

LCWR Region 9 Fall Meeting Minutes
 In-Person, Siena Retreat Center, Racine, WI
 October 16-18, 2023

Monday, October 16, 2023

At 1:00 p.m., the sisters were welcomed to the retreat center by Claire Anderson, Executive Director. She gave the history of the early beginnings of the retreat center and stated that it has been since January 1966 that retreat ministry here has been going on even to the present day. Claire also gave an orientation to the facility and information about name tags and WiFi.

Mary Kay Brooks, SSND, chairperson of LCWR Region 9, opened the gathering and welcomed everyone—40 members present. The Sisters of St. Agnes were responsible for providing the snacks for the breaks and the evening socials, and the Racine Dominicans were responsible for prayer during the days.

Prayer

The opening prayer was led by Racine Dominican S. Kathy Slezar. The prayer followed the theme of the gathering, "Mindful Leadering: A Time for Sharing Wisdom." Descriptions of wisdom were presented by several sources, and the group was asked to reflect on the question, "What description of wisdom speaks to your heart?" Some time was given for sharing at the tables on the wisdom statements as well as shared intercessions. A blessing of wisdom taken from *Blessings Upon Blessings* by Maxine Shonk, OP was given, and prayer closed with the song, *Send Us Your Spirit*, by Dan Schuette. S. Kathy asked us to consider for homework the question, "What is one situation in which you seek wisdom right now?" She suggested writing it down, date it, and see what happens.

Introductions

Mary Kay led this session, "*Getting to know you, getting to know more about you,*" by inviting the sisters to share any of the following questions in no particular order:

1. Where is your favorite place to see fall colors?
2. What is your favorite animal, wild or tame?
3. What show are you watching on TV? (major network or streaming)
4. What is the best advice you were given that you bring to leadership?
5. What do you dream of doing once your term of leadership is completed?

Document "Reflection on the LCWR Assembly"

Rose Jochmann, OSF, set the context of the assembly and some of the many challenges before us, such as: forming new collaborative and partnership opportunities, imagining new expressions of mission, envisioning religious life into the future, attending to changing structures, assuring the care of their members pondering new approaches to institute leadership and governance, and more. She shared a 4.5 minute clip showing a summary of the assembly.

Rose invited the group to some silent reflection and journaling around the following: "One thing that I took away from the assembly that is making a difference in my life as a religious life leader today is" The table groups then engaged in conversation with their answers to this statement.

Back in the large group, the sisters were invited to share in group conversation the question, "What did I hear at the table that might be helpful for the whole group to hear?"

Some of the comments included:

--A feeling of hope in living our call and the purpose for our lives—what we were founded to be. We can go home and help our members take the next step

--Brian Swimme—a sense of reality. Vision of the cosmos--we are a part of this. We don't know where we are going, but we know we are going to get there. We've never been in this place before, but step by step, we are going somewhere.

--Noahsphere—cosmogogenesis—relationships. The statement that we would commit ourselves to cosmological awareness and the interdependence that comes from that concept. There is awareness that it is not what I am doing, it is why am I doing it. Make your final gift/legacy an explosion of generosity.

--A pilot program of telling spiritual stories. An idea for next spring: share with LCWR spiritual stories starting with the senior sisters—asking them to share on a deeper level—not just what they have done in ministry.

--Felt a feeling of hope—not denying the reality of what needs to be done but that there is hope and beauty in our lives.

--Our founders and foundresses were charged with creatively bringing to conclusion their roles. As they were creative in founding our congregations, it's like the star dying and giving new life—giving hope that something remarkable will come out of it.

--The significance of the cosmos—noticing how LCWR is in process of change in terms of who they are looking to support. The process is happening even faster than LCWR is ready to address. We are co-creators of a new future for LCWR.

Then, after two minutes of quiet reflection and journaling, the group was asked the question, "As I listened to the insights that were shared about this assembly, I want to remember" From all of this sharing, Mary Kay will complete a report through survey monkey.com to relay any insights or ideas that arose that would be helpful for the Conference to know.

REGIONAL AGENDA

Consent Agenda

After a stand-up/stretch break, Mary Kay presented the consent agenda, which was to approve the minutes from the Spring gathering, March 27-29, 2023 and the finance report dated October 6, 2023. Both items were approved as presented.

By-laws—clarification/approval

Theresa Sandok, OSM, explained the main changes in the by-laws coming from the governance committee. The main change comes with the addition of Section 6.2 Archives. This was added because the LCWR archives, both national and regional, will be housed at the University of Notre Dame Archives. Another section, (e) in 1.4, was removed, since it refers to the national depository. Theresa made the motion to accept the proposed changes in the by-laws, Georgia Christensen, FSPA, seconded, and the motion carried.

Georgia mentioned the future meeting dates:

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| 2024 | April 22-24 Oshkosh | CSA responsible for prayer
SCSC responsible for hospitality |
| | November 11-13 Racine | OSF-Green Bay responsible for prayer
OP Racine responsible for hospitality |
| 2025 | April 18-30 Oshkosh | (tentative because Oshkosh is not accepting
dates at this time) |
| | Racine is wide open from mid October through mid November | |

October 27-29 Racine (consensus requested from the group)

A new meeting chart will come out reflecting these dates.

Pat Cormack, SCSC, mentioned that there is a rotation for volunteer communities for prayer and hospitality.

Pat also mentioned that she is still looking for someone in addition to Julia Walsh, FSPA, to be on a panel at the Spring 2024 gathering to dialogue with newer members of religious life. She has an alternate plan B that she hopes to finalize in a month or two. For Fall 2024, we will be focusing on Chapter 4 of Laurie Brink's latest book, "Orienting Ecclesiologies: The Formative Experience of church for Cohort Identity."

Pat invited the group to brainstorm at the tables about topics of future interest. Time was given for this purpose, and then Pat listed the suggested topics on newsprint. She stated that, between now and the end of the day on Tuesday, we would be asked to indicate our preferences. We would each be given five dots to post on the newsprint. We could spread the dots out or put them all on one topic.

After dinner, Pat and Mary Kay grouped the topics as follows:

		<u>Wednesday a.m.</u>
		<u>Total dots</u>
#1	Look at property—alienation of property while protecting legacy	3
#2	Investments—ways to pool together for greater returns.	5
#3	Mental Health	<u>45</u>
	--treatment	
	--managing behaviors	
	--transition into group living	
	--crucial conversations (let go of independence)	
#4	Sponsorship	8
	--giving up sponsorship & finding suitable partners	
	--models of ministry sponsorship	
	--what works in MJP (ministerial juridic person) (PJP--public juridic person--for ministry)	
	--fostering Catholic identity beyond our presence	
#5	Dementia Help--Community understanding/support	17
#6	Transfer sisters—how does it work?	0
#7	Cosmology ideas on a practical level	<u>29</u>
#8	Grace in the midst of grief (support of sisters)	17
#9	Religious life outside the box	11

- creative ways to invite
- stop recruiting
- another model (Julia Walsh's Fireplace retreat in Chicago)

#10	Cohorts—language and expectations	5
#11	Panel of our own members to share:	<u>23</u>
	A) Where are you on the continuum of change/transition and what we have learned?	
	B) How might we collaborate to share leadership and care for the sisters? Find new membership for the future of the life— Network our lay collaborators	

Navigate the Website

Pat stated that, since COVID, documents on the website have not been updated. Last spring, we lost the GoDaddy account. Now we have to navigate to a new one, and we are having difficulty linking to a proper place. WRC and LCWR share the cost and the webmaster.

Pat explained the procedure for getting to the website as follows and showed what is on the website and how to navigate through it:

- Go to: WRC website: <https://www.wrcollab.org/>
- Click on: LCWR9 members only tab
- User name: lcwr9 or LCWR9
- Password: Leaders#9

Rose will send the directions in writing to membership, and Georgia will let us know when the updates on the website are available.

Token Gifts—history

Pat explained that, up until 2020, LCWR 9 meetings were held at the motherhouses of the region members. Hosts shared token gifts that were a unique expression of that community's life to be shared with the wider community. The decision was made in 2020 to use the two retreat centers for meetings—one in the spring and one in the fall. Pat asked the question: because the hosting community has to bring all the snacks, drinks and food for the socials, is the custom of token gifts a custom beyond it's time? The answer was a unanimous "yes"! We thanked the CSAs for doing it this last time.

Liaison Reports

Mary Kay invited conversation about whether we need all the liaisons. Decisions about them are as follows:

1. LCWR 9 Legislative Network. Rose Jochmann, OSF, liaison.

KEEP. This is a subgroup of LCWR 9 and is the peace and justice "arm" of the WRC. Rose mentioned that Tracy Abler, Tim Hall and Peg Spindler, CSA, are forming a subcommittee of LCWR 9 Legislative Network to brainstorm about a possible collaborative campaign during the Republican National Convention. She asked if there is some direction from LCWR Region 9 related to a collaborative effort at the RNC in Milwaukee. The Legislative Network would like to hear any thoughts or ideas that might surface from the LCWR 9 meeting. Rose asked the group to have some conversation at their tables.

Suggestions included:

- LCWR Global Concerns—air pollution and racial disparity—tack onto National.
- Each state chairperson has to plan things every day for their delegation. Have them come to the Benedict Center--Sisters Program South to hear about the human trafficking corridor between Milwaukee and Chicago.
- Put up a billboard—Sisters against Human Trafficking
- Signs on the sides of buses
- Check with Region 8 about a statement going out to the people regarding violence, immigration, and climate change.
- Rose mentioned that we have \$510 in the budget for justice funds for the legislative network
- Have the Legislative Network reach out to Sisters Program South and other groups to collaborate.

Rose will keep us updated and continue as liaison.

2. Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Consortium—Kathy Lange, SCSC, liaison

DROP. Kathy explained that she attended one meeting of the Consortium via ZOOM. Her previous reports have been just to indicate what groups/organizations are working against human trafficking. It was felt that any legislation related to human trafficking would be handled by the Legislative Network. Pat stated that the need for this liaison report would not be as necessary as it was in the beginning when people were attending the Consortium meetings and there was a heavier focus on human trafficking.

3. Wisconsin Catholic Conference Public Policy Advisory Comm.—Maryann McMahon, OP

DROP. Maryann stated that she has tried to reach out to the committee, but nothing seems to be happening.

4. WRC—Wisconsin Religious Collaborative—Julie Tydrich, FSPA, executive director **KEEP**. This is very necessary, as the purpose is to establish cooperation and surface resources among members to assist each other in addressing their needs. The WRC has been in the process of seeking a Shared Services Director for the past eight months. Pat Cormack, SCSC, stated that respondents to the position don't know enough about religious life and do not possess the skills and knowledge of the life. Pat also mentioned the availability of SLI-Connect resources to the members.

5. Communicators for Women Religious—position currently vacant **DROP**. It was mentioned that a new leader will be coming on board in December/January. They are organized regionally and nationally. We will bring this back to the Spring gathering; but for now, we will go without a liaison, but would appreciate their assistance when we have matters that need attention.

6. Wisconsin Council of Churches—Pat Cormack, liaison **DROP**. Pat mentioned that it is easy to sign up to receive their newsletter. Georgia will put the link on our website.

The meeting ended with a break and a social before supper at 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

Prayer

Kathy Slezak, OP, led the opening prayer, continuing the theme, "Mindful Leadering: A Time for Sharing Wisdom." She reminded us to image God holding our hand and invited the group to listen to reflections on wisdom found in nature—lessons from a sea turtle, the ocean, and nature itself. Members reflected on the questions: What advice or lesson speaks to your heart? When, where, and how have you seen the glory of God? What have you learned from nature? Time was given to share at the tables. Then, blessings of nature were offered taken from "Blessings Upon Blessings," by Maxine Shonk, OP. The prayer closed with the song, "Canticle of the Sun."

Marlene Wiesenbeck, FSPA

Pat introduced Marlene and gave her a warm welcome. Marlene referred to Maria Clara Christ who maintains that the older we get, the more satisfied we are with religious life. But this is not true with the Xers and the Yers. Many of them are leaving religious life because they don't feel they are being heard by the leaders and vice versa.

Marlene prefaced her talk by going to question #4 of the sheet of questions from member communities that asks about "Rome consequences" if communities experiment and don't get permission for doing so. She stated that we have to understand our role in the Church as a PJP and the agreed upon rule of law. We take an oath, a sacred promise to abide by our constitutions and abide by the teachings of the Church. We need to find a way to live with ourselves if we make a mistake.

Marlene referred to what is happening in Austria and Canada. A public association that has been formed canonically still has to request a commissary from the Holy See. In dealing with the commissary issue, Marlene advised doing plenty of research, writing to the Vatican and asking their advice, and sending them a sample process giving a lot of data. She further advised that we should increase our communication with the Holy See being generous and more transparent in what we send.

Marlene then referred to her very informative PowerPoint slides entitled, LCWR 9 Governance Through Mindful Leadering. She explained well the difference between governance and administration. She also spoke to a quote from David Whyte to John O'Donahue, "The greatest relationship of compassion is to get over yourself." Marlene advised us to read David Whyte's poem, "Just Beyond Yourself" if we get stuck where we are.

Marlene answered further questions from the members, and then lunch was served at noon. At 1:30 p.m. Mary Kay facilitated a follow-up from the morning session.

NATIONAL AGENDA

Outstanding Leadership Award for 2024

Kathy led this session by reading the qualifications on the PowerPoint for the three nominees: Marcia Allen, CSJ; Nancy Schreck, OSF; and Nancy Sylvester, IHM. Time was then given for dialogue and discernment at the tables. After about 15 minutes, Kathy asked that a listener/recorder from each table give their table's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice and some accompanying reasons. A ballot was given out to each table.

In summary, the consensus was: Nancy Schreck 1st choice—her work with the poor, her ability to translate scripture in meaningful ways and to different mediums, and her work on ecology and social justice issues. Nancy Sylvester 2nd choice—her involvement in

work with contemplative dialogue and engaging impasse and her commitment to the transformation of leadership of women religious. Marcia Allen 3rd choice.

It was noted that members received the PowerPoint with summaries of the nominees quite late from LCWR, so some had not had a chance to read through. It was suggested that next time, it would be helpful for the new members who don't know the nominees to group together and then be seated with others who do know the nominees so the new members can get more of an insight into each nominee. Kathy will send the report of our nominees to National and will include this suggestion for future consideration.

Spirit Call Within a Call

We watched the video with Anita Baird, DHM, on the intersection of racism, immigration, climate change, and human trafficking. Anita showed a picture of "The Last Supper to Be," where Jesus was shown just faintly in the background. Anita asserted that Jesus won't be fully at the table until all are represented there.

After a 10-minute break, Pat asked the members, "What supports would be helpful from LCWR's Spirit Call Within a Call? What kind of help would your community like to receive?" Answers received included:

- ✓ CASTE—lead a book study
- ✓ Immigration issue
- ✓ Legacy—how to acknowledge our privilege as a religious community
- ✓ The example from the Sinsinawa Dominicans—worked on Crossroads for 25 years
- ✓ Talk about from a systemic white privilege
- ✓ Network—workshop on racism in the Catholic Church
- ✓ Bryan Massingale
- ✓ Clearinghouse on website on racism issues

Mary Kay will report these suggestions to LCWR National via survey monkey.

Global Concerns

Georgia led this session in which members were to converse with others on the work of intersectionality—to be called/to respond/to challenge. She drew our attention to the Resolution to Action: "Air Pollution and Racial Disparity," by Patty Johnson, CSJ, LCWR Call 2023-2028, and Assembly Resolution 2022-2025.

Regarding air pollution and racism, she asked, "What has been a story you have experienced about the intersectionality of racism, migration, climate change, human trafficking, etc.?" Time was given to share stories at the tables. Some responses were:

- Network—connect better with them
- Get behind what already exists
- Determine a focus area—to support
- Come at the Spring gathering and share what we have been doing.

The meeting ended for the day at approximately 4:23 p.m., followed by a social and a festive dinner hosted by the CSAs.

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Prayer

Kathy Slezar, OP, led opening prayer with a reading from 1 Kings, followed by reflection and sharing from the following questions:

- Wisdom of people: How would you respond to God's offer?
- Who are some people who are sources of wisdom for you?
- What are some other sources of wisdom for you?
- Share some wisdom you have been given.

Intercessions from LCWR—Prayer for World Relief followed, and we closed again with the song, "Send Us Your Spirit."

Follow up with Regional Agenda

Pat reviewed the dot totals--#3 Mental Health--45 dots; #7 Cosmology-- 29 dots; and #11 Panel of our own members—23 dots. She asked for suggestions of names for each category.

<u>Mental Health</u>	<u>Cosmology Awareness</u>	<u>Panel</u>
1. Lynn Levo, CSJ	1. Dianne Bergant, CSA	Representatives from 2 or 3 groups
2. Dr. Emily Cash	2. Ilia Delio, OSF	
3. Dayna Hurst—memory care	3. Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ	
4. Janice Bader, CPPS	4. Kathleen Storms, SSND	
5. Fr. Jim Schroeder		
6. SLI-Connect videos		

Comments/Suggestions

"Is there a way we can devote some of our meeting time to sharing with the whole group various things that our communities are doing or have already done on certain issues?"

What if—during the winters of the next two years—

--Panel on mental health with different community members

--Panel on collaboration

--Or additional virtual panel opportunities

--Homespun wisdom panel

--Invite more people than Region 9.

--Two panels—one in a.m. and one in p.m. on different topics

--A panel at each of our gatherings on a focused topic

--2025 seems too long to wait

--LCWR National—if we could have less material from them so we could have more time to share with each other

--How do we meet both/and?

The Executive Committee will debrief these suggestions.

Future Topics for National Assembly

We will send some of our topics to the national office for future ideas for them as assembly topic recommendations.

- ✓ Cosmology—Dianne Bergant
- ✓ Break-Out Groups--Dialogue with Maria Clara Christ and Julia Walsh and Xers/Yers
- ✓ Grief and Change—giving up car keys, apartment, pet, going to motherhouse, not knowing how to grieve and help others grieve
- ✓ Have a ZOOM break-out—specify some time other than at our gathering to select our nominee for Outstanding Leadership Award
- ✓ Break-out—practical cosmology
- ✓ Break-out from National—check list on coming to completion and how we proceed—communities talking to each other
- ✓ Legacy—National conversation how we are going to partner with non-profits to continue our mission and how to work with them—sisters need some education
- ✓ Clearinghouse of topics
- ✓ Break-out groups—within the agenda we could use the wisdom of each other
- ✓ Hubs—practical conversations

- ✓ RCRI—Resource Center for Religious Institutes—difference between RCRI and National—more of these topics—get more practical at RCRI
- ✓ Sharon Huerta—tract for leaders
- ✓

Nominations for LCWR National Elections—president-elect and National board member

Mary Kay mentioned that we should be thinking about potential nominees for these posts. We will be able to nominate online from December 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024. Mary Kay stated that nominations for board member can come from outside leadership. It was suggested that we look to people from *Giving Voice*. We could even recommend to National that someone from *Giving Voice* be on the board automatically. The Dominicans have a future leadership group.

A suggestion was made for the next gathering—when we have introductions, introduce the leadership groups again as a change instead of the questions.

Thank You

Mary Kay thanked everyone—CSAs for hosting and Racine Dominicans for prayer.

Closing Prayer

Maryann McMahon, OP led the closing prayer with scripture from the Gospel of Luke and the reflection question: How has your leadership reflected "that the kingdom of God is at hand for you?"

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Lange, SCSC
Recording Secretary

