HWR NETWORK NEWS

The fifth triennial conference of the History of Women Religious Network will be held at the conference facilities of Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 17-20, 2001. Program chair Elizabeth McGahan will be issuing a call for papers later this spring. If you are interested in proposing a paper or forming a panel for the conference, the working title for which is Individuals in Community: Women Religious and Change, please look for the call for papers for further details or contact McGahan at the University of New Brunswick, P.O. Box 5050, St. John, NB, Canada E2L 4L5 (telephone 506-648-5600; fax 506-648-5799; email emcgahan@nbnet.nb.ca)

PUBLICATIONS AND TALKS

Constance Berman’s The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe, is forthcoming in early 2000 from the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Magdalena S. Sanchez’ The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) affords intriguing glimpses into the functions of cloistered nuns in seventeenth-century Spanish society.

Barbara M. Walsh’s recently completed doctoral thesis, A Social History of Roman Catholic Nuns and Sisters in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England and Wales: The Veiled Dynamic (Lancaster University), has been accepted by the Irish Academy Press for publication. The thesis examines the development of active communities of Roman Catholic nuns and sisters in England and Wales, exploring their temporal and spatial growth and the nature of their contribution to social development and service. Walsh may be contacted at 1, Bridgeside Cottages, Kildangan, Co. Kildare, Ireland, or barb@eircom.net

Phil Kilroy’s Madeleine Sophie Barat: A Life will be available in English, Spanish, or French versions early this year from Cork University Press. Orders may be placed by mail, CUP, Crawford Business Park; Crosses Green, Cork, Ireland, or by email corkunip@ucc.ie or Internet www.ucc.ie/corkunip

The biography was commissioned by the Society of the Sacred Heart to commemorate the 200th anniversary of their foundation. The author had unprecedented access to the Society’s archives around the world as well as to material held in public archives in France and Italy.

The Society of the Sacred Heart has also just published the third and final volume of the Correspondence of Madeleine-Sophie Barat and Philippine Duchesne (1826-1852) (privately printed). More information may be obtained from the director of archives in the U.S., Margaret Phelan, RSCJ, at 801 S. Spoede Rd., St. Louis, MO 63131; email archives@rscj.org


Mary Denis Maher, CSA, is pleased to report publication of a paperback version of her groundbreaking dissertation, To Bind Up the Wounds: Catholic Sister Nurses in the U.S. Civil War, by the Louisiana State University Press. The original hardback version done by another press is out of print.
Theresa Corcoran, SC, has completed a history of the only university in Canada dedicated primarily to the higher education of women, Mount St. Vincent University: A Vision Unfolding, 1873-1988 (University of America Press, 1999). The Sisters of Charity transferred ownership to the University Board of Governors in 1988 when the institution's enrollment stood at 4,000.

Eileen Egan, co-founder of Pax Christi, U.S.A., reflects personal experiences over 30 years as an executive of Catholic Relief Services in her reflections on the philosophy and practice of non-violence, Peace Be With You: Justified Warfare or the Way of Non-Violence (Orbis Press, 1999). Her earlier publications, For Whom There is No Room: Scenes from the Refugee World (Paulist Press, 1995); and Catholic Relief Services the Beginning Years: For the Life of the World (published by Catholic Relief Services, 1988), contain numerous references to the role of various women's congregations in Catholic-sponsored relief efforts and long-term development initiatives.

JoEllen McNergney Vinyard, For Faith and Fortune: The Education of Catholic Immigrants in Detroit, 1805-1925 (University of Illinois Press, 1998), includes in her critical study of the development of parochial school education in Detroit a balanced and sensitive treatment of the significant contribution of religious congregations, particularly of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Felicians.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Fred Simonelli (American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party, University of Illinois Press, 1999) is interested in information on individual Catholic women religious or U.S. orders that sought to assist persecuted European Jews from 1933 to 1945. “Assistance” can be appeals to the U.S. government or to Vatican authorities on behalf of Nazi victims or direct action of any kind. Reply to Simonelli at Mount St. Mary’s College, 12001 Chalon Rd, Los Angeles, CA 90049; email fjsla@earthlink.net

Angelyn Dries, OSF, presented a paper, “American Catholic Women’s Work for Women in the Twentieth Century,” at a Boston University seminar last October. The paper is part of her current examination of twentieth century American missions and gender in connection with the Pew Charitable Trusts-supported Currents in World Christianity project. Dana Robert of Boston University chairs the U.S. section of the international project.

Papers at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association conference, held January 6-9, 2000, in Chicago concurrently with the American Historical Association, reflected research activity focusing on women religious in Counter-Reformation Europe: Elizabeth Lehfeldt from Cleveland State University presented results of her current research in a paper entitled “The Struggle for Autonomy: Administration and Identity in Early Modern Spanish Convents;” P. Renée Baemstein, Miami University, presented “Conflict and Community: Ursulines in the Counter-Reformation;” Susan E. Dinan, Long Island University, completed the panel with “Redefining Enclosure: The Active Vocation of the Daughters of Charity.”


Kirsten Christensen from the University of Notre Dame applied the perspective of gender to early modern European developments with her paper, “Virgins of Remarkable Virtue: The Influence of Women Religious on Peter Canisius;” while
Dominican Cecilia Murray from Mount Saint Mary College addressed the twentieth century with "'Damned if they do and damned if they don’t': Religious Leadership and Radical Change."

At the AHA, Kathryn Burns, University of Florida (Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru, Duke University Press, 1999; see HWR News and Notes Oct. 1999) drew from her current research for a paper entitled "Convents and Independence in Peru."

BOOK REVIEW


With The Friendship of Florence Nightingale and Mare Clare Moore, Mary C. Sullivan, RSM, has produced another tour de force. Sullivan’s edition of letters exchanged between Sister Mary Clare Moore, a Bermondsey Sister of Mercy, and Florence Nightingale, England’s great reformer of healthcare, exhibits her impressive ability to move beyond information to deeper analysis of Victorian women’s aims.

Using the correspondence begun after Florence Nightingale recruited Moore and other Sisters of Mercy to join her in nursing soldiers during the Crimean War, Sullivan supplies many details of the record provided by these remarkable women. But, by concentrating upon those aspects of their letters in which Florence and Clare discussed matters of the spirit, she allows us to see how an anonymous Catholic nun and a famous Anglican laywoman entertained the burning questions regarding human suffering and sought ways to mitigate the plight of the disadvantaged. By emphasizing the deeply spiritual motivation that prompted each woman, moreover, Sullivan has reminded us of how religious motivation can be easily misrepresented.

As Sullivan makes clear, Clare and Florence held similar ideas about the passion of Christ and its relevance for their lives. While Clare had learned of the cross as a Mercy sister at the knees of Catherine McAuley, Florence came to understand it in various ways. Yet Clare’s influence upon Florence can hardly be considered minimal. As Nightingale often admitted, Clare was a Catholic nun who had the “most religious mind I ever knew.” Because Clare lent her books by the medieval mystics, for example, Florence learned new ways of looking into the meaning of suffering, sin, and redemption. From these, she developed a philosophy of suffering that reflected, in particular, the works of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Gertrude of Helfta, Catherine of Siena and Catherine of Genoa. They helped her to see that “Christ the Cross” was the highest expression hitherto of God. “God does,” she wrote, “hang on the Cross everyday in every one of us.” (p. 183) Thus, the cross both changed and empowered each to action. It melted down the wall of religious bigotry that might have divided the two women. It strengthened their deep friendship and later helped Florence appreciate the work of other Mercy Sisters. Finally it kept Nightingale focused on service. After Clare’s death, Florence continued to live by the standard of mercy, relentlessly seeking ways to extend the same compassionate care that she witnessed at the heart of the Mercy congregation.

Mary Sullivan’s research has long illumined the history of the Sisters of Mercy. With this book, she has broadened her scope and expanded her audience. Many, who knew nothing of the contribution of sisters to health reform, will now come to know that English Catholics and Protestants once worked together in this ministry. They will also learn that at least one Protestant philanthropist found inspiration in the self-sacrifice of nuns.

Dolores Liptak, RSM Catholic Historical and Archival Services West Hartford, Connecticut
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious will hold its annual conference September 28-October 1, 2000, in Cleveland. Information is available from ACWR, Trinity College, 125 Michigan Ave., NE, Washington, D.C. 20017; email ACWR@juno.com or Web page www.homestead.com/acwr

The National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education has announced its fifth conference, on the theme of "Women and Women's Studies in the New Millennium: Forging New Models for Leadership and Social Change in Catholic Higher Education," to convene at Boston College June 30-July 1, 2000. Contact the NAWCHE office for more information, at Women's Studies Program, Department of Sociology, McGuinn 519A, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467. Email nawche@bc.edu

The Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, Minnesota, are seeking a doctoral student of history interested in pursuing as a doctoral dissertation topic the history of the College of St. Teresa, founded in Winona in 1907 and closed in 1989. Interested persons are asked to contact M. Lonan Reilly, OSF, Archivist, 1001 14th St. NW, Rochester, MN 55901.

The New Orleans Sisters of Mercy archives have been transferred to the regional archives housed in Mercy Center, 2039 N. Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63131. Most of the Mercy research library has been sent to the Avila College Special Collection on religious women. Mary Hermenia Muldrey, RSM, formerly director of the research center, has assumed the position of archivist for the Lady of Wisdom Health Center in New Orleans, a recently opened intercommunity facility accommodating retired sisters, brothers, and priests from 16 religious congregations.

The HWR Network is grieved to report the death of Alice O'Rourke, OP. A long-time member of the Network, she served as Secretary of her religious congregation, the Sinsinawa Dominicans, until shortly before her death last March.

New Web page addresses: For the Benedictine Sisters of Covington, KY, see http://www.rc.net/covington/walburg

Corrections to notices appearing in the October 1999 issue: under publications, Schultz: Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary should read Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Under Research in Progress, Peronne Marie, VHM, should read Peronne Marie Thibert, VHM; her affiliation is with the St. Paul (Minnesota), rather than, as stated, with the Georgetown Visitation community.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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