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# HISTORY OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

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Volume 3

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NEWS AND NOTES.

## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

A proposal by Christopher Kauffman, editor of the U.S. CATHOLIC HISTORIAN, to publish the proceedings of the June, 1989 Conference on the History of Women Religious has been accepted. The Fall, 1990 issue of the journal will contain papers given at the Conference as well as reflection pieces relating to the shorter panel contributions. Publication of selected papers in a feminist journal is still being pursued, but will not affect the U.S. Catholic Historian project. Conference presenters can expect to be contacted in the near future regarding these publication plans.

## RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

ST. ANGELA MERICI AND THE SPIRITUAL CURRENTS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE is the title of the Theology Doctoral Thesis (3e Cycle) sustained with honors at the Faculté de Theologie Catholique, University of Strasbourg, France in October, 1986, by Dorothy L. Latz. Dorothy, who also holds a doctorate from the University of Paris (Comparative Literature) is

currently at the College of New Rochelle, New York. Her thesis situates Angela's WRITINGS and work in the context of recent scholarship on the Renaissance and sheds new light on her intent to found a lay Society returning to the practice of the Consecration of Virgins of the primitive church. Copies of the thesis may be obtained in standard microfiche form from: Atelier National de Reproduction des Thèses, Université de Lille-III, 9 rue A. Angellier, 59056-Lille, France. Copies are \$8.00 including USA postage; payment should be in the form of a bank draft in French francs. Specify title, author, date, and University of Strasbourg thesis when ordering. The author also has a work and translation concerning Angela forthcoming from Peregrina Press (Toronto, Canada).

Elizabeth W. McGahan's "Inside The Hallowed Walls: Convent Life Through Material History," MATERIAL HISTORY BULLETIN/BULLETIN d'HISTOIRE de la CULTURE MATERIELLE (25, Spring 1987), 1-9, contains some very interesting insights into religious life among the Sisters of Charity of New Brunswick, 1854--, based on

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examination of the first convent built in southern New Brunswick, convent artifacts, and religious habits.

Elizabeth, currently at the University of New Brunswick, P.O. Box 5050, Saint John, N.B., Canada E2L 4L5, has agreed to serve HWR News and Notes as corresponding Editor for Canada. We look forward to improved coverage of pertinent research and publication through her correspondence.

**CORRECTION:** Our last issue gave Smith in place of the correct spelling of Elizabeth Smyth's name (Institute for Studies in Education, Northwestern Center, Thunder Bay, Ontario).

Research projects reported to News and Notes include work on women's religious communities of German origin, especially the Sisters of Notre Dame from Cresfeld, Germany, by Mary Jessica Karlinger, SND (13000 Auburn Road, Chardon, OH 44024); and on the so-called "Ratisbon Family" of Dominican Sisters including the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh, New York, and five other groups. Mary Cecilia Murray, OP, congregational historian for the Newburgh congregation, is to begin writing this history for publication this year.

Gretchen E. Knapp, a doctoral student majoring in American religious history at the State

University of New York at Buffalo, writes that she hopes to do her dissertation on the history of women's religious orders founded in Buffalo.

Marie Paula Holdman, SC, is in the midst of research on the life of Josephine Rosaire Rea, SC, a convert, former dean and administrator of the College of Mount Saint Vincent, Riverdale, NY; and one of the founders of the native community of Sisters of Martin de Porres, now a Benedictine convent in Nassau, the Bahamas. This partial list of Rea's life works suggests a very interesting biographical subject. The Sisters of Charity, New York, marked the centennial of their Bahamas foundation in 1989.

Ken Ball writes from Australia of his keen interest in the history of religious orders and congregations of men and women, particularly during the expansion from Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland to Australia and the United States. He has joined our subscriber list for purposes of sharing interests and information.

Helen Delaney, RSM, also a new subscriber, is an Australian Sister of Mercy commencing a doctorate on the development of government in the Australian Sisters of Mercy. She is presently located at 175 Main Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 1C3.

## BOOK REVIEW

Marie Augusta Neal, SND de Namur, FROM NUNS TO SISTERS. (Twenty-Third Publications, 1989, 143 pp. notes, bibliography; \$9.95.)

A sensitive, perceptive, and challenging analysis of the growth of United States women religious from nuns to sisters, Marie Augusta Neal's FROM NUNS TO SISTERS both carefully unfolds her subject matter ["how and why . . . changes occurred and what their relationships are to the urgent mission of today's church" (2)] and skillfully probes her theme ["how this ferment became a radical transition point in the experience of religious congregations of Catholic women, especially in the United States" (4)]. Neal has the rare ability to synthesize succinctly broad sweeps of history without treating historical currents in a superficial manner.

Serving as a collective memory for the Sister Formation Movement, Religious Formation Conference, and Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the author maintains that United States women religious' development from nuns into sisters began when Pius XII called a World Congress on the States of Perfection in 1950. The Sister Formation Conference, founded in 1953, "introduced a slowly accelerating program of formation and education that

would culminate, at the time of the Second Vatican Council, with an almost entirely new conception of mission and religious life" (30). In other words, United States women religious were already quietly creating the attitudes that find us where we are today.

The first chapter, "From Nuns to Sisters: Three Significant Changes," is a delight to members of the History of Women Religious conference because of its linking the three vows to their emergence on center stage at crises points in the history of religious life: Period I: Early Christian Era to 1600-- "vowed virginity, a New Way of Life for Women"; Period II: 1600 to 1950-- "Poverty or Property" Period III 1950 to the Present-- "Obedience to the Mission of the Church."

The challenge and prophetic stance of the book finds expression in chapters 4 and 5: "Vows in the Context of Mission" and "Governance and the Realization of Mission." Hierarchical, patriarchal mind sets will find these chapters hard to read, let alone agree with, since, as Neal writes, the Congregation for Institutes of Religious Life (formerly SCRIS) "forces governmental models of hierarchy on religious congregations founded to do apostolic ministry in the church" (90). United States women religious have, for the

most part, trained ourselves in participative forms of governance that call us to help fashion a church responsive to the need for God's justice for the poor.

The only weakness I see in this altogether excellent work is its failure to delineate clearly the distinctions between monastic, apostolic and contemplative congregations and the impact of obedience to the mission for monastic groups of United States women religious.

Marie Augusta Neal, mentor, model, and colleague for History of Women Religious members, has given us another outstanding study, one aptly suited for courses in the history of women religious, theology of religious life and the vows, or for personally challenging reading. Regina Siegfried, ASC, Aquinas Institute, St. Louis, MO.

#### MISCELLANY

Keith J. Egan reports that the Center for Spirituality at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, will sponsor a symposium in July, 1991, to commemorate the School of Sacred Theology at Saint Mary's founded by Sister Madeleva in 1943. The School functioned from its founding through 1970.

Christopher Kauffman as general editor of the Bicentennial History series, has been awarded the John Gilmary Shea Award for the outstanding work on American

church history published in 1989. Several members of the HWR Network contributed to American Catholic Women which is part of the series: Karen Kennelly as editor and co-author; Mary Ewens, Mary Oates, Debra Campbell, Jim Kenneally, Colleen McDannell, and Rosemary Rader as contributors of individual chapters. Congratulations to all concerned for this recognition of their success in bringing the history of American Catholic women, including that of women religious, into print.

A bicentennial symposium, "Historians, Bishops and Community in Dialogue," held November 3-4, 1989 in Baltimore, featured papers by authors of the six-volume series and commentaries by various bishops. These will be published in a forthcoming issue of the U.S. Catholic Historian.

The Carmelite Communities Associated has just completed a reprinting of the nineteenth-century book CARMEL IN AMERICA by Charles W. Currier, with a new preface by Constance Fitzgerald, OCD. It is the first of a series which on Carmelite sources; scheduled for 1990 is The Diary, the account of the first Carmelites' trip to America. All of this activity is part of preparation for celebration of the Carmelite women's bicentennial in the United States, 1790-1990. For further information on the recent publication, contact

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Marian Steffens, OCD,  
Carmelite Monastery, 25 Watson  
Avenue, Barrington, RI, 02806.

Rosalie McQuaide, CSJP, has  
been active since the 1989  
Conference developing a  
proposal for a new Association  
of Women Religious Archivists.  
Contact Rosalie  
Archivist/Records Manager,  
Catholic Relief Services, 209  
West Fayette Street,  
Baltimore, MD 21201-3403, for  
more information.

J. Gordon Melton, senior  
research associate of the  
Santa Barbara Centre for  
Humanistic Studies, has  
requested that communities of  
women religious send him  
copies of the United States  
history of their congregations  
and biographies of American  
foundresses so that the Centre  
can add to its collection of  
information about communal  
societies. Among activities  
with which Gordon is  
associated is a proposed  
three-volume Encyclopedia of  
North American Communes, a  
project of the National  
Historic Communal Societies  
Association. Regina  
Siegfried, ASC, has accepted a  
position on the editorial  
board for the Encyclopedia.

#### NOTES

The subscription/renewal  
notice included with this  
issue is intended to put News  
and Notes subscriptions on a  
calendar year basis. Please  
ignore the notice if you have  
recently (October, 1989--)  
paid for your subscription.

#### NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please have copy for the June  
issue to the editor by May 1.

#### THE HWR NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Karen M. Kennelly,  
CSJ.

#### Ad hoc Conference Committee:

Kay Ashe, OP; Barbara  
Brumleve, SSND; Mary Ewens,  
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## NEWS AND NOTES.

The History of Women Religious Network is dedicated to the promotion of research and publication on the subject of the history of women religious worldwide, with particular emphasis on the United States. It publishes a newsletter three times a year to facilitate networking among the membership which is open to all interested persons through subscription to the HWR News and Notes. The deadlines for submission of materials to be included in the newsletter are January 10, May 10 and September 10th. Subscriptions are \$5 per year, payable by February.

To subscribe or to renew your subscription, complete the form below and enclose a check for \$5 (made payable to History of Women Religious) to:

Karen Kennelly, Editor  
HWR News and Notes  
Mount St. Mary's College  
12001 Chalon Rd  
Los Angeles, CA 90049

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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