Conference on the History of Women Religious

Lives and Archives

13th Triennial Meeting
June 22–25, 2025

Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism · University of Notre Dame

Conference Committee

Christopher Allison
Dominican University

Molly Gower
Saint Mary's College

Ann Killian, O.P.
University of Notre Dame

Deirdre Raftery
University College Dublin

Jacqueline Willy Romero
Lanier Technical College

Sister Mary Corita Kent stands before her work at Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, 1957. 2024 Corita Art Center, corita.org, licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

The Conference on the History of Women Religious (CHWR) was established in 1988 both to assist historians in discovering and preserving the historical record of vowed women from the Middle Ages to the present and to integrate their stories into the larger narratives of their times and places. Since 2012, the CHWR has been administered by the University of Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism.

The 13th triennial CHWR, cosponsored by the Center for the Study of Spirituality at Saint Mary's College, explores a variety of areas of interest related to the "lives and archives" of women religious.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Sunday, June 22

5 – 6:30 p.m. **Welcome Dinner** · Smith Ballroom, Morris Inn

6:30 p.m. **Conference Check-In Opens**
Registration Desk, 2nd Floor Concourse, McKenna Hall

7 – 8:30 p.m. **Keynote Address** · 215–16 McKenna Hall

Rewilding Authority: Catholic Women Religious in Synodal Times

Katharine Massam, University of Divinity (Melbourne, Australia)

Monday, June 23

8 – 9 a.m. **Light Breakfast Available**
Light food and refreshments available outside 215–16 McKenna Hall

9 – 10:30 a.m. **Panel Sessions 1–3**

1 **Catholic Sisters and Schools in North America**
Chair: *Mary Beth Fraser Connolly, Purdue University Northwest* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

Remembering Sisters in the Northwest: Three Grey Nuns and Their School at Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta
Melissa Coles, University of Notre Dame

Dominican Beginnings in Gold Rush California
M. Patricia Dougherty, O.P., Dominican University of California

People Are More Important than Ideas: Confronting Legacies of Colonialism and Faith through the Story of Lakota Catholic Sisters
William Critchley-Menor, S.J., Boston College

2 **How Scholars Narrate the Lives of Women Religious: Methods and Ethics**
Chair: *James T. Carroll, Iona University* · 215 McKenna Hall

Bridging the Gap in Women Religious Archives: Some Thoughts on Where We Go from Here
Carol K. Coburn, Avila University

Nuns, Archives, and Historians: Notes from a Dutch Carmelite History Project
Brian Heffernan, KU Leuven and UCLouvain

Love as Object and Method of Ethnographic Research among Catholic Sisters
Samuel Huard, University of Toronto

3 **Women Religious and Social Action**
Chair: *Monica L. Mercado, Colgate University* · 216 McKenna Hall

Institutional Care in Pre-Independence Ireland: St. Vincent's, Goldenbridge, c. 1854–1916
Cormac Begadon, Durham University

The Nun in the Picket Line: Historical Dimensions of the Modern Apostolate
L Heidenreich, Washington State University

Pax Christi Franciscans: "Center Ladies" Aiding Black Mississippians
Paul Murray, Siena College

10:30 – 11 a.m. **Break**

11 – 12:30 p.m. Panel Sessions 4–6

4 **On Writing the Histories of Women Religious**
Chair: *Molly Gower, Saint Mary's College* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

Polishing Their "Golden Links": How Two Dominican Congregations Collaborated to Tell Their Shared History
Arlene Bachanov, Adrian Dominican Sisters
Sr. Mary Navarre, O.P., Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids

Holding Family Secrets: Archives Reveal the Fidelity Funding Company's Activities and Impact
Mary B. Carney, SUNY Fredonia

Stories Never Get Old
Dan Heckel, Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph (Maple Mount, Kentucky)

Negotiating Tension, Building Trust: Archival Research on Women Religious
Barbara Wolf Shousha, University of Nebraska

5 **Toward a Geography of Women's Apostolic Life: Experiences of Urban and Rural Space in Vincentian Communities**
Chair: *Betty Ann McNeil, D.C., DePaul University* · 215 McKenna Hall

Navigating a Politicized Landscape: The Daughters of Charity, Design, and Development in Santa Barbara, California, 1918–1925
Kristine Gunnell, Claremont Graduate University

St. Vincent's and the Village: Negotiating Charitable Mission and Community Relations at a New York City Hospital
Thomas Rzeznik, Seton Hall University

The Daughters of Charity and the Foundlings Hospices of Paris, c. 1640–1860
Simone Zurawski, DePaul University

6 **Women Religious and Education: Sources and Interpretations**
Chair: *Deirdre Raftery, University College Dublin* · 216 McKenna Hall

Irish Women Religious in Education in India and Pakistan, 1840–1990: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Lives and Legacies
Ruth Ferris, University College Dublin
Catherine Nowlan-Roebuck, University College Dublin

A Harmonious Combination of Science and Virtue: The Annals of the Sisters of Notre Dame as a Unique Insight into Germany's First Catholic Academic Courses for Female Teachers, 1899–1909
Anna Strunk, Hamburg University

Reading the Lives of the Loreto Sisters in India
Alexandra Verini, Ashoka University

12:30 – 2 p.m. **Lunch** · Smith Ballroom, Morris Inn

2 – 3:30 p.m. Panel Sessions 7–9

7 Catholic Sisters, Medical Crisis, and Healthcare

Chair: *Angela Xia, University of Notre Dame* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

"The sisters of charity may enter yonder pest house": Anti-Catholicism and Sisters' Relief Work in the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1855 in Virginia
Christopher Eads, Independent Researcher

Catholic Sisters and HIV/AIDS in Britain, 1980s–1990s
Carmen M. Mangion, Birkbeck, University of London

8 Collaborative Histories: Archivists and Researchers in Dialogue

Chair: *Jason B. Kauffman, University of Notre Dame* · 215 McKenna Hall

Opportunity in the Flux: Archives of Women Religious in Transition
Casey Bowser, Seton Hill University

Archival Research 101: Points to Consider for Laypersons and Archivists
Peggy M. Delmas, University of South Alabama

Powers and Pitfalls of Digital Scholarship
Reba Drey Luiken, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Human Resource: Archival Research With a Personal Touch
Jennifer Meacham, Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Monroe, Michigan)

9 Reconstructing History Through Images (1,000 Words in a Picture)

Chair: *Natalie Sargent, University of Notre Dame* · 216 McKenna Hall

"Esto es para la fundación": The Cowboy Nuns of Cuba
Selena Aleman, Catholic Archives of Texas

A Torch After the Fire: The Dominican Sisters of San Rafael in the Wake of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Firestorm
Jack Doran, Dominican Sisters of San Rafael

A Simple Dedication, a Wealth of Information: A Clue to Archival Records of the Experiences of Three Irish Sisters of Charity in 19th-Century Paris
Catherine KilBride, Independent Scholar

Reinterpreting History Means We Have to Change Our Catherine McAuley Narratives
Anna Nicholls, R.S.M., Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington

Beyond the Written Sources: How Photographs Can Reveal the Gendered Stories of Women Religious
Kristien Suenens, KU Leuven

A Picture Tells a (Cosmic) Story: An Analysis of the Lucca Manuscript's Cosmos, Body, and Soul
Emma Yeager, University of Chicago

3:30 – 4 p.m. **Break**

4 – 5:30 p.m. Panel Sessions 10–12

10 **Developing New Resources for the Study of Women Religious**
Chair: *Fernanda H. Perrone, Rutgers University* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

Sisters Then, Sisters Now
Evelyn Lynch, Independent Researcher

Counting to 350,000: Finding Women Religious and Preserving Their Legacy, One by One
Sunny Jane Morton, Independent Researcher

Catholic Archives of Western Pennsylvania: Collaboration on Engagement, Advocacy, and the Beginnings of a Regional Directory
Kathleen Washy, Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden

11 **Media and the Monastic Archive: Accessing Nuns' Lives through Manuscripts, Books, and Film**
Chair: *Catherine O'Donnell, Arizona State University* · 215 McKenna Hall

Ex Libris Abbatiae: What the Books and Reading Habits of Benedictine Nuns Reveal About Their Spiritual and Intellectual Revival in England, 1795–1830
Scholastica Jacob, Institute for the Study of Anglican Religious Life, Society for the Sacred Mission

Scribal Work as a Practice of Care: The Prayerbooks of Elizabeth (Cecily Joseph) Cornwallis
Joanne E. Myers, Gettysburg College

12 **Reconstructing Narratives at the Intersection of Race, Education, and Gender**
Chair: *Jacqueline Willy Romero, Lanier Technical College* · 216 McKenna Hall

Transgressive Identities: The Ursuline Curriculum of Disorder in French Colonial New Orleans
Petra Munro Hendry, Louisiana State University

Copies Across Curricula: Histories of Colonialism at St. Benedict's Academy and St. Benedict's Industrial School, 1884–1896
Darby Ratliff, Saint Louis University

Look at the Child's Face: An Elementary School, Racial Integration, and a Monastic Community's Memory and Myth
Jacqueline Sanchez-Small, O.S.B., Saint John's School of Theology and Seminary

Integrating before Integration: The Education of the Oblate Sisters of Providence at Saint Louis University
Caitlin Stamm, Saint Louis University

5:30 – 7 p.m.	**Dinner** · Smith Ballroom, Morris Inn
7 p.m.	**Whole Conference Group Photo** · McKenna Hall *Those joining the conference group photo should gather outside 215–16 McKenna Hall by 7 p.m.*
7:15 – 8:30 p.m.	**Work-in-Progress Film Screening** · 215–16 McKenna Hall

You Should Never Blink

Jillian Schultz and Leah Thompson, Two Tigers Productions

Tuesday, June 24

8 – 9 a.m. **Light Breakfast Available**
Light food and refreshments available outside 215–16 McKenna Hall

9 – 10:30 a.m. **Panel Sessions 13–15**

13 **Daily Life and Networks of Women Religious**
Chair: *Kathleen Sprows Cummings, University of Notre Dame* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

Christian Virginity and Confucian Chastity: Chinese Christian Virgins and Religious Literacy
Ji Li, University of Hong Kong

The Cardinal's Roe Deer: Food, Memory, and Community among Roman Nuns
Kathleen Manning, Loyola University Chicago

Congregational "Dynasties" and Convent Dynamics: Kinship Networks and Women Religious in the Long 19th Century
Deirdre Raftery, University College Dublin

14 **Religious Orders in Hindsight: Origins and Legacies**
Chair: *Margaret McGuinness, La Salle University* · 215 McKenna Hall

Founding Mothers: 25th Anniversary Research Project Detailing the African Sisters Education Collaborative's Founding
Tara M. Lopatofsky, African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC)

The Life and Mission of Blessed Maria Theresia Bonzel and Her Impact Through the Years
Sr. Mary Martha N. Fe, O.S.F., University of San Carlos

"Hidden Lives in Silent Archives": Giving Voice to the Founding Sisters of La Sainte Union des Sacrés-Coeurs Congregation in Ireland, from 1863
Geraldine Noonan, University College Dublin

Bound for the Promised Land: Loretto Roots and Enslavement
Annie Stevens, Webster University

15 **Women Religious and the Arts**
Chair: *Thomas Rzeznik, Seton Hall University* · 216 McKenna Hall

A Powerhouse of the Spirit: The Life and Art of Sister Margaret, C.R. (1879–1964)
William D. C. Barham, Royal Holloway, University of London

Writing Friendships: Letter Correspondence Between Jazz Pianist Mary Lou Williams and Women Religious, 1961–1981
Deanna Witkowski, Elmhurst University

10:30 – 11 a.m. **Break**

11 – 12:30 p.m. **Panel Sessions 16–19**

16 **Archival Praxis in Action: Challenges and Strategies in Documenting Monastic Lives**
Chair: *Carol K. Coburn, Avila University* · 202 McKenna Hall

Archival Stories and Silences: Rival Lives of Abbess Lucy Knatchbull, O.S.B.
Jaime Goodrich, Wayne State University

Accessioning Records of Redemptoristine Contemplatives: A Learning Curve
Patrick Hayes, Baltimore Province of the Redemptorists

"How do you digitize glitter?": Examining the Impact of Monastic and Queer Activist Contexts on Archival Practices of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence
Victoria Van Hyning, University of Maryland, College Park
Travis L. Wagner, University of Illinois

17 **Lived Experiences of Three Early Modern Nun-Playwrights in Italy, Portugal, and Spain**
Chair: *Ann Killian, O.P., University of Notre Dame* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

Uncovering Life in the Esperança Convent through the Writings of Soror Maria do Céu
Anna-Lisa Halling, Brigham Young University

Hearing the Voice of the Florentine Educator Eleonora Ramirez di Montalvo (1602–59) in Her Spiritual Plays and Administrative Writings
Jennifer Haraguchi, Brigham Young University

Life in the Convento del Ángel Custodio: *Las obras poéticas* by Sor Ana de San Jerónimo and Her Letters to Her Brother
Valerie Hegstrom, Brigham Young University

18 **Sisters During the Second World War**
Chair: *Rose Luminiello, University of Notre Dame* · 215 McKenna Hall

Rome Convents that Sheltered Jews During World War II
Mary Ewens, O.P., Sinsinawa Dominican Research Center

Polish Women Religious and the Rescue of Jews During the Holocaust
Eileen Groth Lyon, SUNY Fredonia

A Challenging Project: Catholic Women Religious in Norway under the German Occupation (1940–45)
Else-Britt Nilsen, O.P., University of Oslo

19 **Women of Courage and Conviction: The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur**
Chair: *Allison Isidore, University of Iowa* · 216 McKenna Hall

Purpose, Empowerment and Compassion: The Unique, Holistic Leadership Approach of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Kelly A. Basile, Emmanuel College

Vatican II and the Role of Women in the Church: The Pioneering Spirit of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Federico Cinocca, Emmanuel College

Inherit the Land: Sister Dorothy Stang, S.N.D. de N., and Her Legacy 20 years after Her Murder
James D. McGarry, Notre Dame de Namur University

12:30 – 2 p.m. **Lunch** · Smith Ballroom, Morris Inn

2 – 3:30 p.m. Panel Sessions 20–22

20 **Archives in Transition: Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities**
Chair: *Patrick Hayes, Baltimore Province of the Redemptorists* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

The Current Reality of the Archives of Women Religious
Veronica Buchanan, Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

Planning for the Future: Preserving the Archives of Catholic Women Religious
Jennifer Head, Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

How the Larger Historical Community Can Assist Women Religious in this Process
Michele Levandoski, School Sisters of Notre Dame North American Archives

A Future for Religious Archives: KADOC-KU Leuven and the Heritage of Women Religious in Flanders (Belgium)
Kristien Suenens, KU Leuven

21 **Object Lessons: The Material Culture of Women Religious** (1,000 Words in a Picture)
Chair: *Peggy M. Delmas, University of South Alabama* · 215 McKenna Hall

Shocking Image: Notre Dame, 1966
Mary Ewens, O.P., Sinsinawa Dominican Research Center

England's First—and Last—Pre-Reformation Abbey for Women
Deborah M Jones, Shaftesbury Abbey, Dorset

Wings of Change
Betty Ann McNeil, D.C., DePaul University

Mother St. John's Stamp Box
Ryan P. Murphy, Chestnut Hill College

Are Nun Dolls the Legacy?
Kathleen Washy, Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden

22 **Spiritual and Sexual Abuse in Religious Life**
Chair: *Peter Cajka, University of Notre Dame* · 216 McKenna Hall

[Un] Broken Records: Catholic Sisters Under *Spotlight*'s Glare
Kathleen Sprows Cummings, University of Notre Dame

Abuse in Religious Life and Voices for Change, 1935–Present
Mary Dispenza, Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests

The Lives of Religious Sisters in the Abuse Archives, 1950–Present
Terence McKiernan, BishopAccountability.org

3:30 – 4 p.m. **Break**

4 – 5:30 p.m. **Panel Sessions 23–25**

23 **Finding the Soul in Religious History**
Chair: *Christopher Allison, Dominican University* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

Roundtable Discussants

Malachy McCarthy, Archival Consultant
Colleen McFarland Rademaker, Disciples of Christ Historical Society
Monica L. Mercado, Colgate University
Catherine O'Donnell, Arizona State University

24 **Negotiating Authority: Transgression and Resistance**
Chair: *Tim Dulle, Jr., Saint Louis University* · 215 McKenna Hall

"Living among detectives and spies": Challenges to Leadership in Loreto (IBVM) Convents in the Late 19th Century
Ruth Ferris, University College Dublin

"I never lay down under the rules": Disrupting Narratives of "Blind Obedience" in the Pre-Vatican II Convent
Karen Hanrahan, University College London

Lives and Archives: Researching the Life of Ann Gertrude Wightt, America's First Runaway Nun
Joseph Mannard, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

25 **Theology in and of the Archives**
Chair: *Dan Horan, Saint Mary's College* · 216 McKenna Hall

Exploring the Theology of the Archives of Women Religious: Mother Angélique Arnauld on Sin and Grace
Elissa Cutter, Georgian Court University

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat's Spiritual Teachings: Lessons from Her Conferences
Juliet Mousseau, R.S.C.J., University of San Diego

Archives as Artifact: The Role of Charism in the Benedictine Archive
Elaine Nadeau, Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica

5:45 – 6:30 p.m. **Reception** · Smith Ballroom Prefunction, Morris Inn

6:30 p.m. **Conference Banquet** · Smith Ballroom, Morris Inn

The Past as Prologue: History Enriching the Call of the Spirit Today

Banquet Address · *Sister Simone Campbell, S.S.S.*

Presentation of CHWR Awards

Wednesday, June 25

For those checking out of hotels on Wednesday morning, luggage may be stored in 204 McKenna Hall.

7:45 – 8:30 a.m. **Light Breakfast Available**
Food and refreshments available outside 215–16 McKenna Hall

8:30 – 10 a.m. **Panel Sessions 26–28**

26 **Exploring Methodology: Blending Archival Sources and Oral Histories**
Chair: *Ryan P. Murphy, Chestnut Hill College* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

The Unknown History of the Indigenous Sisters (Ammagarulu) of the Congregation of Jesus Mary Joseph
Sr. Lilly Antony, KU Leuven

Stories and Memories Buried in Archives: Brooklyn's Religious Teachers
James T. Carroll, Iona University

Lives and Archives: Boston CSJ Archives
Ava Mari Doogue, Boston CSJ Archives, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston

The Algorithm and the Archive: Social Media as History for the Lives of Women Religious
Lauren A. Tassone, Harvard University

27 **The Health and Faith of Catholic Women and Sisters**
Chair: *Angela Xia, University of Notre Dame* · 215 McKenna Hall

Understanding Chronically Ill Women's Spiritual Experiences: Hildegard and the Perils of Retrospective Diagnosis
Lilia Ellis, University of Chicago

Cheerfully Sacrificed Their Young Lives: The Fragility of Religious Life in Antebellum Pittsburgh and Chicago
Mary Beth Fraser Connolly, Purdue University Northwest

Separation and Adjustment Experiences of Former Catholic Religious Women
Sr. Rose Mwangi, F.E.S., The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

28 **Nuns and Modern American Intellectual Life**
Chair: *Dan Horan, Saint Mary's College* · 216 McKenna Hall

Nuns and the Rise of Catholic Psychiatry, 1945–1965
Peter Cajka, University of Notre Dame

"Instant Chaos" with Corita Kent
Tim Dulle, Jr., Saint Louis University

Women Religious as Catholic Intellectuals and the Fight for Social Justice
Allison Isidore, University of Iowa

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. **Break**

10:30 – 12 noon **Panel Sessions 29–30**

29 **Biography and the Legacies of Individual Sisters**
Chair: *Reba Drey Luiken, University of Wisconsin–Madison* · 205–6 McKenna Hall

The Italian Mother of Mercy: The Unfinished Heroic Story of Sister Irene Stefani
Lucy Wanjiku Gichane, University of Nairobi

"A congregation of native sisters would be an enormous power for good in the country": Lives and Ministry of Founding Members of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus
Sr. Caroline N. Mbonu, H.H.C.J., University of Port Harcourt

The Catherine McAuley Brand
Anna Nicholls, R.S.M., Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington

The Footsteps of Love by Sister Mary Paul Watts: Archival Preservation from Rural Taiwan to Global Religious Historiography
Chia-An (Victor) Tung, University of Toronto

30 **Euro-American Higher Education**
Chair: *Carmen M. Mangion, Birkbeck, University of London* · 216 McKenna Hall

Doing God's Work in the Secular University: The Leadership of Sister Suzanne Fleming
Peggy Delmas, University of South Alabama

Daughter of Beelzebub? Jacqueline Grennan and the Secularization of Webster College
Fernanda Perrone, Rutgers University

12 noon **Lunch**
Boxed lunches available outside 215–16 McKenna Hall

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