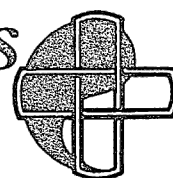


History of Women Religious News and Notes



Volume 20—Number 2

June 2007

HWR Network News

The Seventh Triennial Conference of the History of Women Religious network is set to convene June 24-27 at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. To register visit <https://marketplace.nd.edu/cce>. For those without internet access, please call (574) 631-6691. Highlights of the conference, organized with the theme of "Local Cultures/Global Church," include major addresses by Angelyn Dries, OSF, Danforth Chair in the Humanities, St. Louis University, on "Mission and World Christianity," and Margaret Eletta Guider, OSF, Associate Professor of Missiology, Weston Jesuit School of Theology, on "Mission in the Americas: The Challenge of Reciprocity." Recognition of outstanding scholars will take place through presentation of the Distinguished Book Award, the Distinguished Historian Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award. A particularly important business meeting will include planning for the future as the network marks its twentieth year.

In addition to the major talks and papers given at 33 concurrent sessions and workshops, the conference will feature an exhibit of Corita Kent's serigraphs at the Snite Museum of Art and a performance by the NGoma Group, "A History of African-American Life in Song." (Please note a correction on p. 7 of the conference program: the title of Patricia Jean Manion's paper should read "Venture into the Unknown: Loretto in China, 1923-1998").

Publications

James G. Clark, editor, brings together a collection of essays in *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Boydell & Brewer, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion series, publication anticipated Sept., 2007) that examines patterns of life and thought in the communities of women and men who built English monasteries during the six centuries between the Conquest and the Dissolution.

Leonie V. Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300, Space, Gender and Social Pressure* (Boydell & Brewer, SHMR series, publication anticipated Nov., 2007), grounds a study of the reality of religious life in early medieval Normandy on a variety of sources pertaining to communities of nuns and

monks, including architecture, chronicles, visitation accounts, and hospital and parish records.

Meredith Parsons Lillich, editor, *Cistercian Nuns and Their World* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture series, 2005), presents a collection of essays that breaks new ground regarding Cistercian women's houses with many implications for future study of medieval women religious in general.

Amy Leonard, *Nails in the Wall: Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Women in Culture and Society series, 2005) disproves the assumption that women's experiences of and roles in the Reformation simply reflected that of men's. Her study points out a major difference by documenting the survival of several Dominican convents in Protestant Strasbourg in the sixteenth and seventeenth century whereas men's houses and orders disappeared as a result of Protestant rejection of religious vows and life.

Asunción Lavrin delivered the keynote address, "Femininity and Masculinity Through the Prism of Religion: Mexico 1550-1800," at the 39th Annual Conference of the Western Association of Women Historians (May, 2007, at the University of San Diego).

Carol Mattingly's "Uncovering Forgotten Habit: Anti-Catholic Rhetoric and Nineteenth-Century American Women's Literacy" appears in *College Composition and Communication* (58:2, December 2006, pp. 160-81). Her thesis is that anti-Catholic rhetoric fostered the spread of proprietary academies lest Protestant girls be influenced by the excellent educations they might otherwise receive at the hand of Roman Catholic religious sisters.

Rosa MacGinley, PBVM, reports that her *A Dynamic of Hope: Institutes of Women Religious in Australia*, first published in 1996, is now available in a revised second edition (Darlinghurst, NSW: Crossing Press, 2002). The press has now ceased operating, with the result that some have found it difficult to obtain the book which can be procured from: Golding Centre, Australian Catholic University, Mount Saint Mary Campus, Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield NSW 2135, AUSTRALIA.

Cost \$25 AUST, plus marked postage. A demonstration copy and order blanks will be available at the June, 2007, Triennial Conference at Notre Dame.

Angelita Myerscough, ASC, has completed a sixth and final volume of a project begun in 1995, a translation from Italian, with annotations, of the 1432 extant letters of her congregation's founder, St. Maria De Mattias.

Sarah McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 2007), explores and documents the activity of Catholic women religious in the area of human ecology and its religious aspects.

Research in Progress

Hildegard Pleva, OSsR, is working a paper on the history of monastic enclosure for women in her order (Redemptoristine Nuns), with the goal of providing a fact-based context for current discussions concerning enclosure among contemporary monastics living with Papal Enclosure. Her article on the history of their profession ring was published in *Review for Religious* in Fall, 2007, and is about to be published in the American Society of Jewelry Historians newsletter.

Darra D. Mulderry, Lecturer at Harvard University, has successfully defended her dissertation at Brandeis University, "‘What Human Goodness Entails’: The Changing Moral Ideals of U.S. Catholic Nuns, 1940-1980." The work offers an intellectual history of U.S. sisters, describing and explaining dramatic changes in sisters' definitions of women's religious life through an intellectual and social genealogy of the influences animating writings by poet, Madeleva Wolff, CSC; philosopher, Mary Emil Pinet, IHM; and psychologist, Annette Walters, CSJ. This methodology carries over into her probing of the meanings and implications of the Sister Formation Conference through an examination of the intellectual and institutional world of the eighteen sister-Ph.D.s who gathered in 1956 to write the "Everett Curriculum." The dissertation closes with a description of how sisters' understanding of the dignity of persons informed feminist critiques of church and society and a new philosophy of "spiritual direction" in the 1970s and 80s. She is currently in the process of refining the text with a view toward its publication.

Carmen Mangion is researching aspects of Catholic health care in England. A specific area regarding which she is currently seeking information is that of developments that led to issuance of the 1936 decree *Constans et sedula*, permitting women religious to handle obstetric and surgical cases. She is aware of the importance of Agnes McLaren, Anna

Dengal and the Medical Mission Sisters, and would be very interesting in learning of any work done or being done on the topic. Anyone with information is asked to contact her at c.mangion@history.bbk.ac.uk.

Thomas Joseph McGoldrick, a Sister of St. Joseph of St. Augustine, Florida, has completed a history of that congregation and is seeking a publisher. Anyone with suggestions is asked to contact her (Archives, Sisters of St. Joseph, 241 St. George St., St. Augustine, FL 32084; email, ssjarc@bizse.rr.com) or Barbara Mattick who will be presenting a paper on the St. Augustine SSJs at the coming HWR Conference, email BMattick@dos.state.fl.us.

Nacke, CSJ, and Mary Savoie, CSJ, are considering a broadcast documentary of Sister Survivors of European Communism, and a traveling photography exhibit. Both projects are dependent on funding and are outgrowths of their recent month-long visit to six former Communist countries (see session at the coming Triennial conference, "Oral History Project: Sister Survivors of European Communism"). They were accompanied by two staff members from NewGroup Media, South Bend, one of whom took numerous photographs of Sisters being interviewed.

Book Reviews

Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past, by Suellen Hoy (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006). Pp. xiv, 242. \$22 paper.

Incorporated in 1833 with a population of 350, the city of Chicago grew by leaps and bounds in the next decades. By 1846 when the first nuns arrived, the city was a rough outpost of some 20,000 people. The five Sisters of Mercy who came from Ireland that year were first in a long line of women religious who worked in the city's schools, hospitals, and social services. The Sisters of Mercy remained the only order serving in early Chicago for the first ten years but were followed quickly by other orders of nuns such as the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Katherine Drexel's new order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, the Daughters of Charity, Dominicans, and Franciscans, to name only a few. Their numbers grew. One hundred years later in 1946 they were over 9000 working in the city. It is evident that women religious were part of Chicago's history from the beginning. They taught in the Catholic schools of the archdiocese, staffed and, in many cases, founded hospitals, and served the poor in a host of social services. The Sisters of Mercy took to heart the zeal and mission of their foundress Catherine McCauley that they not be afraid, that they go out into the city and help the

poor, the illiterate, and the sick now because they "need help today, not next week" (p. 35). Suellen Hoy calls them, "good hearts," women who "carried out their assignments with energy, purpose and confidence (p. 2).

Hoy chose Chicago for her study of the lives of women religious, she tells us, not only because she was familiar with the city from her own family backgrounds, but because she realized that Chicago with its large Catholic and immigrant population, followed by a large migration of Southern blacks, was an excellent place to examine her thesis. She came to see, like several other recent historians, that in spite of the fact that it was often women religious who established health care and educational systems and social service programs, their story is too often neglected in publications of women's history and even in publications on the Church. Yet, the Catholic sisters were already engaged in the same work as the better-known Jane Hull. Suellen Hoy sets out to give a fuller picture of the real lives of nuns in the city of Chicago. In the past, nuns have often been dismissed as irrelevant, out of touch with the world, and dominated by a male Church leadership. Hoy's look at the life of sisters in this large industrialized metropolis reveals a much different picture. She finds them energetic, dedicated agents of change in a bustling, changing city, even feisty at times when their work for the poor was challenged by hierarchy, pastors, or civil authorities.

Except for the final chapter, Hoy's work is a collection of related articles which she published in historical journals within the past ten years. Aptly named *Good Hearts*, the collection focuses on the social programs begun by the sisters rather than on the very large educational apostolate carried on in the hundreds of Catholic schools in the city. Even in the social programs they sponsored the nuns always considered education a most important component because the ability to read and write was most important for success. The first two chapters focus on the women who left Ireland for America in the early nineteenth century and on the coming of the Sisters of Mercy to fledgling Chicago. On an extended stay in Ireland, Hoy became interested in the emigration of Irish to America in the early nineteenth century, especially the many young women who left their homes to find a new life and livelihood in a totally unfamiliar world. Having returned to the United States, she researched what these young women did once they settled in America and found that a number of them had entered religious orders, or had even been recruited to come to America in order to enter these religious orders. Here the story of their courageous work in Chicago began. The Sisters of Mercy became known as the "Walking Nuns" (chapter 2) as they traveled the streets of the city to respond to people's needs. There were

many challenges—education for the less advantaged, cholera epidemics, the call to nurse in the Civil War which they did with other religious women. They gained the respect of the civic authorities and Protestant churches for the good they brought to the city in their service to the people.

The remaining chapters focus on the social programs of several sisterhoods in Chicago, e.g. care of abandoned women and girls, education of African-American girls, and the struggle to teach and serve in the face of the racism that has been and remains a part of American culture. More than half the book is devoted to the sisters' responses to the change in American culture due to the civil rights movement and the need for services of all kinds in the black community. The work of the sisters in the face of the racism of that time reveals the courage the sisters had and the influence the orders could bring to help effect cultural change. Unlike many who worked for social justice in the city, the sisters most often lived among the poor whom they served and for whom they advocated, bringing the sisters the respect and friendship of their neighbors. The sisters were fearless as voices for the poor and oppressed and ultimately were powerful change agents in Chicago, albeit often with struggles and bitter disappointments. Hoy highlights the care of abandoned women and girls (1859-1911), and the education of "colored girls" (1911-1956), both sponsored primarily by the Good Shepherd Sisters. (chapters 3 and 4), the mission work of sisters in the Black Belt of Chicago, among them Catherine Drexel's Blessed Sacrament sisters, the Dubuque Franciscans and the Sisters of the Holy Family (chapter 5), the struggle for inclusion of black students at Loretto Academy on Chicago's South Side (chapter 6), and in a final chapter (7) the role of women religious in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Hoy's book makes clear in these seven selected topics the contribution of women religious to the development of modern Chicago as well as their role in changing the cultural outlook of the city towards their non-white citizens. Both in educational institutions and in social programs the sisters worked for low salaries or in many cases volunteered. Many in church and city took their work for granted—for many they were "cheap labor." Yet they were a dedicated work force that was seldom equaled in attitude and service toward those to whom they dedicated their lives. Perhaps, Hoy says, they were not valued *because* they were considered "cheap labor." Yet their story eminently deserves to be told. Hoy's scholarly presentation provides an excellent glimpse into some aspects of that heroic story.

Elizabeth Kolmer, ASC
Professor Emerita, St. Louis University

Lady Blackrobes: Missionaries in the Heart of Indian Country, by Irene Mahoney, OSU. (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2006). Pp. xiii, 329. \$16.95 paper.

Irene Mahoney, O.S.U., has completed another installment in the history of the Ursuline Sisters with *Lady Blackrobes: Missionaries in the Heart of Indian Country*. This saga traces the paths of Mother Amadeus Dunne, O.S.U., and her companions from the Ursuline convent in Toledo, Ohio, to Montana where they opened eight missions in as many years.

A simple but effective map of Montana helps to locate the mission sites. Sister Mahoney has researched her topic using a range of international records as befits mission sites with worldwide members and influences. Correspondence played an important role in reconstructing the travels and trials of the pioneer missionaries. First, Mother Amadeus Dunne and her companions wrote back to the convent in Toledo, to various bishops requesting priests, to benefactors such as Miss Catherine (later Mother Katharine) Drexel, and writing among the Montana houses. Then the Bishops, especially Right Reverend John Baptist Brondel, newly appointed bishop of the Montana Territory, requested sisters and also priests to staff the missions. In 1883 he wrote to Bishop Richard Gilmour, bishop of Cleveland, Ohio, requesting priests for his see, since he had one priest for an area stretching east to west for 800 miles. Bishop Gilmour responded by publishing a letter in the diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Universe*, asking "Who of our young priests will volunteer their services for these children of the forest? Who of our female religious will devote themselves to the care and education of these pagan children?" (pp.2-3). And so begins the story.

From the responses Bishop Gilmour received, six Ursuline sisters were selected to begin work in Montana. They were young (26 to 40 years of age), eager and enthusiastic for the spread of God's kingdom. Several factors influenced the lives and the history of these pioneers. Technological progress or the lack thereof was one factor. For some of the pioneers, the train ride from Ohio to Montana showed them more of their native land than they had seen previously. The accounts of their travels by train—1600 miles in 96 hours—and their first impression of Miles City, Montana show the true frontier nature of this undertaking. Accommodations were less than what they had expected; they spent their first night huddled on the floor in boarding house rooms. They arrived Jan. 18, 1884, and within a few days had rented a house and sung a High Mass in the little church the following Sunday. They returned to their convent home around 2:00 p.m. that Sunday to find the townsfolk visiting this new concept—the convent. Just at the townsfolk left, a Cheyenne chief, The

Wolf That Lies Down, visited and shared their dinner. Within a month of arriving, the Sisters opened a boarding school for the local children. Soon Bishop Brondel and Mother Dunne were making plans to open a mission for the Cheyenne. The second mission's pioneers left on March 29, 1884, for St. Labre's mission. It took them four days to travel ninety miles since no railroad could take them. Their Army escort helped to repair the wooden cabin that would serve as their home. Photographs of the early missions capture the pioneer spirit of the sites.

These adventures set the stage for the continuing saga. It is a stirring adventure tale, full of fires destroying wooden structures, isolation from others, the poverty of hastily erected wooden structures with minimal furnishings, the challenge of learning new languages, and bureaucratic puzzles. Woven into this tale of evangelization are threads of government contracts, politics, hierarchical struggles and personalities. To help with the lack of sisters, Mother Dunne started a novitiate at St. Peter's Mission to the Blackfoot Nation. The Sisters arrived there in 1890. The Jesuits were staffing this mission, thus providing the Sisters with the spiritual comforts of Mass, communion, confession, benediction and the opportunity for spiritual direction. The novitiate was a big help, since several American and Irish women entered the Ursuline community directly at St. Peter's. Even postulants would find themselves involved with missionary activities.

Several international factors influenced the Ursuline Sisters' missions. In addition to the policies of the United States' government, the Ursulines themselves decided to adopt the "Roman Union." This placed all the Ursuline convents under a central administration in Rome. This greatly reduced Mother Dunne's autonomy; she was in fact removed from Montana to become the first Provincial of the northern portion of the United States, with offices in Middletown, NY, in 1906. A centralized novitiate, also in Middletown, closed the novitiate at St. Peter's, withdrawing much needed help from the mission territory. Mother Dunne had hoped to start a Native American community, to provide Native American sisters for the missions; this did not succeed.

All the elements of human drama are here—the personality clashes of a visionary with more enthusiasm than diplomacy (Mother Dunne) and a hierarchy without missionary experience (Bishop Mathias Lenihan of one of the newly divided Montana dioceses, 1903), the wild frontier, clashes between unsympathetic white settlers and the Native Americans who are pushed further and further away from traditional lands and lifestyles, restrictive government policies, and the pride of seeing the children learning and the conversions made. Not all missions were successful; the schools opened by the

Ursulines at St. Charles (Crow Nation) and St. John Berchmans' (Flathead Nation) each closed within ten years. Not all buildings destroyed by fire could be rebuilt or reopened. Not all Sisters could persevere in the wilderness.

Lady Blackrobes is a well written and readable book that both educates and entertains. Sister Mahoney notes in the conclusion that the original seven Ursulines opened eight missions and had grown to sixty-seven members by the turn of the century. The golden age of the missionary endeavor in Montana was short-lived, replaced by the even more remote Alaskan frontier and dimmed by governmental policies. The reader will find inspirational stores of ever flexible convents that somehow managed to absorb additional boarders, sisters' perseverance in the face of extreme poverty, hunger and isolation, and the extraordinary efforts necessary to expand the borders of God's Kingdom on earth.

Stephanie Morris, Ph.D.
Director of Archives, Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament

Announcements

Jayasri Hart's PBS video, *Sisters of Selma: Bearing Witness for Change*, was shown on a variety of PBS stations during the month of February, Black History Month in the U.S.. For more information on local screening schedules and to purchase the DVD contact the web site www.aptv.org/AS/SISTERS and click on "Links" and the on "Broadcast Schedule."

The national office of the Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) has been moved from Washington, D.C. to Ohio. The new mail address is: ACWR, 5900 Delhi Road, Mount St. Joseph, Ohio 45051. The email and web page addresses are unchanged: acwr@juno.com, and www.archivistsacwr.org.

The March-April, 2007 deadline for submitting essays in response to the Call for Proposals by editors of a projected essay collection, *Gendered Spiritualities: Catholic Women's Experience of the Divine: 1520-1900*, is past, but for more information, contact Laurence.Sterritt@up.univ-mrs.fr and c.mangion@history.bbk.ac.uk.

Subscription Information

HWR News and Notes is published three times a year, February, June and October.

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The Call for Papers for the sixth annual conference of the History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland, to be convened 31 August-1 September, 2007 at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, London, was issued earlier this spring with a March deadline. Program and registration forms may be found on their web site www.rhul.ac.uk/bedford-centre/history-women-religious/. In addition to Event information, this new site carries a Bibliography section listing major contributions to the historiography of women religious of Britain and Ireland, a Reviews section including book and conference reviews, and a Sources and Gallery section (in progress). Contributions welcome. Please contact c.mangion@history.bbk.ac.uk or Dr. Caroline Bowden at c.bowden@rhul.ac.uk with contributions, comments or queries.

The Western Association of Women Historians will convene its 2008 conference May 16-17, 2008, at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC, Canada. For more information contact their web site at www.wahw.org.

The 43rd International Congress on Medieval Studies is scheduled to convene at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 8-11, 2008. The Call for Papers will be sent in July, 2007. For more information contact their web site www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress.

A newsletter featuring current research on Margaret Anna

Cusack (the "Nun of Kenmare," founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace), edited by Rosalie McQuaide, CSJP and Janet D. Richardson, CSJP, is available on the web: www.csjp.org/women at the table.

Newsletter Deadline

Please have copy for October 2007 issue to the editor by September 1, 2007. KKennelly33@hotmail.com.

The HWR Newsletter

Published by the
Conference on History of Women Religious
2311 So. Lindbergh Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63131

ISSN: 1054-545X

Subscription: \$10.00/1 year

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