
History Of Women Religious

News and Notes

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HWR NETWORK NEWS

Bids to host the fifth triennial conference, summer, 2001, are now being received. Selection criteria include convenience of location, capacity to accommodate 250 for residence, dining and meeting spaces, and moderate prices. Sites of past conferences: The College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota; Marymount College, Tarrytown, New York; Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois. Dates have been in late June. Please consider your local resources and others with which you may be acquainted, and forward your formal bids or informal suggestions to the newsletter editor for consideration by **May 1**.

Elizabeth (Beth) McGahan will be our first Canadian program committee chair. Her experience includes membership on the program committee in the past as well as considerable experience with other conferences. Appointment of other program committee members and a local arrangements committee is pending site selection.

The three-year cycle is being retained for the fifth conference to permit adequate planning. The question of moving to a two-year cycle will be revisited in 2001. Conference duration has been three full days (Sunday noon – Wednesday noon) and may be shortened or lengthened depending on site availability and the recommendation of the program committee.

Book review editor: Mary Hayes has resigned as book review editor. Please let the editor know if you are interested and, if so, any area(s) of

specialization you may have within the broader field of the history of women religious. We are very grateful to Mary for her guidance of this newsletter feature over the past several years, for the reviews she has produced herself—an outstanding example of which is carried in this issue—and for those she has elicited from others.

PUBLICATIONS

Kathleen Boner, South African Dominican, has completed a comprehensive history of Irish Dominican foundations in South Africa, Dominican Women: A Time to Speak (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1998).

Margaret MacCurtain, Dominican historian and public lecturer, has contributed an essay, "Godly Burden: The Catholic Sisterhoods in Twentieth-Century Ireland," to Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland, edited by A. Bradley and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis (University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).

Bruce Venarde, Women's Monasticism and Medieval Society: Nunneries in France and England, 890-1215 (Cornell University Press, 1997), has assembled an extensive data base for 850 women's monastic foundations in England and southern France. The volume is reviewed by HWR member Jo Ann McNamara in the October, 1998, issue of The American Historical Review.

Daniel Hickey, Local Hospitals in Ancien Régime France: Rationalization, Resistance, Renewal, 1530-1789 (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997), relates the founding of numerous women's

religious nursing orders--and subsequent alterations in women's roles in cloister and household, and in the division of labor between men and women in French hospitals—to the pioneer work of Vincent de Paul and the Lazarists.

Mary Beth Lamb successfully defended her dissertation, First Contact: Swiss Benedictine Sisters at Standing Rock Missions in a Cross-Cultural Frame, 1881-1890, in September, 1998, at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley.

Shelley Amistè Wolbrink successfully defended her dissertation, Noble Pursuits: Family, Power and Gender in the Premonstratensian Monasteries of Northwestern Germany, 1120-1250, in September, 1998, at the University of Cincinnati.

Ann Miriam Gallagher, RSM, has a series of recent articles to her credit: "Catherine Josephine Seton and the New York Mercy Experience," in MAST (Journal of the Mercy Association in Scripture and Theology) 8:1, Fall 1997; and a series, also on Catherine Josephine Seton, published in The Seton Way, Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Emmitsburg, Maryland, issues of Summer/Fall 1997, Winter 1998, and Spring 1998.

The revised edition of Women of Minnesota: Selected Biographical Essays, edited by Barbara Stuhler and Gretchen Kreuter (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1998) includes Karen M. Kennelly's biographical essay on a turn-of-the-century lay Catholic, later Franciscan nun, "Mary Molloy: Women's College Founder," as well as brief biographies of six other women religious who made significant contributions to the state's history. First published in 1978 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Minnesota statehood, the volume is a model in terms of collaborative writing and inclusion of women's stories.

BOOK REVIEW

The Poor Belong to Us: Catholic Charities and American Welfare by Dorothy Brown and Elizabeth McKeown (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 284 pp.

To honor the significance of the publication of The Poor Belong to Us: Catholic Charities and American Welfare, by Dorothy Brown and Elizabeth McKeown, Woodstock Theological Center sponsored a May, 1998, forum on Catholic Charities, Catholic social teaching, and the impact of the radical changes in welfare provision brought about by the 1996 welfare reform act (The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996). In reflecting on the fundamental shift effected by the 1996 legislation, the panelists raised critical questions about the challenges for welfare provision in the twentieth-first century, focusing on the tension between the commitment of independent agencies like Catholic Charities, U.S.A. and local, state, and national governments.

This tension is the subject of Brown and McKeown's pioneering study of the evolution of independent, nineteenth century Roman Catholic care-giving institutions into centralized bureaucracies linked through national networks. The Poor Belong to Us is a major achievement in the historiography of Roman Catholic culture, joining the tradition of John McGreevey's Parish Boundaries (1996) and Mary Oates' The Catholic Philanthropic Tradition in America (1995) in its successful integration of the Roman Catholic story with the national context in which it interacted. It retrieves the little-acknowledged central role of Catholic charities in caring for the urban immigrant poor up the World War II. Although it studies Roman Catholic institutions, The Poor Belong to Us is not institutional history; it is a model social history that situates the Catholic response to poverty within the framework of national social policy issues and the politics that shaped the methods of care for the dependent poor and juvenile delinquents.

One of the key dynamics in the Catholic interaction with the broader welfare community has been the challenge to apply the values of Catholic social teaching to welfare provision while at the same time maintaining collaborative relationships with other non-profits and with local, state, and federal agencies. Brown and McKeown describe this challenge as Catholic charities "resistance to the secularization of charity and its simultaneous and deliberate accommodation to the modern welfare

state." They analyze this complex balancing act by describing the shifts that transformed local care giving agencies, initially stimulated by the child-care reform initiatives of the Progressive Era and by the emergence of social work as a profession. At the same time, growing Catholic need for adequate funding led to participation in community chest fund-raising projects and to the acceptance of public welfare, along with the compliance to the professional standards which this funding required. By 1930, in response to this complex evolution, most local charities had become accountable to newly organized bureaus of charity, headed by priests who increasingly demand that professionally trained social workers replace volunteers in the field and in management.

Perhaps no institutions were more dramatically affected by the evolution of Catholic charities than the institutions sponsored by congregations of women religious. In developing their analysis, Brown and McKeown highlight the impact of these institutions in ways that demonstrate that they were a part of history, that the sisters (and brothers) who managed and staffed these institutions were genuine actors in the child-care provision debates. They thus provide a model of the way in which congregational history could be written. Congregations engaged in Catholic charities were primarily committed to children living in poverty; from the 1850's through the 1920's, in fact, the majority of children at risk were Roman Catholic children of immigrant parents, a situation that did not go unnoticed by critics of the Church. In response, therefore, to sheer need and to the fear that Catholic child-care institutions run by religious congregations and assisted by lay Catholic volunteers and by lay organizations such as the St. Vincent dePaul Society. Brown and McKeown report that in 1910, religious congregations cared for almost 89,000 dependent or delinquent children in approximately 325 infant homes and orphan asylums.

The twenty years from 1910 to 1930, however, would test congregations and their lay colleagues as they addressed the challenges arising from new trends in child-care provision advocated by Progressive reformers, and as they accepted the consequences of growing centralization at the

diocesan level, prompted in part by the bishops' desires, for financial reasons, to exercise greater control over the independent agencies in their dioceses. Brown and McKeown craft a nuanced analysis of the ways congregations adapted to these changes; in response to the "home first" principle, for example, congregations accepted the trend to support children at home rather than in institutions, and moved towards working for foster care placements and establishing day nurseries. For congregations and for diocesan bureaus the motivation to change and to adapt remained the constant focus on providing for children at risk. Brown and McKeown thus conclude their analysis where the forum honoring their work began: "The issues confronted in the 1870's still persist: Children are still in peril and poverty still haunts the land. The challenge continues"

The Poor Belong to Us meets the highest standards of interdisciplinary scholarship and should be part of any library's core collection in Catholic Studies, Women's Studies and social history. Seventy-seven pages of notes offer a comprehensive overview of the latest scholarship and suggest some exciting research possibilities.

Mary Hayes, SND
Trinity College
Washington, D.C.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Anne Winston-Allen, department of foreign languages and literature at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, has been working since 1994 on the fifteenth-century Observantine reform movement, first in connection with the founding of rosary confraternities (see her *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages*, Penn State Press, 1998), and then focusing on the activities of women in church reform. She and Sarah DeMaris at Valparaiso University are planning to collaborate on a book about the reform of women's cloisters by female reform activists. Winston-Allen's area of expertise is German medieval literature.

Anita L. Specht is conducting her doctoral dissertation research at the University of Notre Dame on the topic of "Body and Soul: How Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion Influenced the Hospitals of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, 1886-1930."

Barbara Wall's dissertation research, at UND, is on "Constancy Amid Change: Catholic Nuns and the Development of Health Care Institutions."

Carolyn Edwards, also at UND, is developing her doctoral research on "Memory, Writing, and the Convent of Regensburg, 950-1250."

ARCHIVES

We note with regret the death late last November of Rose Matthew Mangini, IHM from Monroe, Michigan. She had just been succeeded by Mary Beth Fraser as editor of ACWR News, and was serving as her congregation's archivist at the time of her death.

The Archives for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) held its annual conference in Orlando last year and installed HWR subscriber Dolores Liptak, RSM, as president—a repeat performance for Liptak who represented this organization as well as HWR at hearing held in Washington, D.C. in November by the President's Commission formed to celebrate women in American history. She was a singular voice promoting inclusion of Catholic lay and religious women in the planning of millennium celebrations.

Barbara Misner, archivist-historian for the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, was responsible for a session entitled "Religious Archives: Treasures and Challenges," at the fall meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The session highlighted religious archives as a valuable resource for social historians researching the history of education, health care, social work, and demography, focusing on documentation found in the archives of Benedictines, St. John's Abbey; Capuchins, Detroit Province; Michigan Mercy Sisters, Farmington, Michigan health care corporation headquarters; and Dominicans, Adrian, Michigan.

Grace Donovan, SUSC, and Mary Ewens, OP, participated in October-November sessions of the English-Speaking Archivists in Rome, Italy. Both discussed papers presented at the HWR June, 1998, conference.

M. Teresa Wolking, OSB, reports that St. Walburga Monastery of Benedictine Sisters of Convington, Kentucky, has renovated archives space and is holding open house for interested visitors. At opposite ends of the continuum so far as opening, closing, or renovating archives are concerned, ACWR's practical publication How'd You Do That for November, 1998, describes the efforts of Genevieve Shea, SLW, in setting up archives for her community, the Sisters of the Living Word, 800 North Fernandez Avenue B, Arlington Heights, Illinois. Avila College is beginning to receive documents—to date, two reference libraries—in the depository for materials relating to the history of women religious recently established there.

Mary Lonan Reilly, OSF, is chairing her congregation's anniversary committee in preparation for celebrating the centenary of the death of foundress, Mother M. Alfred Moes, December 18, 1999. Plans are to share the Franciscans' stories with the civic community of Rochester, Minnesota, where the sisters contributed greatly to the development of the world-famous Mayo Clinic as well as to education and other facets of civic life.

Mary Kraft, CSJ, is facilitating a collaborative project to up-date the history of the St. Paul Province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the sole comprehensive history of the province being the centenary work by Helen Angela Hurley, CSJ, On Good Ground (University of Minnesota Press, 1951).

Timothy J. Meagher, archivist and museum director for The Catholic University of America, is engaged in a project to improve access to Catholic archives and through them to documents of American Catholic history through the internet. To obtain a copy of the data collection form being used to collect information, contact Meagher at CUA, or Michael Galloway, Catholic Online, 1701 Westwind

Drive #219, Bakersfield, CA 93301 (FAX 805-869-1810; email mlg@catholic.org)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Carmelites of Baltimore have scheduled events open to the public to mark Black History Month in **February** and Women's History Month in **March**. Featuring authors reading from their works, video screening and critique, and lectures, the events relate Carmelite interests and history to the broader topics in unique ways.

The Coordinating Council for Women in History is accepting applications for the Catherine Prelinger Award Scholarship, to enhance the work of a contemporary scholar following a non-traditional academic path. Deadline **February 15, 1999**; request application materials from Professor Marguerite Renner, Dept. of History, Glendale College, 1500 North Verdugo Road, Glendale, CA 91208.

The Abigail Quigley McCarthy Center for Women's Research, Resources and Scholarship continues to make annual grants available for persons doing research on women. The application deadline is in **mid-March**. Contact the Center at The College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, MN 55105 (FAX 651-690-6024).

Rosa MacGinley, PBVM, has announced that the Institute of Religious Studies in Australia is ceasing publication of History Newsletter. MacGinley can be reached in the future at Presentation Convent, 41 Enderly Road, Clayfield QLD 4011. Those who have learned to rely on the newsletter for timely and substantive information on research in and about Australian orders of women religious will continue to find a valuable source of information in MacGinley whose editing and personal research have contributed much to the networking of scholars interested in the history of religious institutes.

The Committee on Program for next year's annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association, to be held in Chicago on January 7 - 9, 2000, invites proposals for individual papers or (preferably) complete sessions. Include a brief

synopsis of contents for papers, to James D. Tracy, Dept. of History, 715 Social Sciences Building, University of Minnesota, 267 19th Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55455 (Telephone 612-625-6303; fax 612-624-7096). The deadline is **January 11, 1999**, but exceptions could be requested.

The American Historical Association's deadline is **February 15, 1999**, for proposed papers/panels to be presented at its January 6 - 9, 2000, in Chicago. All materials can be found on the AHA's web site of <http://chnm.gmu.edu/aha> and click on "Annual Meeting."

The American Society of Church History also meets in conjunction with the AHA, January 6-9, 2000, and invites proposals for papers or sessions, with a deadline of **April 15, 1999**. Contact Henry W. Bowden, ASCH, POB 8517, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please have copy for the **June 1999** issue to the editor by **May 1, 1999**.

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DISTINGUISHED HISTORIAN AWARD

CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

Whereas Jo Ann McNamara, recently retired Professor of History at Hunter College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, has in numerous translations, articles, scholarly presentations, and books made fresh and original contributions to the history of Early Christianity and the Middle Ages, and

Whereas, she has contributed to the recovery of women's history through her study, research, scrupulous textual criticism, and published writing in the field of hagiography, and

Whereas, in *A New Song: Celibate Women in the First Three Christian Centuries*, she has reinterpreted the virginal ideal as a source of power by which women have exercised their right to define their own sexuality and the meaning of their own lives, and

Whereas, in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* she has provided us with a rich resource and introduced us to 18 extraordinary women of Merovingian Gaul, placing them in the context of their historical, religious, cultural, economic, and political background, and

Whereas, in *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia*, she has detailed with rare intelligence and sensitivity both the struggles and the achievements of women religious across the ages, and

Whereas, in that same work, she draws on a wide range of primary sources and brings into sharp relief the lives and works of women who have served church and society as teachers, healers, theologians, mystics, and social activists, and

Whereas, she has enriched women's studies and furthered gender studies by applying the insights of feminist theory to the issues of chastity and gender, sanctity and power, and celibate collaboration between women and men, and

Whereas, in 1997, both the Hunter College Faculty and the National Coalition of American Nuns granted her awards acknowledging her excellent, thorough, and fruitful research, and

Whereas she has served her profession and the public at large by serving as Editorial Consultant for *Feminist Studies*, *Trends in History*, and *Women in History*; as a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Women's History*, the *Medieval Feminist Newsletter*, *Vox Benedictina*, and *Magistra*; and as Consultant for the award-winning series "Women of Spirit," a presentation of Wisconsin Public Radio that featured the lives of women saints, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference on the History of Women Religious here assembled present the Distinguished Historian Award to JoAnn McNamara, in recognition of her dedication to research, publication, and other activities furthering understanding and appreciation of the role of nuns in history.

Given the twenty-second day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred ninety-eight, at the conference, "Through Multiple Lenses: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the History of Women Religious," gathered at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.

(October 1998 issue carried the text citation for Mary Ewens)

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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