

Annotated bibliography for "Nuns in Public Life"

Bendyna, M., E. and Mary L. Gautier, (2009). *Recent Vocations to Religious Life: A Report for the National Religious Vocation Conference*. Washington, DC, Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University

The 2009 CARA report conducted by Bendyna and Gautier surveyed religious institutes and societies of apostolic life of men and women in the U. S. to gauge best practices and ascertain what specifically attracted interested men and women to religious life. The research included a survey of both the religious institute and members in initial formation or in final vows or commitment since 1993. Additionally focus groups were conducted with the members in some stage of initial or temporary formation since 1993. The report had a high response rate and provided interesting generational cohort results. The salient point, as it relates to the current vocation discussion among women religious, was that a larger percentage of women were in formation with institutes affiliated with the religious Conference of Major Superior of Women Religious (CMSWR) as compared to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Additional areas comparing CMSWR and LCWR were made in several sub-categories pertaining to age distribution and what attracted them to religious life. The study also indicated that 1 out of 7 Millennial Generation (born since 1982) had been homeschooled prior to entrance. The comparative data between the two women religious conferences makes this study particularly interesting.

Brennan, M. R. (2009). *What Was There For Me Once: A Memoir*. Toronto, Canada, Novalis Publishing.

Margaret Brennan's, IHM, former (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) LCWR president, chronicles her life as religious amidst the turmoil and excitement of the post-Vatican II era. Brennan reveals the challenges and as well as the joys and hopes she experienced in her role as president, both of her community and of LCWR, and in seeking to live as a modern religious transitioning from pre to post Vatican II directives. The book is an important resource for those looking for insight into the strain and disappointment Brennan experienced in her attempt to broker a dialogue between those who resisted the changes and those who were looking to fully implement their progressive interpretation of Vatican II--as well as the depth of feeling that accompanied the changes. It is a rich personal account of one American sister's story.

Briggs, K. (2006). *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns*. New York, Doubleday Publishing

Briggs, a journalist, provides a well researched book on the struggle that American sisters have faced in their efforts to fully implement Vatican II changes. Briggs interviewed a number of religious for his book and presents strong evidence of American sisters sense of being betrayed by the hierarchy as the sought to implement the updates of Vatican II. It is one of the first

accounts of the internal institutional tensions and conflicts facing American sisters. In his search to understand the lack of vocations to the religious life, Briggs uncovered an even more compelling story about ecclesial conflicts facing American Catholic sisters.

Carey, A. (1997). Sisters in Crisis: The Tragic Unraveling of Women's Religious Communities. Huntington, IN, My Sunday Visitor Publishing Division.

Carey, a reporter for the newspaper "Our Sunday Visitor", provides the perspective of those who have resisted the reforms put forth in Vatican II. Her account directly targets the LCWR and their direction and belief that the crisis in vocation is a result of the discontinuity with tradition of the role of religious prior to Vatican II. This book is an often referred to source for those holding a more traditional view of religious life.

Chittister, J. (2005). The way we were : a story of conversion and renewal. Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books.

A very personal account of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, PA and their response to the updating of Vatican II. Joan Chittister, OSB, takes the reader into the challenges facing her community's leadership as they sought to navigate the post-Vatican II waters--which dramatically changed their lives - opening the doors to new opportunities in ministry, community living, and emerging theologies of the time. But the lack of process in implementing and absorbing the depths and complexity of the changes also spiraled the community into confusion and uncertainty about religious identity. Chittister takes the reader through the turmoil of the cycles that were necessary to reach a full renewal; and recongized that the post-Vatican II religious experience actually had two processes occurring simultaneously-- one of theological renewal and the other of organizational revitalization. It is a very insightful and rich account of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie.

Coburn, C., K., Martha Smith (1999). Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life, 1836-1920. Chapel Hill and London, University of North Carolina Press.

A scholarly research that follows the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and their institutional influence within the American historical context from 1836-1920. By looking at "the intersections of gender, religion, and power", Coburn and Smith provide a historical account of the sophisticated ways that American sisters engaged publicly and ecclesiastically as they set about building hospitals, schools, and social service agencies. This historical case study, places religious sisters amidst the shared experiences of their Protestant and secular female counterparts--contributing to a comparative feminist analysis of the timeframe. The book provides ample evidence of the power and substantive contributions made by religious women in America.

Confoy, M. (2008). Rediscovering Religious Life and Priesthood: Perfectae Caritatis, Optatam Totius, Presbyterorum Ordinis. New York/Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press.

The source is important for its in-depth analysis of "On the Adaption and Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*" in Section III of the book. It provides a valuable understanding to the juridical tools used post-Vatican II, *Revised Canons* (1983) and *Essential Elements* to de-link the binding of documents of *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* from *Perfectae Caritatis*. This analysis helps to understand the juridical factors underlying the debate on the public role of religious women.

Dries, A. (1993). "Living in Ambiguity: A Paradigm Shift Experienced by the Sister Formation Movement." *The Catholic Historical Review* 79(3): 478-487.

A short journal article that looks at the early movement of the Sister Formation Conference and its effort to establish a distinctive training role for sisters in light of the expanding role of laity. Dries argues that the original intent of the SFC to move toward synthesis, of the still Neo-Scholastic ordered ecclesiology and symbolism of the mystical body of Christ from its previous model as Church as a Perfect Society, met up with a challenging reality when American sisters discovered the dualism of their apostolic religious lives in response to the needs of society. The conflict unraveled the intended design to integrate the model of unity, and gave way to a model resembling a more American democratic model based on scripture (Kopp) rather than the original SFC philosophical model designed by its founders.

Ewens, M. (1978). *The role of the nun in nineteenth century America*. New York, Arno Press.

The original American historical account of the role of sisters in 19th century America. It is an important scholarly work that gives context and substance to the early founding of religious life in America. It portrays the courage and challenges facing American sisters in expanding their missions beyond the shores of Europe. Ewens' offers some interesting accounts of the conflicts between religious superiors and local bishops as they sought to meet the needs of their religious institutes.

Fialka, J., J. (2003). *Sisters: Catholic Nuns and The Making of America*. New York, St. Martin's Griffin

Fialka, a journalist for the *Wall St. Journal* developed an interest in sisters following his reporting on the pension shortfall faced by American sisters. His book blends a historical account of American sisters with narratives that provide a wider look at the influential role and institutional contributions sisters have made to the building of American society. It is a wider and journalistic account to Coburn and Smith's scholar case study research..

Gaspary, A. M. (2003). *Witness to Integrity: The Crisis of the Immaculate Heart Community of California*. Collegeville, Liturgical Press.

A powerful personal account of Anita Gaspary, who was the Major Superior of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) of Los Angeles, during the post-Vatican days. It is this important story between the IHMs and Cardinal James

F. McIntyre of Los Angeles, that opens the window to the fissures that would emerge between religious institutes accepting the call to renewal and bishops and other clerics who sought to stymie the move forward. This is an important historical account of the antimodernist vs modernist battle which culminated in the IHM community seeking a non-canonical status in order to continue their renewal. The wound incurred from this moment in American religious life has carried on into the discussion of today. To understand the complexity of the debate of American sisters and conservative bishops and cardinals serving in Rome--this story provides one important historical lens by which to interpret the conflict.

Kennelly, K., M. (2009). The Religious Formation : 1954-2004. Silver Spring, Religious Formation Conference.

A historical account of the creation and development of the Sisters Formation Movement into the Religious Formation Conferences.

Koblenschlag, M., Ed. (1985). Between God and Caesar: Priest, Sisters and Political Office in the United States. New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press.

Koblenschlag's book is a valuable resource for those seeking to understand the public square question in the immediate post-Vatican II period, when Rev. Robert Drinan, SJ held a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and Sr. Clare Dunn, CSJ, was a state representative in the Arizona legislature. The book provides a thorough discussion on the political participation of American priests and sisters prior to the revision of 1917 Canon law. It was only after the promulgation of the Revised Code of Canons in 1983 (c. 285. §3) that clerics were prohibited from public offices, where they would be exercising civil power. This new canon, however, did not state specifically whether or not non-clerical religious were also forbidden to serve in a public office--leaving the discussion open. The 31 essays are divided into five parts: from a discussion of the background of the topic, narratives by or about those who served in a public office, views from both political and church leaders regarding the role of religious person in the public square, and concluding with a 'yes' and 'no' debate on the topic.

Koehlinger, A. L. (2007). The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

This is a study on the racial apostolate of American sisters. Koehlinger studies the response by some sisters to the reforms of Vatican II, as well as the influence of the Sister Formation Conference and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) to shift from their former Neo-Scholastic philosophical semi-cloistered lifestyle of Vatican I to an incarnational theological model of the mystical body of Christ. The reforms led to sisters to eventually leave their convents for apartments in the public housing project like Cabrini Greens in Chicago, as that sought to live their lives more authentically as a "new nun". This shift from the convent to public housing had a powerful impact on how sisters understood their roles as

religious in the Catholic Church. This research provides the lens of the racial apostolate of American Catholic sisters and how it shaped their lives and their public ministry on behalf of the Church.

McNamara, J. A. K. (1996). Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennium. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

McNamara produced a sweeping and comprehensive history of nuns/sisters that begins with the Roman Empire and ends around the late 1980s with American sisters. The book is an invaluable source to understanding the struggle of sisters throughout history in terms of their relationship with the hierarchy and in protecting their autonomy and public witness.

Mulderry, Dara. (2006). "What human goodness entails": An intellectual history of United States Catholic sisters, 1930--1980, Brandeis University.

Mulderry's dissertation is a historical study of the intellectual thinking that guided the key reformers behind the Sister Formation Conference of American sisters in the 1950s. By studying the educational and intellectual influences of Sisters Madeleva Wolff, Mary Emil Penet, and Annette Walters, Mulderry shows how their respective roles as poet, philosopher, and psychologist, influenced the design of the program to update the formation and training of American sisters. Mulderry applied the intellectual lens of each sister to pull together a comprehensive analysis of the liberal traditions that evolved from religious life and their influence in shaping the social justice agenda-setting that has evolved since the 1960 and 70s.

Quinonez, L. A., and Mary Daniel Turner, SNDdeN (1992). The Transformation of American Catholic Sisters. Philadelphia, Temple University.

This book, written by two former executive directors of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, provides an ethnographic analysis of the transformation of American sisters in the post-Vatican II era. Quinonez and Turner explain how American cultural values influenced the role of religious in the public square. It was the publication of this book, probably more than any other, that led to the decision to form a parallel religious conference., the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR).

Religious, C. o. M. S. o. W., Ed. (2009). The Foundations of Religious Life: Revisiting the Vision. Notre Dame, IN, Ava Maria Press.

This is a very important book from the perspective of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR). The purpose of the book is to emphasize the unpromulgated document called, *The Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of the Apostolate* (1983). CMSWR contributors argue that this document clarifies the importance of the public nature of the vows and how lay apostolic religious institutes are, indeed, extensions of the institutional Church, and not autonomous private ecclesial associations. It affirms the Neo-Scholastic approach to religious life and challenges religious institutes

who are associated with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) as living outside the essential elements, and thereby not authentically living as 'religious' institutes, but as 'secular' institutes. This book outlines the fissures dividing religious life identity between the religious conferences. In many ways, this book is a response to Quinonez and Turner's book.

Schneiders, S. M. (2011). Prophets in their own country: women religious bearing witness to the Gospel in a troubled church. Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books.

Sandra Schneiders, a sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) theologian and scholar on religious life, has written a very accessible book on the recent tensions facing LCWR member institutes. It explains the changes that have occurred in religious life as a life form and argues that a new life form has emerged that stands in contrast and tension with the institutional Church--hence the investigation and on-going conflicts with the hierarchy. This is the first book that seek to make sense of the investigation of American sisters and the LCWR.