
History Of Women Religious

News and Notes

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HWR NETWORK NEWS

Conference '98 is history, and was, by all accounts, a huge success. The fourth triennial conference sponsored by the network, evaluations indicate the Loyola-Chicago gathering more than met participants' goals in terms of exposing them to current research in the field, facilitating networking, and affording opportunity for dialogue on theories, methods, and questions for future research. Many also appreciated the "how to" sessions. The Distinguished Historian Award was given to Mary Ewens, OP, and to Jo Ann McNamara. Congratulations to them, and thanks to conference keynote speaker, Paula Kane; to all presenters; and to members of the conference committee: Florence Deacon, OSF, chair; Ann Harrington, BVM, local arrangements chair; and Barbara Speas Havira, Elizabeth McGahan, Linda Marie Bos, SSND, and Mary Denis Maher, CSA. Thanks also to Kaye Ashe, OP, who chaired the Award committee, and to committee members Karen Kennelly, CSJ, Elizabeth Kolmer, ASC, and Barbara Misner, SCSC. The network owes them, and the many people who assisted in various ways with conference planning and implementation, a big debt of gratitude.

The newsletter editor offices continue to function as a repository for conference papers, a majority of which have been deposited. Depending on receipt of the paper and the author's permission form, copies of conference '98 papers will be sent upon request.

Decisions are pending regarding conference frequency (those who submitted evaluations had a slight preference for every second year rather than every third year as in the past), site, and coordination. Subscribers are invited to express their opinions and suggestions on these matters. If you have a site to suggest, it is helpful to forward to the HWR News

and Notes editor information concerning costs, advantages of location, and suitability of accommodations. We are also in the process of collating suggestions for coordinator of the new and improved HWR network and plan to publicize results along with next steps toward a more formal governance structure in the February newsletter.

PUBLICATIONS

Leslie L. Liedel defended her dissertation, Indomitable Nuns and a Determined Bishop: Property Rights, Women Religious, and Diocesan Power in Nineteenth-Century Cleveland, in April, at Kent State. She has accepted a position as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Maine at Bangor, ME, 04401, and can be reached there for more information. (email <flynun@juno.com>)

Mary Pius O'Farrell, PBVM, has completed a work on their eighteenth century founder, Nano Nagle, Woman of the Gospel. Orders may be sent to her at South Presentation Convent, Douglas St., Cork, Ireland, IRL10 (\$ rate as on day) plus postage. North American connections of the Presentations founded out of Cork include St. John's, Newfoundland, 1833; and San Francisco, 1854. Subsequent foundations from Ireland were New York City, Fitchburg, Staten Island, and Watervliet in New York; Dubuque, Iowa; Fargo, North Dakota and Aberdeen, South Dakota—all in the nineteenth century; and Phoenix, Arizona from which emanated various twentieth century foundations. O'Farrell is pursuing U.S. connections and begs archivists to alert her to pertinent materials, especially pertaining to Francis Moylan, Bishop of Cork, who promoted Nano Nagle's plan for evangelisation after Nagle's death in 1784.

The U.S. Catholic Historian Spring, 1998, issue on Native-American Catholics includes several articles pertinent to the history of women religious: James Carroll, CFC, "Self-Direction, Activity, and Syncretism: Catholic Indian Boarding Schools on the Northern Great Plains in Contact," pp. 78-89, explores the work of the Grey Nuns of Montreal, Benedictine Sisters from Yankton, and Sisters of Saint Francis of Penance and Christian Charity from Niagara, in schools on reservations in North and South Dakota. Thomas W. Foley, "Father Francis M. Craft and the Indian Sisters," pp. 41-55, describes the late nineteenth-century efforts by Craft, whose grandmother was a full-blooded Mohawk, to establish a congregation of Indian women following the Benedictine rule.

Dorothy M. Brown and Elizabeth McKeown treat extensively of sisters' charitable works in The Poor Belong to Us: Catholic Charities and American Welfare (Harvard University Press, 1997).

Anne M. Butler's "Sowing Seeds of Justice: Catholic Nuns, Race and Texas," has been published as part of the Charles L. Wood Agricultural History Lecture Series at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Her research was facilitated by a Research Travel Grant from the Cushwa Center, University of Notre Dame.

Pamela Kirk's "Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Precursor of Latin American Feminism," has been published in the Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology 5 (February 1998), 16-38.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Ana María Díaz-Stevens, associate professor of church and society at Union Theological Seminary, New York, is documenting and analyzing the impact of four women's congregations: the Sisters of Notre Dame, Amityville Dominicans, Trinitarians, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood, on the academic and spiritual formation of Puerto Ricans, and the effect of missionary experience on the congregations. Her research is partially subsidized by a Cushwa Center fellowship.

Sioban Nelson, a postdoctoral fellow at Melbourne University's School of Nursing, is undertaking a comparative study of religious nurses in the U.S., Britain and Australia prior to reforms instigated by Florence Nightingale. She will be based at the University of Notre Dame, aided by a travel grant from the Cushwa Center.

Francis Assisi Kennedy, OSF, is interested in the correspondence of Ambrose Buchmaier (alt., -mayer, -meyer), OFM, Capuchin, pastor of St. Nicholas Church in New York ca.1846-1861. Please forward any information to her at P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036.

Ellen Whelan, OSF, is beginning work on a history of Saint Mary's Hospital/Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, with a view toward publication in January, 2001. She experienced the June HWR conference as a good way to get back into this type of historical research and writing, a pleasure she has not had since completing her dissertation at Syracuse in 1972.

Ann Thomasine Sampson, CSJ, is completing biographical studies of 16 pioneer sisters who contributed to the fields of education, health care, social service, the arts and spirituality in Minnesota. Names and birthplaces of over 2,000 Sisters of St. Joseph, St. Paul Province of the Carondelet congregation, will be included in the book, titled Seeds on Good Ground, publication of which is timed to mark the 150th anniversary of the group's arrival in St. Paul in 1851.

James T. Carroll, CFC, is conducting research for an article-length treatment of Roman Catholic women religious interned by the Japanese during World War II. He has identified women from 13 congregations: Maryknoll, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Good Shepherd, Immaculate Conception, Franciscan Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, Sisters of the Holy Cross, Sisters of the Holy Ghost, Holy Ghost Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Benedictines, Assumption Sisters, Sisters of Charity, St. Paul of Chartres Sisters, and Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine. He would appreciate information on archive locations for these groups, secondary source material, and oral histories, and can be reached at Iona

College, 715 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY
10801 (telephone 914-633-2166; email
<jcarroll@iona.edu>).

BOOK REVIEW

RETRIEVING A LIVING TRADITION:
ANGELINA OF MONTEGIOVE: FRANCISCAN,
TERTIARY, BEGUINE by Roberta A. McKelvie,
OSF (The Franciscan Institute, 1997; address for
orders, Franciscan Friars, 126 West 32nd St., New
York, NY 10001), 211 pp.

Venerated in Foligno in the same sanctuary as the more famous Franciscan penitent-mystic, Angela of Foligno, Angelina (variously labeled of Foligno, of Corbara, of Marsciano, or of Montegiove) (1357-1435) could have lingered indefinitely in the shadows. She has the distinction of being regarded as the founder of the Third Order Regular for Franciscan women. Widow, beguine (bizzoche), foundress, saint of the Third Order of St. Francis: the charismatically-gifted Angela shaped community life of the Italian tertiaries and became their first papally approved minister general. That achievement should have guaranteed her a stellar place in Franciscan lore. Angela's story was lovingly told by early (male) Franciscan chroniclers, according to their own optic. A biography appeared in 1627, two hundred years after her death, "launch [ing] an image of Angelina that remained unchanged until this century." That image differs considerably from the one revealed by McKelvie.

In addition to untangling a very involved web of historical understandings and misunderstandings about Angelina, Sister Roberta McKelvie, a member of the Bernardine Franciscans, here traces out the perduring influence of Angela on her own religious congregation, offering a reinterpretation of the received tradition about her. As women religious attempt to faithfully trace their spiritual roots, this is a task which lies in wait for many a congregation.

For Franciscan women religious, the delving began, naturally enough, with the proto-foundress Clare of Assisi. Thanks to the recent Clare anniversary, in 1993, a cluster of works from many countries and

languages has produced a new look at a woman who had been considered simply a side-kick to St. Francis. (The most recent work to come to my attention is the work of the fine Dutch scholar, Ludo Jongen: *HET LEVEN VAN DE ZALIGE MAAGD SINT CLARA*, Megen, 1998.) Such a faithful mirror to Francis was Clare that some noted (Franciscan men) scholars had previously considered it superfluous to say anything at all about her distinctive history of spirituality apart from Francis, and as a result, robbed her of her originality. Other scholars, such as Ingrid Peterson, OSF, have provided a deeper look at the life and writings of Clare, setting her uniqueness of organization and spirituality into greater prominence.

Grateful for the renewed light on Clare, yet realizing it was high time to move onward, McKelvie undertook this study in order to make the next step, enlarging the scope of study of prominent Franciscan women beyond Clare. After all, Clare is at the origins of the Second Order. Many Franciscans are eager now for information regarding the developments in the Third Orders (religious and secular) to which they are adherents. In unraveling the threads of the vita of Angelina, and employing a hermeneutics of suspicion and retrieval, McKelvie is led to confront patriarchal interpretations buried in existing lore on Angelina. Angelina's history is buried in the depths of Friar Minor history. The First Order is interpreting the Third in this instance. The fact that the earliest biography was written during the Counter-Reformation provides its own context for interpretation, further muddying the waters by eyeing Angelina as model of the prescriptions provided by Trent for the "good religious" of that day, obedient, enclosed, silent, monastic.

A third problem researched by McKelvie is the so-called poverty question, relating to ownership of goods. And fourth, there is the question of how friars related to women, to the penitential movement, and to the beguines. Any one of these problems is daunting enough. McKelvie however, does not hold back. As she originally presented this research as a doctoral dissertation, the work undertaken to sort out the threads is impressive and thorough. A new and credible Angelina emerges under the search lights as the work progresses, providing the reader not only with a new biography of Angelina to replace the

outmoded and misinterpreted ones, but also with all the clues necessary to relish the hunt, even if the book is not read with all the interest that a member of a specifically Bernardine Franciscan congregation would bring to it.

Divided into an introduction, seven chapters, and a set of appendices, the work is enriched by a very helpful inclusion of supporting illustrations including photographs, woodcuts, a map, and diplomatic extracts. By this means, we also learn how Angelina is represented hagiographically up to the present time.

In laying the groundwork, the background of the Franciscan Movement is discussed in brief, together with the problems of the poverty question.

McKelvie then opens up the interpretative tradition about Angelina's personal life, offering a view of the relationships of the Italian beguines to the tertiaries in an informative section very useful to the study of the Italian beguines. Secondly, the interpretative tradition about Angelina's communal life is focused upon. One chapter here relates the founding of the "Bernardine Sisters" in Poland, and another concentrates on Angelina's spiritual presence in Bernardine Franciscan life, especially in Polish foundations beginning in the fifteenth century.

Finally, the crown of the work comes in a section on historical and theological implications. The new Angelina comes into her own in most stimulating chapter, "Retrieving the Living Tradition." Here McKelvie reacts to "historical elitism which elevates the First Order to a preeminent place in the Franciscan world" as she attempts -- quite moderately but firmly, it seems -- to maintain the tension between Franciscan tradition and radical feminist critique.

The old symbol of Angelina showed a hagiographic virgin whose holiness was wrapped up in her love of virginity and charity, through persecution and exile. McKelvie demonstrates that in the over-accentuation of these classic traits by her seventeenth century biographer, other facets of her life were lost or obscured: "The significance of Angelina as a lay person in the world is, therefore, the most underdeveloped area of research and will most likely remain so unless additional material about that part of her

life surfaces in civil archives." In addition, the old biographical material illustrated Angelina as establishing an enclosed form of life for her Tertiary followers. In conformity to the expected model of the seventeenth century church, she was shown as seeking enclosure, obedient, and a model of virginity and silence rather than as a leader in any specific sense. No acknowledgment was made of her active life of performing charitable work. Later Angelina hagiography omitted reference to the importance of the beguine form of life, and to the considerable spread of Angelina's Third Order houses even into Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, and Poland.

In the new symbol which McKelvie proposes, "Angelina reconstructed" is one who is firmly based in her baptismal dedication to God, related in love to neighbor and church. Her stance for virginity, to which she invited other women as well, is interpreted, at least partially, as a stance against patriarchal domination. The revised Angelina is possessed of communal or ecclesial sense, unenclosed, eager to preach the word, collaborating with her sisters in devising a way to a new vocation in the church. These women chose their own superiors, for example. Here we see Angelina open to change, to development, to initiative.

McKelvie concludes by pointing out areas for further study in the Angelinan tradition. Which communities of the over 150 Third Order Regular congregations that can be identified today have roots with Angelina? What is the modern history of the Polish-American Bernardine Sisters? Where are the stories that can be retrieved which will lead to more egalitarian male-female relationships and collaboration in the entire Order?

On the negative side, the book is marred by rather abundant and irritating typographical errors. This reader would have appreciated being provided with indices. And, as long as there are illustrations, more maps would have been very helpful. As it is, there is only one rather primitive one of sixteenth century Cracow. Why not a few of the placement of the Italian houses?

In fine, it is a work which will grace Franciscan libraries (male and female communities) everywhere. Third Order regular communities in particular will find great inspiration from the strong, free,

loving woman who shaped tertiary communal life before imposition of enclosure. While Bernardine Franciscans will have a special interest in the carefully documented research presented here, the implications are much broader. Franciscans have been looking for the "real" Francis. Now we see that the "real" Angelina has been a stranger as well. The book will also interest those looking for balanced and critical works of revisionist hagiography. We may look forward to more works in the same vein in the future, promising a good read, good history, and a key to shape the future.

Sr. Helen Rolfson, OSF
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OPPORTUNITIES

Cushwa Center dissertation awards for July, 1999 through June, 2000, have an application deadline of February 1, 1999. For further information on these and other awards offered, write Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, University of Notre Dame, 1135 Flanner Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556; email <cushwa.1@nd.edu>).

The call for papers has been issued for the annual meeting of the American Historical Society to be held January 6-9, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois. To obtain guidelines for proposal submission, the deadline for which is February 15, 1999, contact Andrew Schulkin at the AHA office, 400 A St., SE, Washington, DC 20003. Telephone (202) 544-2422, ext. 104. Fax (202) 544-8307. Email <aschulkin@theaha.org>

The American Catholic Historical Association annual spring meeting is being jointly sponsored this year by Cabrini College and Villanova University, March 18-20, 1999. Proposals for papers and full sessions are due October 1; send to Prof. Margaret McGuinness, Chair, Religious Studies Dept., Cabrini College, Radnor, PA 19087.

Radcliffe College announces honorary visiting appointment opportunities, research support grants, and dissertation grants at its Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library, on the history of women in

America. Grants are open to college and university faculty, independent scholars, and graduate students at the dissertation stage, who are engaged in research that can benefit from access to Schlesinger Library holdings. Proposal deadline for all programs is February 1, 1999; for complete information write Grants Administrator, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, 10 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Competition for The Organization of American Historians' 1999 Lerner-Scott Prize, for the best doctoral dissertation in U.S. women's history (completed between July 1, 1997, through June 30, 1998), requires submission of a letter of support from a faculty member at the degree-granting institution, along with an abstract, table of contents, and sample chapter, to *each* of the three prize committee members, by November 1, 1998. Members are: Elisabeth I. Perry (chair), 401 Bowling Ave. #77, Nashville, TN 37205; Susan Armitage, Dept. of History, Washington State Univ., Pullman, WA 99164; and Susan Ware, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, 10 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138. Please label all entries "1999 Lerner-Scott Prize Entry."

Sistory, an email list moderated by Regina Siegfried, ASC, and Flo Deacon, OSF, welcomes all HWR members to join. For purposes of networking, timely conference announcements, and sharing of research, the list is meant to complement Sister-L. To join, contact <Regina.Siegfried@juno.com>. She is moderating the list and maintaining the address list.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please have copy for the February 1999 issue to the editor by January 1, 1999.

THE HWR NEWSLETTER

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DISTINGUISHED HISTORIAN AWARD

CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

Whereas Mary Ewens, Professor and Administrator at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome, embraced the religious life in the Dominican tradition, and has served with distinction as faculty member and administrator of Dominican-sponsored institutions of higher education in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Italy, and

Whereas her doctoral studies in the American Studies program of the University of Minnesota brought an interdisciplinary perspective to the subject of the history of women religious, and

Whereas her thesis, The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth-Century America, was a seminal work in the field, offering guidance and inspiration to numerous scholars, and

Whereas she played a founding role in the Conference on the History of Women Religious and in the planning of its initial triennial conference, and

Whereas her syntheses of the subject and contributions to documentary collections, including her essay, "Women in the Convent," in American Catholic Women: A Historical Perspective; and "The Leadership of Nuns in Immigrant Catholicism" in Women and Religion in America, Vol. I, The Nineteenth Century. A Documentary History, exposed this history to a broad readership, and

Whereas her essays, "The Double Standard of the American Nun," in An American Church; "Removing the Veil: The Liberated American Nun," in Women of Spirit; and "Political Activity of American Sisters Before 1970," in Between God and Caesar: Priests, Sisters, and Political Office in the United States, brought sound historical perspectives and a high standard of scholarship to consideration of contemporary religious life, and

Whereas her research and publications relating to native American sisterhoods in the Dakotas and Alaska drew attention to this forgotten development in religious life for women in North America, and

Whereas she traveled the world assisting religious congregations of women to identify resources for ministry in her capacity as executive director of the Conrad Hilton Fund for Sisters, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference on the History of Women Religious here assembled present the Distinguished Historian Award to Mary Ewens, O. P., in deep appreciation for her creative and scholarly contributions to the field of the history of women religious and her untiring efforts on behalf of women's congregations in every continent of the globe.

Given the twenty-second day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred ninety-eight, at the conference, "Through Multiple Lenses: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the History of Women Religious," gathered at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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