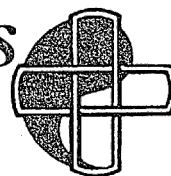


History of Women Religious News and Notes



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HWR Network News

The Seventh Triennial Conference on the History of Women Religious is scheduled to convene June 24-27, 2007, at the University of Notre Dame. The site committee will be chaired by Kathleen Sprow Cummings; the program committee by Prudence Moylan; and the awards committee by Elizabeth Kolmer. Advance information regarding conference format and the proposal process for those desiring to submit papers, organize panels or propose topics for discussion will be available later this year.

Carol Coburn, immediate past program chair, recently sent a reminder to those who presented papers at the 2004 conference to submit a copy of their paper and a release form. Papers are archived at Avila in the Women Religious Special Collection and are made available upon request with the author's permission. Please send your paper and form by regular mail addressed to Coburn at Avila University, 11901 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 64145; or by email to coburnck@mail.avila.edu. Depending on the availability of the paper and the author's release form preference, requests for copies of conference papers will be honored.

Publications

Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800, edited by Alan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York: Routledge, 2003), includes several essays pertaining to women religious: Dominique Deslandres, on women religious in Quebec; Kathleen Ann Myers, on Rose of Lima.

Ordini religiosi, santità e culti: Prospettive di ricerca tra Europa e America Latina, edited by Gabriella Zarri (Firenze: Congedo Editore, 2003), includes essays highlighting women religious in the Spanish colonies: Francesca Cantù, "Rosa da Lima e il 'mistico giardino' del Nuovo Mondo: Identità e trasfigurazione di una santa nell'immaginario sociale peruviano;" and Sara Cabibbo, "Una 'dama niña y hermosa' nella nuova Spagna—Maria d'Agreda fra gli Indios."

Mary Katherine Doyle, RSM, has completed a long-awaited biography of a pioneer religious in the American West, *Like a Tree by Running Water: The Story of Mary Baptist Russell, California's First Sister of Mercy* (Blue Dolphin Press, 2004). Copies in hardcover or softcover are available from the press or from the author at 535 Sacramento St., Auburn, CA 95603. Tel. 916-984-1124.

Jill Blee makes an important contribution to the history of Catholic education in Australia in *From the Murray to the Sea: The History of Catholic Education in the Balart Diocese* (Catholic Education Office, Balart, and Indri Publishing, 2004).

Judith Lancaster, SHCJ, *Cornelia Connelly and Her Interpreters* (England, The Way Press, 2004) explores the ways people have understood Cornelia Connelly (1809-1879), wife, mother, and founder of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, over the past century. The book may be ordered through the online The Way Ignation Book Service, www.theway.org.uk.

Kathleen Marie Shields, CSJ, *Aloha Key Akua, The Love of God: Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Hawaii Vice-Province* (St. Paul, Minnesota, Good Ground Press, 2004), relates the missionary story of the women who transplanted a U.S. mainland congregation on the soil of Oahu in 1938, eventually extending the group's work to all of the major islands in the Hawaii archipelago. The narrative, covering developments through the year of publication, is liberally illustrated. The book may be ordered from the Vice-Province center house at 5311 Apo Drive, Honolulu, HI 96821.

Edit Relay, RSCJ, recently completed her doctoral dissertation, "Restarted Religious Orders in a Renewed Society" (published in Hungarian, *Ujraindulo Szerzetesrendek Egy Megujulo Tarsadalomban*). A member of the Religious of the Sacred Heart and a sociologist, Dr. Revay would welcome inquiries about her research and publications at revay@hcbc.hu or revayedit@hotmail.com.

A recently issued set of videos entitled *The History of the Association of Contemplative Sisters* documents the situation of contemplative communities in the 1950s and 60s and their efforts to engage in inter-congregational dialogue and to create an association of contemplatives. The two hour-long videos feature interviews with lay women and religious who participated in the founding of the Association in 1969 by 100 contemplatives at Woodstock, Maryland, and its subsequent evolution into an association including both laity and religious. To purchase the set, contact Joan Bourne, OCD, at 70 Monastery Road, Elysburg, PA 17824, or jbourneocd@juno.com.

Mary J. Henold, "Gluttons for Dialogue: The American Catholic Feminist Movement on the Eve of Disillusionment, 1975-1978" *Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism Working Paper Series* 36:1 (Spring 2004), explores the Catholic feminist response to the Vatican's 1976 statement on the prohibition of women's ordination. Drawing on her recently completed dissertation, "Faith, Feminism, and the Politics of Sustained Ambivalence: The Creation of the American Catholic Feminist Movement, 1963-1980," Henold explores among other key factors in the shaping of Catholic feminism the role of the National Coalition of American Nuns, the National Black Sisters Conference, the National Sisters Vocation Conference, and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The paper delivered by Sandra Schneiders, IHM, at the recent Congress on Religious Life (Rome, November, 2004), "Religious Life in the Future," explores the future for religious life as a "distinctive lifeform in the Church, i.e., a state of life that can be recognized and identified by its specific contribution to the life and mission of the Church." Congress Proceedings have not yet been published but for further information access the website www.vidimusdominum.org or, for brief coverage of the Congress, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet website www.csjcarondelet.org or the Leadership Conference of Women Religious site www.lcwr.org.

Susan Fitzpatrick Behren's paper at the HWR Atchison Conference has been published in revised form, "From Symbols of the Sacred to Symbols of Subversion to Simply Obscure, Maryknoll Women Religious in Guatemala, 1953-1967," in *The Americas* (Academy of American Franciscan History) 61:2 (2004), 189-216.

Angelyn Dries, OSF, author of the groundbreaking volume *The Missionary Movement in American Catholic History* (Orbis, 1998), has developed a syllabus on the

subject for a graduate course she will be teaching at St. Louis University beginning in January, 2005. Entitled "Women, Evangelization and World Christianity," the course applies historical methodology to the theological area of evangelization. For more information contact her at driesa@slu.edu.

Herself a Mercy Associate, Kathleen Wade, *Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives: The Associate Movement in Religious Communities* (Cincinnati, Ohio, Opel Press, 2004) bases her account of this fast-growing lay movement on interviews with men and women associates. The book may be purchased from Opel Press, 2529 Concordgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244, or opelpress@cinci.rr.com.

Research in Progress

Suellen Hoy anticipates publication in 2005 of her collected studies on Roman Catholic women religious active in ministry in Chicago. Tentative title, *Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past*.

Beth Mouch, MFC, is conducting research on the impact relinquishment of corporate ministries has had on congregations since Vatican II. Her thesis work is being done at the McCormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) in Chicago.

Mary E. Seematter is doing research on religious communities and Social Security, a topic with broad implications for religious institutes in the U.S. A number of congregations have responded to her request for information on individuals who were involved in working out the initial enrollment and funding following 1967 legislation making it possible for persons with a vow of poverty to be included in SS coverage. She would welcome further information at seematter@yahoo.com.

Rebecca Sullivan, Faculty of Communication and Culture at the University of Calgary, anticipates a Spring release of her book on images of nuns in the popular media. The next (June) issue of *HWR News and Notes* will carry an extended notice on this research.

Book Reviews

Henriette Delille: Servant of Slaves, Witness to the Poor, by Cyprian Davis, OSB (New Orleans: Archdiocese of New Orleans in Cooperation with the Sisters of the Holy Family, 2004). Pp. xii + 159.

Two summers ago, I met Father Cyprian Davis while

we were both doing research at the archives of the Holy Family Sisters in New Orleans. Davis, whose earlier groundbreaking *History of Black Catholicism in the United States* had alerted historians to the richness of Catholic African-American history, was in the process of gathering materials for a biography of Henriette Delille, the founder of the Holy Family Congregation. He had been asked by the sisters to write what they hoped would be the "definitive biography" of Delille, so that they could use it as a key consideration in the case they were preparing for her canonization cause.

During our conversation over lunch, Davis expressed how frustrating his new project had proven to be. Delille was not the stereotypical founder of a religious community. Born in 1812 in New Orleans, she was the daughter of a white father and a mother who was of mixed race. Thus, she was a member of the *gens de couleur libres*, a small class that, according to the social mores of the time and place, was considered to be below that of Caucasians but above that of blacks. Women of this class in New Orleans were raised for one purpose—to become concubines of prosperous white gentlemen. Her sister, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother had assumed this role and Henriette was expected to follow their lead. Instead, she did what was considered virtually impossible at the time. She founded a religious congregation of African-American Catholic women dedicated to serving the poorest of the poor, the African-American slave. Delille had undoubtedly been a remarkable woman with the spirituality, charisma, and fortitude needed not only to organize such a community but also to keep it alive when the dominant society in New Orleans, including most of the church leadership, felt that religious life should be the exclusive domain of the white race. Indeed, the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that she was forced to face took their toll on her, so much so that, worn out in body, she died in 1862 at the young age of fifty.

At first glance it seems that a laudatory biography of Delille would be an easy task and her canonization a sure thing. The problem, however, as Davis explains in his preface, is that there is a paucity of information on her life and work. Mother Henriette and her sisters, faced with the bigotry of the day and working with people who had little wealth to finance their labors, simply had no time to keep records for posterity. She did not write a detailed rule for her sisters. Aside from a few notes, we have none of her writings and little written by her contemporaries informing us about her personality and character. The focus and scope of her community's efforts

on behalf of slaves and free blacks were never publicized and she died before her congregation had received ecclesiastical recognition. Thus, a dearth of available information makes it impossible for a researcher to write a full biography of Delille. Nevertheless, by carefully searching through numerous legal documents and archives, Davis is able to separate historically provable facts concerning Mother Henriette from the more speculative.

Chapter one begins with a discussion of Delille's obituary. Here Davis points out that although it mentions her work with slaves, it leaves out the fact that she descended from them and that she founded a community of African-American religious. Davis next compiles a plethora of facts on her ancestors. This is important because it provides a clearer picture than had previously existed of her socio-economic status. This, in turn, helps to create better insight regarding the dynamics of her life and work. In the following five chapters, Davis deals with what little we are able to ascertain from extant sources about Delille's education, the establishment of the Holy Family sisters, and their evolution under her leadership. He concludes by observing that Mother Henriette's work was only able to bear abundant fruit after her death, when the Civil War ended. Four appendices and an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources conclude the volume, which also contains twelve pages of photos.

Considering the limitations Davis faced, he has produced a book of great value for scholars of African-American and women's history, as well as for those involved in her canonization cause.

Edward T. Brett
La Roche College

The Dominicans of Racine Wisconsin, Volume One, *Embrace the Swelling Wave*, by Suzanne Noffke, OP (Bloomington, Indiana, AuthorHouse, 2004). Pp. xii+605.

Suzanne Noffke, OP, is a well known medievalist thanks to her meticulous rendering of the letters of Catherine of Siena into English. Her linguistic abilities and competence in foreign languages (in this case, German) have again served her and us well in recapturing the history of the Dominican community of Racine, Wisconsin. *Embrace the Swelling Wave* is the first of several projected volumes constructed from research in American and German archives over the last twenty-five years.

This volume traces the German roots of the community, ending just as they begin to settle permanently in their American motherhouse. Thus the history of the Bavarian monastery of Heilig Kreuz in Regensburg is a bonus rarely provided by histories of American sisterhoods. Noffke has gone back into archives extending to the thirteenth century, just ten years short of the lifetime of Saint Dominic himself and moving through the secularization of the late eighteenth century and the monastic revival of the nineteenth century.

Primarily, however, the volume covers the life of Mother Benedicta Bauer who entered the community within a few years of its revival after the Napoleonic wars and eventually served as prioress for thirteen years. She was an energetic and aggressive leader, expanding the community to two dependent houses in Bavaria and a colony in Williamsburg in Brooklyn. Noffke enjoyed the use of voluminous sources from Bauer's own hand, her letters, and a series of journals she kept for her confessor. These are balanced by a number of other sources but they do not so closely hinge upon the prioress's career.

The result is almost novelistic in tone. The reader is provided with insight into Bauer's thoughts and ambitions that is rare in historical annals. The prioress, however, was apparently seriously lacking in insights of her own regarding her sisters in religion, for it comes as a surprise to her and to us when her priorate is abruptly ended by their opposition and the bishop's intervention. The reasons for her deposition, in fact, remain somewhat unclear due to her own reticence and the lack of external sources.

Whatever her mistakes may have been they did not deter the hierarchy from giving her permission to transfer to the American mission and eventually to lead a new mission with some of her former sister-companions at Heilig Kreuz half-way across America where she ultimately established her new motherhouse in Racine. Through the perils of sea voyages and the hardship of cross-country travel, the miseries of the Wisconsin winter and the constant penury of women dependent on the charity of friends overseas, Benedicta Bauer continued her record for posterity, complemented by the sparser writings of her companion and eventual successor, Thomasina Ginker. Together they built a lasting community and gave us a story of rare excitement and detail.

Noffke writes with verve and the story is inherently gripping. Her chronicle adds an important chapter to the

emerging history of women religious in America and to the history of women's education here. The on-going relationship of the Racine Dominicans with their German home and with the German immigrant community in America also provides insight into the master narrative of our country, the building of an American people from disparate immigrant cultures.

JoAnne McNamara
Professor Emerita, Hunter College

Brief Notice

A three-volume work by Ida Sala, FdCC (Canossian Daughters of Charity) recounts the history of this Italian congregation's missionary work in Asia: *History of our Canossian Missions: Hong Kong 1860-1910*; *History of our Canossian Missions: China 1868-1952*; and *History of our Canossian Missions: Hong Kong 1910-2000* (Privately printed, Canossian Missions, 1997-2003).

General readers and scholars interested in expanding their knowledge of mission history will be well served by perusing this detailed account of women whose evangelizing zeal inspired them to dedicate themselves, often to the point of death, to sharing the Christian message with the Chinese people. Persisting in service to the Chinese through a tumultuous era marked by wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions, and recurrent persecutions, the Sisters' base in Hong Kong and Macao, numerous indigenous vocations, and early inclusion of the laity in their missionary endeavors gave them a unique survival capacity in times that forced many a congregation to terminate their missions.

Appendices listing personnel serving in Hong Kong, Macao, and the mainland demonstrate the extent of the sisters' commitment over the 135-year period covered by this multivolume account. In vol. I: List of Missionary Sisters who worked in Hong Kong or passed through en route to Mainland China, 1860-1910 (a total of 92 women, by 30 separate expeditions. The first voyage by sea, Trieste to Hong Kong, took 46 days); List of tertiaries or women of Chinese origin who joined the congregation, 1860-1910 (total of 66); Local non-Chinese sisters with dates of entry (1860-1910) for Hong Kong and Macao (many of this group of 97 were from Manila, a lesser number from Portugal); and Missionary Sisters who died in China during this period (total of 76).

In vol. II: Hupeh Sisters (1868-1948, total of 188); Shensi Sisters (1891-1938, total of 42); South Honan Sisters

(1892-1937, total of 37); Western Honan Sisters (1921-1937, total of 30, with an additional 5 Chinese "coadjutrix" members who became Sisters after that class of membership was abolished in 1953). Vol. III lists: Sisters working in Hong Kong and Macao 1910-2003 (total of 405); Sisters expelled from China 1947-1952 (115 in all); Sisters who died in Hong Kong and Macao during this period (223); and finally, Sisters working in these missions who died elsewhere (162).

A formidable amount of research lies behind text and appendices for this illuminating and valuable account of a missionary commitment kept alive to this day through prayer, Mandarin language study, and "sporadic services" to China by individuals and small groups of Sisters. These contacts were formalized in 1991 under the aegis of a China Mission Team sponsored by the Regina Martyrum Province (Hong Kong and Macao), the purposes of which are "to act 'as a presence and a bridge' and to coordinate and plan future activities on the mainland."

For further information contact the author, Sr. Ida Sala, at Canossian Convent, 36 Caine Road, Hong Kong.

Announcements

Persons interested in collaborating with other scholars regarding the history of missions and missiology are invited to contact Angelyn Dries at driesa@slu.edu regarding the U.S. Catholic Mission History list-serv she has established.

The American Catholic Historical Association Spring meeting will be held at the University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, April 22-23, 2005. Proposals for papers were due January 15, 2005. For further information contact Una.Cadegan@notes.udayton.edu.

The next biennial conference of Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious is scheduled for September 28-October 1, 2006, in Ft Mitchell, Kentucky (near-

Subscription Information

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est airport Cincinnati, Ohio). For further information contact ACWR *News* editor Mary Denis Maher, CSA, at smdm@srssofcharity.org or the organization's central office acwr@juno.com. There is also a website www.homestead.com/acwr.

Sisters Online, www.sistersonline.org is a website that aims to foster global kinship among Sisters. Created following the Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing by several Upper Midwest communities, the site's focus areas include peace, Earth, human dignity, and community. The site offers reflections, justice action alerts, and space for member communities to post ministry openings and retreat offerings, averaging over 1,200 "hits" per day.

John A. Bavaro, RN, on the faculty of Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, has spearheaded development of an art exhibit featuring the ministry of eleven congregations of women in health care in western Pennsylvania. Slated to be shown for the first time in fall 2005, the exhibit includes health care memorabilia, archival material from hospitals and religious communities, the original habits worn by nursing sisters, and story boards telling the story of each community and its unique contribution to health care in that region. For further informa-

tion on this project contact john.bavaro@sru.edu.

The 37th Annual Conference of the Western Association of Women Historians will convene April 29-May 1, 2005, in Phoenix, Arizona. For more information visit the Association's website, www.wawh.org.

Newsletter Deadline

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