News



Sr. Kathy Brazda (Courtesy of the Congregation of St. Joseph)



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June 27, 2024

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The triumvirate presidency of LCWR will have two new faces at the group's annual assembly in August.

The national board of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which represents about two-thirds of the 36,000 Catholic sisters in the United States, voted June 25 to name Sr. Kathy Brazda, of the Congregation of St. Joseph, as president-elect.

The group's bylaws allow the national board to fill a vacancy in any office. Sr. Sue Ernster, of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, had been president-elect, but resigned May 22. Ernster would have become president Aug. 16, at the end of the assembly.

"This was not an easy decision," Ernster said in a written statement to Global Sisters Report. "I resigned for personal reasons, which includes my desire to focus my energy in my role as president of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. Right now, FSPA initiatives require my full attention. I have more than two years remaining in my four-year term and I want to take the congregation deeper into the direction we set when I was elected."

LCWR also announced that Sr. Vicky Larson, of the Presentation Sisters of South Dakota, has been elected by members to become president-elect in August. Members voted online throughout June.

Current president Sr. Maureen Geary, a Grand Rapids Dominican, will become past-president. Current past-president Sr. Rebecca Ann Gemma, a Springfield Dominican, will leave the presidency.

"The Leadership Conference of Women Religious is grateful for Sister Sue's time with us in the presidency," Geary said in a statement emailed to GSR. "We are blessed with a vibrant organization that serves our members well. We are looking forward to seeing everyone at our 2024 assembly in August."

Ernster said she knows LCWR will carry on.

"LCWR is in good hands and I look forward to our 2024 assembly in August," Ernster wrote.

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Brazda is currently president of the Congregation of St. Joseph, and was elected to LCWR's national board in 2021.

She was a co-founder and executive director of Taller de José in Chicago, which accompanies and connects people to the services they need. More recently, she worked with the Archdiocese of Chicago's Renew My Church initiative.

"I am both humbled and excited to be appointed president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious during this time of great change in religious life," Brazda said in a written statement. "I look forward to serving, and hold all women religious in prayer as we journey forward with faith and hope."

Larson has been a professor of nursing at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a nursing instructor at Augustana University. She was elected to the Presentation Sisters of South Dakota leadership council in 2018.

LCWR will hold its annual assembly Aug. 13-16 in Orlando, Florida. Officials say the gathering "will name and look critically at what is happening in the world today and in religious life in order to see the compelling call to religious life at this time," and that the aim is to "provide the impetus for leaders to bring forth the best inside of themselves and inside their institutes so that we are energized to respond to a world in need of what we have to bring."

The keynote speakers this year are Fr. Bryan Massingale and Mexico City Benedictine Sr. Maricarmen Bracamontes. At the conclusion of the assembly, the group will present its Outstanding Leadership Award to Dubuque Franciscan Sr. Nancy Schreck.

This story appears in the **LCWR 2024** feature series. View the full series.