

**USCCB's Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations
News Conference on the Year of Consecrated Life
October 1, 2014**

Remarks by Sr. Marcia Allen, CSJ, president-elect, Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR)

The summer of 2015 will, hopefully, offer many unique opportunities for both women and men religious and their lay counterparts in the Church. As part of the Year of Consecrated Life celebration during which the laity is invited to acquaint themselves with religious life for men and women through visits to their convents and monasteries they also will have the opportunity to visit the works of service that Religious provide. The laity is invited not only to observe these works, but to pitch in and participate however possible.

Service by women and men religious is fundamentally and directly a work of their order's charism. It is born out of the energy of a community's charism. It illuminates the charism when it is active in service. Each charism is distinct – it communicates its own spirit and spirituality. The spirit and spirituality are nurtured through fidelity to prayer, attention to the world and an ever-deepening understanding of the charism. In other words, we become what we contemplate. And you can see what we contemplate by looking at what we do.

That's why we are inviting you to visit various works of service in which women and men religious participate or invite them to work with you on your various apostolic projects during the summer of 2015 especially. Working side by side enables us to become fully aware of the spirit and spirituality that moves us. We learn how we integrate with one another, complement one another, and empathize with one another. This opportunity for friendship attracts us. This coming together in common service for the sake of the Church's presence in the world will create a culture of vocations, so to speak. Through shared participation and appreciation, we will be creating together stories that will communicate to generations that follow the beauty and necessity of this particular vocation in the Church.

As you come to know the various women and men religious around you here in the United States, you will realize that many orders have international centers where their ministries also flourish. Some of you will be interested in these.

So, if you are a religious community or if you are a family please welcome one another not only through the open house events and the prayer invitations that will come to you next year, 2015, but also through service opportunities together. These opportunities might be those that already exist or we might be led to create something new – together - in this year during which we celebrate consecrated life in the Church.