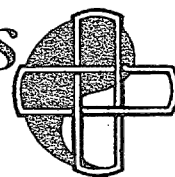


History of Women Religious

News and Notes



Volume 17—Number 2

MAY 2004

HWR Network News

Make plans to attend the 2004 Conference on the History of Women Religious in the Atchison Heritage Center, Atchison, Kansas, June 27-30! Carol Coburn, Program Chair, and Judith Sutura, OSB, Local Arrangements Chair, mailed out the 2004 conference program, travel, and registration information to all *HWR News and Notes* subscribers on March 29. They have received enthusiastic responses about the program and they anticipate an exciting and stimulating four days. Sessions encompass a wide variety of research topics and presenters and include multimedia events and presentations. Consult the conference website for updates and information about the program, lodging and travel information at www.mountosb.org/hwr/index.html. Also, plans for the **book exhibit** continue so please contact Judith Sutura at jsutura@mountosb.org if you have books that you want sent from the publisher for display (or sale) **or** if you intend to bring items with you for display. **Register early** and come join us for an opportunity to learn and discuss the latest research on the history of women religious. Contact Judith for any questions about local arrangements and registration and Carol Coburn coburnck@mail.avila.edu for program information.

Individuals will be honored at the Awards Banquet during the conference in the categories of Lifetime Achievement, Distinguished Historian, and Distinguished Book published since the last triennial meeting. The plenary session Tuesday afternoon will be devoted to HWR business including a treasurer's report and discussion of future conference plans. Anyone interested in submitting a bid for a future conference site is asked to bring preliminary information on facilities and their availability for the proposed dates of June 24-27, 2007.

Publications

Alison I. Beach explores a fresh perspective on the

history and influence of women's religious orders in *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge Studies in Paleography and Codicology 10, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004).

Dianne Hall, *Women and the Church in Medieval Ireland, c. 1140-1540* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, U.S. distribution by ISBS, Portland, Oregon, 2003), focuses mainly on Irish convents of women in her valiant effort to reconstruct women's religious experience in medieval Ireland on the basis of scant sources.

Barry Collett, ed., *Female Monastic Life in Early Tudor England. With an Edition of Richard Fox's Translation of the Benedictine Rule for Women, 1517* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002), makes available for today's readers an extraordinarily revealing text on Benedictine nuns' spiritual lives in pre-Reformation England.

Jacqueline Holler, *Escogidas Plantas: Nuns and Beatas in Mexico City, 1531-1601* (Electronic book. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), traces the history of small groups of *beatas* or uncloistered religious women in New Spain from their early founding of cloistered schools for native girls to their eventual abandonment of that work and dispersal into colonial society.

Mary McGlone, CSJ, expects her history of the growth of a women's religious congregation from its French origins (1650) through its expression in the Church and culture of Peru (1962—), *Comunidad Para el Mundo: The History of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and the Vice Province of Peru* (Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, simultaneous publication in Spanish and in English) to be off the press this summer. Copies may be ordered through the Congregation's Mission Office, 2311 S. Lindbergh, St. Louis, MO, 63131.

R. Scott Appleby, Patricia Byrne, and William L. Portier, eds., *Creative Fidelity: American Catholic Intellectual Traditions* (American Catholic Identities Documentary Series. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Press, 2004), integrate the contribution of women religious to the development of intellectual life among United States Catholics, particularly in Part 3: Catholic Education in the United States: Foundations; and Part 4, Catholic Education: Twentieth-Century Developments.

Cyprian Davis, OSB, and Jamie Phelps, OP, eds., *Stamped With the Image of God: African Americans as God's Image in Black* (Orbis Press, 2004), completes the American Catholic Identities Documentary Series. The editors include many documents illustrative of the contributions of women religious to the shaping of African American Catholic identity in present-day U.S. from the Spanish-French era through contemporary times.

Carol K. Coburn, "An Overview of the Historiography of Women Religious: A Twenty-Five-Year Retrospective," *U. S. Catholic Historian*, 22: 1 (Winter 2004), 1-26, provides a valuable tool for scholars and general readers interested in the history of women religious. This entire issue of the *USCH* is rich in contributions on the subject. Articles of general or comparative interest include those by Joseph P. Chinnici, OFM, "Religious Life in the Twentieth Century: Interpreting the Languages;" and Christopher J. Kauffman, "The Formation of American Identities of Three Congregations of Men Religious." Articles more specific to women religious, in addition to Coburn's bibliographic essay, are those by Judith Metz, SC, "Elizabeth Bayley Seton: Animator of the Early American Catholic Church;" and Suellen Hoy, "Lives on the Color Line: Catholic Sisters and African Americans in Chicago, 1890s-1960s." A lively review symposium composed of Patricia Byrne, CSJ, M. Shawn Copeland, Dolores A. Liptak, RSM, and Cecilia A. Moore, on Diane Batts Morrow's highly acclaimed *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, 1828-1860*, concludes this issue.

Robert R. Trevino, "Facing Jim Crow: Catholic Sisters and the 'Mexican Problem' in Texas," *Western Historical Quarterly* (Summer 2003), 139-164, focuses on the experiences of the Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence in his examination of Catholic nuns' racial attitudes toward Mexicans as they challenged

the segregationist practices that often placed native-born and immigrant Mexicans a step below Negroes in the American Southwest.

Presentations at the American Catholic Historical Association's Spring 2004 meeting included papers by Cornelia Sexauer, University of Wisconsin, Marathon County, "The Journey to Selma, March, 1965: The Story of Sister Mary Ebo;" Barbara Mann Wall, Purdue University, "Entrepreneurs in the Hospital Market: Catholic Sisters and the Development of Health Care Institutions 1865-1925;" Margaret Gannon, IHM, Marywood College, "The Struggles of Theresa Maxis Duchemin: Confronting Racism and Sexism in the Nineteenth Century Church;" and Susan Karina Dickey, OP, Diocesan Archives, Springfield, Illinois, "Desegregation of a Catholic Hospital in Mississippi: Yankee Sisters Encounter Jim Crow."

Cheryl L. Reed, *Unveiled: The Hidden Lives of Nuns* (Berkeley Hardcover, 2004), provides an investigative reporter's discoveries about women's religious life today. Based on interviews with over 300 sisters of from over 50 congregations in the United States, the popularly written text explores the viability of this lifestyle today and such questions as why women continue to enter strict, habited orders in such large numbers.

Research in Progress

Elizabeth Makowski anticipates a Spring 2005 publication by The Catholic University of America Press of her 'A Pernicious Sort of Woman' *Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the Later Middle Ages*. Readers will recall her groundbreaking study published by CUA in 1997, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and Its Commentators, 1298-1545*.

Mary Ellen Doyle, SCN, is nearing completion of a biography of Catherine Spalding, SCN, first superior of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in Kentucky in 1812. She may be contacted at medscn@scnazarethky.org

Annie Steven is currently conducting research on the life of Francisca Lamy, niece of Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy of Santa Fe and pioneer Loretto educator who established the Normal School system for training Loretto teaching sisters in 1897. Her email address through May 31 is astevens@trevecca.edu

Lois Darold, CSJB, is in the early stages of research for a history of the American Province of the Sisters of St. John the Baptist (Baptistines). She may be contacted at baptistines@att.net

Jeanne Beck, author of *To Do and To Endure: The Life of Catherine Donnelly, Sister of Service* (Toronto: Dundern Press, 1997) is currently writing the history of the Canadian Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She may be contacted at jeannerobin.beck@sympatico.ca

Rebecca Sullivan, Professor of Communication and Culture at the University of Calgary, expects her book, *Visual Habits: Nuns and American Postwar Popular Culture*, to be published in 2005 by the University of Toronto Press. A specialist in the field of media and culture, and co-owner of Sister-L, an online discussion forum for the history and contemporary concerns of women religious, she ascribes her interest in women religious to a concern over the relationship between religion and gender in popular culture.

Book Reviews

Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales: 1800-1937, A Social History, by Barbara Walsh (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002). Pp. viii+ 248.

Walsh presents a short but very precise accounting of what the title describes, the growth and influence of Roman Catholic Nuns in the 19th and early 20th centuries in England and Wales. The book includes regional maps and tables displaying the nationality of entrants, the careers or trades of their fathers, convents' regional distribution, financial records, and a wealth of other information.

As the title suggests this is a social history, reflecting the impact of women and, specifically, of women religious of the Roman Catholic Church. The oppression and suppression of sisters in France and Prussia caused many religious communities to seek refuge in England. This influx caused a considerable growth in both the indigenous communities and the foreign communities. Considerable expansion also resulted from increases in the Catholic population and its continued prosperity.

The opportunity for women to be educated is a fact of religious life, now as well as in the past. Sisters were

not only teachers but were well trained to be teachers. At the time this book covers, the training of sisters in nursing considerably surpassed that of the secular world. Walsh points to the contrast between the professional functioning of nursing sisters and secular nurses as an area that needs much more research.

The work of the religious women during the years Walsh's book covers was the usual work of women: teaching, nursing, and social care. Their contributions in all these areas were significant and, in some instances, groundbreaking, especially in nursing. This fact has rarely been acknowledged by historians. Walsh's work is a remedy for this omission. Much more research needs to be done, however, before the larger picture becomes clear.

Convents networked their houses according to their rules, so that their spread was an ordered one. The administration of religious houses was the responsibility of the women themselves. An unusual autonomy existed for them in Victorian England because of their constitutions and the relationships among the sisters described in them. Clerical control was negligible, contrary to prevalent conceptions. Autonomy was especially realized in terms of finances. The need to maintain themselves was the sisters' own responsibility, although the hierarchy held a theoretical responsibility according to Canon Law. The sisters were able to fund themselves very well through fees for services and contributions from benefactors. Their reputation among the people (the poor, the middle class and even the upper class) was high.

Who were the women who entered the communities? Irish women, emigrated from Ireland, accounted for many entrants, especially in rural areas. In urban areas there was a mixture of English daughters from tradesmen, artisans and other similar middle class professions. Roman Catholics were not the only beneficiaries of the sisters' work; it was the needy, the elderly and the poor who received their compassionate ministrations.

Walsh does not claim that these women were incipient feminists, as have some authors, but simply women who experienced a call to religious life, entered, were given rigorous formation, and then became members of their communities. These women

were, however, highly educated, skilled, and competent in a world that did not value nor expect these attributes in women. Indeed sisters have often been construed to be passive individuals dominated by male clerics. Walsh's research successfully eliminates that description in her work on Roman Catholic nuns in England and Wales from 1800-1937.

Joan Range
Emerita, Dept. of Theological Studies
St. Louis University

'Southward Ho!' The Society of the Sacred Heart Enters 'Lands of the Spanish Sea' ed. Marie Louise Martinez, RSCJ (Privately printed, 2003; available from the RSCJ Provincial House, 4389 W. Pine Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63108).

This small volume of essays by and about the Religious of the Sacred Heart provides many ideas for researchers interested in the roles of women in the Catholic Church in the United States and in the work of religious women in Latin America.

The Religious of the Sacred Heart began their apostolate in Latin America in the mid-nineteenth century. The book is divided into chapters discussing the various women who founded houses followed by chapters about the various countries in which houses were located. The first foundation, in Santiago, Chile, in the 1850s, was followed by Peru, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico. The stories tell of heroic women who often contended with resistant bishops and government officials in order to educate young women. At times they had to face great hostility from anti-religious authorities. There are also bright spots, such as when the President of Chile helped the sisters found a normal school to educate women teachers. An appendix lists an impressive number of women from North America and Europe who went to educate and provide religious encouragement and role models to Latin American women.

Grand Coteau, Louisiana, where a flourishing school for girls continues today, is a central connecting theme, as all of the major figures spent considerable time there. In the late nineteenth century there was even a trilingual novitiate at Grand Coteau with English, French and Spanish-speaking novices. Another theme of all the essays is one of continual

contact, supervision, discussion and direction between the various houses and the motherhouse in Europe, the work of the RSJCs having always been highly coordinated.

The essays are not meant to be scholarly pieces but rather, explanations of the basic history of the Latin American foundations and invitations to scholars to consider the rich resources available at the centralized Sacred Heart Archives in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dolores Egger Labbé
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Where Girls Come First: The Rise, Fall, and Surprising Revival of Girls' Schools, by Ilana DeBare (New York: Tarcher/Penguin, 2004). Pp. 333.

The copy on the back cover of DeBare's *Where Girls Come From* states that it is the "first complete history of girls' schools in America." While the book may, in fact, be the first complete history of the private, elite academies for upper-class Protestant students, it drastically short-changes an even larger and more extensive set of institutions. Catholic girls' academies are relegated to a scant 28 pages which, while largely accurate (the Sinsinawa Dominicans are mistakenly located in Iowa), is quite superficial. All-girls' diocesan high schools are not covered at all.

This is unfortunate for several reasons. First of all, the pioneering work of Catholic women religious in education is slighted again. The book barely mentions that the sisters' academies provided the first educational opportunities for Protestant girls and that many of the WASP institutions profiled in this book were founded in response to the sisters' efforts. Additionally, DeBare makes a few generalizations about the socioeconomic and ethnic homogeneity of girls' academies and on the poor quality of their historical archives that do not necessarily apply to the Catholic girls' schools.

This book is well written and is intended for a popular audience. It is a shame that its readers will get such a lop-sided view of DeBare's subject.

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Correction: The review of Holt, *Meet Katherine Drexel*, in the February 2004 issue of *News and Notes*, was mistakenly attributed to Regina Siegfried, ASC, our Book Review Editor. The reviewer of the Holt book was Mary Beth Fraser, The Catholic University of America.

Announcements

Joan de Lourdes Leonard, a Sister of St. Joseph of Brentwood, scholar, historian, educator and canon lawyer, died January 4, 2004. Among other outstanding contributions to the historical profession, she took a leading role in formulating the proposal that earned National Endowment for the Humanities funding for *Women Religious History Sources: A Guide to Repositories in the United States*, edited by Evangeline Thomas, SSJ, published in 1983 by R. R. Bowker Press.

Maria Augusta Neal, a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur. Died February 26, 2004. For many years a professor of sociology at Emmanuel College in Boston, she conducted national surveys and authored several studies that made a significant impact on the renewal of religious life in the U.S. including *Catholic Sisters in Transition from the 1960s to the 1980s*.

The Society of American Archivists holds its annual meeting August 2-8, 2004, in Boston. Details may be accessed on the SAA website, www.archivists.org

The Communal Studies Association's annual conference will be held at Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, September 30-October 2, 2004. For further information contact Elizabeth De Wolfe, edewolfe@une.edu

Subscription Information

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

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The Canadian History of Education Association holds its 13th Biennial Conference in Calgary, October 21-24. For further information contact E. Lisa Panayotidis, President, CHEA/ACHE, Faculty of Education, University of Calgary, 2500 University Dr. N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2N 1N4, Canada, or by email elpanayo@ucalgary.ca

The conference, Consecrated Women: Towards a History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland, will convene September 17-17, 2004, at the University of Cambridge, in conjunction with the Margaret Beaufort Institute. The program features papers relating to medieval, early modern and modern times on the themes of writing biography, social and community works, authority and governance, and the Irish Diaspora. For further details and/or to make arrangements to attend contact Susan O'Brien at susan.obrien4@btinternet.com or Ruth Manning at ruth.manning@univ.ox.ac.uk

Diane Morrow notes an unusual resource, the Blessings Expressions of Faith Company, manufacturers of nun dolls in authentic historic habits. Those interested can find out more from the company's website www.blessings-catalog.com

Newsletter Deadline

Please have copy for October, 2004, issue to the editor by September 1, 2004.
<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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