

The same is true throughout the world and in South Sudan. On March 20 the government of South Sudan, sworn in only a month before, closed all borders, except to humanitarian aid, and shuttered all schools and colleges as well as other gathering places in the country for one month. Solidarity was challenged to send all students back to their homes throughout the country and into border areas of Sudan. Our latest newsletter tells the story of the evacuation from Yambio by cargo plane with students sitting on the floor! So be it for international standards.

Solidarity has reported only four confirmed cases of persons with the virus and these were due to international travel. Handwashing and physical distancing are being promoted, but are difficult to practice where there is little water or soap and living situations are crowded, including in UN Protection of Civilian sites.

Resurrection, however, still abounds. Four new members of Solidarity will soon take up residence in the Good Shepherd Peace Center (GSPC) a few miles from Juba. We are grateful to the congregations that have

released personnel to serve on the Solidarity pastoral team. This is a sign of new life and hope during this Easter season.

The GSPC, which has recently come under Solidarity management, is supported through revenue coming from those who use the center. It is the only conference center in the country, open to all, and is owned by the Religious Superiors Association of South Sudan. Unfortunately all programs are cancelled due to COVID-19. Solidarity is seeking funding to support the local staff who are totally dependent upon salaries from their work as cleaners, cooks, maintenance workers, etc. to feed their families. The estimated need to keep local staff employed at the Center is \$10,000 per month. Unfortunately, there is no government bailout for small businesses in South Sudan.

As we are impacted by this pandemic and the accompanying financial loss, it is difficult to look beyond our own needs and that of our congregations. Yet we have so much to be grateful for when we see the needs of those beyond our border who have little of our abundance. Friends in Solidarity and Solidarity with South Sudan are grateful for the continued support of religious during this time when all are affected by this pandemic. jmumaw.solidarity@gmail.com



New Solidarity pastoral team: Therese Hope Merandi, MSC (US); Christy John, CME, (Sri Lanka); and Scholasticah Nganda, RSM (Kenya/ Irish RSM). They will be joined by a Sacred Heart Sister from Uganda.