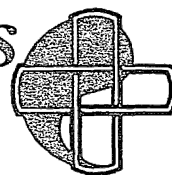


History of Women Religious

News and Notes



Volume 23—Number 1

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HWR NETWORK NEWS

The tentative program for the Eighth Triennial Conference has been posted on our web site, WWW.CHWR.ORG, along with a registration form. The conference, due to convene June 27-30, 2010 at the University of Scranton, Scranton, Pennsylvania, will feature 18 concurrent sessions on a wide range of topics relating to the history of women religious by presenters from the U.S., Canada, England, Norway, Denmark, and Japan. Also scheduled is a screening of the film, "Interrupted Lives: Catholic Sisters under European Communism;" an evening talk and reception at nearby Marywood University; and an awards banquet.

Your nominations are invited for the **Distinguished Book Award** given to the author of the most outstanding book on any aspect of women religious published since the last (2007) conference, and for the **Distinguished Historian Award** given to the historian(s) whose research and publication over a lifetime are deemed to merit such recognition. Nominations consisting of a one-page summary of your reasons for nominating individuals for either award should be sent by **February 15** to committee chair, Elizabeth Kolmer, ASC, at 7607 Teasdale Ave., St. Louis, MO, or by email to KOLMERE@SLU.EDU.

Please keep your subscription/HWR membership current by renewing on the due date indicated by day/month/year on your address label.

PUBLICATIONS

Sharon T. Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) describes the social, institutional, and economic impact of religious at a time when women religious were numerous and influential in society and the local church.

Patricia Byrne and the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, trans., *Nuns Without Cloister: Sisters of St. Joseph in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (University Press of America, Inc., forthcoming in February 2010), has made available for English readers the landmark text of Marguerite (Sister Thérèse) Vacher, CSJ, *Des "régulières" dans le siècle: Les soeurs de Saint-Joseph du P. Médaille aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (1991). One of the first and most innovative among the non-cloistered women's congregations founded after the Council of Trent, the

group established a paradigm for numerous active, apostolic congregations to follow.

Asunción Lavrin, *Brides of Christ: Conventual Life in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford University Press, 2008), focuses on case studies of nuns residing in Mexico City and Puebla convents to tell the story of the nuns' lives "through their own eyes."

Christina Kenworthy-Browne, ed., *Mary Ward, 1585-1645. A Brief Relation with Autobiographical Fragments and a Selection of Letters* (The Catholic Record Society Publication, vol. 81, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), makes some valuable primary source material available regarding a key figure in the evolution of new forms of religious life for women.

Carmen S. Mangion, "Medical Philanthropy and Civic Culture: Protestants and Catholics United by a 'Common Christianity,'" *Proceedings—the First Danish History of Nursing Conference*, ed. Susanne Malchau Dietz (Denmark: Dansk Sygeplejehistorisk Museum, 2009) brings her expertise in the field of women in religion to the Scandinavian milieu.

S. Karly Kehoe, "Irish Migrants and the Recruitment of Catholic Sisters to Glasgow, 1847-1878," in *Ireland and Scotland in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Frank Ferguson and James McConnell (Dublin: Four Courts, 2009), pp. 35-47, elucidates a little-known facet of the history of women's religious life in Scotland.

Annelies van Heijst, *Models of Charitable Care: Catholic Nuns and Children in Their Care in Amsterdam, 1852-2002* (Brill's Series in Church History, vol. 33, Religious History and Culture Series, vol. 1, Boston: Brill, 2008), makes a significant contribution to the record of charitable work by sisters, in this case, by the Dutch congregation, the Poor Sisters of the Divine Child.

Regina Bechtle, SC, "The Impact of Women Religious on the Church of New York," *Review for Religious* (68:3 2009), pp. 230-249, adds to the growing body of scholarly research on the Sisters of Charity occasioned by the 200th anniversary (1809-2009) of the order's founding in the U.S. Other recent articles include William Watson, "The Sisters of Charity, the 1832 Cholera Epidemic in Philadelphia and Duffy's Cut," *U. S. Catholic Historian* (27: 4, Fall 2009).

Ann M. Harrington, BVM, "Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary: The Philadelphia Connection 1833-1843," *U. S. Catholic Historian* (27:4, Fall 2009), pp. 17-30, augments Watson's vignette of the SCs in early eighteenth century Philadelphia with a description of the BVM roots in that city.

Sarah Borden Sharkey, *Thine Own Self: Individuality in Edith Stein's Later Writings* (The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), explores the study of individuality completed by Edith Stein in 1936 but not published until after World War II and only recently available in English translation. A German-Jewish philosopher, Discalced Carmelite nun, martyr and saint who died in Auschwitz, Stein brought unique intellectual gifts to the field of phenomenology.

Dorota Praszalowicz, "Polish American Sisterhood: The Americanization Process," *U. S. Catholic Historian* (27:3 Summer 2009), pp. 45-57, traces the adaptation to American life and customs by members of 14 women's congregation of Polish origin.

M.R. MacGinley, *Ancient Tradition—New World: Dominican Sisters in Eastern Australia 1867-1958* (Strathfield, NSW: St. Pauls Publications, 2009), makes a notable contribution to the documentation of the life and ministry of women religious in Australia.

Mary Rylis Clark, *Loreto in Australia* (University of New South Wales Press, 2009, and Christine E. Burke, *Freedom, Justice and Sincerity: Reflections on the Life and Spirituality of Mary Ward* (ATF Press, Adelaide, 2009), recapitulate Mary Ward's story in the context of Australia by tracing the development of the Loreto group as the Irish branch of Ward's Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Clark), and providing a useful text for the predominantly lay teachers in IBVM schools.

Ann Marie Ryan, "Meeting Multiple Demands: Catholic Higher Education for Women in Chicago, 1911-1939," *American Catholic Studies* (120: 1, Spring 2009), pp. 1-26, includes several women's congregations in her account of efforts to make baccalaureate studies under Catholic auspices available to Chicago women.

Marie Hubert Kealy, IHM, "Immigrant Church to University: Growth of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Eastern Pennsylvania," *U. S. Catholic* (27:4, Fall 2009), pp. 31-43, in an article occasioned by the bicentennial of the archdiocese of Philadelphia, traces the evolution of the IHM sisters' work in higher education beginning with groundbreaking in 1909 for the institution that would become the first Catholic college for women (Immaculata) in the Philadelphia area.

Richard Gribble, CSC, "Catholic Education in Progressive-

Era San Francisco: Theory and Practice," *American Catholic Studies* (120: 3, Fall 2009), pp. 21-45, traces the efforts of Father Peter Yorke and Archbishop Edward Hanna to attract religious to teach in parochial schools in San Francisco and to gain political support for the cause of Catholic education in California.

Anne Zschoche Cockerham, *A mission for mothers: Nurse-midwifery and the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1943-1969* (doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, 2008), draws on archives of the Medical Mission Sisters in Philadelphia (and numerous other archival and secondary sources) to assess the efforts of this congregation to provide state-of-the-art pregnancy care in a spiritual context in the southwest.

Mary J. Henold, *Catholic and Feminist: The Surprising History of the American Catholic Feminist Movement* (University of North Carolina Press, 2008), uses oral history interviews, archival documents and a wide range of secondary sources to support her thesis on the fundamental compatibility of Catholicism and feminism, centering on the crucial period of 1960 to 1980.

Margaret Thompson, *The History of Women Religious in the United States* (CD Series, 2009), presents in a series of studio-recorded lectures the fruits of extensive research, including visits to over 70 congregational archives and numerous interviews. The series, plus a companion study guide containing outlines, review questions, and suggested readings, may be purchased through www.nowyouknowmedia.com or by contacting the media group at 7203 Delfield St., Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Tel. 800-955-3904.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Shannen Dee Williams, a Ph.D. candidate in the history department at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, is engaged in a dissertation topic that explores the social and political activism of Black Catholic sisters in post-World War I America. It specifically seeks to document and examine the travails of black Catholic women religious in their quest to secure equitable recognition and support for themselves, their institutions, and African-American communities served by the Catholic Church after the codification of Canon Law in 1917. Williams may be contacted at 5157 Steuben Drive, Memphis, TN 38134.

EXTENDED NOTE

Sturdy Roots: An Educational Resource for Studying the Heritage and Spirit of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. DVD 2 vol. set, SSND St. Louis Province, 2005, 2009. \$20 vol. I, \$25 vol. II. Contact judithb@yhti.net.

Under the direction of Judith Best, SSND, more than 200 School Sisters of Notre Dame, Associates and professional staff set out to accomplish the Herculean task of presenting the congregation's history in readily accessible and easy-to-navigate digital format. The result of their effort is a two-volume set of DVDs collectively titled *Sturdy Roots*. The project is comprised of a vast collection of primary source materials presented in their historical context and woven together by the common thread of the congregation's charism. When viewed in their totality the documents and the accompanying text provide insight into both the spiritual and temporal lives of these extraordinary women.

The DVDs are intended to be shared in a group setting under the direction of a facilitator, instructions for whom (i.e., discussion questions relating to the historical materials in each section, relevant scripture readings, and suggested supplementary activities) are embedded within the DVDs. The treasure trove of information also provides an entry point into the congregation's history for both serious scholars and the casually curious. *Sturdy Roots* is a truly monumental project that deserves inclusion in the collection of every individual and institution with an interest in the rich history of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Heather Block Lawton
Special Collection Librarian
Minneapolis Central Library/Minneapolis Athenaeum

BOOK REVIEWS

Dolores Enderle, OP, *A Time to Grow*, Vol. III, *The Dominicans of Racine, Wisconsin 1901-1964*. Bloomington, Indiana: Author House, 2009. Pp. 294.

The author selected a passage from Ecclesiastes (3:1-8) for a title, and applies the expectation of fulfillment contained within the appointed times: a time to plant and a time to nurture the beginning. A reader of an early draft of Enderle's account of the Racine Dominicans was left with the feeling of being on the brink of the dramatic changes that were about to sweep over religious life in the Catholic Church and the United States. *A Time to Grow* is an overview of one congregation prior to Vatican II. Enderle's perspective reveals that span of time as dramatic in its own right.

The founding years and early development of this group of Dominicans is recorded in the *Life and Work of Mother Benedicta Bauer*, and *Rooted in Hope*, by Mary Hortense Kohler, OP. In the first chapter of *A Time to Grow*, Enderle places the reader within the context of those beginning years. One meets the sisters on their arrival from Regensburg, Bavaria, in 1862. After the untimely deaths of co-founders Mother Benedicta (1865) and Mother Thomasina Ginker (1866), Bishop John Martin Henni appointed Mother Hyacintha Oberbrunner as

prioress. The twenty-five year old sister accepted responsibility for eleven sisters, five novices, and five candidates. They staffed six schools and Saint Catherina's Female Academy. And they were well acquainted with illness and debt, recurring patterns of hardship throughout Mother Hyacintha's thirty-five years of leadership.

A new phase began for the community with the 1901 election of a first American prioress, Mother Emily Archer. Though her term was designated as a period of less dramatic development, the next seven years contain landmark events. The sisters came to teach German children, but by the turn of the century found they were to meet challenges of the larger civic community also transitioning from immigrant status. The congregation took steps to become a legal, non-profit organization under Wisconsin law.

Changes were taking place within the congregation. The questioning of whether dedicated women without strict enclosure and solemn vows were "religious" culminated in 1900 when Leo XIII issued *Conditae a Christo*. This document gave canonical recognition to non-cloistered, apostolic religious. Although the struggle over enclosure prevailed well into the twentieth century, often with strictures from clergy, the apostolic nature and strong Dominican identity began to take more definitive form. One can only be awed by the grace and patience with which the community met these trials.

The sisters' chaplain from 1869 to 1908, Father Jodocus Birkhaeuser, worked closely with the Dominican General in Rome to gain papal approval of the *Rules and Constitutions* of the Racine Dominicans (1905) as well as overseeing matters religious, legal, and financial. Other chaplains followed, but the governance of congregation affairs was gently and competently taken up by succeeding leaders. Enderle documents this process and that of successive Mother Prioresses to relate the Racine foundations to other Dominican women's foundations across the United States while addressing the challenges occasioned by World War I and II and the Great Depression.

For the most part, the problems and solutions within this history carry a sort of family resemblance, a similarity matching other congregations' history. A commonality among active religious was encapsulated in a statement made during the term of Mother Sabrina Oberts. It was 1928, and any suggestion put forward to expedite an adjustment to changing times required approval from headquarters in Rome which regarded the "emerging American feminism in the roaring twenties as a distinct threat to the role of religious women" (107).

Chronology is occasionally distorted when events overlap in time, but cameo-like portrayals of individuals lend verve and continuity to the narrative, e.g., the first Irish lass, Mother Alphonsa Corry, who by wit and grit gave life to Holy Rosary Academy; the brilliance of Sister Demetria Meyer during

her time at Saint Albertus College; Sister JoEllen Moser's indomitable energy.

The "appointed time" for celebrating a century of service brought together church and civic leaders and provided the needed impetus for gaining help to build the motherhouse and add on to Dominican College. As these projects went forward, a lay advisor to the sisters reminded them that as each spadeful of dirt turned "the roots of the Dominicans will sink even deeper into the (Racine) community." For over a hundred years these sisters had grown along with the people, and in 1962 three-fourths of the active community served within a 150 mile radius of Racine. Though closely bound with the area, the sisters were not unaware of the universal call for missionaries: in 1964 three of their number left for La Paz, Bolivia.

A brief section of parting words concludes this volume and shares the author's vision of each day as continuation of "a time to grow" for the Racine Dominicans as they move into the post-Vatican II era. One hopes the author will write a sequel to share the Racine experience of the last forty years. On a personal note, there is anticipation of recognizing in the Dominican history the similarities that unite religious even as we accept the differences that distinguish one congregation from another.

Therese M. Rebstock, SSND
St. Louis

Marie Brinkman, SCL, *Emerging Frontiers: Renewal in the Life of Women Religious, Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, 1955-2005*. New York: Paulist Press, 2008. Pp. 608. \$29.95.

In an account remarkable for its objectivity and comprehensiveness, Brinkman adds a precious volume to the growing number of works focused on women's congregations as they experienced the last half-century. In addition to comparable studies of U.S. groups cited in the October 2009 issue of *News and Notes* one might also cite recent Australian volumes: *Crossings in Mercy: The Story of the Sisters of Mercy of Papua New Guinea 1956-2006*, and *Presentation Sisters in Papua New Guinea 1966-2006*. Comprehensiveness is enhanced by skillful use of archival material, a thorough review of published sources, and mini-histories of the corporate ministries of the Leavenworth congregation. An appendix provides a complete roster of living and deceased members (1955-2005) of a community that dates its origins to 1858 when a small group of five professed sisters, a novice, and two postulants arrived in the Indian Territory of Kansas from Nazareth, Kentucky. Sources include responses to four surveys, of past and current members and of lay colleagues in ministry; extensive interviews; and documentation from renewal chapters beginning in the late

1960s as well as from chapter-mandated analyses such as the Apostolate Study of 1975.

Three sections of unequal length enable the author to situate the context from which the renewal era developed ("The Way We Were," chaps. 1-4); to probe the many nuances of the Sisters' response to the call for renewal issued by the Second Vatican Council ("As We Struggled to Become," chaps. 5-19); and to assess the impact of renewal on Sisters' lives and ministries from roughly 1990 to 2005 ("As We Are Becoming," chaps. 20-26). Describing the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth as pioneers by heritage and instinct, the author ascribes the Sisters' ability to preserve community despite the many divisive issues generated by the renewal process, to their unswerving loyalty to personal commitment and their determination to be consistent with their past. Other factors that helped them stay together amid sometimes tumultuous circumstances were their sense of a common vision and of their Vincentian heritage—a bond strengthened by joining the Elizabeth Seton Foundation of Charity in 1995—and courageous leadership.

One of the book's many strengths lies in the frankness with which difficult issues are handled. The injustices suffered by many individuals as the congregation struggled to meet the demands of ministry in the immediate post-World War II period are acknowledged, as are also the many and varied reasons for departures from the congregation as revealed by those who sought dispensation from vows during the early stages of renewal. So-called "hidden sources" of disunity revealed by renewal efforts are noted with honesty. We stand in admiration before the heroic efforts made by the Leavenworth Sisters of Charity to "listen to the smallest voice" as all strove to discern a common future that respected the Vatican II renewal imperative to religious congregations to renew themselves in the light of the Gospel, the signs of the times, and the founders' spirit.

Blessed with the fruits of hundreds of sisters' labors since 1858 in the form of 17 hospitals located in Kansas, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Nebraska, and California, of numerous parochial schools staffed by the Sisters, academies, and a college in these and other states, leadership had the foresight to help ensure continuation of these ministries in the sisters' spirit by fostering lay partnerships. We gather from the few stories shared by the author that following in the footsteps of the pioneer women was both daunting and exhilarating. As one contractor described the sister sent from Kansas to supervise the building of St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica, California, "Good grief, she could build, she could boss, and she straightened out my life and my language"! With the laity assuming more and more of the roles once filled by religious in the U.S., the congregation responded generously to the papal appeal for

missionary outreach in the 1960s and 70s by founding missions in Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Individuals reached out to the poor and underserved in this country—Native Americans, Mexican immigrants, and the prison population among others.

Religious congregations throughout the world, but particularly those whose origins and development occurred mainly in the U.S., will resonate with the Leavenworth Sisters of Charity experience of the renewal era. Brinkman's examination concludes with a reverent regard for the past and a hopeful look toward the future. New life gave hope: for the Leavenworth SCs in 2005, the welcoming of four candidates in Peru and Leavenworth, and the renewal or final profession of vows by two women in the U.S. Hope also came from the commonly shared conviction that "community grows by fundamental laws of the spiritual life: the contemplative spirit that nurtures presence to one another depends on self-knowledge and attentive listening."

Karen M. Kennelly, CSJ
Coordinator/Editor History of Women Religious

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland has announced its next two conferences: September 3-4, 2010 at Leuven, Belgium; and June 23-25, 2011, at Queen Mary, University of London. The latter conference will be a joint one with the "Who Were the Nuns" project at Queen Mary, University of London. For more information on proposing papers contact Carmen Mangion at c.mangion@history.bbk.ac.uk.

The one-day spring meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association will be held on the campus of Princeton University March 13, 2010. For more information contact Dr. Steven M. Avella, Dept. of History, Coughlin Hall 308, Marquette University, P.O. Box 1881, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881.

The exhibit, *Sisters & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, is continuing its traveling schedule with an opening January 15, 2010 at the Smithsonian Institution, S. Dillon Ripley Center, Washington, D.C., where it will remain through April. The next venues include the Maltz Museum in Cleveland during the summer months, and Ellis Island beginning in September.

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History of Women Religious ***News and Notes***

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Proposals are due March 1, 2010 for the Berkshire Conference on Women's History scheduled for June 9-12, 2011 at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Instructions for proposal submission are posted on the Conference website www.berksconference.org.

The University of Notre Dame became the repository for the records of the Center for the Study of Religious Life as of July, 2009. Records document the history of the Center from its inception in 1998 to its closing in 2009 including files from the CRLS Board and Corporation, financial records, topical files, programs and publications, and on organizations including LCWR, CMSM, USCCB.

Newsletter Deadline

Please have copy for the **June 2010 issue** to the Editor by **May 1, 2010**. KKennelly33@hotmail.com.

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