

## **LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award Nominees Summary for Attendees at Fall 2024 Region Meetings**

Note: The following is a copy of the information presented on Power Point for referral during small group discussion at the Fall 2024 Region meeting.

### **Purpose of the Outstanding Leadership Award:**

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious has established the LCWR Outstanding Leadership Award (OLA) to:

- Recognize and honor persons who have significantly contributed to the ministry of leadership, and who reflect the LCWR mission.
- Thank leaders for their service and for the impact they have had on religious life.
- Affirm the significance of collaborative leadership.
- Inspire LCWR members and our partners in our own call to the ministry of leadership.
- Lift up the value of religious life in our church and our world today.

### **The Mission of LCWR**

The purpose of the conference shall be to promote a developing understanding and living of religious life by:

- Assisting its members personally and communally to carry out more collaboratively their service of leadership in order to accomplish further the mission of Christ in today's world.
- Fostering dialogue and collaboration among religious congregations within the church and in the larger society.
- Developing models for initiating and strengthening relationships with those concerned with the needs of society, thereby maximizing the potential of the conference for effecting change.

### **Criteria for the Award**

The person must have significantly contributed to the ministry of leadership in a manner that reflects the mission of LCWR.

The potential recipient evidences:

- Commitment and collaboration in the ministry of leadership.
- Faithfulness to Gospel values and mission.
- Creative and innovative leadership in one or more areas.
- Deep listening, authenticity, and responsiveness to the Spirit.
- Significant contributions as a leader on a national and/or international level, particularly to congregations of women religious.

## Summary of Nominees for the 2025 Outstanding Leadership Award (in alphabetical order)

### Mary Pat Garvin, RSM, PhD

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

- Global leader in the area of initial and life-long formation. She has worked with both national and international conferences of Religious, including over 80 Religious Congregations throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia.
- 2011-2017 Leadership Team Member for her institute.
- Co-designer of the UISG International Program for Preparation of Formators (current teacher in this program as well).
- Keynote Address at the UISG Plenary Meeting (2013). Graced Companionship: A Metaphor for Religious Leadership Today.
- Interim Co-Executive Director of the Religious Formation Conference (Jan 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023 while the search was on for a new Executive Director).
- Religious Formation Conference (RFC) Current Board Member
- Intercongregational Collaborative Novitiate (ICCN) – Current Board Member
- Cranaleith Spiritual Center – Board Member (2024-2016)
- Three online course each year for both apostolic and contemplative religious (approximately 200 participants from 23 countries).
- A former Fellow in Human Formation with Saint Luke Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland, and her research interests is in the interplay of spirituality and psychology which promotes a healthy and holy living of Religious Life.
- Doctorate in psychology from Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, and was on the Institute of Psychology faculty at the same University from 1994 to 2001.

Region nominations noted:

“At this time of incredible change and transformation in Religious Life, Sr. Mary Pat can be likened to a mid-wife; assisting those congregations who have newer members through her work in the ministry of Initial and Life-long Formation.”

“...my congregation and I have benefitted directly from her wise counsel and ground-breaking presentations.”

“One of Mary Pat’s gifts is her ability in her presentations to speak across generations and cultures. She inspired each of our very diverse gatherings with her love for religious life and commitment to the future of the vowed life.”

“Mary Pat has the gift of being able to find a common language of the heart and mind that transcends difference...her leadership transcends congregational lines.”

“For those congregations who are working to develop and enhance formation programs for the women religious of the future whose mission will be even more complex than today’s, Mary Pat has been a godsend!”

## **Nancy Sylvester, IHM**

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe, MI

- Founded the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue (ICCD) in 2002. The institute fosters and facilitates the larger movement for the transformation of consciousness so as to create new responses to the crises of our time and to cultivate a healthy Earth community. Its unique contribution is its commitment to the transformative power of contemplation.
- Author and speaker who has lectured widely on a variety of topics including contemplation, transformation of consciousness, and living in a time of chaos.
- Wrote the book, *Journey-Faith in an Entangled World*, in 2024 to articulate how she has integrated her faith experience with contemporary insights from theology, philosophy, science and psychology through her commitment to the transformative power of contemplation.
- Has served numerous congregations by designing processes to deepen both individual and congregational commitments to contemplation, and to invite deepening conversations on the issues facing them.
- Vice president of her community (1994 - 2000).
- LCWR Presidency (1999 – 2001).

Region nominations noted:

“Nancy was part of LCWR presidency around 2000. When the conference was deeply divided over...a very polarizing situation, Nancy led the way to peacemaking and deep listening through the practice of contemplation within the conference. Her contemplative circle training and ministry ...continued to spread the practice of contemplation before action. During other very strained moments in LCWR’s history...(her) training of women religious helped us in discernment and peacemaking at some of our hardest moments. That contemplative stance-led by Nancy became a powerful force in dealing with the apostolic visitation...when LCWR members were deeply divided about how we would respond.”

“Nancy has made significant contributions through her work with NETWORK and in the area of contemplative dialog...very deserving of the award.”

“We believe that she embodies the values and spirit of LCWR in all of her work and in her experiences working for justice and right relationships in church and in society.”

“She is committed to the transformation of leadership of women religious.”

**Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA, PhD, JCL**

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, LaCrosse, WI

- Diocese of La Crosse (Director of Consecrated Life, Tribunal official, Chancellor) 1990-2002
- Co- Founder and Project Director of A Renaissance of Iconography for Eastern European Institutes of Consecrated Life 1998-2004
- President, National Conference of Vicars for Religious 2000-2001
- President, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration 2002-2010
- Coordinator of Franciscan Common Venture 2002-2019
- LCWR Presidency 2009-2011
- Member of White House Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships 2012-2013
- Founder and Coordinator of La Crosse Task Force to End Modern Slavery 2013-2021
- Consultant in canon law to numerous religious institutes and individuals 2011 – present:
- Extensive Board and committee work on local and national organizations such as La Crosse Boy Choir, Viterbo University, RCRI, Catholic Health Association, Mayo Franciscan HealthCare, La Crosse Interfaith Coalition

Region nominations noted:

“Deep, caring and open...She is active in anti-trafficking efforts, providing innovative leadership & long-term commitment.”

“...is a talented and gifted scholar, musician, and religious leader who has committed her life to people and causes that uplift the spirit, awaken the mind, and bring out the best in people and organizations.”

“...continues to be inseparable to a path intimately linked to serving and meeting the needs of others. She has done so willingly and capably, demonstrating a long standing and faithful commitment to promoting the Gospel and the common good. She truly models servant leadership.”