

## CALL FOR PAPERS



### THE NUN IN THE WORLD: A Transnational Study of Catholic Sisters and the Second Vatican Council

University of Notre Dame, London Centre | 7-9 May 2015

This symposium aims to unite three burgeoning areas of scholarship in religious history: the examination of the “lived history” of the Second Vatican Council; an analysis of the Roman Catholic Church as a transnational actor in global history; and efforts to develop a comprehensive understanding of Catholic women’s religious institutes through the lens of the history of gender and voluntarism during one of the most transformative moments in their collective history. At the Council, religious communities were urged to seek renewal by examining the original charisms of their founders and by subjecting their life and ministry to prayerful scrutiny. This search for renewal prompted most communities to implement a variety of structural changes and to reconceptualize their mission within a church now open and receptive to “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties” of the age.

A crucial element of this symposium is its dual focus on the local and the transnational. By virtue of their multinational structures and missionary organizations, women’s religious congregations offer a particularly fruitful way to present the Roman Catholic Church as a networked global organization transcending (or challenging) the post-war nation state. Participants are encouraged to think about relationships between daughter houses, sister houses and motherhouses, especially when they crossed national boundaries. Situating the work of women religious, both apostolic and contemplative, within Catholic Social Teaching as well as the secular fields of philanthropy and social work, we hope to re-contextualize the prayer lives, charitable activities, and social activism of Catholic sisters within national histories of citizenship and civil society.

Scholars are invited to submit proposals for papers that explore communities of women religious from a variety of disciplines and approaches, including history, literary studies, religious studies, gender studies, sociology or media studies. We are seeking papers that move beyond ideological assumptions about women’s religious institutes that artificially divide women religious into unhelpful “progressive” and “traditional” categories. We encourage papers that consider the complexities inherent in the transformations that followed (and, indeed, sometimes preceded) the Council, encompassing shifts that were visible, intellectual, professional, social and authoritative. The intent is to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how women religious made sense of the changes in religious life, and how local and global circumstances shaped the lives of women religious within and across congregations.

Some bursaries are available to defray the cost of conference fees of those who submit successful proposals and are without institutional funding. Preference for these funds will be given to postgraduates. Please indicate on your abstract if you wish to be considered for these bursaries.

#### Abstracts Due

Please send an abstract of approximately 250 words with a biographical background of 50-100 words to Kathleen Sprows Cummings at [cushwa.1@nd.edu](mailto:cushwa.1@nd.edu) by 15 May 2014.

Applicants will be contacted by 15 August 2014.

#### Symposium Organisers

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of American Catholicism,  
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**Alana Harris**  
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#### Funding

Funding for this symposium is provided by the Global Collaboration Initiative at the University of Notre Dame.

#### More Information

Visit [cushwa.nd.edu](http://cushwa.nd.edu)