



## *For Immediate Release*

### Catholic Sisters Deepen Collaboration for Justice

#### *Press release*

**Cleveland, OH, November 13, 2014**—This week, social justice promoters from congregations of women religious gathered at River’s Edge Retreat Center in Cleveland, Ohio for a the first-ever national convocation. Sisters Miriam Eileen Murray and Marie Lucey of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia based in Aston, PA joined over 150 participants representing more than 100 congregations from 26 states and one Canadian province at “Entering the Transforming Future: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Ministry in the Coming Age of Religious Life.”

The justice promoters met to strengthen their work on critical global and national issues. They shared innovative strategies and best practices to respond more effectively to issues that affect the lives of people and the planet. The justice promoters also established a network for intentional collaboration and to share prayer, education and action resources.

Keynote Speaker Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International, challenged participants to work toward the *New Creation*.

“Work for peace is like that – slowly pushing back the fear, the terrible threat of violence, the reality of social injustice to make room for life. Effective peacemaking acknowledges the interdependence of communities around the world. The fact that our security is intrinsically interconnected with that of the families in that little village in Afghanistan is crucial. In the soil surrounding the village are planted the landmines of further violence and the seeds of peace. But to understand that fact and to discern how we as individuals or nations might nurture the seeds of peace and snuff out the roots of violence, we have to get close enough to such marginal places - from where the world looks entirely different - to understand.”

Mary Jo Nelson, OLVN, facilitated the work of the two-day event.

The convocation also featured eight “Transformation Talks” prepared by participants. These TED-style talks shared insights into specific social justice topics, built social media skills, and reflected on the spirituality underlying action for justice.

“What a wonderful opportunity this has been,” said Ann Scholz, SSND, Associate Director for Social Mission for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. “Women religious take seriously the Gospel call to stand with those who are marginalized and forgotten and we have a long and rich tradition of advocating for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. We remain faithful to the call to transform structures that oppress and to build the reign of God. These days have been a sacred time to learn from one another and to strengthen the networks which will multiply our ministry. One firm step taken to transform one such structure of oppression has been to draft letters to President Obama, current Speaker of the House John Boehner, and the Speaker of the House for the 114th Congress. On behalf of this conference, we call on them to do everything in their power to alleviate the suffering created on account of the United States’ broken immigration policies. ”

Participants gathered for “Entering the Transforming Future: JPIC Ministry in the Coming Age of Religious Life” rooted themselves in their Catholic tradition and reached towards the future, as is evident in the name adapted from a line of Rainer Maria Rilke: “The future enters into us, in order to transform itself in us, long before it happens.”

“While the future is unknowable, the fact that these Sisters and those who represent them remain deeply committed to justice, transformation and collaboration is a sign of hope for all.” said Ann Oestreich, IHM, co-chair of the Convocation.

When asked what was the most important insight from the Convocation, Sr. Miriam commented, “The faith, commitment, strength, integrity, and love and care for our brothers, sisters, and the entire cosmos among the participants was overwhelming. The work of justice is alive and well!”

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