
HISTORY OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

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NEWS AND NOTES

CONFERENCE '98

Plans are progressing for the fourth triennial conference in summer, 1998. Of the three sites being considered, Loyola University, Chicago; Mount Conference Center, Atchison, Kansas; and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Terre Haute, Indiana, Loyola is favored by the ad hoc conference committee for reasons of location and conference facilities. The next issue of the newsletter will include details on the date and confirmation of site. Judging from the research news which comes in from week to week, there are excellent prospects for another stimulating meeting. Members engaged in doctoral or other archival research are particularly encouraged to look forward to Conference '98 as an opportunity to dialogue on the subject of the history of women religious.

PUBLICATIONS

Members have alerted the newsletter to a number of entries by and on women religious in the forthcoming *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC HISTORY*. Feature length articles include "Franciscan Sisters in the USA," by Grace McDonald, FSPA; "The School Sisters of Notre Dame in the USA," by Stephanie Mary Pilachowski, SSND (who has also contributed biographical sketches on Mary Caroline Friess and Margaret Ellen Traxler); on the Catholic Church in Oregon, by Beatrice Weisner, SNJM; and "The Society of the Sacred Heart," by Patricia Byrne, CSJ.

Biographical entries in the *EACH*, in addition to the above, include Holy Name sisters Miriam Therese, best known for her work in the establishment of minimum

wage laws both for Oregon and nationwide (by Carole Strawn, SNJM), and Mary Flavia, prominent for her work in setting high standards for Catholic schools in the Northwest and establishing normal schools for lay and religious women entering the teaching profession (by archivist, Rosemarie Kaspar, SNJM); on Ursuline, Dorothy Kazel (by Cynthia Glavac, OSU), and her companions murdered by Salvadoran government forces in 1980, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford (by Judith Noonan, MM); and Religious of the Sacred Heart Lucile Mathevon, Grace Dammann, Carol Putnam (by Margaret Phelan, RSCJ) and Aloysia Hardey, Georgia Stevens (by archivist Elizabeth Farley, RSCJ). This partial listing (see also HWR October 1995) is indicative of the valuable contribution this publication will make to reference aids on the subject.

"Pray for Your Wanderers': Women Religious on the Colorado Mining Frontier, 1877-1917," *FRONTIERS: A JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S STUDIES* (XV:3, Fall, 1995 Special Issue: Women in the West), by Martha Smith, CSJ, and Carol Coburn, helps fill in the story of congregations active on the frontier in addition to the Daughters of Charity, known more widely through the published letters and life of Blandina Segale.

JOY IN THE PLANTING: The Life Story of Clementine (née Barbara) Zerr, 1832-1906, by Pauline Grady, ASC (privately printed, 1994, Adorers of the Precious Blood, Ruma, Illinois), is a fictional account, based on primary sources, of the life of the founder of the Ruma vicariate of this congregation. The author, who also wrote an earlier background history, *RUMA: HOME AND HERITAGE: The Story of a Convent in Rural Southern Illinois 1876-1984* (privately printed, 1984), is currently working on the influence of Fred Witte, chaplain to the Ruma motherhouse from 1919-1961, on modernization of

the Ruma vicariate/province. She would welcome information on comparable priest-religious superior relationships as she explores the interaction of Witte and vicarial superior Veronica Baumgart in the 1920s.

"Historical Perspectives on Women Religious: Implications for Creating a Feminist Theology of Religious Life," by Susan Marie Maloney, SNJM, in *WOMEN AND THEOLOGY*, eds. Mary Ann Hinsdale and Phyllis Kaminski (Orbis Press, 1995), proposes a feminist theological perspective from which to view contemporary religious life.

The recently published *WOMEN'S INTEREST GROUPS: Institutional Profiles*, ed. Sarah Slavin (Greenwood Press, 1995), profiles a number of groups whose founders and/or membership are predominately women religious: the National Black Sisters Conference (by Karen M. Kennelly, CSJ); Network : A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby (by Mary Ewens, OP); Las Hermanas (by Yolanda Tarango, CCVI); the National Assembly of Religious Women (by Judy Vaughan, CSJ); and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (by Marianne C. Ferguson).

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Audrey Olson, CSJ, whose doctoral degree from the University of Kansas is in American history with a concentration on immigration and urban history, is gathering information toward a future documentation and history of the lay associate movement as it is evolving in the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. She can be contacted at the St. Louis province motherhouse, 6400 Minnesota Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63111.

Joan Wiesenbeck and her sister, Marlene Weisenbeck, both members of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA), are writing what will be the first biography in English on St. Rose of Viterbo (1233-1251). Joan and Carmen Morzillo, MVP, have begun to develop a literary triptych featuring three women saints from Viterbo, Italy: Blessed Rosa Venerini, St. Giacinta Mariscotti, and St. Rose, with a focus on how each portrays particular charismatic gifts for her own times--their lives span several centuries. Marlene's article, "How Varying Forms of Consecrated Life are Emerging in the United States," has been accepted for publication by *REVIEW FOR RELIGIOUS*. She presented it at the

National Conference of Vicars for Religious in Rome las, March. It reviews the various canonical options for consecrated life and gives examples of newly emerging expressions of religious life at the end of this century, probing emerging diversity and motivations for beginning new religious communities as revealed in the testimony of respondents.

Mary Paulinus Oakes, RSM, is completing work on a primary source, a handwritten journal describing the arrival of Sisters of Mercy in Vicksburg, Mississippi, from Baltimore in 1860, to open a school; their Civil War involvement as Confederate nurses; and their experience of yellow fever epidemics, especially those of 1878 when half the populations of Vicksburg and Jackson died, including all the priests serving in the two cities and 6 of the 8 sisters. The journal's author, Sister Ignatius Sumner, was a niece of the Massachusetts abolitionist, Charles Sumner; her blood sister married Jefferson Davis' nephew. Please contact Oakes at 19 North Hill Pkwy, #19-P; Jackson, MS, 39206 for information and with suggestions for a publisher. To date, the University of Mississippi Press has been approached but has declined because of the brevity of the journal.

Dolores Liptak, RSM, is working with the Sisters of Providence of Holyoke, Massachusetts, on a collaborative history of that congregation since 1875 when the community, originally a branch of that begun by Mother Emelie Gamelin of Montreal, came to Holyoke from Kingston, Ontario. Publication is slated for 1997.

Regina Bechtle, SC, has underway an annotated listing of archival holdings of the writings of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, as a step toward publication of the complete Seton corpus. She and Judith Metz, SC, with the assistance of Ellin Kelly (co-editor, *ELIZABETH SETON: SELECTED WRITINGS*, Paulist Press, 1987), are coordinating this project for the 13-member Elizabeth Seton Federation.

Bechtle is also researching the spirituality of religious leadership, with a focus on the interaction of internal and ecclesiastical leadership in the first American congregation for women, the Sisters of Charity, during the crucial periods of foundation (1809-1812), and formation of the independent congregation in New York (1846). This year marks the 150th anniversary of the New York foundation.

Rome last
Claude Auger would be grateful to anyone who finds data pertaining to the service of the clergy by women religious, by any congregation, to share it with him as he continues his research on this little known facet of women religious' history. A slightly revised version of the text he presented at the HWR Milwaukee conference has been submitted for publication in the CCHA annual. Claude can be reached at 1162 Chimney Hill Way, Gloucester, Ontario K1J 8Z8.

Gail Ball, St. Ives, Sydney, Australia is completing a doctoral thesis on Anglican Sisterhoods in Australia. A précis of her research, which is being pursued at Sydney University, appears in the October 1995 issue of History Newsletter, published by The Institute of Religious Studies, PO Box 280, Strathfield NSW 2135. Rosa MacGinley, PBVM, edits the newsletter.

Another University of Sydney dissertation with implications for women religious (specifically, the Daughters of Sion), also featured in the above publication, is that by Marianne Dacy, NDS, on "The Parting of the Ways: the Break between the Church and the Synagogue."

Maria Hetherington, OP, is working on her dissertation in folklore at Indiana University, Bloomington, with profession customs of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael as her subject. She asks any readers with information on the custom of choosing a motto at the time of final profession, or of taking a ring on that occasion, to contact her.

Barbara Zajac is conducting interviews in connection with her dissertation, "Life as a Nun: The Collective Biography of a Women's Community in Los Angeles," being carried out in Sociology at the University of California, Riverside.

Mary Elizabeth Brown's study, THE SCALABRINIANS IN NORTH AMERICA (1887-1939) will appear in 1996. Among its subjects are relations between the Society of Saint Charles Scalabrinians and groups of women religious: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart; Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence; Sisters of Charity Pallottine; and Sisters of Charity of Saint Joan Anheia.

Veronica Strozak reports that the network works--she received helpful information in response to her request

for information in recent News and Notes; her dissertation on Victorian foundresses, with an emphasis on crisis and emergency, is underway. We look forward to further news bulletins on this research!

Jane Mowrer, OP, continues to develop oral history holdings of the Sinsinawa Dominican archives. Now in the collection are 454 autobiographical interviews; and records from 144 authors interviewed on topical subjects. The total number of interviewees transcribed in the Oral History collection has reached 236.

BEIJING

HWR member Kaye Ashe, OP, reflects as follows on the Non-Governmental Organizations Forum on Women:

"It would be difficult to exaggerate the depth and scope of all I felt among the 30,000 women of every color, class, and continent who gathered in Huairou (Beijing) in September. The women religious at the NGO Forum issued a news release stating that issues of particular concern to us were: 'the forces of militarization, economic inequity, violence, racism, narrow fundamentalist interpretations, and patriarchal structures which negatively affect women everywhere.' It was clear at the Forum that these concerns are widely shared and that women are ready to form global partnerships built on vision and conscience.

Since I am at present at work on a book titled for the moment The Feminization of the Church?, I attended the Forum with an eye to workshops on women and religion, women's spirituality, religion and ecofeminism and the like, and I found them in abundance. I heard a Hindu woman, an Hawaiian elder, a Maori elder, a Canadian Wiccan, Catholic theologians, Franciscan sisters, a Brazilian sociologist, a Jewish lesbian--all yearning for liberation, peace, wholeness, true community, for a conversion from what remains an institutional religion of inequality, misogyny, homophobia, racism, and dualistic, patriarchal assumptions.

I was fascinated with the many ways that women spoke at the Forum: through silent protest,

symbols, art, feisty demonstrations, reasoned presentations, theater. Woman's voices are gaining in strength and confidence. And this is good. Adrienne Rich reminds us that 'In a world where language and naming are power, silence is violence, is oppression'" My hope now is that our voices will reverberate in every village, every city, every nation every religious congregation."

NOTICES

The Eudist Center of Buffalo, New York and the Congregation of Jesus and Mary sponsored a conference at Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center, Norcross, Georgia, August 18-24, 1995, on the French school of spirituality. Over 30 congregations of men and women sent representatives to the gathering, entitled "Alive for God in Christ Jesus: A Conference Exploring Contemporary Influence from the French School of Spirituality." Raymond Deville, SS, general superior of the Sulpician order and a recognized scholar on the seventeenth century golden age of French religious thought, was the principal speaker. Mary Roger Madden, SP, who attended, may be able to provide more information for those interested in contents or outcomes of the conference.

The November, 1995 issue of the Archivist for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) News carries a notice from Dolores Liptak, RSM, concerning exploration of a possible central archive for publications, documents, archives and related materials on the history of American Catholic women. Some funding has been received for a feasibility study. The ACWR national office located at the IHM motherhouse, 610 West Elm Avenue, Monroe, Michigan 48162, is eager to receive your suggestions and ideas on this matter.

The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill formally opened their Heritage Exhibit, "Call and Response," October 29, 1995. The exhibit documents 119 years of history, from 1876 to the present.

A call for papers has gone out, and deadlines passed, for the spring meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association meeting in March, and the Catholic Historical Association annual meeting next January. For further information on the March 22-23 meeting which

will be held at the University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77006, contact program chair Richard J. Schiefen, CSB. On the January 3-5, 1997, meeting, you may want to contact HWR member, JoAnn McNamara who is program committee chair: 500 West 111th Street, Apt. 5B, New York, NY 10025.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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Editor: Karen Kennelly, CSJ
Book Review editor: Mary Hayes, SND
Ad hoc Conference Committee:
Kaye Ashe, OP; Florence Deacon, OSF;
Mary Ewens, OP; JoAnn McNamara;
Mary J. Oates, CSJ; Judith Sutera, OSB;
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