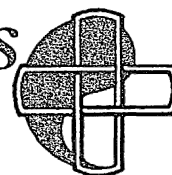


History of Women Religious

News and Notes



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HWR Network News

Carol Coburn, HWR Program Chair, would like to thank everyone who submitted individual proposals and/or panels for the 2004 Conference. She and the Program Committee will work through the proposals this fall and contact applicants after final program decisions have been made later this year. Carol would also like to thank individuals who, although they did not send proposals, have volunteered to serve as chairs or moderators of sessions. Judith Sutera continues to work on local arrangements as the Benedictines at Mount St. Scholastica prepare for the June conference in Atchison, Kansas. As the conference nears, more information will be available on the conference website www.mountosb.org/hwr.

Elizabeth Kolmer, chair of the Awards Committee, invites everyone to nominate books and authors for the Outstanding Book Award, for the book judged to have made an outstanding contribution to the history of women religious published since the last Conference (2000); and for the Outstanding Historian Award, given from time to time to recognize individuals for lifetime contributions to research and publication pertaining to the history of women religious. Nominations may be sent to her at 5914 Suson Place #1, St. Louis, MO 63139, or by email to kolmere@SLU.EDU.

Publications

The current issue of *Mémoire Dominicaine* (Les Éditions du Cerf, vol. 16:2002) includes a series of six articles on Dominican nuns: their role in the origins of the Order of Preachers, the historical evolution of their juridical situation, nuns as preachers, geographic expansion, 1206-2002, archival collections, and a biographical essay. The doctoral thesis of one of the contributors, Barbara Estelle Beaumont, OP, has also been published, *La restauration des monastères de Dominicaines en France au dix-neuvième siècle* (Rome: Istituto storico Domenicano, 2002). More information on the latter publication is available at ufficio.libri@curia.op.org.

Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, Cambridge University Press, 2002), emphasizes the close relationship between religious and lay spirituality during this period, especially with regard to women.

The collection of essays edited by James G. Clark, *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England* (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion, vol. 18, 2002), includes two of special relevance to women religious: Claire Cross, "Yorkshire Nunneries in the Early Tudor Period;" and Marilyn Oliva, "Patterns of Patronage to Female Monasteries in the Late Middle Ages."

Asunción Lavrin and Rosalva Loreto L., *Monjas y beatas: La escritura femenina en la espiritualidad barroca Novo-hispana, siglos XVII y XVIII* (Puebla: Universidad de las Américas, 2002), have given scholars interested in topics relating to women in Mexican colonial history a unique anthology of spiritual writings authored by women, only one of whom had found an editor in modern times prior to this publication.

Barbara Walsh's thesis, *Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales, 1800-1937: A Social History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), helps fill in the many gaps in our knowledge of the history of women religious in nineteenth and twentieth century Britain. Of particular interest is the influence of public policy on patterns of religious establishments and the crucial role of immigration from Ireland.

Kathryn Lawlor, BVM, develops the context for letters written by her congregation's founder, *Your Affectionate: Commentary on Mary Francis Clarke's Writings* (privately printed, Sisters of Charity, BVM, 2003), by means of a general introduction and particular commentaries accompanying a critical edition of 137 letters.

Leslie Woodcock Tentler, "On the Margins: The State of American Catholic History" *U.S. Catholic Historian* (Spring, 2003; reprint from *American Catholic Quarterly*, March, 1993), pp. 77-95, includes in her analysis a thoughtful assessment of Catholic sisterhoods and their persistent neglect by historians of American social history. Although not specifically commented on by the five historians who weigh the significance of Tentler's article ten years later (Bodnar, Duntley, Killen, McCartin, and McGreevy, pp. 96-126), her observations regarding neglect of Catholic sisterhoods in the historical record retain substantial validity today.

Sioban Nelson, "Invisible Radicals" (*Health Progress*, March-April, 2003), pp. 27-37+, corroborates Tentler's analysis. A native of Australia who teaches nursing at the University of Melbourne, Nelson is the author of *Say Little, Do Much: Nursing, Nuns, and Hospitals in the Nineteenth Century* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

Rosa MacGinley's study, *A Dynamic of Hope: Institutes of Women Religious in Australia*, has been reprinted in response to continuing demand (Darlinghurst, New South Wales: Crossing Press, 2002). Information is available at sales@crossingpress.com.au.

Jennifer Peckinpugh, ed., *Mountain Sisters* (University of Kentucky Press, 2003), relates the story of the Glenmary Sisters whose service among the rural poor in Appalachia took a new turn in the late 1960s. In a process roughly analogous to that of the Los Angeles Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters, conflicts with church authorities over renewal led to formation of a non-canonical group by some members of the original Glenmary congregation.

Mary Ransom Burke, SCN, *We Drank the Water: Nazareth in Belize* (Louisville: Harmony House Publishers, 2003), traces the story of Belize and its people as experienced by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth who began ministering there in 1975.

The inaugural issues of *CONVERSATIO Dominican Women on Earth* (Sor Juana Press, 2003, mailing address 28 Hein Road, Boerne, Texas 78006) develop the topic of ecological issues and spirituality: *Earth Spirituality: In the Catholic and Dominican Traditions*, by Sharon Therese Zayac, OP; and

Permaculture: Finding Our Own Vines and Fig Trees, by Carol Coston, OP.

Regina Bechtle, SC, reports that a recent issue of *Vincentian Heritage* (vol. 21:2) includes her article, "In the Face of Diversity": The Response of the Vincentian and Charity Families to 9/11," as well as articles by Jean Flannelly, SC, on Elizabeth Seton as a model of contemplative presence; and Gertrude Foley, SC, on Louise de Marillac.

Thomas W. Foley, *Father Francis M. Craft, Missionary to the Sioux* (Nebraska University Press, 2002), explores the life of a priest (1852-1920) whose often controversial ministry among the Sioux Indians included the founding of an Indian order of sisters.

Anne M. Butler, "Building Justice: Mother Margaret Murphy, Race, and Texas," *Catholic Southwest: A Journal of History and Culture* (13: 2002), pp. 13-36, makes another fine contribution to our understanding of the work of sisters in the west.

Research in Progress

Midori Teranishi is doing research on the post-World War II mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame to Japan. She is at the dissertation stage of doctoral studies at Doshisha University in Kyoto and plans to attend the Atchison Conference. Persons interested in sharing information with her prior to the Conference may contact her at teran6@wd6.so-net.ne.jp.

Ann Harrington, BVM, hopes to resume her study of the first Roman Catholic sisters who went to Japan during the Meiji period (1868-1912) when she completes work on a popular history of the founder of the Sisters of Charity BVM, Mary Frances Clarke.

Margaret Nacke and Mary Savoie, CSJ, have been working with women religious of Central and Eastern Europe since 1993. They presented some of their findings to the Catholic Theological Society of America at its annual convention in Cincinnati (June, 2003), and are currently designing a process for collecting stories from Sisters who lived under Communist regimes from 1945-1990.

Mary Cresp, RSJ, is in the early stages of a two-year project in which she will be examining the phenomenon of Church movements and the spread of the

Sisters of St. Joseph congregation originating in Le Puy, France. A member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, founded in Australia in 1866, and with extensive experience of religious life in that country, she is currently conducting archival research in the U.S. and can be reached at marycresp@sosj.org.au.

Ellen Whelan, OSF, is working on a sequel to *The Sisters' Story: Saint Marys Hospital-Mayo Clinic 1889-1939* (see *HWR News and Notes*, Feb. 2003). The sequel will take the story of this world-famed hospital and clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, from 1940 to the present.

Elizabeth Perry, an art historian who researches convent art, especially portraits of nuns from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century, is interested in expanding her research beyond her dissertation focus on painting by Mexican nuns. She would be very interested in information about portraits or convent art collections of any kind that she might be able to visit. She is also studying collections of photographs of nuns or convents from the 1860s through the 1960s. She may be contacted at EQPerry@aol.com or at 508-626-4826.

Kathleen O'Brien, RSM, whose first book, *Journeys: A Pre-Amalgamation History of the Sisters of Mercy, Omaha Province*, was published several years ago, is now working on a second volume covering her congregation's history from 1929 to the present.

Rosalie McQuaide, CSJP, asks that anyone doing research on Margaret Anna Cusack, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, contact her or Janet Richardson to share your project. Email addresses are rosalie47@juno.com and jrichardson@juno.com.

Jean Richardson, assistant professor at Buffalo State College, is currently conducting research on the Sisters of Charity Hospital in Buffalo, New York, 1848-1900.

Book Reviews

Cloister and Community: Life Within a Carmelite Monastery, by Mary Jo Weaver (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2002). Pp.108.

With over two dozen double-page and numerous smaller black and white illustrations of the India-

napolis Carmel in its various stages of physical growth, this beautiful book combines architectural biography, Carmelite history, and the particular spiritual journey of the Indianapolis Carmelite community.

Mary Jo Weaver brings not only her vast background in religious history to this project, which initially was intended as a booklet on the architectural changes in the monastery, designed for the sisters themselves, but also her long friendship with the Sisters.

Divided into six chapters, corresponding to the stages in which the monastery was constructed and modified, Weaver puts the spiritual life of those who inhabit the monastery into the context of Carmelite history and spirituality. Thus, Teresa of Avila and her reforms, the importance of sacred space, the meaning of simplicity and poverty, enclosure and silence, and the spiritual consciousness that enabled this group of women to move from an understanding of enclosed space separated from the world to the community that today sees the world as sacred space are all succinctly covered. Detailed notes supplement the text rather than impede it.

Interwoven in this context of Teresian principles of reformed Carmelite convents is also the story of the visionary founder of the Indianapolis Carmel, Mother Theresa Seelbach, who sought to build a monastery physically reminiscent of the crenellated city of Avila, Spain. The Indianapolis Carmel was founded in 1922 as a daughter house from the Davenport, Iowa Community. The first actual monastery building was finished and opened in 1932. The struggles of physically and spiritually building the community and the additional structures which housed the sisters over the years after Mother Theresa died in 1936 are detailed. The photographs bring the text to view. Certainly, there are the expected pictures of sisters engaged in prayer and work as well as external and internal views of the monastery during the physical evolution culminating in the construction of new doors between the choir and the chapel in 1988; however, one of the most fascinating photos shows several sisters in their habits standing on scaffolding waterproofing the outside wall of the monastery.

Many readers of this newsletter are familiar with the Indianapolis Carmelites through their editions

of the Liturgy of the Hours rendered in inclusive language and enriched by the addition of modern saints such as Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. They also have a website www.praythenews.com. These activities emerged from their growth over many years in prayer and understanding of their role in the universe. Officially titled the Carmel of the Resurrection, the community's life as depicted in Weaver's book offers a visual and textual look at this Christian mystery lived out by a special group of women.

Mary Denis Maher, CSA
Ursuline College, Pepper Pike, Ohio

Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828-1860, by Diane Batts Morrow (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Pp. 352.

This book is stunning. Its setting is antebellum Baltimore—a city unusual not only because both Protestants and Catholics comprised its civil and cultural elite but because it boasted the largest free Black population north of Louisiana. Its focus is the 1829 foundation of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first Black congregation of women religious in the world. For these reasons alone, the book makes fascinating reading. Diane Batts Morrow proves herself equal to the historian's task as well, providing for us a marvelous study of how one group of African American women became active agents of change in the U.S. Catholic Church.

Morrow deftly analyzes the impact of these Black women as they struggled to do the unthinkable. Thus, the book is more than the story of a religious congregation of women but also a provocative, precise study of how the matter of race caused consternation, even chaos, among the Catholic leadership of Baltimore. Through meticulous research, she allows the reader to view the development of the Oblates as they searched for identity in both a Church and a society that often denigrated them. As a result of her refocusing on the known facts and her unearthing of new material, the reader learns aspects of history never before brought to light. In the process, we are forced to reject old assumptions about relationships that existed between Black Catholics and their Church, to discover how race played a crucial factor in decisions made by hierarchy and clergy, and to

consider the variety of ways whereby antebellum Catholic leaders failed their Black Sisters.

Were it not for Morrow, for example, this reviewer would never have thought to include the Carmelites and the Sisters of Charity in my assessment of Black Catholics. Nor would I necessarily have turned to Oblate sources to seek understanding concerning the views of Church leaders, like Archbishops Whitfield and Eccleston, regarding the Black Catholic population they pledged to serve. Finally, I would not have used this data to expand my views relative to Chief Justice Roger B. Taney and his opinion with regard to Dred Scott.

In the end, however, wherever the path that Morrow directs us, we are made to respect the simple, overarching reason why Morrow wrote this monograph: to tell the Oblate story. She makes it clear that theirs is an uncommon history of courageous, holy women that deserves to be told. She shows how these Sisters were perfect models of women who became agents of their own destiny and how the Church, albeit broken by the sins of racism and sexism, responded appropriately, summoning up enough courage to allow the Sisters both place and voice. What results is an American Catholic story that really has no equal. The Oblates faced the greatest challenge that any community of American Catholic women—religious or lay—was ever called upon to face. These women answered the challenge by relying on the Providence of God. Because of their persistence, they survive today, possibly to proclaim the same message: that women in the Church must keep up hope that their desire to serve God's people will always achieve good results.

Dolores Liptak, RSM
Historian/Archivist, Connecticut Region
Sisters of Mercy

Announcements

We regret to announce the death of Camilla Mulla, member of the St. Mary of the Spring Dominicans, on July 14. Sister Camilla left a 17-chapter work in manuscript form as tangible evidence of her dedication to her vocation as a religious and an historian up to the time of her death.

The next Berkshire Conference on the History of Women is scheduled to convene at Scripps College in

Claremont, California, June 2-5, 2005. The program committee welcomes interdisciplinary proposals relating to the theme, "Sin Fronteras: Women's Histories, Global Conversations." Proposal deadline is Dec. 15, 2003. For more information, visit website at www.berksconference.org.

Probable dates for the next annual conference of the Western Association of Women Historians are May 21-23, 2004, at the University of California, Santa Barbara. More information will be posted on the WAWH website when available: www.wawh.org.

The American Catholic Historical Association will be accepting proposals for its Spring, 2004 meeting (at St. Thomas University, Miami, Florida, April 16-18) until Dec. 5, 2003. Please send proposals for individual papers or full panels to Francis J. Sicius,

Dept. of History and Religious Studies, St. Thomas University, 16400 NW 32nd Ave, Miami, FL 33054.

Entries for the Organization of American Historians 2004 Lerner-Scott Dissertation Prize must be submitted by Dec. 1, 2003. Doctoral dissertations in U.S. women's history completed July, 2002- June 30, 2003, are eligible. For more information contact Joyce Antler, Dept. of American Studies, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02454.

A grant from the Louisville Institute to the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at University of Notre Dame will support the a conference entitled "Uncommon Faithfulness: The Witness of African American Catholics" to convene at UND March 11-14, 2004. The purposes of the conference will be to examine the latest scholarship of Black

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News item for *HWR News and Notes*, Recent Publication, Research, Interests, etc.

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Catholics in history and theology, and to explore critical issues for future studies. Among HWR network members represented on the conference speaker agenda is Diane Batts Morrow (see Book Reviews in this issue). Cyprian Davis, OSB, will be presenting a paper on Henriette Delille, founder of the Holy Family Sisters in New Orleans in 1842. Contact the Cushwa Center at cushwa.1@nd.edu for further information.

American Catholic Studies, formerly *Records of the American Catholic Historical Association*, invites manuscripts relating to American Catholic history. Send two copies of proposed manuscripts to Rodger Van Allen, Villanova University, Villanova, PA 19085. More information is available from Margaret McGuinness at Margaret.McGuinness@Cabrini.edu

Newsletter Deadline

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