



## A Newsletter on the Museum Exhibit of Catholic Sisters in America

Sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Summer 2008

### LCWR Announces Exhibit Name Change

Since beginning the history exhibit project, the LCWR History Committee has used the working title *Pioneers, Poets & Prophets: Catholic Sisters in America*. After consulting with its exhibit design team as well as other experts familiar with museum projects, the committee has chosen a new title, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*. This title will be used as we go forward in applications to museums and in all future press and promotional materials. Because the new name is more succinct, easier to remember, and captures the true essence of this exhibit, the History Committee believes it will have more appeal for museum directors and potential visitors.

### Visit Our New Website

[www.womenandspirit.org](http://www.womenandspirit.org)

Women & Spirit now has its own website which has been designed initially for museums that are seeking information on the exhibit. The website will be expanded to include information for the public and the media. Visit the site now and throughout the next few months to stay updated on the exhibit's progress.

### Project Update

Because of the outstanding generosity of its donors, LCWR has been able to raise more than \$3.5 million to create a premier traveling exhibit expected to open in spring 2009. Additional funding will make it possible to bring this exhibit to even more venues across the country.

In order to make this dream a reality, LCWR engaged the distinguished firm of Seruto & Company of Pasadena, California. This company has among its many accomplishments, the design of the "Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs" exhibit.

### Message from LCWR History Committee Chair:

Helen Maher Garvey, BVM

Dear Friends,

Think the year 1900. Think the Great Storm of September 8. Think the worst natural disaster in the history of the country, the hurricane in Galveston Texas where 6,000 people died overnight. During the afternoon the winds and rain continued to increase. Rising higher and higher, the waters of the gulf met the waters of the bay with fierce waves crashing on the beach sending flood waters throughout the City of Galveston.



In St. Mary's Orphan Asylum, as the flood waters rose, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word took the children to second floor of the girls' dormitory. The sisters cut the clothesline rope into sections and used it to tie the children to the cinctures which they wore around their waists. Each sister tied to herself between six to eight children. Ninety children and 10 sisters perished in the Great Storm. They died together. Wherever they are in the world on Sept. 8, the members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word sing an old French hymn, "Queen of the Waves."

Help, then sweet Queen, in our exceeding danger,  
By thy seven griefs, in pity Lady save;  
Think of the Babe that slept with in the manger  
And help us now, dear Lady of the Wave.

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word are together once again with the sisters and children who perished in the storm.

*Helen M. Garvey, BVM*

# A Spirited Endorsement

John Allen, senior Vatican analyst for CNN, correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter and author, describes his impression of this unprecedented exhibit:

“Like most Catholics, I could not imagine my faith journey without the contributions of religious women. Sisters have taught me in Catholic schools, cared for me in Catholic hospitals, made me welcome in Catholic parishes, challenged me as speakers and writers, and in myriad other ways shaped who I am. Professionally, I’ve watched sisters doing phenomenal work in places high and low, scattered across the four corners of the globe, teaching and healing and leading and urging us all to realize the best versions of ourselves. I’m always dazzled by the unique blend of tough-mindedness and tender-heartedness that women’s religious life somehow seems to foster.

Also like most Catholics, I’ve long been haunted by the sense that our sisters don’t get anything like the credit they deserve. Not that they’re in it for the credit, of course, but in an era of declining vocations, this is a story that must be told. For precisely this reason, I’m thrilled by this exhibit, which brings the story of religious sisters in the United States to life. Against all odds, these largely anonymous, unsung women changed the country. Be dazzled by this exhibit – and if you’re Catholic, feel your heart swell with pride.”

