HWR Network News

The newsletter office moves to St. Louis, Missouri, as of this issue. Please note the new address for all future correspondence.

Judith Sutera, OSB, has facilitated a successful bid by the Atchison Heritage Conference Center in Atchison, Kansas, to host the Sixth Triennial Conference in June, 2004, pending feasibility of dates. We are competing with a cluster of annual events related to Amelia Earhart, including fly-ins by antique flyers, international women pilots, etc., plus events relating to the nearby Benedictine monastery. Details pertaining to site, local arrangements chair, and program chair will be confirmed in the next issue of News and Notes.

The logo introduced with the October 2001 issue was designed by Minnesota graphic artist, Joanne Emmer, CSJ. Many thanks, Joanne, and apologies for omitting an acknowledgment in the October issue.

Publications


Donal Blake, CFC, writer in residence at Marino Institute of Education in Dublin, is the author of *Mary Aikenhead (1787-1858) Servant of the Poor* (Caritas, Dublin, 2001). A convert from the Anglican Communion, Aikenhead formed the Religious Sisters of Charity in Cork (1816) for the purpose of ministering to the poor. She and her “walking nuns” were searching out and meeting the needs of the poor in the streets of Ireland, England, and Australia by the time of her death. For further information, contact Caritas, 15 Gilford Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4. Tel. 01-2697833.


Margaret Walsh makes a significant addition to Australian religious and social history with *The Good Sams: Sisters of the Good Samaritans 1857-1969* (John Garratt, Melbourne, 2001). One of Australia’s great teaching institutes, this congregation was also the subject of a recent dissertation, *Compassionate Samaritans: Active Benedictine Women in New South Wales, 1857-1877*, by Marilyn Kelleher (Sydney University, 2001).

Madeleine Chi, RSCJ, in *Shanghai Sacred Heart: Risk in Faith, 1926-1952* (Privately printed, Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, 2001), relates the story of the educational mission of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in Shanghai, China, their collaboration with other missionary congregations, and their shared experience in living through times of turmoil, war, revolution and persecution. For book orders, contact The Secretary of the Society at 4389 W. Pine Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63108. Tel. 314-625-1500; fax 314-534-6800.

An essay by Carol Baxter in Women in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe (ed. Christine Meek; Four Courts Press, 2000), on notions of the body among the nuns of Port-Royal, identifies the nuns’ attitudes toward fasting, clothing, enclosure, illness, and death. Francesca Medioli’s contribution to the same essay collection examines the discussion of the enclosure of women at the Council of Trent, tracing pre-Tridentine rules about enclosure, summarizing the actual discussion, and reprinting the Tridentine decree in its various drafts.

Raymond Jonas, France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, Studies on the History of Society and Culture, number 29, 2000), analyzes the connection between the cult of the Sacred Heart and counter-revolution. Seen in the context of a religious revival led by religious orders such as Sophie Barat’s Sisters of the Sacred Heart, the cult symbolized the road to national restoration as well as to personal salvation.

Gabriella Zarri, Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna (Mulino press, Bologna, 2000; Saggi, number 516), illustrates the relationships or recinti that influenced Italian women's lives in early modern times, cloister being seen as symbols and practices, as well as physical spaces, that constrained women and influenced their self-perception.


Marie Celeste, SC, professor of modern languages and literature at Loyola University of Chicago, and author of The Intimate Friendships of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton, has published a related work, Elizabeth Ann Seton: A Woman of Prayer, Meditations, Reflections and Poems Taken from her Writings (University Press of America, 2000).

Margherita Marchione, Religious Teachers Filippini, prolific writer on religious and literary subjects and professor emerita of Italian language and literature at Fairleigh Dickinson University, has published a compilation of her memoirs: The Fighting Nun: My Story (Cornwall Books, 2000), as well as an addition to prior publications on Pius XII, A Pictorial Life of Pope Pius XII.


Fernanda Perrone of the special collections and university archives department at Rutgers University has completed “Catholic Women’s Colleges in the United States: An Archival, Bibliographic and Historical Survey,” in Archival and Bibliographic Series VI, 2000 (published by, and copies available from: Newcomb College of Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70118).

Laura Swan, OSB, has published History of North American Benedictine Women, A Bibliography (Writers Club Press, 2001), as a research and reference tool. Chapters identify sources on general history, liturgy, spirituality, the Rule of Benedict, memoirs, congregation/Federation histories, and other topics. The volume can be ordered through bookstores or from Saint Placid Priory, <www.stplacid.org>

A panel entitled "New Territories, New Challenges: Sisters in a Century of Change, the 1800s," at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association January 4-6, 2002, had Barbara Misner, SCSC, as chair and commentator, and included papers by Grace Donovan, SUSC: "What Happens to a Women's Religious Congregation When the Clerical Founder Dies? The Case of La Sainte Union;" Mary Hayes, SND: "The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Transition: The Dutch Crisis, 1815-1830;" and Janice Farnham, RJM: "From Marseilles to Mussoorie: The 'Conversion' of French Missionaries in India, 1842-1857."

The Minnesota Historical Society's Fall, 2001, public lecture program featured a presentation by representatives of eight religious congregations of women with mother houses in Minnesota: Sisters of St. Joseph, of Carondelet (written and presented by Karen M. Kennelly), and of Medaille (Pat Murphy); Franciscan Sisters, of Rochester (Mary Lonan Reilly), and of Little Falls (Jean Schweiters); Sisters of St. Benedict, Monastery of St. Joseph, MN (Linda Kulzer), Monastery of St. Scholastica (Mary Catherine Shambour), and of St. Paul (Rosemary Rader); and the School Sisters of Notre Dame (Marjorie Myers). Mary Kraft, CSJ-Carondelet, organized the program, for which a readers' theater format was used, as a way to mark the 150th anniversary of the Carondelet CSJs in the state.

Alice Gallin, OSU, notes that a report on a symposium held September 16, 2000, on her book, Negotiating Identity, is now available from The President's Office, College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, NY 10805. Symposium commentators are Philip Gleason; Margaret Mary Kelleher, OSU; Sandra Yocum Mize; and David O'Brien.

Patricia Lynch, SBS, notes that her publication, Sharing the Bread in Service: Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, 1891-1991, is now available in a two-volume paperback edition from SBS Mission Shop, 1663 Bristol Pike, Bensalem, PA 19020-5796 (price $35.00) <SBS Mission Shop@aol.com> Fax 215-639-1154.

Dolores Liptak conducted an Archives Workshop in July, 2001, at Georgetown Visitation Monastery, for archivists of the U.S. First and Second Federation of the Visitations.

Catholic Women's Colleges in America is on the Spring, 2002, publication schedule of Johns Hopkins Press. Edited by Cynthia Russett and Tracy Schier, the book features essays written from sociological, historical, and theological perspectives, by Kathleen Mahoney; Mary Oates, CSJ; Tom Landy, SJ; David Contosta; Melanie Morey; Karen M. Kennelly, CSJ; Monika Hellwig; Jane Redmond; Jeanne Knoerle; Jane Hurd Green and Dorothy Brown, with a forward by Jill Kerr Conway.

Research in Progress

Rosemary Rader, OSB, has initiated what she anticipates will be a four-year collaborative project on a book with the working title of "The Role of Inculturation in Benedictine Women's Communities. The project is worldwide in scope.

Asuncion Lavrin, on the faculty of Arizona State University, has received a Guggenheim award for the academic year 2002-03, for a project on "Masculinity and the Religious Orders in Colonial Mexico." She will also be co-directing a 2002 NEH Summer Institute for College and University Professors on the topic of "Hispanic Gendering of the Americas: Beyond Cultural and Geographic Boundaries."

Else-Britt Nilsen, on the faculty of the University of Oslo, spent time in French, Italian and Vatican archives this summer collecting documentation related to her current research on sisters' history in the Nordic countries.

Rosalie McQuaide would like to be in touch with anyone doing research on the life and work of Margaret Anna Cusack. Her mail address is Women at the Table, c/o Peaceworks, Box 642,
Barbara Kraemer, Center for the Study of Religious Life at Chicago Theological Union, has received a $35,000 grant from Our Sunday Visitor Foundation “to begin collecting stories on religious life.”

Elizabeth Matatics has research underway for a book on the nun’s habit, to be published by Doubleday Religion. She began the research last fall, and would welcome contact from persons with expertise on the topic. She can be reached at 220 Linden St., #806, Scranton, PA 18503. Email <elizabethm@fast.net>

Constance Berman has found a title for her next book: “The White Nuns. Abbeys for Women and their Property Management in the Cistercian Order,” but she is finding there’s much rethinking and revision to be done—too many ideas, too little time!

Book Review


To what degree did Vatican II (1962-65) transform the lives of American nuns? Co-authored by four members of St. Joseph Monastery, With Hearts Expanded explores the experiences of Benedictine nuns in St. Joseph, Minnesota, from 1957 to the present day. Offered as a sequel to With Lamps Burning which detailed the community’s history from 1857 to 1957, With Hearts Expanded proves to be an enlightening story of women who brought renewal to their community before Rome’s call in the 1960s.

Instead of viewing Vatican II as a top-down reform process, the book gives credit to local movements and the initiatives of women religious in transforming women’s monastic experience. Under the leadership of Priorress Richarda Peters (1949-1961), sisters were encouraged to broaden their educational experiences through study groups or by earning an academic degree outside monastery walls. As further proof of this new educational zeal, Mother Richarda asked libraries to update their materials and to consider subscribing to newspapers like the New York times. Priorress Henrita Osendorf (1961-1973) allowed sisters to watch television and encouraged them to read Cardinal Suenens’ The Nun in the World. Conferences held during the 1950s, such as the Sister Formation Movement and the Conference of Major Superiors, helped to unify the vision of American nuns and to prepare sisters for Vatican II changes.

As educational opportunities expanded and sisters across communities intermingled and discussed a common spiritual framework, questions inevitably arose concerning traditional practices. Although the path to present-day traditions was not always an easy one, the authors reveal that ultimately these questions proved valuable for a spiritual community trying to redefine itself. The sisters became aware that their purpose and unity as a community was fueled by a spiritual mission, rather than by external goods or the lack of individuality.

“How can the community express more directly its primary mission as a Benedictine community” is the question answered in the second part of the book as the authors’ focus on transformation within the Benedictine community’s far-reaching ministries. Stressing again the simultaneous impact of Vatican II and local monastic initiative, chapters detail both the successes and challenges of these changes in relation to Native American ministries, health care ministries, the College of St. Benedict, and world mission in places like the Bahamas. Ultimately, the authors conclude that their present day lives are “inexorably intertwined with the people of Central Minnesota.”

In spite of the dialogue concerning change, the authors want to make clear the “sacredness of the transformations taking place.” They write, “This book offers the community’s self-disclosure in the hope that it will help its readers find meaning in the challenges with which God also shapes their lives.” Thus, this book will have a tremendous impact on women religious as they relate the
experience of one group of nuns in Minnesota to their own lives. Lay professors, as well, will find this book useful as they contemplate religious change over the centuries and how women have helped contribute to this change.

Shelley Wolbrink, Ph.D.
Drury University

Announcements

The History of Women Religious Conference notes with great regret the death of James J. Hennesey, SJ, 27 September 2001. Supporter and mentor for many interested in the field of women's history, Jim was involved with developments that led to the formation of the conference in the 1980s. He will be greatly missed.

The deadline for submission of presentation proposals to the American Historical Association, for the next annual meeting (2-5 January, 2003, Chicago), is 15 February, 2002. Further information may be found on the AHA's web site at <http://www.theaha.org> and click on "Annual Meeting."

The American Catholic Historical Society holds its annual meeting concurrently (3-5 January, 2003). Its proposal deadline was 14 January, 2002. For further information contact Frederic J. Baumgartner, c/o Dept. of History 0117, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061. Tel. 540-231-8364; fax 540-231-8724; email <treeman@vt.edu>

Subscription Information

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News item for HWR News and Notes, Recent Publication, Research, Interests, etc.
HWR members Carmen Mangion and Caroline Bowden have organized a symposium entitled “Brides of Christ: Towards a History of Women Religious in Britain and Ireland,” to be held October 12, 2002, at the Centre for Religious History, St. Mary’s College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, London, England. They welcome contributions on the subject, from all disciplines; abstracts of 250 words should be forwarded by 14 February 2002 to Dr. Caroline Bowden at <cbowden@sas.ac.uk> or to Carmen Mangion at <manwag@freeuk.com>

The department of history at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, announces an international conference on “Christianity and Native Cultures,” to convene 19-22 September, 2002. Proposal deadline was 15 January, 2002. for further information contact Conference chair Cyriac K. Pullapilly at the above address; or Mary Beth Dominello, administrative secretary: email <mdominel@saintmarys.edu>; Tel. 219-284-4473; fax 219-284-4866.