

**LCWR-9 Fall 2017 Meeting Minutes**  
Hosted by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration  
St. Rose Convent, 912 Market Street, La Crosse, WI 54601

**Monday, October 16, 2017**

**Call to Order & Welcome**

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, October 16, 2017. Theresa introduced Karen Lueck, FSPA, who welcomed Region 9 to the Cooley region and St. Rose Convent. Karen acknowledged Julie Tydrich, FSPA, who was responsible for planning the details of hosting the Region. Catherine Kaiser, FSPA, and Helen Elsbernd, FSPA, were also introduced.

**Attendance**

26 members representing 12 congregations attended (Attachment - Attendance).

**Opening Prayer**

The opening prayer, "Seasons of Change," was led by Diane Baumann, ANG, and Mary Barbieur, ANG.

**Introductions**

The sisters introduced themselves by name and by community. Each community shared a highlight that took place since the Spring 2017 meeting.

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, announced the names of eight new members to Region 9:

- Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother (SSM): M. Lois Bush, Catherine Marie Hanegan, Sherri Marie Kuhn;
- Sisters of St. Agnes (CSA): Rhea Emmer, Cyndi Nienhaus;
- Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross (OSF): Rose Jochmann;
- Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres (SPC): Estela Garcia;
- Holy Cross Sisters (SCSC): Linda Songy (will begin in January).

Theresa also acknowledged the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother for allowing Emily Anderson to post items on the Region 9 website, and for hosting Region 9's Executive Committee meetings at Franciscan Courts, where lunch is included.

Theresa then introduced the members of the Executive Committee: Ellen Sinclair, SDS – Vice-Chairperson; Agnes Johnson, OP – Treasurer; Ann Rehrauer, OSF – Corresponding Secretary (Ann was unable to attend the meeting); and Diane Baumann, ANG – Recording Secretary.

**Agenda: Approval of Minutes**

Diane Baumann, ANG, Recording Secretary, presented the draft of the minutes of the April 3-5, 2017 LCWR-9 Spring meeting; the minutes were approved unanimously. (Attachment – Spring 2017 Minutes)

## Finance Report

Agnes Johnson, OP, distributed the following financial reports:

- the annual financial report for 09-01-17 to 08-31-17;
- a report of the checkbook activity from 09-01-17 through 10-05-17; and
- a report of the Completion Project Funds.

The finance report was unanimously approved. (Attachment – Finance Report)

## Liaison Reports

- *LCWR-9 Communicators of Women Religious* – No report at this time.
- *Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Consortium* – Report presented by Toni Harris, OP. Toni had spoken with Margaret Kruse, OSF, about the consortium. The next meeting is October 20, 2017. Toni will have a representative from her community attend the meeting.

Pat Cormack, SCSC, informed the group that she has an updated video for the Parish Tool Kits, which she had received from Celine Goessel, SCSC, and which are available for each community. Please see Pat for a copy.

Diana DeBruin, OSF, announced that the consortium is training sisters who would be willing to do presentations on anti-human trafficking.

Debra Fumigalli, OSF, thanked Theresa Sandok, OSM, on behalf of the entire group, for writing the letter to the bishops of Wisconsin regarding DACA. Theresa stated that she had received a response from Bishop David Ricken, Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay, which Theresa read to the group.

- *Legislative Network Committee* – Liaison Susan Seeby, CSA, had provided a report prior to the meeting. Susan also had sent a request that each congregation sign the letter provided opposing the repeal of the Wisconsin moratorium on acid mining; each community present did so.
- *Wisconsin Catholic Conference* – Liaison Susan Seeby, CSA, had sent an update on WCC activities before the meeting.
- *Public Policy Advisory Committee* – Liaison Jean Steffes, CSA, had provided information on “Conscience Protection for Child Welfare Providers” and on “Solitary Confinement in Wisconsin Prisons.” Jean commented further on these two topics.

Theresa Sandok, OSM, expressed gratitude to the liaisons on behalf of Region 9 for all of their work.

## Wisconsin Religious Collaborative

Pat Cormack, SCSC, had shared current information on the Collaborative with the Region 9 members before the meeting. Pat commented on the information, thanking all who had attended the August 2, 2017 meeting, at which 14 congregations were represented. Ten congregations have made a commitment to the collaborative for the first three years. The goal is to establish the corporation by July 1, 2018, and to hire an Executive Director by that same time; a salary for the director is being researched,

and fund-raising may be necessary. The plan is to move funding to the corporation, eliminating it from the Region 9 treasury. Questions were raised: Could the collaborative become national? Or, is the regional nature more conducive to the work of the collaborative?

### **Region 9 By-Laws and Handbook**

Theresa Sandok, OSM, had sent proposed changes to the By-Laws and Handbook to the members before the meeting. Theresa reviewed the proposed changes section by section. In the handbook, section 8, "Vicars of Consecrated Life," Jean Steffes, CSA, moved and Marcia Lunz, OSF, seconded the striking of the words, "and have a standing invitation to attend meetings." The change was unanimously accepted. Sylvia Anne Sheldon, OSF, moved and Helen Elsbernd, FSPA, seconded the acceptance of all changes to the By-Laws and Handbook. The motion was accepted unanimously.

### **Update on Trial re: Death of Sr. Margaret Held and Sr. Paula Merrill**

Debra Fumagalli, OSF, updated the members on the up-coming trial of the person accused of the deaths of Margaret Held, OSF, and Paula Merrill, SCN. The accused has been arraigned and has entered a plea of not guilty to multiple counts. The trial is scheduled for early February of 2018.

### **National LCWR Business**

#### **Deepening Groups**

Theresa Sandok, OSM, announced that because LCWR has experienced contemplative dialogue as capturing the essence and meaning of religious life, all members are invited to become part of a Deepening Group. Guides may be found in the members section of the national LCWR website. Meetings could take place via Zoom, Skype, etc. Groups may be self-selected or assigned, and would determine the frequency of their own meetings.

#### **Regions' Relationships to Each Other, the Board, and the National Office**

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, invited Region 9 to discuss the values we wish to preserve in regard to our regional relationships, specific recommendations we may have, and questions or concerns that occur to us.

Theresa presented the video, "LCWR Governance Structure," featuring presentations by LCWR Past-President, Mary Pellegrino, CSJ, and President Teresa Maya, CCVI. Regions are about relationships, information flow, and connections. Regarding communication, it will be necessary to develop effective systems and methods of communication. Conversations on this topic could take place at the Spring Regional Meeting, in conversations during the National Assembly, and at the LCWR Board Meeting.

Three questions were proposed for group discussion; Toni Harris, OP, volunteered to record the notes from the discussion on the easel provided.

#### **What are the values that we want to preserve by keeping the Regions connected to one another and to the national office and the national board?**

- Balanced connections:

- Mutual exchange; communication in both directions
- Balance between national and regional groups
- Vibrant conduit going region to national and region to region
- Unified efforts based on connections
- Integration of regional experiences: importance of each region; all need to hear about each area
- Wisdom from regions
- Value of broader perspective: beyond Dominican, Franciscan etc.
- Opportunity to develop personal bonds
- Solidarity of women religious: speak as a group
- Subsidiarity: recognize importance of each level
- The “why” question: the why behind what we do
- Power of a consolidated voice
- Simplicity – avoid complexity
- Interculturality
- Use technology, such as the “little box” method

**What are the specific recommendations you would like to make in order to not only maintain but strengthen relationship between and among the regions, board and national office?**

Region to Region:

- Initiate intentional conversations between neighboring regions related to structure/cooperation
- Share best practices among regions (meeting structures, planning, etc.)
- Provide common focus question for regional sharing
  - \*Building relationships chair-to-chair and region-to-region is a new component

Regions to National Board:

- Include three to four regional chairs, who are geographically dispersed, during the National Board Meeting, possibly using Zoom
- Assign Board members to be responsible for three to four regional chairs
- Following National Board Meeting, specific Board member could hold a conference call follow-up with three to four regional chairs

Regions to National Office:

- Research other national groups to determine similarities with structures, communications, etc., such as NRVC (National Religious Vocation Conference), etc.
- Have the National Office share the strengths and best practices of each region
- Have the National Office serve as a clearing house for reports and needs of congregations; strengthen solidarity through issues common to all
- Observation: social media cannot be effective unless we commit ourselves to learning how to use it; Goal: each member is committed to using the technology required to maintain relationships

**What are your questions/concerns about relationships between and among the regions, board and national office moving forward?**

How will members know information about candidates in order to create a diverse and representative board?

Could Board have regional representatives (e.g. “West” not usually represented)?

How will we have diversity of competencies?

What are the implications of discomfort with technology among some members of the Board?

Who decides who is chosen to be on the ballot, from among all nominees? Will interculturality be considered?

Suggestion: Produce a video of each of the fifteen candidates for the nine Board positions.

### **Outstanding Leadership Award**

Theresa Sandok, OSM, Chairperson, reviewed with the members the award and its purpose. The criteria is leadership, gospel values, innovation, and contributions made. Each region may make three recommendations. The members will decide on their choices at a later time during the meeting.

### **LCWR Region 9 Collaborative Response**

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, reviewed with the group the collaborative response to the current political situation in the United States. Theresa raised the question: Shall we continue with the weekly prayer, to which various communities are committed for each day of the week? The group will return to this question later in the meeting.

Theresa also reported that prayer ideas were posted on the Region 9 member website in the resources section. She invited the members to send other prayer experiences for posting. Toni Harris, OP, indicated that she will prepare and send a prayer for Human Rights Day, which is observed on December 10. Toni will also send a prayer that could be used during Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-13, 2018. We were reminded that the purpose of the prayer experiences is to invite others to join us for the prayer. Diana DeBruin, OSF, will pursue contacting Speaker of the House Paul Ryan to ask if he would be willing to have a non-publicized meeting with sisters from Wisconsin. Perhaps we could ask him to let us know how we can help him in his work. Mary Barbieur, ANG, is willing to assist in composing questions for the dialogue.

The Sisters of St. Agnes reported that they had a breakfast with Representative Glenn Grothman at their motherhouse. We were reminded that Network has excellent resources, containing suggested paragraphs and room for our own statements, for communication purposes. A suggestion was offered to reach out to women in Congress who have done so much to benefit the people of our country. Theresa checked with all of us to see if we were using social media to communicate our values; all indicated that they were doing so.

### **Announcements**

Theresa Sandok, OSM, announced that an Elections Committee is needed for the Spring 2018 elections. Agnes Johnson, OP, Treasurer, and Diane Baumann, ANG, Recording Secretary, are not eligible for re-election. Ellen Sinclair, SDS, Vice-Chairperson, will know of her eligibility in February after her community elections.

Also needed are Liaisons to LCWR-9 Communicators of Women Religious and to the Legislative Network Committee. Susan Seeby, CSA, is willing to continue as liaison to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference.

Parking directions were given by Julie Tydrich, FSPA, and the group moved to the dining room for the evening meal.

## **Tuesday, October 17, 2017 – Morning Session**

### **Call to Order & Prayer**

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. A prayer for DACA Dreamers was led by A New Genesis.

### **Introduction of Speaker and Presentation by Dr. Fran Kaplan**

Ellen Sinclair, SDS, Vice-Chairperson of Region 9, introduced our speaker for the morning session, Dr. Fran Kaplan, who has fifty years of experience working for social justice. Fran continues to work in the area of anti-bias education and is the Coordinator of the American Black History Museum, virtual museum. She asked the members to list what they hoped to get out of the day and a concern they had, on a piece of newsprint found on each table.

Fran spoke about the resurgence of overt racial bias and the blind spots we have, along with the misinformation that is imbedded in our brains, including myths about history. She spoke of helping with current issues, without disempowering those being helped. Fran encouraged us not to carry guilt for the past, but to be responsible for what we do now; be forgiving; stay aware and keep learning; do what we can.

Small group discussion took place at each table on the questions: What are we doing to oppose racism? What are the challenges? How can we deal with the challenges? In the large group report, comments included:

- How can we help the larger community be more welcoming to all races?
- An example was given of an inter-cultural class, where there is an opportunity to tell stories, receive peer support, and build relationships within cultures.
- Some of our own elderly sisters reject the care of people of color.
- Some communities have completed the survey on racism that is available on-line. The information has been used for community follow-up and discussions.
- Personal experience and relationships are key.
- We can lobby, work to become welcoming communities, promote well-paying jobs, discuss with others how poverty segregates people, listen to the marginalized – asking what kind of help we can give (not assuming), take the long view, and realize, “We came on different ships, but are in the same boat now.”

Fran ended with “Ella's Song” by the group, “Sweet Honey in the Rock,” inspired by Ella Baker. Fran's PowerPoint may be found on the Region 9 member website.

The group adjourned for lunch.

## **Tuesday, October 17, 2017 – Afternoon Session**

### **Introduction of Speaker and Presentation by Frank Sherman**

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Theresa introduced the speaker for the afternoon, Frank Sherman, who spoke on “Investing with a Conscience,” considering the moral imperatives of people of faith. Frank is an advocate for peace and justice as the Executive Director of the Seventh Generation Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investment. He spoke about the fact that we are in the midst of a planetary emergency, requiring a change to our moral imagination. Sixty

percent of the earth's ecosystem is under stress. Humans have caused 95% of climate change.

We face a moral and financial crisis. USCCB has authored "Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines." Seventh Generation helps investors screen out "sin stocks," leveraging investor power for social change. Corporations are engaged through direct dialogue.

Toni Harris, OP, offered to make information available regarding the climate finance project. Frank concluded with a video featuring Mike Crosby, OFM, Cap, and his statements on responsible investing.

### **Outstanding Leadership Award**

After table discussion and large group discussion, the members decided to recommend three people for the Outstanding Leadership Award. Two choices were from among the ten recommendations provided by the national office:

#1 – Jamie Phelps, OP

#2 – Amata Miller, IHM.

The third recommendation was surfaced by Region 9:

#3 – Simone Campbell, SSS.

Marcia Lunz, OSF, offered to provide information about Simone's contributions, which could be used in our recommendation.

Debra Fumagalli, OSF, and Jean Steffes, CSA, recommended that more than one OLA be awarded each year, perhaps even several awards in the same year, to honor the many who have contributed so much to religious life, the church and world.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Vice-Chairperson Ellen Sinclair, SDS, shared information on the present and upcoming Region 9 meetings. After discussion, the members decided to schedule Lynn Levo, CSJ, to speak on mental health issues in the care of our sisters during the April 9-11, 2018 meeting in Elm Grove. Amy Hereford, CSJ, would then be invited to speak during the October 15-17 meeting in Sinsinawa on the topic of "Religious Life at the Crossroads." Ellen will explore the possible involvement of Giving Voice, Sisters without Borders, and Sisters 2.0 in a related panel. An invitation will also be extended to communities in the area and to Region 10 to be part of the day.

Ellen asked for communities to volunteer for prayer during the 2019 meetings. Please email Ellen if you are willing to lead prayer for the Spring or Fall meeting.

### **Proposal for Conference Action**

After listening to the song, "Whatever Be the Love" by Lori True, the Region 9 members responded to the following question from the national office: "Please briefly describe the thinking of your region about what is stirring in us now. How are we being invited to be the presence of love in the world?"

- Continue to live out the National Resolution through:
- Promoting effective healthcare for all;
- Working with congress people on the state budget for better coverage of needs;
- Encouraging greater openness in immigration policies, including arrangements for the citizenship of DACA dreamers;

- Focusing on climate change, especially as it affects the poor, showing respect for the dignity of all people;
- Exploring how to break down barriers, especially as expressed in Islamaphobia and Anti-Semitism;
- Promoting a Revolution of Goodness and Appreciative Inquiry; restore social civility, especially as manifested through social media;
- Continue to work against racism.

Consider adding the following to the resolution:

- Supporting the abolition of the death penalty;
- Promoting prison reform.

Notes were taken by Marcia Lunz, OSF, on the easel provided.

### **LCWR Region 9 Collaborative Response**

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, led a discussion about Region 9's collaborative response to the current political situation in the United States, introduced earlier in the meeting. Members decided to continue the practice of weekly prayer, for which each congregation has volunteered to engage in a particular day of prayer.

### **Region 9 Election Committee**

Chairperson Theresa Sandok, OSM, reviewed the Region 9 listserv with the members. She then reminded the group of the need for an Election Committee for Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. The directory on the member website lists the fifty sisters who currently are members of Region 9. Job descriptions for the positions are provided in the By-Laws. It is hoped that one or two nominees can be surfaced for each position. Pat Cormack, SCSC, volunteered her leadership team to serve as the Election Committee, for which the members were very grateful.

### **Liaison for LCWR-9 Communicators of Women Religious**

The Communicators have worked on anti-human trafficking projects; Emily Anderson, who is employed by the Sorrowful Mother Sisters, works with the liaison; Jomarie Zielke, CSA, the former liaison, is no longer a member of Region 9. Diana DeBruin, OSF, volunteered to serve as the liaison. Her offer was applauded by the entire group.

### **Liaison for Legislative Network Committee**

Susan Seeby, CSA, has resigned her role as liaison to the Legislative Network Committee, while retaining her role with Wisconsin Catholic Conference. The committee keeps Region 9 posted on up-coming state legislation, such as the current issue of acid-mining. Toni Harris, OP, volunteered for the role, again much to the appreciation of Region 9 members.

### **Adjournment**

Theresa Sandok, CSA, announced that all business for Region 9 had been completed. Therefore, the Thursday, October 18 meeting session would not be needed. Theresa expressed our appreciation to the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration for their gracious hosting, and the group in turn expressed its thanks to Theresa for her leadership. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. with a closing prayer lead by A New Genesis. The group then moved to the social before the festive meal.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Baumann, ANG, Recording Secretary