

November 2017

Engaging LCWR Members in the Emerging Questions

At its October meeting in Washington, DC, the members of the LCWR Contemporary Religious Life Committee devoted time to considering how it might best carry out its mandate which is to “assist the conference to actively read the signs of the times from a gospel perspective, assume an anticipatory role in understanding the implications for religious life, and bring the emerging questions, issues, and trends to the attention of the members. These questions will inform the planning of the programs, services, and resources offered to LCWR members to assist them in their ministry of leadership.”

The committee members committed to seeking ideas on the emerging questions by informally asking LCWR members to name what they see emerging, and by engaging in additional reading and study in a variety of disciplines all impacting religious life leadership today. A portion of each meeting’s agenda will include discussion of what the group sees coming forth.

(continued on page 3)



Contemporary Religious Life Committee members meeting in Washington, DC: Maria Hughes, ASC; Sheila Lemieux, CSJP; Marie McCarthy, SP; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; Cathy Bertrand, SSND; Miriam Ukeritis, CSJ; Ana Lydia Sonera Matos, CDP; Pat McDermott, RSM; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM



Graphic by Catholic Sisters of the Upper Mississippi Valley

LCWR Responds Publicly to White House Immigration ‘Principles’

LCWR issued a [public statement](#) in response to the [White House immigration principles](#) released on Sunday, October 8. President Trump hopes to link this list of sweeping immigration policy demands to legislation to protect DACA recipients and DREAMers. The demands encompass the full range of anti-immigrant legislation, including the construction of the border wall, a crackdown on unaccompanied minors from Central America seeking asylum in the United States, the hiring of an additional 10,000 immigration agents, beefing up interior enforcement, punishing sanctuary cities, and dramatically limiting family immigration.

LCWR’s statement denounces the White House principles, pointing out that they run counter to deeply-held American values and threaten the dignity and well-being of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The statement goes on to speak against “the clear attempt by the Administration to use America’s DREAMers as bargaining chips to fulfill misguided campaign promises.” Instead LCWR urges Congress to secure the rights and dignity of 800,000 DREAMers by passing the bipartisan Dream Act of 2017 and to ensure that immigration law reflects the values of the nation and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

From the LCWR Presidency

Historians for the Lions

by Mary Pellegrino, CSJ — LCWR Past President

*Until the lions have their own historians,
tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.
-- African Proverb (paraphrased)*

If it weren't for the crush I had on Mr. Caler, my shy, boyishly bookish high school history teacher who liked The Beatles equally as much as my friend, Jennifer, and I did, I don't think that I would have paid much attention to things of the past. I certainly wouldn't have learned to regard it in the way I do now. To ask questions. To consider sources.

And if it weren't for the late Maria Harris with whom I had the opportunity to study years ago at Fordham University, I probably never would have heard of the "null curriculum" and the critical questions about inclusion and exclusion it raises. In short, the null curriculum asserts that subject matter, experience, and insights that are absent from an educational setting (or any setting for that matter) are just as important and formative as those that are present. Equally important is who and how those decisions of inclusion and exclusion are made.

Mr. Caler and Maria Harris taught me to notice things. To be curious. To consider what's there and what's not there, what's being said and what's not being said. They taught me that truth matters and history is important. And from there it was a short path to the realization that whoever tells the story controls history, and whoever controls history shapes the present and the future.

I've been thinking a lot about Mr. Caler and Maria Harris during these painful, perilous days made even

more so by the ever-growing disparity between truth and what passes as truth, between whose stories are told and whose are deemed unworthy of voice, between inclusion and exclusion in nearly every domain that characterizes human experience – racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, religious, economic . . .

As American women religious we know the danger of falsehoods told about us, of assumptions made, of motives assigned, of not having agency over our own story. We also know the power of our privilege, the strength of our voice, and the doors that are opened to us because of our status.

Our privilege places us in unique positions to gain entrée to some of the highest echelons of influence as well as the lowest stratas of society. Our status demands that we amplify the stories and expose the lies about whole groups of people who have been excluded from the most basic arenas of agency in our society.

As ecclesial women we're called to expose the immorality of distorted narratives of Jesus' message of love, narratives like the prosperity Gospel or others that hint at supremacy and exceptionalism. Our influence compels us to become historians for the lions, to give prominence to the truth

and to the stories of those who fall prey to the hunt – those who are vulnerable and powerless, whose voices are rendered silent, whose memories are being erased.

Without those stories and those truths, we'll all fall prey to the mistakes and the moral failures of the past.

Our privilege places us
in unique positions
to gain entrée to some
of the highest echelons
of influence as well as
the lowest stratas
of society.

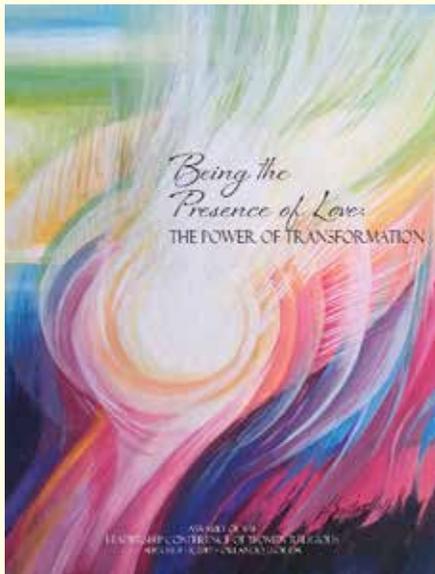
Engaging LCWR Members in Emerging Questions

(continued from page 1)

In each issue of the LCWR newsletter, the committee will put forward some of the emerging questions in an effort to provoke further reflection by and conversation among LCWR members pertaining to religious life, leadership, and the signs of the times. The first set of questions are found below and follow on the theme of the 2017 LCWR assembly.

In addition, the committee reviewed the 2017 LCWR assembly and worked on plans for the 2018 assembly.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION



Where has love led me/us?

How have I/we been the presence of love?

Members Offer Feedback During LCWR Assembly

As the 2017 LCWR assembly concluded participants were given the opportunity to offer a response from their table group to the following questions:



- How does who we are and what we are experiencing as LCWR leaders, propel us forward to be the presence of love?
- What could this invite from us as we consider individual and corporate responses?

The following themes emerged and were threads woven through both the table and individual responses:

- Use LCWR's moral voice to be the presence of love in the public square and on the margins/peripheries of society.
- Build bridges and explore avenues of collaboration with other organizations of women religious; conferences of religious, those serving religious and others
- Enter into reflection and dialogue on a new narrative of communion
- Read the signs of the times in light of the new narrative
- Explore ways to be inclusive while respecting the role and purpose of LCWR
- Create circles of contemplation and contemplative dialogue that are inclusive

Participants were also given the opportunity to indicate if they wished to make a commitment to a particular action and would like to connect with others who might be interested in a similar actions. The national office will work on connecting members with similar commitments to action so that they can self-organize and support one another.

A more refined synthesis of the assembly responses will be shared with the LCWR Assessment Committee and the national board in the coming months.

LCWR Disappointed in President Trump's Move to Scrap the Clean Power Plan

In a public statement issued October 11, LCWR expressed its disappointment in the move by President Trump and his Environmental Protection Agency administrator, Scott Pruitt, to revoke the Clean Power Plan (CPP) thereby placing the health and welfare of the nation and the planet in jeopardy. The 2015 CPP outlined efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions from power plants by 32 percent over 15 years, generate yearly benefits of over \$30 billion, and prevent 90,000 asthma attacks annually.

With powerful storms, dangerous wildfires, and a warming climate continuing to threaten the nation, the administration should be taking urgent action to cut the carbon pollution that is fueling climate change. Instead, by moving to repeal CPP it places the concerns of carbon polluters above the health and safety of the nation.

In its statement LCWR reminds citizens that climate is a common good given to all and for which all are responsible. It cites the words of Pope Francis, who said that all nations have "a clear, definitive, and ineluctable ethical imperative to act" on climate change. Finally, LCWR calls on Congress to seek a "bipartisan solution to end the continued poisoning of our air, water, and land" and challenges all "to make personal and communal choices to protect Earth and all who call this planet home."



Order Upcoming Occasional Papers

The Winter 2018 issue of LCWR's *Occasional Papers* will take the theme, "At the Heart of Our Life." For several years, LCWR has been exploring the enormous shift taking place in human evolution and has been asking questions about the role of religious life as this shift occurs. Along with all the changes transpiring in the global community, changes are occurring as well in religious life as it has been known in recent decades.

As the life undergoes profound transformation, this issue will explore what is most at the heart of religious life that makes it of value for these times and for the challenges of the future. What is it that women religious value the most about this life that they wish to nurture and assure will stay strong so that it is not lost as the life undergoes change? What do the people served by religious and the larger global community most need from the presence of religious in the world at this complex, rapidly changing time in the planet's history? The issue will include an interview with Sandra Schneiders, IHM on living into resurrection.

All LCWR members, associates, and subscribers will receive a copy of this issue. Many leaders order additional copies for their members, staff, associates, boards, and others. These orders may be placed at lcsr.org/item/winter-2018 by **December 20**.

Subscriptions to *Occasional Papers* are also available. More information on subscribing may be found at: lcsr.org/publications/occasional-papers/subscribe.

However Long the Night: LCWR to Publish Book on Working Through Conflict

The former and current LCWR presidents and staff who worked with the doctrinal assessment by and mandate from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith have been discerning how to best capture what LCWR learned from this experience and make it available for the benefit of others. In December 2016, the group concluded that it would begin work on a book that would highlight the key insights LCWR gained about how to work through situations of conflict and polarization. The book, to be entitled, *However Long the Night*, will provide ideas and suggestions for those seeking ways to work through differences that respect and value the differences and maintain integrity.

Ten of the presidents and staff agreed to write chapters on the various learnings. In September, the authors met for a writing retreat at the Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio, Texas where they worked together on critiquing the chapters and discerning content.

The target date for publication is early 2018. The hope is to make the book available to as wide an audience as possible. LCWR welcomes any ideas for marketing the book.



However Long the Night book writers at their writing retreat in San Antonio, Texas: Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA; Janet Mock, CSJ; Pat Farrell, OSF; Sharon Holland, IHM; Florence Deacon, OSF; Marcia Allen, CSJ; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Mary Hughes, OP; Joan Marie Steadman, CSC; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM

Pope Francis Launches Two-Year Share the Journey Campaign

Today the world faces an unprecedented global migration crisis. More than 61 million people have been displaced from their homes, more than at any time since World War II. Some 21 million are refugees. Most are women and children forced from their homes by the violence of poverty, crime, war, persecution, or abuse.

Pope Francis has launched a two-year campaign to encourage Catholics world-wide to [Share the Journey](#) of the millions of migrant and refugee families who are seeking safety and a decent life. This campaign highlights Catholic teaching on migration and reaffirms the Church's commitment to assist migrants who have fled their homeland for a better life elsewhere.

The campaign builds on Pope Francis's idea of a "culture of encounter" as a common goal, encouraging people to be fearless in the ways they look beyond themselves to the needs of others. "Faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others," he has said.

The campaign sponsored by Caritas Internationalis and its national partners, including Catholic Relief Services, and Catholic Charities USA hopes to create opportunities for encounters to take place between migrants and local communities. Caritas believes that encounters not only contribute to changing the debate around migration, but also successfully breaking down fear, racism, and xenophobia.

Looking for Meaningful Christmas Gifts and a Way to Support LCWR?

Contemplative Greeting Cards

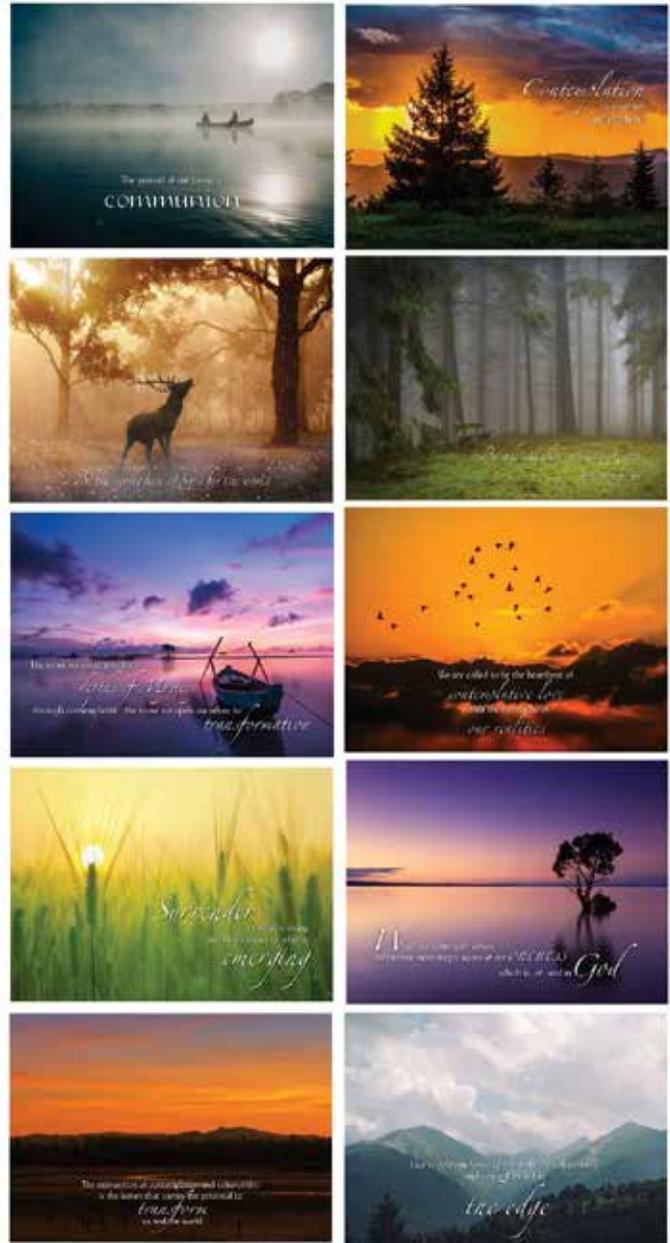
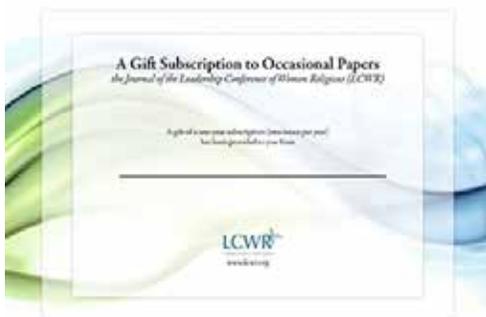
LCWR has produced a set of 10 greeting cards based on the insights of its members that were voiced during LCWR assembly deepening group sessions.

Priced at just \$10.00 for the set of 10, these folded cards make great Christmas gifts and are a means of sharing ideas about contemplation, communion, and Gospel-centered living. All proceeds from the sale of cards go toward supporting the work and mission of LCWR.

Cards may be purchased online. LCWR members are asked to promote the cards to others and consider selling them in their gift shops or in other venues. For more information, contact Carol Glidden at cglidden@lcwr.org.

Gift Subscription to Occasional Papers

One-year gift subscriptions to LCWR's *Occasional Papers* may be purchased for \$15.00. A gift certificate can be downloaded and presented to the gift recipient.



LCWR Contemplative Greeting Cards

LCWR Deepening Groups Forming

LCWR is currently assisting interested members in forming deepening groups. A description of the groups and their purpose is available in the members' only section of the LCWR website. The registration deadline for being included in one of the groups is **October 27**. Anyone who would like to participate in a deepening group and has not yet registered may use the following link to access the google registration form, goo.gl/forms/JS0JsxBUhVC4OMmm1. In early November those who have registered will receive information about the members of their group and about how to get started.

Educational Resources Available on Catholic Sisters

The National Catholic Sisters Week (NCSW) website offers a number of resources that may be used to promote greater awareness of women religious.

NCSW is an annual celebration that takes place from March 8-14. Created to honor women religious, it is a series of events that instruct, enlighten, and bring greater focus to the lives of Catholic sisters. NCSW provides an opportunity to recognize the contributions of sisters, as well as provide information to young women who may be interested in this way of life.

The first unit of a new curriculum is now available online at www.nationalcatholicsistersweek.org/curriculum.php.

NCSW is a branch of the National Catholic Sisters Project and is headquartered at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The week of celebration is held in conjunction with Women's History Month.

LCWR Endorses SOA Watch Border Encuentro 2017

LCWR has once again endorsed the School of the Americas (SOA) Watch Border



Encuentro. This will be the second year that the gathering will take place on the border in Nogales Arizona/Sonora.

This year's *encuentro* is a direct response to the call for solidarity with the border communities to resist militarization, support refugees and migrants, and to denounce the US military, political, and economic policies in Latin America that create the conditions for forced migration and violence. The program includes forums and workshops as well as a vigil at the Eloy immigrant detention center and a rally and concert at the border wall. Additional information about the *encuentro*, registration, and how to become an endorsing organization is available on the [website](#).

Upcoming LCWR Dates

Leading from Within Retreat

Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona

January 14 – 19, 2018

Imagining Justice Workshop

Redemptorist Renewal Center
Tucson, Arizona

March 12 – 15, 2018

LCWR New Leader Workshop

Conference Center
University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois

April 12 – 15, 2018

LCWR Assembly

St. Louis, Missouri
August 7– 11, 2018

LCWR Assembly

Scottsdale, Arizona
August 13 – 17, 2019

LCWR Assembly

Dallas, Texas
August 11 – 15, 2020



Update is an official publication of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious published monthly and distributed to members nationally. © 2017 LCWR All rights reserved.

Editor: Annmarie Sanders, IHM

8808 Cameron Street — Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: 301-588-4955

Fax: 301-587-4575

E-mail: asanders@lcwr.org Website: lcwr.org

Women Religious Encouraged to Register Concerns about FY2018 Budget

The House of Representatives recently passed its FY2018 budget resolution containing trillions of dollars in cuts to vital social programs, including deep cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and many other domestic discretionary programs. In the Senate, the Budget Committee is considering its own FY2018 budget resolution that likewise outlines billions of dollars in cuts to non-defense spending. While the two resolutions differ in significant ways, both include huge increases in defense spending. Assuming that the Senate can pass its budget, House and Senate leaders will have to negotiate a compromise.

The DC interfaith community has offered an alternative faith-based budget. *Priorities for a Faithful Budget FY2018* is a 70-page blueprint calling for faith values in federal budget and appropriations negotiations. It was written by faith leaders engaged in advocacy for immigration and refugees, native communities, healthcare, domestic human needs, Pentagon spending, criminal justice policy, international aid, tax, and environmental justice policy.

The writers describe a faithful federal budget as one that:

[P]rioritizes the well-being of those who are struggling to overcome poverty or are especially vulnerable, as well as our obligation to future generations through our collective responsibility as stewards of creation. It is a budget that addresses and remedies the inequities that result from institutional racism and systemic injustice and a broken immigration system, creating a world where everyone may realize the potential of all that God intends. It is a budget that enhances the transformation of conflict with creative and courageous nonviolent peacebuilding, thus cultivating a more sustainable just peace. (Preamble)

Women religious are invited to register their own concerns about the FY2018 budget. Sisters are encouraged to write letters to Speaker Paul Ryan letting him know that a budget that cuts protections for the most vulnera-

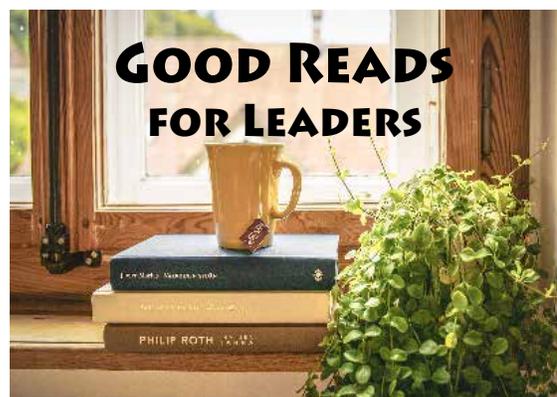
ble does not reflect the and principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Organizers hope to hand-deliver more than 2000 letters to Speaker Ryan's office. Sisters can mail their letters to NETWORK Lobby, 25 E. Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20001 by November 10. Resources about the budget and details about the campaign are available on the [NETWORK website](#).

LCWR Investment Partner Offers Perspective on Fossil Fuel Divestment

LCWR's investment partner, Christian Brothers Investment Services (CBIS) recommended to the LCWR Finance and Audit Committee at its October 4-5, 2017 meeting an article on fossil fuel divestment. Divestment of fossil fuel companies has recently gained favor among some investors. CBIS respects the decision to divest, but believes robust and substantive engagement with companies is a more effective way to reduce CO2 emissions and create a cleaner global energy future.

LCWR members may wish to read the article on CBIS' perspective on fossil fuel divestment on the [CBIS website](#).



Any LCWR member who has read a book that may be of interest to other women religious leaders is asked to consider submitting a brief review to include in the monthly "Good Reads" column. This is a helpful way to share good resources with one another.

Contact LCWR communications director Annmarie Sanders, IHM for more information (asanders@lcrw.org).



- Letter to Secretary of State Tillerson and Acting DHS Secretary Duke expressing deep concern about the recent elimination of the Central American Minors (CAM) Parole Program. LCWR (9/18/17)
- Interfaith letter to members of Congress urging them to immediately pass a “clean” Dream Act 2017 (S. 1615/H.R. 3440) which provides a pathway to citizenship for immigrant youth. LCWR (9/19/17)
- Letter from the Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) and other organizations to the Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget urging him to advise the president to request funds in the president’s fiscal year 2019 (FY19) budget to combat human trafficking and forced labor in accordance with the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013. LCWR (9/18/17)
- Amicus brief submitted on behalf of faith-related organizations to the U.S. Supreme Court, in opposition to the Executive Order barring refugees and citizens of six predominantly Muslim countries from entry to the United States. LCWR (9/18/17)
- Interfaith letter to Members of Congress outlining the principles of a moral framework for health-care and registering concern that the proposal from Senators Graham, Cassidy, Heller, and Johnson falls short of most of these principles. LCWR (9/20/17)
- Interfaith letter to Senators asking them to oppose the Graham, Cassidy, Heller, and Johnson health proposal and extend CHIP and DSH funding. Joan Marie Steadman (9/21/17)
- Letter from faith-based organizations expressing opposition to H.R. 3697, the Criminal Alien Gang Member Removal Act. LCWR (9/22/17)
- Letter to the leadership of the House Judiciary Committee opposing the Legal Workforce Act (HR 3711) and any expansion of the E-Verify program and urging them to reject this enforcement-only bill and pursue reform that supports, rather than undermines, our country’s economic vitality. LCWR (9/22/17)
- Endorsement of Representative Keith Ellison’s (D-MN-5) Strengthening Refugee Resettlement Act. LCWR (9/22/17)
- Written testimony to the Senate Finance Committee concerning the devastating effects of the Graham, Cassidy, Heller, and Johnson bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA). LCWR 9/25/17
- A letter to Senate and House sponsors of the Dream Act 2017 asking them to align the Dream Act’s treatment of expunged convictions with that of the criminal justice system by recognizing rehabilitation. LCWR (9/25/17)
- Statement of Catholic leaders to Congress and the Administration in support of the Iran nuclear deal and calling for negotiations with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. LCWR Directors (9/29/17)
- Interfaith letter to the members of the House Homeland Security Committee opposing the Border Security for America Act (H.R. 3548) and urging them to vote against any legislation allowing the Department of Homeland Security to build the border wall, rush to hire Border Patrol agents, deploy surveillance technologies and equipment designed for theaters of war, and make local police forces agents of DHS. LCWR (10/2/17)
- Written testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Oversight of the Administration’s Decision to End Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, in support of DREAMers and the Dream Act of 2017. LCWR (10/3/17)
- LCWR statement registering disappointed with President Trump’s decision to abandon the Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Power Plan. (10/11/17)
- Letter from Catholics to Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio urging him, as the pastor of Catholics serving in the United States military, to help form the consciences of the faithful members of the military by issuing a statement obliging them to refuse any order directing them to participate in an aggressive war against the people of North Korea. Ann Scholz, SSND (10/12/17)
- LCWR statement challenging the Trump Administration’s Immigration Policy Priorities. (10/13/17)
- Letter to Congressional leadership urging action to

(continued on page 10)

LCWR SIGN ONs & Letters

(continued from page 8)

keep guns out of dangerous hands, fund community-based violence intervention programs, support public health approaches to reducing violence, and address hate-based violence. LCWR (10/18/17)

- Letter to Chris Lischewski, President and CEO of Bumble Bee Seafoods expressing concerns regarding human trafficking in the seafood supply chain and to share Catholic consumers' desire to support ethically sourced products. LCWR (10/20/17)
- Letter to Valentin Ramirez, President and CEO of Chicken of the Sea International expressing concerns regarding human trafficking in the seafood supply chain and to share Catholic consumers' desire to support ethically sourced products. LCWR (10/20/17)

National Religious Retirement Office

The annual national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will take place December 9-10, 2017. Last year, there was a generous response to the collection and NRRO was able to distribute \$25 million in direct care assistance to 390 religious communities.

Leaders of congregations recently received campaign materials from the NRRO office. NRRO asks for the help of all leaders in promoting the collection, as this is one concrete way religious can aid one another with retirement needs. While some progress has been made in addressing the retirement-funding gap among US religious communities, there is still a significant deficit. Of the 539 communities providing data to NRRO last year, only 41 — or 7 percent — were adequately funded for retirement.

What can congregations do? Speak in parishes, write to area pastors, and/or promote the collection on social media. (A speaker guide, social media tool kit, and other resources are available at retiredreligious.org.) Inform parishioners and other ministry partners about the importance of the collection. Throughout the year, share news about ministries, justice actions, or other activities to remind area Catholics that religious are present and providing an important voice and service in the church and civil society.



Preparing Leaders for the Future

The Collaborative Leadership Development Program (CLDP), sponsored by the Leadership Collaborative, is an 18-month integrative process with an intercultural perspective, designed to prepare participants with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to assume leadership positions in community and ministry. The CLDP blends contemplative practices and building relationships with self-growth and spiritual development, through prayerful study and interaction, online forums, mentoring, and coaching.

Eligible applicants are . . .

- Vowed members, co-members, associates of congregations based in the United States or with ministries outside the United States
- No older than 60 years of age as of January 1, 2018
- Able to commit to three 4-day sessions: October 14-19, 2018; March 2-7, 2019; and November 16-21, 2019.
- Recommended by congregational leadership

Applications are due **May 31, 2018**.

More information may be obtained by contacting Charlene Diorka, SSJ, program director, at charlenediorka@gmail.com or Rita Waters, RSM, program assistant, at rwaters@sistersofmercy.org for an invitational letter, brochure, and application form.

Resource Center for Religious Institutes Position Opening: Civil Lawyer/Staff Attorney

The Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI), located in Silver Spring, Maryland, seeks a full-time staff attorney to assist the organization in carrying out its mission to approximately 500 member religious institutes and societies of apostolic life. The civil lawyer serves as a resource to RCRI members and staff seeking assistance on legal matters that pertain to religious institutes. The position is to begin effective January 1, 2018.

Responsibilities

The civil lawyer will serve as the point person for questions/issues raised by members relating to civil law; respond to requests for consultation on a range of civil law issues including taxes and IRS regulations, benefits such as social security, Medicare and Medicaid; review of corporate documents and trusts; research civil law implications of canon law topics; provide appropriate research, development and written documentation for articles and news updates for RCRI publications; participate in the RCRI annual conference; and serve as a presenter at the conference when appropriate.

Additional information can be obtained from RCRI executive director Sharon Euart, RSM at seuart@trcri.org.

News from the UN

November 20 --Universal Children's Day was established to promote international togetherness, awareness of children worldwide, and children's welfare. November 20 is the date in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the [Declaration of the Rights of the Child](#). It is also the date in 1989 when the UN General assembly adopted the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).



November 25—International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women reminds the people of the world that violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, public health pandemic, and serious obstacle to sustainable development. Violence against women and girls imposes large-scale costs on families, communities, and economies. The world cannot afford to pay this price. Women and girls cannot afford it – and should not have to.

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.



by Joan Mumaw, IHM
President
www.solidarityfriends.org

A Hopeless Situation?

This is what many are saying about South Sudan. Reading newspaper accounts of the ongoing violence, which began as a power struggle between political leaders and rekindled unresolved ethnic hostilities, one would think there is no hope for peace in this new country.

There are, however, many peace-making initiatives taking place both inside and beyond the borders of South Sudan. The government has initiated a National Dialogue on reconciliation and peace which is now holding regional gatherings. The South Sudan Council of Churches has received funding from the US government, through Catholic Relief Services, to develop peace building initiatives at all levels. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGAD, comprised of the countries surrounding South Sudan, has taken the initiative to hold talks with the opposition leader, Riek Machar, who is being held captive in South Africa. IGAD is also hosting meetings in Ethiopia with the hope of bringing opposing sides together and honoring the August 2015 agreement.

With the splintering of the SPLA, the national army, and emergence of local militias, there are no longer just two

“sides.” Any peace initiative needs to deal with all the factions and include not only government leaders, but also civil society, women, and the youth.

The greatest potential for peace making is the country’s rich heritage of community-led peace processes. The churches are well positioned to assist local communities coming together to resolve local conflicts and reflect on the larger conflict besetting the nation. Bishop emeritus, Paride Taban, from Torit Diocese, has established the Kuron Peace Village and called on leaders from the area to gather in the village to engage in processes leading to reconciliation and forgiveness.

Solidarity with South Sudan, working with the national pastoral director, is introducing the concept of active non-violence to groups of women, young adults, diocesan pastoral leaders, and clergy - building awareness and skills over a three-year period. In turn, these groups will plan together for similar workshops at the local level. Annette St. Amour, IHM, a member of the training team, writes, “A quality of the South Sudanese people is resilience. Month after month, year after year they have been living in the midst of conflict, insecurity, poverty, hunger and now hyperinflation with the rising cost of food and basic necessities. They express being ‘sick and tired’ of war and conflict.” They are open to any initiatives which will end the conflict and are eager to learn skills to avoid conflict in the future.

We invite religious communities to join with the South Sudanese people in praying for peace. [Prayer for South Sudan](#). You can also access the [Advent Brochures](#) at Advent Journey To make a tax-deductible donation in support of Solidarity peace-building initiatives go to [Donate](#).