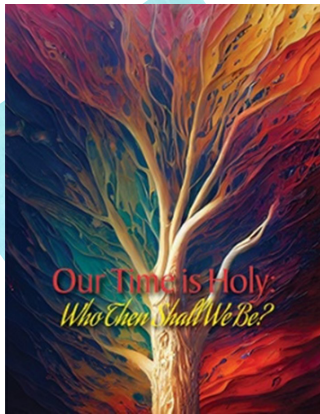


Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



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The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) is an association of the leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The leadership teams of our three USA provinces of the Roman Union Ursulines are LCWR members and participate in its various meetings and activities throughout the year. The annual LCWR Assembly was held in Orlando, FL, August 13-16, with a theme of “Our Time is Holy: Who Then Shall We Be?” Some of our Ursuline leaders were able to participate in person, while others did so virtually. In this issue of *Heart to Heart*, some of them share their experiences of the Assembly and how it was a source of hope and energy for them. Those who would like to access the Assembly presentations may find them at <https://www.lcwr.org/calendar/lcwr-assembly-2024-1>.

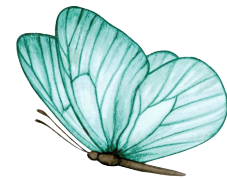
We sisters sometimes ask ourselves how we can still be *in mission*, even as we age. Sr. Maureen Geary, OP, said in her presidential address: What our world needs today is *accompaniment, healing, and presence, which comes from our being*. . . We don't do life, we live it.

There were numerous things I heard during the Assembly that nurtured my hope:

- Move from “reframing uncertainty” to “navigating the mystery.”
- Believe that we are exactly where God wants us to be.
- Lamenting loss allows us to dream.

Sr. Margaret Manion, one of the Toledo Ursulines in attendance, died unexpectedly in her hotel room during the night. It was a shock to all. We Ursulines (from at least seven different groups) rallied to be present and encircle with love and support the other two sisters from Toledo. It was a genuine sign of what sisterhood really is.

—Elisa Ryan, OSU
St. Louis, MO



In looking back on this year's LCWR Assembly, I am dwelling on the invitation, the urging of Bryan Massingale, one of the presenters: “Dare to dream. To dream boldly. To dream audaciously.” Then came the Democratic National Convention, and I know with all my heart that what we dream for our world is possible! And to make the dream a reality, we must do something! Sounds like Angela! Having been lifted up to dream and then to possibility, I am joyfully ready to be and do what we are called to!

—Dianne Baumunk, OSU
Windsor, CA



There was much that could be mentioned. I'd like to cite in particular the conversation between three lay women entitled *Who Do We Need You to Be for the World?* These three women were invited intentionally so that the voices of non-vowed religious could challenge us. I summarize their challenge as: We need you to be who you have always been (e.g.- moral compass, network of prayer, joyful & opinionated), and to be "all in" with us. Click the link to watch their video: <https://vimeo.com/999294674>

—Jean Hopman, OSU
St. Louis, MO

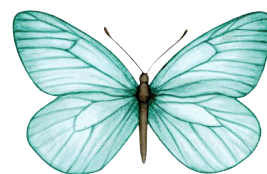
Though I could not attend in person this year, I am so grateful for the live-stream and taped videos/scripts of the presentations that were made available by LCWR. Some key thoughts that give me hope flowing from the presentations are the following:

- I hear and am more aware of the "call" to reconnect with one another in new life-giving ways in this "in-between" time in which we find ourselves!
- I need to embrace the grace-filled nows, realizing the deeper call I/we have to be a healing presence where I am/we ARE.
- We are still called to trust the Spirit in these times of "seismic shifts." Our generation has been, and we still are called to be, transitional women of deep hope, even if I am the last "one to turn out the light!"

—Margaret Johnson, OSU
Moscow, ID

Here's where I found hope at the LCWR Assembly. Looking around the group of 800 or more participants, most have gray or white hair, many walk slowly, and some hearing aids are in evidence; yet the room is full of energy and passion. These women are fully engaged in life and in mission. The other great source of hope for me is the spirit of collaboration that is palpable. Sisters are rooted in their charism and love being "Ursuline," or "Franciscan," or "Dominican," etc., but it's so clear that we are in this together! And lay co-workers – CEOs, Associates – are in it with us.

—Peggy Moore, OSU
St. Louis, MO



The time at the LCWR was full of renewed relationships, wonderful presentations, discussions and sharing. As I reflected on this time, I was struck by the depth of the conversations that I was privileged to be a part of.

The hotel for the LCWR had a pool called the lazy river. This became an image of how I see religious life right now. In the lazy river you sit in a large tube and just float in the current. As I went on the river, I was struck by the fact that you ride in the current, occasionally hit a wall, get turned in different directions, get sprayed by the different sprinklers that are spread out throughout the river. Occasionally you find yourself outside of the current and you need help to get back into it. It was a most peaceful experience and it spoke to me of the experience of religious life right now. We are in the process of moving forward, yet at times we get

stuck and need help to get ourselves out of it. The more I prayed with this image the clearer it all became.

Sr. Maureen Geary's presentation spoke deeply to me. She said that the ultimate question remains, "Who then shall we be?" She remarked, "What shall we do surely has something to do with who we shall be. We shall plant seeds...and delight when new life appears. We shall use our voices and our hearts. We shall own our complicity... demand change...be changed...be a healing presence... be a new creation." Maureen encouraged members to continue the journey of discovery to uncover our collective call to be what the world most needs women religious today to be.

—Pat Schifini, OSU
New Rochelle, NY