

ACWR NEWS

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ARCHIVISTS FOR CONGREGATIONS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

THE ROLE OF RECORDS RETENTION

Religious archival depositories have frequently been established as private ventures and sometimes have remained that. Others have tried to remedy their plight because of the involvement by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in the 1970s. Then there are those who flounder not knowing what to do or how to do it. Members of the Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) plan to collaborate with each other to improve the method of conducting their respective archives and to help others who wish to comply with the Holy Father's invitation:

"The documents of the Church bear witness to the spread of the kingdom of Christ in this world. The worthy and adequate preservation of these documents, from the most humble to the most precious, becomes a service rendered to the truth."

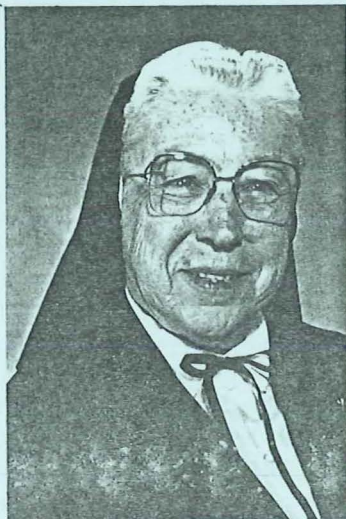
Pope John Paul II

Most of the mission statements state that congregational archivists want to participate in the Church's redemptive mission by dedication to their respective apostolates, and to the call of their founders or foundresses and of their bishops to promote justice, effect reconciliation, and sustain unity. Archivists of religious congregations need to zealously preserve the documents which have been handed into their care and build a program that is properly authorized and maintained with clear goals and objectives. Other obligations are to:

- preserve and make available these records
- obtain the necessary resources to continue the operations that have been one's heritage
- meet legal requirements
- provide for historical continuity.

One aspect of defining the scope of a collection is to develop a plan by which the archives automatically receives records from administrative offices on a continuing basis so the archivist need not beg nor argue for every transfer of materials into archival custody. In turn, a schedule is needed for the annihilation of non-permanent records. Thus, records management and disposition (retention) schedules are necessary.

Records retention is a plan for identifying the permanently valuable records of an agency which for ACWR members are the individual congregational records. The archivist designates categories both to



PRESENTER OF THE ACWR RECORDS RETENTION WORKSHOP: SISTER EMMA CECILIA BUSAM, OSU

55TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS
SEPTEMBER 25 - 29, 1991
ADAM'S MARK HOTEL, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

*** ACHR ROUNDTABLE ***
** SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1991 **
** 3:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M. **
** ADAM'S MARK HOTEL, PHILADELPHIA **

PROGRAM: DOLORES LIPTAK, RSM, NOTED AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN, WILL ADDRESS THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE SUBJECT OF ARCHIVISTS AND HISTORIANS COLLABORATING TO SAVE THE RECORD AND TELL THE STORY

ACHR BUSINESS MEETING

MODEL RECORDS RETENTION-DISPOSITION SCHEDULES FOR ARCHIVES OF CONGREGATIONS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

the volume of records which deserve preservation and to the functions and activities of the particular institution. Then the archivist considers the location and titles of particular series or segments of series in which the documentation or category can be found. This develops into a comprehensive but simple document that describes all or part of the records of an institution and specifies which of these records are to be preserved as having archival value. The disposition of specified recurring series of records is part of the retention schedule and is included in the finding aids which are the signposts that lead the archivist and the researcher to the information they are seeking from a particular archives.

Sister Emma Cecilia Busam, OSU, will conduct a records retention workshop as part of the ACWR Roundtable meeting being held at the Society of American Archivists (SAA) convention in Philadelphia on Saturday, September 28, 1991, at 3:30-5:30 p.m. During this time she will discuss the retention schedules of her archives and those of other archivists for congregations of women religious.

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The next conference for History of Women Religious has been scheduled for June 28 to July 1, 1992, at Marymount College in Tarrytown, New York. ACWR has been invited to organize a session for archivists as part of the general program.

All archivists of congregations of women religious are encouraged to join the Network of History of Women Religious and can do so by sending a check for five dollars (\$5.00) payable to History of Women Religious to: Karen Kennelly, Editor, HWR News and Notes, Mount St. Mary's College, 12001 Chalon Road, Los Angeles, California 90049.

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MEET THE ACWR COMMITTEE

SISTER ROSALIE MCQUAIDE, CSJP, holds a PhD in historical musicology and is a published author. She has been an archivist since 1982, working full time since 1986. She has attended numerous SAA workshops and has certificates in archives management and religious archives management. Currently the ACWR Chairperson, she says: "Saving 'herstory' is a work that flows from the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, and is one to which I am fully committed. ACWR is an idea whose time has come; it will be a great service to the Church and to history."

SISTER EMMA CECILIA BUSAM, OSU, is the director of archives/museum for her congregation since 1983, and is also the part time archivist for the Diocese of Owensboro in Kentucky. Her educational background consists of ABs in art and history, an MA in art, and numerous grants and fellowships. A certified archivist, she has attended many SAA meetings and workshops and various archival meetings throughout Kentucky. In her words: "Before becoming an archivist, I taught at all levels in schools that my order staffed. Besides attending archival workshops I have sponsored them and also been a presenter of them. My travels have taken me to many and various kinds of archives in the United States and Canada."

SISTER ANNE COURTNEY, SC, is a past educator with an MA in American literature and a PhD in English language and literature, and has been her congregation's archivist for six years. She says: "On retirement from college administration, I came to the archives with no knowledge but plenty of enthusiasm. The meetings and workshops, conducted by the Archives of Religious Institutions and our local archival group were network and support for me, as was the NHPRC consultancy of Beth Yakel provided through ARI. I re-organized our archival collection, worked with my successor this past year, and will retire in September, 1991, to years (I hope) of poking among our rich heritage of 175 years in New York City."

SISTER DOROTHY CROPPER, SHCJ, has been the archivist for her congregation's American province since June, 1982. She holds a BA in secondary education and an MA in history and has taken several workshops on archival management from LCWR, SAA, and the National Archives. She has also attended archival workshops sponsored by the Pennsylvania Board of Education. Her vision for her archives is: "preserving the history of our Holy Child Society, seeking out new materials, encouraging our Sisters to contribute from their experiences as teacher, apostolic minister, social worker, artist, writer, etc., making the archival materials available to all worthy scholars, educating our Sisters on the value of keeping adequate records, and encouraging our Sisters to make use of the archives."

SISTER ROSEMARIE KASPER, SNJM, has had a varied ministry for forty-plus years as a teacher of elementary and junior high schools, a librarian, an art educator, and an assistant director in a home for unwed pregnant teenagers. In addition to her teaching degrees, she also had the privilege of a full year sabbatical in the Credo program which included a three-week stay in the Holy Land with another week in Rome and Greece. She has been the archivist for the Oregon province for three years and received her training in Longueuil under the tutelage of their general archivist. SAA workshops and on-the-job training in her province archives have added to her archival training. She says: "I can hardly wait for a copy of Sister Emma Cecilia's retention program as this has been a difficult area for me to deal with in my work."

SISTER JOSEPHINE KENNELLY, CCVI, has a BS in radiologic technology and an MA from Incarnate Word College. She served in the health care system until 1983, when she took the position of archivist for her congregation. Since that time she has been very involved with developing the congregation's archives, collecting and preserving materials of historical significance, and promoting oral history programs among the Sisters, and also holds memberships in various archival societies. In her words: "My big interest in ACWR lies in the hope that it will develop programs directed primarily to the continuous education of archivists for congregations of women religious and function as a pool of resources from which to tap knowledgeable and qualified personnel."

SISTER RITA KING, SC, has an MA in American history and holds a New York City permanent certification in administration. A beginning archivist, she has had a one-year internship and attended a series of archival workshops. Her comments are: "My year as intern was a major learning experience under Sister Anne Courtney. We both had to cope with the aftermath of a fire in our Sisters of Charity Center in August, 1990. I am looking forward to the challenge of being a 'real' archivist."

SISTER ELIZABETH M'CLOUGHLIN, SC, was an educator for thirty-five years at the levels of elementary and secondary schools. She holds a BA in social studies and an MA in English literature. She has been her congregation's archivist for five years and was the assistant archivist for two years previous to that time. Her archival education has been received in workshops conducted by SAA, ARI, the Catholic News-letter staff and other professional organizations. She holds membership in ARI, MARAC, SAA, USCH, and NHWR, and it is her hope that "ACWR will help organize and publicize the history of women religious in conjunction with, not in isolation from, the above organizations as well as with LCWR."

SISTER MICHAELA O'CONNOR, SHF, holds a BA in history and an MA in religious education. Not an official archivist, she is the historian for her native San Franciscan congregation and also serves as the coordinator of catechist formation for the Diocese of Oakland. In her spare time, she has been "indexing the early annals and letters of the community and sorting through and organizing 119 years of Holy Family history which still has to be put in order."

SISTER MARY SERBACKI, OSF, has her BA and an MA in history and archives administration, and has attended workshops on various facets of archival administration,

theory and practice. Holding memberships in SAA and MARAC, she is a certified archivist and has been the province archivist for eleven years now. She has served as an archival consultant for various congregations of women religious for ten years. In her words: "As we move closer to the twenty-first century and continue to experience the evolution of religious life, I believe it's essential that we work hard at preserving and making known the record of the lives and contributions of the women of our pasts. It also seems clear that our community leadership increasingly needs official documents and records. There is a continuous call for documentation and verification of every sort. We can see the absolute necessity of preserving and making readily available the information so vital to day-to-day administrative activity. Strengthening our archival programs is vital to both areas. I see ACWR as a vehicle by which we can share not only community heritage, but also archival expertise."

SISTER MARY MARGARET SWITLIK, CSJ, holds a BA in business administration and has ministered in her congregation's hospitals for thirty-plus years as an accountant, business office manager, or admitting manager. Holding honorary memberships in the National Association of Hospital Admitting Management and the Kansas Association of Hospital Admitting Management, she served as NAHAM's editor for 7½ years and on the task force for the founding of KAHAM. She is in her third year as archivist, is an SAA member, and has attended several workshops and annual meetings. Her comments are: "Being an archivist is a sacred trust but proper preparation and adequate education are the keys to valued service. I believe it's imperative that congregational archivists be better prepared for the challenges which lie ahead, and I look to ACWR to provide that impetus with LCWR and congregational federations in partnership with SAA and its educational opportunities, pertinent literature, standards, and overall professionalism. I think ACWR members are to be encouraged to become full-fledged members of SAA for these very reasons."

SISTER CARM TERNES, OSB, has MAs in speech and drama with emphasis on literature and art and in religious education. An experienced teacher, pastoral minister, religious education director, director of Elderhostel, she is also active in women's issues and peace movements and is involved in historical and local civic organizations. She has been her order's archivist for six years and has attended various workshops and meetings. She says: "It seems to me, with ACWR, we are embarking on a new age of awareness of the gifts women bring to society, and the importance of documenting their accomplishments."

SISTER BEATRICE WEISNER, SNJM, was an educator for many years and holds BA and MEd degrees for that ministry. Well-traveled, she's done post-graduate work in many places including 8½ months in the Holy Land. She has completed three years as assistant archivist for her Oregon province and has had on-the-job training. In her words: "It is a distinct privilege to work in the archives of our congregation. I think working with and preserving the history of our congregation is a holy and life-giving trust."

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HAVOC IN HUNAN is the story of the Sisters of Charity in Western Hunan captured for future generations by Sister Mary Carita Pendergast, SC. This fascinating 280-page volume tells of women religious who entered the lives of Chinese men and women and their children with love and devotion in a time of grave political danger during the years 1924-1951, and is available for \$14.95 per book plus \$1.50 postage from College of Saint Elizabeth Press, 2 Convent Road, Morristown, New Jersey 07960-6989.

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Any questions or comments regarding ACWR are to be addressed to Sister Rosalie McQuaide, CSJP, ACWR Committee Chairperson, 10319K Malcolm Circle, Cockeysville, Maryland 21030. The telephone number is (301) 628-6141 (home) or (301) 625-2220 (Catholic Relief Services).