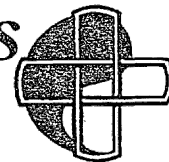

History of Women Religious

News and Notes



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The Conference on the History of Women Religious concludes its publication of News and Notes with this issue. The Memorandum of Understanding reached with The Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, University of Notre Dame, provides for inclusion of HWR news in the American Catholic Studies Newsletter published twice yearly by the Cushwa Center. ACSN will be accessible to HWR members on the Cushwa Center's web site www.nd.edu/~cushwa. Those wishing to receive biannual email notification when the Center posts a new issue should send an email to Cushwa.1@nd.edu with your current email address. A print copy will be sent upon request should you be unable to access the internet. To receive a print copy, write Cushwa Center, University of Notre Dame, 407 Geddes Hall, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5611.

Members may continue sending news regarding publications and research in progress to Karen M. Kennelly, CSJ, at KKennelly33@hotmail.com, or to Margaret McGuinness at m McGuinness@lasalle.edu who will be assuming some of the editorial functions now filled by Kennelly. Persons desiring to review books for the Conference should contact Annie Stevens at astevens1953@yahoo.com who has agreed to share responsibility for matching reviewers with publications of particular relevance to the history of women religious. We thank Regina Siegfried, ASC, for her years of past service to the Conference as book review editor.

Conference news will also continue to be available on its web site www.CHWR.org.

SAVE THE DATE: the Ninth Triennial Conference will convene at St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota, June 23-26, 2013. Elizabeth McGahan, University of New Brunswick, will be the Program Chair. Mary Kraft, CSJ, archivist of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet St. Paul Province, will chair the Local Arrangements committee. Long time HWR members may recall the first triennial which met at SCU in 1989. New conference and residential facili-

ties have since enhanced an already welcoming site. Check our web site and the Cushwa newsletter for more information as it becomes available.

PUBLICATIONS

Elizabeth Rapley, *The Lord as Their Portion: The Story of the Religious Orders and How They Shaped Our World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2011) provides the general reader with that rare volume: one that provides a reliable compendium of a vast subject without being weighed down with scholarly apparatus. Rapley's account thoroughly integrates the emergence of religious orders in the Catholic tradition among women and men from the beginnings of Christian monasticism in classical and early medieval centuries (chap.1) and on through the Middle Ages 1200-1500 (chap. 2), the Reformation (chap. 3), the Seventeenth Century "Age of Confessionalism" (chap. 4), the Eighteenth Century characterized as "A Time to Break Down" (chap. 5), and an extended concluding chapter entitled "The Nineteenth Century: A Time to Build Up." An epilogue carries the narrative into the contemporary era with a sensitive and perceptive assessment of trends affecting religious orders from 1950 to the present. Bibliographic essays concluding each chapter point the interested reader to the scholarly works upon which the narrative is based, including the author's masterly *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth Century France*, and *A Social History of the Cloister: Daily Life in the Teaching Monasteries of the Old Regime*.

Matias Augé, *El Hábito Religioso. Historia-Psicología-Sociológica* (Madrid: Claretian Publications, 2011), offers an interdisciplinary, non-polemical analysis of the significance attached to the religious habit over the centuries.

Sherri Franks Johnson, "Convents and Change: Autonomy, Marginalization, and Religious Affiliation in Late Medieval Bologna," *The Catholic Historical Review* (April 2011), 250-275, analyses the complex relationships between two Bolognese monastic houses

and other religious congregations that resulted in an evolution from independent, regional status in the thirteenth century to acceptance of Dominican status in the fifteenth century.

Several essays in *Women, Religion, and the Atlantic World* (1600-1800), eds. Daniella Kostroun and Lisa Vollendorf (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), notably those by Barbara Diefendorf on women's roles in the Counter-Reformation; Lisa Vollendorf's listing of works by women writers from Spain (66 authors) and the Spanish colonies (36); and Amy Froide's consideration of the religious lives of single women in the Anglo-Atlantic world make valuable contributions toward understanding the nexus between women, gender and religion during the period in question.

Ann Harrington, BVM, "Catholic Women Religious and Catholicism in Japan: 1872-1940" in *Xavier's Legacies: Catholicism in Modern Japanese Culture*, ed. Kevin M. Doak (University of British Columbia Press, Asian Religions in Society Series, 2011), 31-36, examines the impact of women's religious communities in Japan from the era of the Meiji restoration to World War II.

Donna Porche-Frilot and Petro Munro Hendry, "Whatever Diversity of Shade May Appear": *Catholic Women Religious Educators in Louisiana, 1727-1862*," *Catholic Southwest: A Journal of History and Culture* (vol. 21, 2010), 34-62, add to the meager literature on the role of women's congregations in the Territory and later state of Louisiana.

Anne M. Butler, *Across God's Frontiers: Many Nuns for Many Wests* (in press, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) brings into monograph form the fruit of her years of scholarly work on the nuances connected with the history of western sisterhoods.

Mary C. Sullivan, RSM, has brought several years' research to a conclusion with her biography of Sisters of Mercy founder, Catherine McAuley (1778-1841) (in press, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press).

Richard Fossey and Stephanie Morris, "Courage Under Fire: Katherine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Confront the Texas Ku Klux Klan," *Catholic Southwest, A Journal of History and Culture* (vol. 21, 2010), 7-22, elucidate the nature of anti-Catholic prejudice with which religious were forced to contend in the early decades of the twentieth century

and beyond.

Frances Krumpelman, SCN, *Impelled by the Love of Christ, The Life and Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, 1912-1924* (Privately printed, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, 2011) is the first in a series of volumes on the last century planned to commemorate the SCN bicentennial in 2012. Drawing freely on archival sources the book documents the congregation's early twentieth century work in education, healthcare, and social services.

A Chapter of Franciscan History 1949-1989 begun by Grace McDonald, FSPA before her death in 2009 has been completed by Celesta Day, FSPA and posthumously published (Privately printed, Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wisconsin, 2011). Volume II in the *History*, it describes transitions from traditional observances to aggiornamento, from historical ministries to response to contemporary needs, and from centralized governance to province and region formation. The transitions included a difference of perceptions regarding the direction for religious living which led to the separation of 55 FSPA members to form the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist of Meriden, Connecticut.

Anne E. Patrick, SNJM, *Women, Conscience, and the Creative Process* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2011), probes the importance of creativity for the Christian moral life. Professor emerita of Religion and the Liberal Arts at Carleton College (Northfield, Minnesota), Patrick delivered the text of this book in 2009 as part of the Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame. She hopes to have a more extended treatment of the same topic ready to submit to publishers later this year.

Richard Gribble, CSC, "The Challenge of Religious Life in the United States Today," *American Catholic Studies* (Spring 2011), 33-53, offers an analysis of the challenges facing contemporary religious life in the U.S. and proposes some suggestions for the future involving acceptance of Vatican II's *Perfectae Caritatis* as a genuine path toward renewal.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Ann M. Harrington, BVM, professor emerita Loyola University Chicago, is currently writing a book on the history of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM, congregational offices in Dubuque, Iowa) to cover the period from 1919 to 1943. For

more information contact aharri1@luc.edu.

Theresa Keeley, Northwestern University, has been awarded a research travel grant by the Cushwa Center, UND, to pursue research on the topic of "Reagan's Gun-Toting Nuns: Catholicism and U.S.-Central American Relations."

A number of Dominican women from several U.S.-based congregations are participating in an extensive international project under the direction of the faculty of social sciences at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome. The project aims to draw together a collection of studies on important Dominican women, either individually or in groups, active in the field of social ethics, Catholic social teaching, and the practical living out of the evangelical call to justice and peace during the twentieth century. The collection, tentatively titled *Preaching Justice II*, is intended as a follow up to *Preaching Justice: Dominican Contributions to Social Ethics in the 20th Century*, which was confined to the contributions of Dominican men. For more information, contact Helen Alford in HelenAlford@pust.urbe.it or Mary Pat Beatty in GrandRapids@GRDominicans.org.

The Academy of American Franciscan History is seeking six scholars to develop substantial essays of from 100 to 120 pages on aspects of Franciscan history in the U.S., i.e., on the Franciscans' experience of charity and justice, missions (1840--), education, spirituality, parishes and immigration, and Franciscan women. A two volume history is envisaged; a consultative conference will open and close the research process beginning in fall 2011. Stipends and travel expenses will be available. Interested scholars should send a brief statement of interest and a CV to Dr. Jeffrey M. Burns, Academy of Franciscan History, 1712 Euclid Ave., Berkeley, California 94709, or email applications to acadafh@fst.edu. Submission of applications began in March, to continue until all slots are filled.

BOOK REVIEW

Sarah A. Curtis, *Civilizing Habits: Women Missionaries and the Revival of French Empire*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. x+374.

Through the lives of three French women, Sarah Curtis, associate professor of history at San Francisco State University, has written a "collective, contextualized biography" (p. 3) uniting three main threads: women religious, the Church hierarchy, and the

French government. Each of the three parts centers on a single group, presenting the life of the founder and the work of their congregation.

The first one is Philippine Duchesne (1769-1852), one of the first Religious of the Sacred Heart and missionary leader of the congregation. She arrived in the United States in 1818, opening a school for Indian girls near St. Louis (1825) before going to live with the Potawatomi tribe in Kansas (1841). Laboring in a territory that had been part of the first French empire, Duchesne realized how the cloistered life of her congregation impeded their work in the Indian missions.

The author then presents Émilie de Vialar (1797-1856). She founded the Sisters of St-Joseph de l'Apparition (1832), which beginning in 1835 opened houses all around the Mediterranean basin, not only in the new colonies and future territories of France in North Africa and the Middle East, but also in Malta, Cyprus, Armenian Turkey and Greece. Their schools and clinics allowed the sisters to engage "in secret acts of evangelization" (p. 159) on Muslim territory.

The third founder is Anne-Marie Javouhey (1779-1851), who with her three blood sisters began the Sisters of St. Joseph de Cluny (1807). The congregation started missionary work ten years later on île Bourbon (Réunion); by the time of the death of the founder, they had houses on all continents and was considered "France's official female colonial order" (p. 185).

France supported the sisters' work as a means to extend France's sphere of influence. But the religious faith of the sisters and their leaders allowed them to pursue other objectives, through education, health care, and work with disenfranchised groups, such as the Indians (Duchesne) or the enslaved and recently emancipated populations of African origin (Javouhey). The story of the Mana colony, a project of Javouhey and her sisters in French Guiana (chapter 8, p. 209-232), is particularly interesting. The author also reveals how the sisters interacted with bishops, priests and men religious, whether in conflict or in partnership.

Because the author chose to focus on the United States, the Mediterranean basin and the French slave colonies (p. 4), the other missions started by de Vialar in Australia and Burma, and by Javouhey in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, India and Oceania, are briefly mentioned but not thoroughly examined. In the context of a study of the French empire, this lack of attention to British territories (Australia, Burma and

India) is understandable; however, it might have been enlightening to read a comparison to the missionary strategies of Saint-Joseph de Cluny in the non-slave French colonies (Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, Tahiti and the Marquesas).

This reviewer spotted two small mistakes: the foundation dates of Cahokia and Kaskaskia are off by 100 years (p. 48); the scapular medal, not the cloth one, carries an image of the Sacred Heart (p. 89). I also wonder why that the publisher chose an admittedly beautiful drawing of a Daughter of Charity to illustrate the book jacket, instead of a sister of one of the three congregations studied in the book. Finally, I personally hope that publishers of books on women religious will soon stop using the word "habits" in their titles... But these small remarks should not detract from a book that is finely researched, beautifully written, and profoundly illuminating.

Claude Auger
Dominican University College
Ottawa (Canada)

Sarah McFarland, *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xx+363.

Beginning with a summer of volunteer work at Genesis Farm in 1994, Sarah McFarland Taylor, who teaches religious studies at Northwestern University, spent the next decade expanding her field research on the propagation of earth ministries, organic farms, and ecological centers founded by environmentally-active Roman Catholic women religious – "eco-nuns" or "green sisters." These include, but are not exclusively, members of the Sisters of Earth network.

Combining historical, ethnographic and gender studies methods, Taylor collected newsletters and publications from over two dozen women's religious communities and conducted over one hundred interviews. Her objectivity as an "intimate outsider" – a married woman and cradle Episcopalian – allows her to situate the green sisters' own stories within the context of a larger paradigm: "I hope that when, years from now, a religious studies, history, or women's studies professor wants to teach about the green sisters movement at the turn of the twenty-first century, this book may in some small way contribute to the resources enabling him or her to do so more effectively" (xiv).

In her introduction, Taylor outlines seven focal areas for this book: greening the religious vows; ecologically sustainable living as spiritual practice; re-inhabiting Western monasticism; ecological food choice and contemplative cooking; sacred agriculture; seed saving; and the greening of prayer and liturgy. She examines the roots of the green sisters movement rising from the New Universe Story articulated by Thomas Berry and Miriam McGillis, using the metaphor of "companion planting" to describe the "composting" of contemporary social movements.

Taylor includes many congregations and ministries in Green Sisters. Her chapters on the Monroe IHM motherhouse "eco-renovation" and the Green Mountain Monastery are particularly well-developed case studies. She includes contact information for 50 religious-based organic farms and eco-spirituality centers, though unfortunately omitting web addresses. Her extensive endnotes provide detailed information derived from congregational publications and academic studies; it would have been helpful to list these in a separate bibliography as well.

In her final chapter, Taylor realistically analyzes the "hostile plantings" – those who fear backlash against green spirituality as suspect, "pagan," incompatible with Christianity. At academic conferences where she presented her findings, Taylor found fundamentalist Protestants most resistant; Catholic colleagues were far more supportive of the green sisters' work. More significantly, Taylor examines the challenges to sustainability mentioned by the sisters themselves: attracting new "greening" members, living with tension within church and society, decentralizing structures. But there are many signs of hope. Cultural consciousness of climate change engages researchers in nearly all disciplines, and young people of "Generation Green" are coming to volunteer in ecological spirituality centers, much like Sarah Taylor did in the summer of 1994. And on the campus of Webster University, I currently teach a religious studies course on women's religious communities which includes chapters from Taylor's book.

Annie Stevens, SL
Webster University
St. Louis, Missouri

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Conference notes with sadness the recent deaths

of Sister Lillanna Kopp who died Easter Sunday April 24, in Portland, Oregon; and Sister Martha Smith who died May 9 in St. Louis, Missouri. Founder of the Sisters For Christian Community, Kopp's understanding of what was transpiring in religious life in the 1960s led her to create the SFCCs as a non-canonical group in the sense that those who transferred to the new congregation were no longer required as they had been to fulfill the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience within a structured community life. Smith, a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet, was professor of history at Avila University for over 30 years, a Fulbright Scholar to India in 1965, and co-author with Avila colleague, Carol Coburn, of the ground-breaking *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920*.

We also extend our sympathy to the Sisters of Charity of New York over the death of Sister Anne Courtney who died May 6 in Yonkers, New York. One of the founders of the Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious, she was a gifted teacher of English, writer and poet as well as serving as archivist for her congregation for some years prior to her death at age 96 in the 80th year of religious life.

Another key woman in the early days of the ACWR, Celeste Rabaut, IHM, died May 10 in Monroe, Michigan. A longtime member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation in Monroe, and archivist for that congregation for many years, she will be greatly missed by the many IHM sisters, archivists for women religious, and historians who have benefited from her generous sharing of herself and her expertise over the years.

The American Catholic Historical Association's annual meeting will convene in Chicago, Illinois, in January 2012. The Association invites panels that explore dimensions of Catholicism in its engagement with society and culture, in accord with the meeting theme of "Communities and Networks." The deadline for submission of individual or session proposals was May 15. For more information contact program committee members Malachy McCarthy at mccarthym@claretians.org, Ellen Skerrett at ellenskerrett@gmail.com, or Larissa Juliet Taylor ljttaylor@colby.edu.

The Southern Association for Women Historians invites proposals for the Ninth Southern Conference of Women's History, to be held June 6-9, 2012, at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. Proposals,

to be submitted by August 1, 2011, may be for panels or individual papers on any dimension of southern women's and gender history. Inquiries regarding submission requirements should be directed to Lorri Glover, program committee chair, at lglover1@slu.edu.

John Bavaro, faculty member at Slippery Rock University, Pennsylvania who spearheaded development of the "Sisters in Healthcare" exhibit project highlighting the ministry of eleven congregations of women in health care in western Pennsylvania, reports that the exhibit is enjoying a very successful run at the campus Martha Gault Gallery. The sponsoring congregations and the University have now gifted the collection to the Heinz History Center, affiliate of the Smithsonian in Pittsburgh. A virtual exhibit will eventually be posted on their web site www.sistersinhealthcare.org.

The "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" exhibit will close at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa May 22 after which it will move on to the José Drudis Biada Gallery, Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles from June 17 to August 14. Remaining venues are the Northern Indiana Center for History in South Bend from September 3 to December 31; and the California Museum in Sacramento from January 24 to June 3, 2012, following which artifacts will be restored to home archives and the exhibit dismantled. An hour-long DVD is in production as a means of extending the viewing experience beyond the life of the exhibit. Sponsors for the South Bend tour are Notre Dame's departments of History and American Studies, the Saint Mary's College Center for Spirituality, and the Northern Indiana Center for History. For events planned in conjunction with the South Bend tour see the Cushwa Center web site www.nd.edu/~cushwa.

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