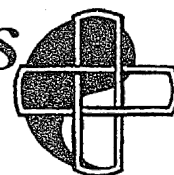


# History of Women Religious News and Notes



Volume 16—Number 2

JUNE 2003

## HWR Network News

The deadline of August 1, 2003, for submitting proposals for panels or single papers for presentation at the Sixth Triennial Conference is fast approaching. For more information on the Conference, to be convened June 27-30, 2004, at the Atchison Heritage Conference Center in Atchison, Kansas, contact local arrangements chair, Judith Sutera, OSB, at [jsutera@benedictine.edu](mailto:jsutera@benedictine.edu); or program chair, Carol Coburn, at [coburnck@mail.avila.edu](mailto:coburnck@mail.avila.edu).

Thank you to those of you who brought your subscription/HWR membership up to date following the reminder in the last issue. Please look at the renewal date indicated next to your name on the address label and renew your subscription if it is due. This will prevent our dropping from the list anyone who is in arrears with dues through inadvertence.

## Publications

Mary Catherine Hilker's presentation for the 2001 Madeleva Lecture at Saint Mary's College, South Bend, has been published under the title *Speaking with Authority: Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today* (Paulist Press, 2002).

Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff have edited an anthology, *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800* (Routledge, 2003), that examines the interpretation of sanctity and its cult in the colonial Americas. Chapters of special relevance for women religious are Dominique Deslandres' "In the Shadow of the Cloister: Representations of Female Holiness in New France;" Greer's "Iroquois Virgin: The Story of Catherine Tekakwitha in New France and New Spain;" and Kathleen Ann Myers, "'Redeemer of America': Rosa de Lima (1586-1617), the Dynamics of Identity and Canonization."

P. Renee Baernstein, in *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (Routledge, 2002), describes the adaptation of a Milanese convent to the Counter-Reformation world of Renaissance Italy.

Anita M. Caspary, *Witness to Integrity: The Crisis of the Immaculate Heart Community of California* (Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2003), gives us a long awaited first-person account of the controversy involving the Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation and James Francis McIntyre, Cardinal Archbishop of Los Angeles, in the years immediately before and after the Second Vatican Council.

Roland Davey, CSJ, and Marie de Paul Rochester, CSJ, chronicle 150 years of a hospital's history in *Sesquicentennial: 150 Years of Caring at St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Paul, Minnesota* (Privately printed, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Paul Province, 2003).

Ann Hoyer, SSJ, *Seasons of Nature and of Grace: History of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling 1853-2003* (Privately printed, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Wheeling, 2002), provides a narrative rich with excerpts from the writings and other memorabilia of past sisters, priests and bishops in her account of the life and ministries of the Wheeling congregation, begun as a mission from Carondelet, Missouri, in early 1853.

John J. Fialka, *Sisters: Catholic Nuns and the Making of America* (St. Martin's Press, 2003), describes the contributions of nuns to American life in popular, journalistic style, using to good advantage biographical detail for Catherine McAuley, Elizabeth Lange, and Katherine Drexel, as well as for lesser known Mercy Sisters Sharon Burns and Lucille Lyness.

Anne Butler continues her studies on religious in the West in her article, "Pioneer Sisters in a Catholic Melting Pot: Juggling Identity in the Pacific Northwest," *American Catholic Studies*, Spring, 2003, pp. 21-39.

Karen M. Kennelly's chapter "Leadership of Women Religious," in *One Hundred Years of Catholic Education: Historical Essays in Honor of the Centennial of the National Catholic Educational Association* (NCEA, Washington, D.C., 2003), assesses the contribution of sisters to the expansion of Catholic elementary and secondary education in the U.S.

The Winter 2003 issue of *U.S. Catholic Historian* is devoted to the topic of recovering the U.S. Hispanic Catholic heritage. Essays of particular significance for women religious are Ana María Díaz-Stevens, "Missionizing the Missionaries: Religious Congregations of Women in Puerto Rico, 1910-1960," pp. 33-51; and Anita de Luna, MCDP, "Evangelizadoras del Barrio: The Rise of the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence," pp. 53-71.

Fernanda Perrone's article, "Documenting Student Life at Catholic Women's Colleges," was due to appear in the *Journal of Archival Organization*, December, 2002. Perrone is currently doing research on the history of Catholic women's colleges in New Jersey.

The Center for the Study of Religious Life commissioned CARA to do an annotated bibliography on religious life with focus on social science research in the U.S. since 1990. Edited by Mary Charlotte Chandler, RSCJ, the 493-entry text is available on CD for \$15 from the Center (5401 So. Cornell Ave., Chicago, IL 60615).

## Research in Progress

Gertrude (Trudy) Yeager, associate professor of history at Tulane, is working on a study of Latin American women's participation in the Social Catholic movement in the 1920s. She is also developing a panel proposal for the 2004 Triennial Conference, with the working title of "Doing Liberation Theology in Latin America." Yeager may be contacted at [tyeager@tulane.edu](mailto:tyeager@tulane.edu)

Suzanne Noffke, OP, reports substantial progress

on the first volume of Racine Dominican history, covering the story of the founders, Maria Benedicta Bauer and Maria Thomasina Ginker. She will be working in Bavarian archives this summer. An article reflecting her broader Dominican studies, "Integrity Learnt in Contemplation: Insights from Catherine of Siena," appears in the Irish publication, *Religious Life Review*, March/April, 2003, pp. 66-80.

Barbra Wall is writing a book on Catholic sisters' development of hospitals in the West and Midwest, 1865-1925, based on intensive study of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Paul Province; Holy Cross sisters in Indiana; and the Incarnate Word sisters in Texas.

Constance Gaynor, FSP, is continuing research on the history of her congregation, the Franciscan Sisters of Peace, with a view toward publication by 2005.

Mary Sudman Donovan is working on a book on the Episcopal Church's response to the destruction of the World Trade Center. She reports that many members of Episcopal sisterhoods were active in that effort.

Regina Bechtel, SC notes that work continues on the Elizabeth Bayley Seton collected writings. Volumes I and II have been published (see *HWR News*, Oct. 2002); publication of vol. III (Seton's meditations, instructions, and translations) is in process but delayed by lack of funding. Regina would welcome funding suggestions: [reginab@mountsaintvincent.edu](mailto:reginab@mountsaintvincent.edu)

Anthony D. Andreassi's doctoral thesis research at Georgetown is on the lives and work of the first generation of the Sisters of Divine Compassion, a small congregation founded in New York City in 1886.

## Book Reviews

*Beyond the Adobe Wall*, by Patricia Jean Manion, SL (Two Trails Publishing Press, Independence, MO, 2001). Pp. 195.

*Uncommon Women; Unmarked Trails: The Courageous Journey of Catholic Missionary Sisters in Frontier Montana*, by Suzanne H. Schrems (Horse Creek Publications, 2003). Pp. 128.

The wonderful title of Suzanne Schrems' book serves as a perfect umbrella for both these books, the one dealing with nuns in frontier Montana and the other with the missionary exploits of the Sisters of Loretto from their arrival in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1852 until 1894 when they had established nine houses: six in New Mexico, one in Texas, and one in Colorado.

The leader of the Loretto group was Sister Magdalen Hayden, an Irish immigrant child who entered the recently founded Sisters of Loretto in Perry County Missouri in 1830. Twelve years later she was one of a group of twelve who responded to a request for Sisters of Loretto to come to Santa Fe—City of Holy Faith—to begin a school. Their trip was harrowing. Beyond the usual discomforts of wagon travel and riverboat (poor food, fatigue, lack of privacy) they were visited by the dread cholera. Since cholera victims had to be isolated the whole company was forced to leave the boat. On the banks of the Missouri, housed in the heat of an old warehouse, they watched their superior die. A second sister, too ill to continue, was also left behind. Sister Magdalen assumed the role of superior which she held until 1894.

During those forty-two years the mission flourished. In addition to recruits coming from the East to join them, they soon had a flourishing novitiate of native girls zealous and well trained to continue the work of education. Manion describes in some detail each of the new foundations with its attendant hardships and triumphs. "Uncommon women" indeed.

One of the most impressive qualities of these first sisters was their sworn determination to learn Spanish, the language of the people. In every instance, this became their first duty. The author is fortunate in having community annals and a substantial correspondence to draw from. It seems to this reviewer that she has lost the opportunity of dramatic immediacy by not quoting liberally from these sources rather than resorting to paraphrase. Who were the Sisters of Loretto, what was the position of New Mexico, what was the impact of the Civil War and its aftermath? Sprinkled throughout are charming and whimsical pen and ink sketches which add a certain flavor. One regrets that no map is provided for those not acquainted with this terrain.

Professor Schrems' book covers the years 1864-1919. It is not, however, a simple chronology. She begins with the arrival of the first religious women in western Montana at St. Ignatius Mission at the foot of the Mission Mountains. The Sisters of Charity of Providence, a congregation begun in Montreal in 1843, were already working in the Pacific Northwest when the Jesuits asked their help in establishing a school for Native Americans. The first four sisters arrived in October, 1864, just four months after leaving Montreal. Since they could not travel across country, they had sailed south, crossed the isthmus of Panama on horseback, sailed up the Pacific and then continued their 500 mile trek to the mission.

Just twenty years later six Ursuline nuns from Toledo, headed by Mother Amadeus Dunne, arrived in Miles City in southeast Montana, to prepare for work among the Northern Cheyennes. While the Sisters of Providence remained mostly at St. Ignatius, the Ursulines traveled far and wide, establishing eight missions within the next sixteen years.

While providing interesting details of this onerous work, Schrems calls our attention to larger issues. In chapter three: "The Trail to the Great White Father," she investigates an area which is not immediately available to those of us who may read and admire the documents of these early pioneers without being aware of some of the underlying problems. Here Schrems calls our attention to the important role of the Indian Agent, to the political chicanery which often accompanied his appointment and to the power he could exert over both missionaries and Native Americans. Ecumenism was a thing of the future and the rivalry and hostility among Christian sects would certainly seem enough for the "Noble Savage" to question the tenets of Christianity.

But chapter six, "The Trail to St. Labre," is surely enough to re-inspire us. This was heroic living. That three sisters, so unskilled in the ways of the prairie, so foreign to the loneliness of these vast spaces, could "soldier on" for years, often without any protection, with little evidence of success, without even a priest to provide them with the sacraments—surely this must lift our hearts.

Throughout her volume Schrems keeps us aware of "women's place" as it was conceived in Victorian America. Whether we want to agree with Jay P. Dolan in *The American Catholic Experience* that nuns were "Catholic serfs," Schrems certainly provides us with evidence that not only bishops but even the Jesuits who lived in close proximity to the nuns, who were certainly aware of the burdens they bore, could be remarkably dogmatic and peremptory. In the contracts that were drawn up it is obvious that the nuns (both Ursulines and Sisters of Providence) were expected to accept the lion's share of washing, mending, cooking, cleaning. In return the priests would provide them with spiritual sustenance. To their credit, neither group of women accepted such conditions graciously.

Professor Schrems has provided us with a book which at once satisfies and entices. What more? we wonder as we put it down. What still remains to be explored? Uncommon women. John Fialka is not far from the mark when he subtitles his book, *Catholic Nuns and the Making of America*.

Irene Mahoney, OSU  
College of New Rochelle

*Gender Identities in American Catholicism*, eds. Paula Kane, Jim Kenneally, and Karen Kennelly (Orbis Books, 2001). Pp. xxvi+287.

*Gender Identities in American Catholicism* is a well edited work that makes a uniquely creative contribution to the nine volume series, *American Catholic Identities-A Documentary History*, general editor, Christopher J. Kauffman. *Gender Identities* is a fascinating collection of primary source documents that illustrate the rich diversity of Catholic approaches to—and construction of—ideal masculinity and femininity over a 200-year period of American Catholicism. The abundant research that is illustrated as well as the useful categorization will serve a wide variety of readers who share interest in the journey of American Catholicism from past to present. The diversity of multiple interpreters and interpretations represented in the 120 primary source documents make this a fascinating and comprehensive collection that will be a valuable reference for years to come.

The editors have categorized the material into eleven topical units with the source documents arranged chronologically in each unit for easy and useful reference. The readable and enlightened introduction to each of these units presents an overall context that guides readers who have less historical sense than the editors. Overall, the primary documents that have been selected for inclusion illustrate clearly that being an American and being Catholic has never meant that all American Catholics think and believe the same things about gender identity. Changing social conditions and an American way of life had its influence in the advice that was given to men and women by those who believed they were accurate representations of "church" insight. As might be expected in a nation proclaiming equality, liberty and justice for all, there are quite different and occasionally directly opposing perspectives on the gender related issues.

Some of the unit topics covered by the rich diversity of source documentation include women and men's roles in family, church and society, gender and education, gender roles and the Vatican, gender and politics, gender and social reform, gendering of work, alternate gender identities and strategies of resistance and reaction to limited gender views. Each of the eleven categories of this work is covered with historical precision and diversity of approaches that reveal the creative richness of American Catholicism up to and including the present era.

Among those who will find this an invaluable source for intelligent reading and discussion are any Catholics who are interested in the difference being American and Catholic has made, and particularly groups of clergy, theological educators, book discussion groups, ecumenical groups trying to understand each other's Christian tradition, women's and men's groups interested in gender related issues of men and women, and anyone interested in American Christian history who wishes to study primary source documents rather than interpretations of history.

This reviewer highly recommends this work as deserving a space on bookshelves of all those who already know that inculturation has been neither easy nor too difficult for American Catholics. This foundational work is a definite contribution to

understanding an identity of American Catholic that reaches over a two hundred year journey. It provides insight for an American church still contributing to form a church that is on its way to becoming truly Catholic or universal.

Shawn Madigan, CSJ  
The College of St. Catherine

## Announcements

We note with regret the death of Thomas W. Spalding, CFX, January 28, in Louisville, Kentucky. Himself a noted church historian (*The Premier See, a History of the Archdiocese of Baltimore* and other works), Brother Thomas assisted

many women religious with their research and writing of community histories and will be greatly missed.

The deadline for papers is past for the Second Annual Conference on Women Religious of Britain and Ireland, 10-11 October 2003, Birkbeck College, University of London, but contributions are still invited for a session on *Work in Progress*. Please send an abstract of not more than 100 words to Dr. Caroline Bowden at [cbowden@stanford.edu](mailto:cbowden@stanford.edu) or Carmen Mangion at [carmenmangion@freeuk.com](mailto:carmenmangion@freeuk.com) before 31 July 2003. The conference was extended into a second day because of the large number of abstracts received for the already scheduled sessions.

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News item for **HWR News and Notes**, Recent Publication, Research, Interests, etc.

2401 Karen M. Kennelly, CSJ, Editor

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Revier College's Heritage Committee invites proposals for papers or panels to be included in a Symposium, "The Tradition of Catholic Education in the Northeast," to convene March 4-5, 2004, in Nashua, New Hampshire. The deadline for proposal abstracts (for paper, one-page limit; for panels, two pages) is September 15, 2003. Send email or hard copy proposals to Guyleane Couture, Rivier College, 420 Main Street, Nashua, NH 03060. Tel. 603-897-8577. Email <gcouture@rivier.edu>

HWR subscriber Mary Pius O'Farrell, PBVM, reports from Cork that the Presentation sisters' founder, Nano Nagle, topped a poll of *Sunday Tribune* readers in December, 2002, as the "Greatest Irish Person." Congratulations, Nano Nagle and all her Presentation daughters throughout the world!

### **Newsletter Deadline**

Please have copy for October, 2003, issue to the editor by September 1, 2003.

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