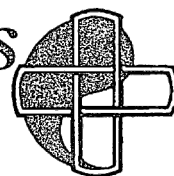


History of Women Religious News and Notes



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OCTOBER 2004

HWR Network News

The Sixth Triennial Conference on the History of Women Religious convened in Atchison, Kansas, June 27-30. The Conference theme, "Crossing Boundaries: Comparative Perspectives on the History of Women Religious," featured papers from Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, Japan, and Norway, in addition to the United States. Travel difficulties forced cancellation of papers from India.

Participants had an unusual opportunity to view advance clips of a PBS documentary to be released in 2005, "Sisters of Selma: Bearing Witness for Change." Producer Jayasri Hart offered a commentary supplemented by a round table composed of three of the Sisters featured in the film: Antona Ebo, FSM, Barbara Moore, CSJ, and Rosemary Flanigan, CSJ.

Other highlights of the Conference were the keynote address by Elizabeth Rapley, recipient of the HWR Distinguished Historian Award, "A Boundary Crossed: Apostolic Women in Early New France;" and Anne Butler's spirited address at the awards banquet, "There are Exceptions to Every Rule: Adjusting the Boundaries—Catholic Sisters and the American West." Two scholars were honored recipients of the Conference's Distinguished Book Award: Diane Batts Morrow for *"Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time": The Antebellum Experience of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828-1860*; and Anita Caspary, IHM, for *Witness to Integrity: The Crisis of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Community of California*. The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Mary Hermenia Muldrey, RSM, in recognition of her work over a period of many years documenting and interpreting the record of the Sisters of Mercy in the South, culminating in her major biographical work, *Abounding in Mercy: Mother Austin Carroll*.

Elizabeth McGahan, HWR member from New Brunswick, Canada, reviewed the Conference for H-



This picture was taken at the "Sisters and the State: Boundaries of Faith and Politics"

Names from Left to Right are as follows: Susanne Malchau; Else-Britt Nilsen, OP; Midori Teranishi; Wendy Pojmann

Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. The webpage address is <http://www.h-net.org/~educ> To access the Conference review type McGahan in the subject search box.

SAVE THE DATE: the Seventh Triennial Conference will convene June 24-27, 2007, at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

Publications

The Dizionario degli istituti di Perfezione, edited by Guerrino Pelliccia and Giancarlo Rocca, Vol. X, Via-Zwijssen (Rome: Edizioni Pauline, 2003), is the last volume in this encyclopedia of monasticism project begun in the wake of Vatican II and published regularly since 1974. "Monasticism" is interpreted broadly to include expressions from Islam and Buddhism as well as Christian traditions, and lay movements as well as commonly recognized orders and congregations. Appendices update the history of women religious and statistics for religious groups worldwide.

The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England, edited by James G. Clark (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 18. Rochester, New York: The Boydell Press, 2002) is a collection of essays that

originated in a colloquium at York in 1999. Essays include several with relevance for women religious including "Women Religious" by Claire Cross and Marilyn Oliva.

Anne Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing about Women and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 2004), surveys the literary activities (chronicles and other writings) of women in German and Dutch-speaking religious communities in Italy, Switzerland, Germany and the Low Countries in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Works such as Magdalena Kremer's chronicle of Kirchheim, Ursula Haider's New Year's addresses to her community, and Kunigunda Haller's advice for prioresses demonstrate the women's engagement in many kinds of writing beyond the visionary works often regarded as their primary mode of expression.

Cyprian Davis, OSB, *Henriette Delille Servant of Slaves Witness to the Poor* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans in Cooperation with the Sisters of the Holy Family, 2004), provides a biography of the founder of the Sisters of the Holy Family, the second congregation for black women religious to be established in the U.S. With almost no direct testimony from Delille's own writings, Davis relies on legal documents and archival sources bearing Delille's name and those of her contemporaries to reconstruct their lives and times. Appendices include an historical sketch of Louisiana in Henriette Delille's time (1812/13-1862), a genealogy, a listing of the library holdings of the Sisters, and a bibliographic essay.

Ann M. Harrington, BVM, *Creating Community: Mary Frances Clarke and Her Companions* (Dubuque, Iowa: Mount Carmel Press, 2004), drew on archival collections in the U.S. and Ireland to provide this engaging and perceptive portrait of the founder of the Sisters of Charity, BVM, and the companions who accompanied her from the early days in Dublin to Philadelphia and thence to the Iowa frontier town of Dubuque where they settled and gave definitive form to the BVM congregation.

Sally Witt, CSJ, *Sisters of the North County: The History of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Watertown, New York* (Privately

printed, Sisters of St. Joseph of Watertown, 2005), relates the story of a Sisters of St. Joseph congregation, founded in 1880, that traces its spiritual origins to seventeenth century France. Copies of the book, expected to be off the press by early 2005, will be available from Annunciata Collins, SSJ, 1425 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601; Tel. 315-782-3460.

Kathleen A. Brosnan, "Public Presence, Public Silence: Nuns, Bishops, and the Gendered Space of Early Chicago," *The Catholic Historical Review*, 90: 3 (July, 2004), 473- 496, describes and analyses from a gender perspective the history of the Sisters of Mercy in Chicago from their arrival in 1843 to the Civil War era.

Steven M. Avella, *In the Richness of the Earth: A History of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee 1843-1958* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002) integrates traditional perspectives on the founding of parishes and the activities of clerical hierarchy with attention to the contributions of women religious and the growth of Catholic communities in his account of this key Midwestern archdiocese.

Suellen Hoy, "Stunned with Sorrow," *Chicago History* (Summer, 2004), 4-25, recounts with sensitivity the experience of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVMs) as both victims and heroes of the tragic 1958 Our Lady of the Angels school fire in which ninety-two children and three Sisters lost their lives.

Marian Ronan's review essay, "Danger and Longing: Roman Catholic Nuns in American Culture," appears in *Religious Studies Review*, 30: 1 (January 2004).

Research in Progress

Michel Paret anticipates completing his Ph. D. program in the sociology of religion at the Sorbonne (École Pratique des Hautes Études) by late this year or early 2005. His topic is "Les Diaconesses de Reuilly, une communautaire religieuse protestante entre action medico-social et vocation communautaire religieuse (1841-2002)."

Ann Mayo, a Secular Franciscan graduate student interested in Franciscan studies, is submitting a

paper on Angela of Foligno to the Franciscan journal, *The Cord*. She is currently developing a paper comparing the spirituality of St. Clare and Angela, and has been accepted for studies at the Franciscan International Study Centre in Canterbury, England. Any suggestions for funding would be welcome. Ann may be contacted at annm@hsc.edu or at PO Box 728, Hampden-Sydney, VA 23943.

Susan Hill Lindley, Dept. of Religion at Saint Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, is working with an advisory board and Westminster John Knox Press on the Westminster Dictionary of Women in Religious History. The one-volume, alphabetically arranged dictionary will have short entries on specific women and women's organizations including Roman Catholic women's orders in the U.S. and Canada.

Mary Ann Kuttner, SSND, is working on the English translation of the letters of the School Sisters of Notre Dame founder, Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger. Kuttner has identified consultants regarding translation of the letters from the original German, but would appreciate consultant suggestions for matters relating to editing and publication. She may be contacted at makuttner@ssndmankato.org or at 170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN 56001.

Margaret Nacke and Mary Savoie, CSJs from Concordia, Kansas, are continuing work on their project, "Sister Survivors of European Communism," by collecting oral histories and congregational historical documents pertaining to sisters who survived communism in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. The Catholic Theological Union in Chicago is serving as the repository for data. Anyone with contacts and/or relevant data is asked to contact Margaret or Mary at csjdev@nckn.com or by calling them at 785-527-2516. Mail address is 602-20th St., Belleville, KS 66935.

Marian Ronan has begun research on a biography of Mary Daniel Turner, SNDdeN, executive director of the Leadership Council of Women Religious 1973-1978 and superior general of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur 1978-1984. She would be interested in hearing from those who interacted with Turner in either of these capacities or at other

times during her life. Ronan may be contacted at mronan@sbcglobal.net or by writing to her at American Baptist Seminary of the West/Graduate Theological Union, 1811 Milvia St., Berkeley, CA 94709.

Book Reviews

Sisters Are Doing What?!! Great Stories About Religious Women Today, by Regina Coll (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004). Pp. 112.

In this slight publication, Regina Coll introduces her readers to a sampling of women religious who apparently were selected because their lives and ministries do not fit stereotypes of "good sisters." Despite the volume's title, not all those included are living "today" (for instance, Blessed Margaret of Castello); indeed, Coll provides no information as to how her examples were chosen, and what or whom they are intended to represent, although a disproportionate number of those cited are Sisters of Saint Joseph (the author's congregation). The result is a collection of anecdotes, many of them about undeniably interesting women, but hardly surprising or informative to anyone who has even rudimentary familiarity with what sisters have been up to during the past half century.

It is not clear for whom this volume is intended—perhaps those high school girls who no longer tend to be the focus of serious vocation work—but it is unlikely to be of much use to scholars. Both the book and its presentation are rather breathless. For example, the cover comments (quoted extensively on both the amazon.com and barnes&noble.com websites) begin by gasping: "Prepare to be astonished!" That exclamation point, not to mention the two in the title and the "great" in the subtitle are indicative of a tone that is, alas, more emotional than insightful.

All of this is rather unfortunate and, it might be said, unnecessary. Coll—who served for eighteen years as Director of Field Education in the University of Notre Dame's Theology Department—is a serious scholar who has offered significant contributions to both religious and women's studies in previous works such as *Christianity and Feminism in Conversation* and *How to Understand Church and Ministry in the United States*. She unquestion-

ably has the gifts and resources to have produced a book on religious life that is accessible and informative. For whatever reason, *Sisters Are Doing What?!!* is not that book.

Margaret Susan Thompson
Syracuse University

Nuns and Sisters in the Nordic Countries after the Reformation: A Female Counter-Culture in Modern Society, ed. by Yvonne Maria Werner (vol. 79, *Studia Missionalia Svecana*, Uppsala, Sweden, 2004). Pp. 442.

The nine authors contributing to this collection of essays were participants in a research project focused on the history of women religious in the Nordic countries. Financial support by the Swedish Research Council, including funds for translation and printing, and by the Nordic Research Council for the Humanities, facilitated several project conferences and what was clearly a very fruitful dialogue leading to the publication of this groundbreaking volume.

Research a decade ago by the Swedish scholar, Inger Hammar, called attention to the relationship of religion and women's emancipation in Sweden (see particularly her doctoral dissertation, *Emancipation och religion. Den svenskakvinnorörelsens pionjäre i debatt om kvinnans kallelse ca 1860-1900*, Stockholm, 1999). Norway has been particularly well-served by Dominican sister-theologian Else-Britt Nilson's studies of the work of women religious in that country (for a comprehensive essay, see "Ordenssøstrens virke i Norge-en oversikt," in *Den katolske kirke i Norge fra kristningen til idag*, Oslo, 1993). Publication of Susanne Malchau's biography of a Danish-born Sister of St. Joseph of Chambéry (*Kærlighed er tjeneste. Søster Benedicte Ramsing--En biografi*, Århus, 1998) was instrumental in drawing the notice of serious researchers to this neglected field. Now, for the first time, thanks to the decision by the authors to publish their latest research in English, a broader academic audience can benefit from their outstanding work.

Contributors and their essays are Agneta af Jochnick Östborn, "The Birgittine Revival in Sweden," Yvonne Maria Werner, "Female Counter-Culture and Catholic Mission: The Sister of Saint

Joseph in Denmark and Sweden," Susanne Malchau, "Women Religious and Protestant Welfare: The Sisters of Saint Joseph's Empire of Catholic Hospitals in Denmark," Katrin Åmell, "The Convent—A Global Village," Vefie Poels, "Expanding the Number of Tabernacles: Dutch Women Religious in the Norwegian Mission," Else-Britt Nilsen, "Religious Identity and National Loyalty: Women Religious in Norway during the Second World War," Birgitta Laghé, "National but Foreign: Female Religious Communities in the Church of Sweden," Susan Sundback, "Submission, Protest and Emancipation: Female Orders and Convents in the Nordic Context," and Sven-Erik Brodd, "A Female Face of the Church: Sisterhoods from an Ecclesiological Perspective."

An introduction by Werner places the work of these scholars in the context of historiography in Europe and North America as well as in the Nordic countries particularly as this relates to the growing recognition of the positive impact of religion on women's emancipation.

Not immediately evident from essay titles is the chronological, geographical and denominational scope of the work. The effective coverage time-wise is from the 1850s when Denmark became the first of the Nordic countries to restore full religious liberty to its citizens, to the present. Geographically, although the work of women religious in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden is the central concern of the various authors, data pertaining to the activities of religious congregations and monastic orders of women in the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, and Iceland, as well as in the aforementioned countries, is summarized in appendices I.—V. as compiled by Malchau and Nilsen.

In addition to the 67 Roman Catholic women's groups (51 congregations and 16 monastic or contemplative orders) identified as having established a presence in the Nordic countries, 1851-2000, one Orthodox convent is named (in Finland, 1895—) along with 12 Protestant foundations (1947—). Figures on the number of women as of 2000 afford another perspective: there were 12 Orthodox religious at that time, their number having fallen sharply with World War II; 49 Protestant sisters, and 755 Roman Catholic sisters.

Scholarly readers will miss not having an index, but will be grateful for the extensive footnotes and bibliography of unpublished and published sources. The very readable text is enlivened by numerous black and white photographs. Speaking as the descendent of Swedish Lutheran immigrants to the United States in the 1870s, and as a student of religious life, this book awakened family memories and whetted my appetite for more such research.

Karen Eastman-Kennelly
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Announcements

Angelyn Dries, OSF, author of *The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History* and other related works, notes the lack of a forum among scholars to discuss U.S. Catholic missions overseas.

Although many women's congregations sent their members to Latin America, China, Japan, Africa, Oceania, and Korea, Dries observes that "it is difficult to find out what each of us is researching, what syllabi we might have produced encompassing some aspect of the topic, what our students are researching, helpful website links, and so forth. As assistant editor of *Missiology*, I know that very little comes to us on American Catholic missions for consideration in this journal."

Thinking that this journal is not unique, and that research on this subject needs to be promoted not only in "in-house publications but also in other venues," she invites persons interested in being part of a list-serve to keep themselves informed about research on various aspects of U.S. Catholic missions overseas. The list-serve would consist of those researching the topic or archivists whose holdings

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are germane. If you would like to be included on this list, please email her at driesa@slu.edu or write Angelyn Dries, OSF, Danforth Chair, Dept. of Theological Studies, Saint Louis University, 3800 Lindell Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63108.

Elaine Lindsay co-edits *Woman-Church*, an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion. The journal carries items of potential interest to subscribers whether concerning organizations, publications, or conferences. It has an international subscription list, not just Australian. If you are interested in subscribing, Lindsay may be contacted at elindsay@dodo.com.au or write Women-Church, GPO Box 2134, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia.

The Fortieth International Congress on Medieval Studies will convene May 5-8, 2005, at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan USA 49008. Abstracts for papers were due by September 15, 2004. For more advance information contact mdvl_congres@wmich.edu or consult the webpage <http://www.wmich.edu/medieval>

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