

Loretto Earth Network



For the 20th anniversary of the Loretto Earth Network, we celebrated with a special presentation during the May gathering: *Moments of Grace: Religious Life Enters Its Cosmological Phase*. Here women religious of St. Louis listen attentively to the challenge of Gail Worcelo sgm to reorient their focus from one that is solely human-centered to one that includes concern for the total sacred community of life. Quoting Thomas Berry, Gail said, "While this would have been unthinkable in former centuries, it now is unthinkable that religious groups would not be committed to the healing and protection of the life systems of the planet."



Meeting of the Loretto Earth Network
Embracing the Heart of the Cosmos, the theme of the 2011 LEN meeting, is aptly illustrated in this gesture of praise and love led by Gail Worcelo sgm.



LEN sponsored a retreat in Santa Cruz, California: *Ecology, Spirituality, and the Universal Human*. JoAnn Gates, Elaine Prevallet and Susan Classen collaborated in leading those gathered in Santa Cruz to a deeper understanding of our evolutionary vocation that focuses energy on creating something new both for Loretto and for the cosmos.

Communication is an important part of Loretto Earth Network activities. Karen Cassidy brings periodic eNews to the attention of the Loretto Community while Mary Ann Coyle edits our quarterly LENNews, which Nancy Wittwer faithfully formats for circulation.



Loretto Women's Network

The Loretto Women's Network is concerned with the rights of women in home, church, and society. It is our hope that in the journey to Jubilee these rights become more fully realized.



Mary Ann Cunningham has edited couRAGE, the LWN newsletter, for 25 years.



The Mary Rhodes Award is given at Assemblies and large Loretto gatherings to honor the work for women by non-community members. In 2011, the Mary Rhodes Award recipients (pictured) were Methodist Bishop Minerva Carcaño; Clarice Hall, a teacher in the St. Louis public schools for 51 years; Rabbi Susan Talve and Asra Nomani, Muslim femi-



LWN coordinators attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2011. Pictured during that event are Kathy Baldwin-Heitman, director of Kansas City Academy; LWN Coordinators Mary Nelson, Lisa Reynolds, Anna Koop and Theresa Kinealy; Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Vermeer; Sally Dunne, Loretto's NGO at UN; and Rosa Lizarde, Chair of the Feminist Task Force of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty.



Latin America/Caribbean Committee

Just as the Loretto Community has spent five years “journeying to Jubilee” the Latin America/Caribbean Committee has been engaged in an even longer sojourn toward the achievement of comprehensive, humane immigration reform in the United States. However, our Jubilee journey has its climax in sight.

On the other hand, the country’s political climate continues to create obstacles that test the quality of our determination to achieve our goal. We attempt to expose Loretto to the migrants’ reality, alert to critical situations and provide ways to take action at crucial moments. This applies also to migrant farmworkers who in many parts of the country are still on the journey to achieve justice. Nor can we overlook the growing U.S. militarization of all of Latin America.



The September Denver “DREAM Act Sabbath Service” featured the biblical story of illegal Joseph. Next came the DREAMers, seven local undocumented college students who shared their stories of heartbreak, hard work and hope. Various other Loretto locations participated in this nation-wide, faith-based effort to gain support for passage of the DREAM Act.



For the sixth year the LA/CC sponsored an awareness-building journey to the Nogales, Arizona/Sonora, Mexico border. Each year Alicia Ramirez, who is an RN, has provided medical attention to desert-traveling migrants. In the accompanying picture the Loretto border travelers experience the desert itself—but on a road, not the “bush.”



Carolyn Jaramillo, our United Farm Worker board member traveled to Portland, Oregon, where the board demonstrated on behalf of Ruby Ridge dairy workers at Darigold, a processing plant that buys from Ruby Ridge.



Loretto members, as well as the larger Kansas City community, journeyed to the UMKC campus for a “Dialogue on Democracy, Dollars and Debts: the Decolonizing (and Demilitarization) of the Americas.” The panel included Father Michael Gillgallon, a 35 year missionary in Bolivia; William Black, economist/author who spoke about the U.S. foreign trade policy and its various impacts on Latin America. One example: it forces people into survival migration. Mary Rhodes Awardee Judy Ancel facilitated the evening.

Investment Committee

The Investment Committee has two areas of work: shareholder activism and making loans to organizations doing solid social justice work. The following three organizations are a sampling of the dozens of loans we are currently stewarding. This work in the journey to Jubilee has been ongoing and will continue as we go into the future.



Fonkoze: Haiti’s Alternative Bank for the Organized Poor

Fonkoze is the largest micro-finance institution offering a full range of financial services to the rural-based poor in Haiti. Fonkoze is committed to the economic and social improvement of the people and communities of Haiti and to the reduction of poverty in the country. Loretto is proud to be one of the original investors in this bank. Visit Fonkoze.org for more information.

TIGRA: Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research and Action

TIGRA’s goal is to accredit and promote socially responsible money transfer companies, while redirecting corporate philanthropy to sustainable development projects. They work with day laborers, domestic workers, taxi drivers—any immigrant in the United States who sends money back to their home country to insure the money they remit is not lost through excessive charges. TIGRA also works with money transfer companies to encourage them to donate some of their profits. Loretto’s loan enabled them to start their own money transfer system called REMIT4Change which is controlled by migrants. Profits support needed projects in India, the Philippines and Mexico. Visit TIGRA.org for more information.



Vallecitos Mountain Refuge

Located on a 135-acre parcel of land inside the 300,000 acres of the Carson National Forest wilderness, Vallecitos is a retreat center dedicated to helping social justice activists stay grounded in their work and promoting meditation practice as a way of solving social problems. The ranch is a dedicated wildlife refuge frequented by elk, deer, bear, beaver, wild horses, eagles and many other creatures. The Vallecitos River, protected under federal law for its outstanding wild and scenic values, runs through the ranch. Our loan to Vallecitos enabled them to permanently protect the ranch and surrounding acreage from development, protecting some of the most majestic old-growth forest in the Southwest. This picture is of the main meditation room at the ranch. Visit Vallecitos.org for more information.





The Racial Justice Committee suggested a movement of thinking, reading, seeing and discussing for the spring and fall Community Groups, with the article, "The Fears of White People" by Robert Jensen, and the documentary, *9500 Liberty*. Loretto members, volunteers, and friends in the Washington, DC, area, watched *9500 Liberty*, about immigration status of suspected undocumented persons. Pictured left to right: (on floor) Molly Chamberlain; (seated) Jeannine Gramick, Katie Jones, Ellen Rolles, Ann Lacher, Nadya Aswad, Eileen Harrington, Maureen Fiedler.



For 2011, the Racial Justice Committee embraced new goals of collaborating with educational institutions and of broadening our focus beyond black/white issues. The RJC inspired a student assembly at Nerinx Hall High School in St. Louis on January 27, 2011. Collaborating with the Nerinx theology department was a first for the committee and proved to be a good fit for both. The RJC is exploring other opportunities to work with our schools. Because of anti-Islamic and anti-Jewish prejudice, the topic of the assembly was "Women of Faith." Pictured are Nerinx President Barbara Roche (left), and RJC member, Mary Seematter (right), with panelists (middle three) Dr. Ghazala Hayat MD, Rabbi Roxanne Shapiro, and Carla Mae Streeter OP.



Loretto volunteer, Leah Taraskiewicz attended an anti-racism workshop. At the workshop conducted by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Leah learned to uncover and analyze the racism built into the institutions of our society and workplaces. 2011-2012 Loretto Volunteers participated in a similar anti-racism training as part of their fall orientation.



Committee member, Carol Kaiman, facilitates a workshop discussion during the Jubilee Heart gathering in St. Louis in May 2011. The committee shared that its focus is broadening to include education on ethnicity in order to appreciate other traditions, languages, religions and cultures.



When the General Assembly of the United Nations hosted an all day event on the theme "Harmony with Nature," a concept based on the recognition of the Rights of Mother Earth, Loretto was there. Vandana Shiva, philosopher, environmental activist, and eco-feminist, who addressed the General Assembly and is pictured here with Andrea Solazzo, Loretto Volunteer at Loretto's NGO office.



The Loretto at the UN Office entered into partnership agreements with two other religious communities in 2011. Loretto UN/NGO Representative Sally Dunne now also serves as the UN contact for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and for the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri. Since the three communities share common values and priorities, the work of the NGO office will continue to be driven by Loretto's justice and peace values: women and girls' rights, poverty eradication, human rights, migrants' rights, sustainable consumption and development and the rights of Mother Earth.



In a special briefing at the U.S. Mission, the Loretto group heard from Melanne Vermeer, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. Pictured with Amb. Vermeer are Sharon Melendez, teacher and her students from Loretto Academy in El Paso, Sarah Ahmed from Iraq and Sharon Kotok, a graduate of Loretto Academy, a Mary Rhodes Awardee and chief-of-staff to Amb. Vermeer.

This year, Loretto's NGO office hosted students and faculty from St. Mary's Academy, Loretto Academy and Kansas City Academy to attend the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In this year of our journey to Jubilee, Loretto's CSW delegation numbered almost 40, including the LWN coordinators, students from Webster University and a participant in the

Loretto at the UN coordinates the hopes of the Jubilee year through the ongoing work of peace.



The UN held its 4th International Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul, Turkey, to address the unique needs and issues faced by the LDCs. Loretto added its presence and voice to the civil society gathering by sponsoring Andrea Solazzo to attend and provide reports by way of her blogs.

Nuclear-Free Cell



Action alerts are sent out by Trish Herron, PJ Manion and Penny McMullen. Forty-four Loretto members responded to our survey about acting on alerts. In addition, the Motherhouse Peace Action committee (pictured) gathers folks there to decide what letters are to be written so that Loretto members can co-sign them. From left, Lupe Arciniega, Lois Dunphy, Mary Fran Lottes, Cecily Jones, Mary Swain, PJ Manion, Julia Anne McEntee. (Patricia Hummel not present.)



Loretto for a Nuclear-Free World display table at the Working with a Jubilee Heart Gathering.

We, along with concerned citizens around the nation, have succeeded in delaying (and maybe stopping permanently) the massive new \$6 billion plutonium facility at the Los Alamos National Lab, which would have the capacity to produce up to 80 new plutonium triggers for nuclear weapons annually. Congress denied 2012 funding for construction, questioning the need (the U.S. has thousands that can last at least for another 80 years) and requesting more study about the safety and cost of such a dangerous facility on an active earthquake fault.

Also, many citizens have become convinced that nuclear energy is too dangerous, and are advocating for increased emphasis on renewable energy sources. This is part of our journey to Jubilee as we hope for a nuclear-free world.

Community Groups



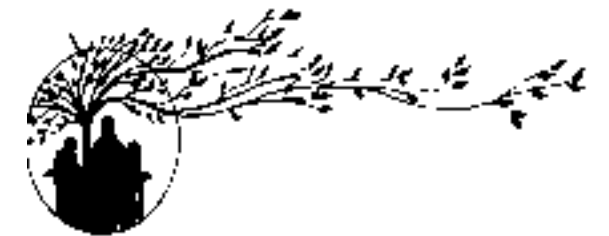
Community Groups were designed to enable us to strengthen the bonds of community and to contribute on issues of government and mission. Community Groups met in spring and fall. During 2011 there were 19 Community Groups.

This year topics included in-depth work on the election of leadership; a documentary about immigration — *9500 Liberty*; the Jubilee theme of justice; a reading: “The Fears of White People”; and evaluation of the Sister Community Committee for Guatemala and the Sister Community Committee for Ghana. Loretto committees are evaluated by Community Groups every five years.

There were also discussions on living mission, different leadership models and an evaluation of the work of the Community Perspective Committee.

Education Coalition

Because Loretto values education at all levels and in all settings, the Education Committee wished to continue to express Loretto’s spirit through education. However, maintaining the Loretto spirit had become increasingly difficult as more community members worked in isolated settings rather than clusters. The Education Committee developed a more 21st century approach to continue to accomplish the reasons for establishing the Loretto Education Committee in 1986.



The Education Committee reconfigured as the Loretto Education Coalition. The coordinators of this coalition developed a Facebook page which will feature interactive sections such as: Community Service/Social Action for Loretto Community, teachers, alums, volunteers and friends networking and discussing Loretto values, a teacher exchange of ideas, networking opportunities with diverse web sites, and networking with other Loretto standing committees as the page is further developed.



The Education Coalition worked on their Jubilee project—an update of *Risking Change: Personal Reflections of 11 Women in the Third World* which features current essays of the women who participated in the Third World Project. It will be published in 2012.