



## **Convocation of the Justice Conference of Women Religious**

### **March 5-7 2017 Rituals**

The music and slides for the lament ritual are found in a separate attachment.

## March 5 Opening Ritual 7:30 pm

*Environment:*

*In a central place near the podium:*

*-a large, attractive glass bowl*

*-table to hold the bowl*

*-attractive cloth to cover the table*

*-perhaps some plants around the base of the table*

*-4 pitchers containing water from the Atlantic, Pacific, Rio Grande, Great Lakes*

*-smaller glass bowl at each table*

Welcome and Invitation to Prayer

Reader: We come together as members of the Earth Community, bearers of the water of life from the Great Lakes of the North. One in our desire to cherish and nurture the beautiful, we pledge to walk in ways that will protect and sustain the beauty of Earth for all people. We seek ecological sustainability.

*As we sing **In Beauty we walk**, someone walks from the north corner of the room carrying the waters of the Great Lakes. When reaching the bowl at the front of the room, she reverently pours the water into the bowl.*

Reader: We carry the Water of Compassion from the Rio Grande of the South and gaze with loving kindness on our Mother Earth. As we step into a universe longing for healing and wholeness, we promise to mirror the tenderness and welcome of a loving God for all creation. We seek Mercy and Compassion.

*As we sing **In Kindness we walk**, someone walks from the south corner of the room carrying the waters of the Rio Grande. When reaching the bowl at the front of the room, she reverently pours the water into the bowl.*

Reader: We carry the Water of Peace from the Atlantic Ocean of the East as we walk in right relationship with our world. We commit ourselves to root out in our own hearts attitudes and actions leaning towards violence. We cultivate largeness of heart through the difficult soul work of personal, national, and global peacemaking. We seek nonviolence.

*As we sing **In Peace we walk** , someone walks from the east corner of the room carrying the waters of the Atlantic. When reaching the bowl at the front of the room, she reverently pours the water into the bowl.*

Reader: We carry the Water of Justice from the Pacific Ocean of the West as we walk with Mother Earth. In a world where some hoard abundance while the human family struggles to thrive, we work towards all that is equitable for both people and the planet. We seek economic, racial, and ecological justice.

*As we sing, **In Justice we walk** someone walks from the west corner of the room carrying the waters of the Pacific. When reaching the bowl at the front of the room, she reverently pours the water into the bowl.*

*After the refrain **In Justice we walk** The four people together lift the bowl of the mingled waters.*

Reader: We carry the Water of Jesus, who fully inhabited our beautiful, yet wounded world. In communion with the entire Earth community, we work to change the systems and structures which oppress our most vulnerable sisters and brothers. We witness to the dream of the Holy as we seek to build a more just, more inclusive, more peaceful world.

We sing **With Jesus we walk**

*At the conclusion of the refrain the four people return the bowl to the table and return to their seats.*

Leader: Each of you has brought some water from your home place, the sacred waters of our lives. I invite you now to turn to the people at your table. Each of you will introduce her or himself and share briefly how you see women religious as bearers of hope, beauty, justice in our world. When you each are finished sharing, please pour your water into the bowl at the center of your table.

### **Introductions and Sharing**

*When the table sharing is concluded:*

Leader: I invite one person from each table to carry your bowl of water to the center and mingle the waters with the waters from the four directions.

*During the procession of the waters, we will sing a refrain.*

Introduction of keynote Cynthia-Moe Lobeda

*After the introduction, Cynthia is invited to come forward for a blessing.*

*The assembly will extend hands in blessing toward Cynthia while singing a few verses of the mantra, changing “we” to “you” , e.g. In Beauty You Walk.”*

Leader: Cynthia’s theology is deeply rooted in the theology of Martin Luther and so it is fitting that we have a Lutheran keynoter in the year we recall the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. Luther wrote often of Jesus as the “crucified God” the God who is forever on the side of those broken by structures of injustice. He also wrote “even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.” The cross is the symbol of God’s irrevocable solidarity with the broken. The cross is also the flowering tree of life. In the name of that God, we trace the cross on Cynthia’s forehead with the mingled waters of our lives.

*Someone will then bless the Cynthia by tracing the cross on her forehead with the water.*

*First Keynote Presentation: Cynthia Moe-Lobeda*

## **March 6 Morning Prayer 9:00 am**

*Environment:*

*The mantra will be projected by PowerPoint.*

**Sung Mantra:**

*Breath of the One Life, blow through me, flow through me, Breath of Life.  
Great Source of all that is, hidden within, renews the face of the Earth.*

**Reader: A reading from the prophet Isaiah:**

My intentions are not always yours, and I do not go about things as you do. My thoughts and My ways are above and beyond you, just as heaven is far from your reach here on Earth. For as rain and snow can't go back once they've fallen, but soak into the ground and nourish the plants that grow, providing seed to the farmer and bread for the hungry, so it is when I declare something. My word will go out and not return to Me empty, But it will do what I wanted; it will accomplish what I determined. For you will go out in joy, be led home in peace. And as you go the land itself will break out in cheers; The mountains and the hills will erupt in song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands.

*Silent Contemplative Sitting*

**Sung Mantra:**

*Breath of the One Life, blow through me, flow through me, Breath of Life.  
Love and compassion, life deep within, renews the face of the Earth.*

## March 6 Ritual of Lament and Repentance

4:15-5:00 pm

*Environment:*

-PowerPoint equipment

-CD player

-small glass bowl with water at each table

-chime

**Introduction:** “Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we commit ourselves to examine the root causes of injustice and our own complicity as Congregations.” This excerpt from the 2015 LCWR Assembly Resolution is a call to all of us. Often times, I suspect we are more focused on examining the root causes of injustice than we are to name, own and lament our own complicity as Congregations of women religious in these injustices. So we invite you to enter into this contemplative space – of quiet, of images, -- to allow God to draw up within us a deep lament for our complicity in the wounds of the world that God so loves.

**Chime** (3 times)

PowerPoint/My Heart is Moved

My heart is moved by all I cannot save:

So much has been destroyed.

I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age,  
perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.

Contemplative quiet – five minutes

Introduction to Ritual

The ritual is introduced by inviting people to a moment of contemplative silence to reflect on an area of complicity of religious life in structures of injustice that will be shared aloud with the other people at the table. Each person will dip her/his fingers in the water, allow the water to flow like tears from their fingers, and then say, “My tears are for...”

Contemplative quiet – 2 minutes

At the end of the contemplative quiet, some participants model the ritual gesture. Each will approach the central bowl, dip fingers and allow the water to flow off them like tears, and then say something like, *My tears are for our racism as Congregations when we would not accept African American women as candidates.*”

As quiet music is played people repeat the ritual gesture at their places. When the ritual is concluded:

Reader: Poem: "To Have Hope," by the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo of Honduras

To have hope is to believe that history continues  
open to the dream of God and to human creativity.

To have hope is to continue affirming that it is possible to dream a different world,  
without hunger, without injustice without discrimination.

To have hope is to be a courier of God and courier of men and women of good will,  
tearing down walls, destroying borders, building bridges.

To have hope is to believe in the revolutionary potential of faith,  
is to leave the door open so that the Spirit can enter and make all things anew.

To have hope is to believe that life wins over death.  
To have hope is to begin again as many times as necessary.

To have hope is to believe that hope cannot die, that hope no longer dies.  
To have hope is to live.

Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Honduras

**Closing song:** A Future With Hope (David Haas, Lori True)

I know the plans I have for you, not for harm, but for your good,  
to give you a future, a future with hope.

Then when you come and call upon me, when you pray, I will hear you;  
when you search for me, you will find me there.

If you will seek me with all your heart, I will be there; you will find me;  
I will gather you, and bring you home.

When you feel lost, I will guide you, I am with you, true to my promise;  
when you call to me, I will bring you back.

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## March 7 Morning Prayer 9:00 am

*Environment:*

*The mantra will be projected by PowerPoint.*

Mantra: God Is Here - David Haas

Reading: God in Hiding

A legend tells how, at the beginning of time, God resolved to hide within creation.

As God was wondering how best to do this, the angels gathered around.

“I want to hide myself in my creation,” God told them.

“I need to find a place that is not too easily discovered, for it is in their search for me that my creatures will grow in spirit and in understanding.

“Why don’t you hide yourself deep in their earth?” the first angel suggested.

God pondered for a while, then replied, “No. It will not be long before they learn how to mine the earth and discover all the treasures that it contains. They will discover me too quickly, and they will not have had enough time to do their growing.”

“Why don't you hide yourself on their moon?” a second angel suggested.

God thought about this idea for a while and then replied, 'No. It will take a little longer, but before too long they will learn how to fly through space. They will arrive on the moon and explore its secrets, and they will discover me too soon, before they have had enough time to do their growing.’”

The angels were at a loss to know what hiding places to suggest. There was a long silence.

“I know,' piped up one angel, finally. 'Why don't you hide yourself within their own hearts? They will never think of looking there!’”

“That's it!” said God, delighted to have found the perfect hiding place. And so it is that God hides secretly deep within the heart every one of God's creatures, until that creature has grown enough in spirit and in understanding to risk the great journey into the secret core of its own being. And there, the creature discovers its creator, and is rejoined to God for all eternity.

Contemplative Silence

Mantra: God Is Here - David Haas

## **March 7 Closing Ritual**

*Environment:*

*-On each table in draw string bags will be a packet of marigold seeds from Genesis Farm and a small bottle of water, from the waters we have mingled during the rituals.*

### **In Beauty we walk**

Reader: We go forth more deeply conscious that we are members of one Earth community. We go forth more deeply committed to contemplate Earth's beauty and to act for the flourishing of all life.

### **In Kindness we walk**

Reader: Like Jesus, in our depths we are moved with compassion. May the fierce compassion of Jesus draw us forward.

### **In Peace we walk**

We commit the precious energies of our lives to God's dream of Shalom – peace within us, peace between us, the energies of peace flowing freely through all life.

### **In Justice we walk**

Reader: Come Spirit of Wisdom, Integrity, Dance. Guide our feet in the ways of justice.

### **With Jesus we walk**

Reader: At tables of sharing, in conversations of deep feeling, in peace making, in healing laughter and sweet words of reconciliation - May Jesus, the Justice of God made flesh, be our companion and friend.

Leader: I invite you to share with the other people at your table a grace of the convocation for you or a renewed sense of mission with which you are leaving.

### **Table Sharing**

Leader: In the bowls at the center of the table, are small bags – each contains a packet of heirloom marigold seeds from Genesis Farm in Blairstown, NJ – an organic farm and ecospirituality center run by the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell; each contains a small bottle of water from the waters that we have mingled together. I invite you to bless one

another by taking the bowl, giving a bag to you neighbor and saying, “May you water roots of justice; may you sew seeds of peace.”

Leader: I invite you to stand and join in the Closing Song: Marty Haugen, *God is Still Speaking*