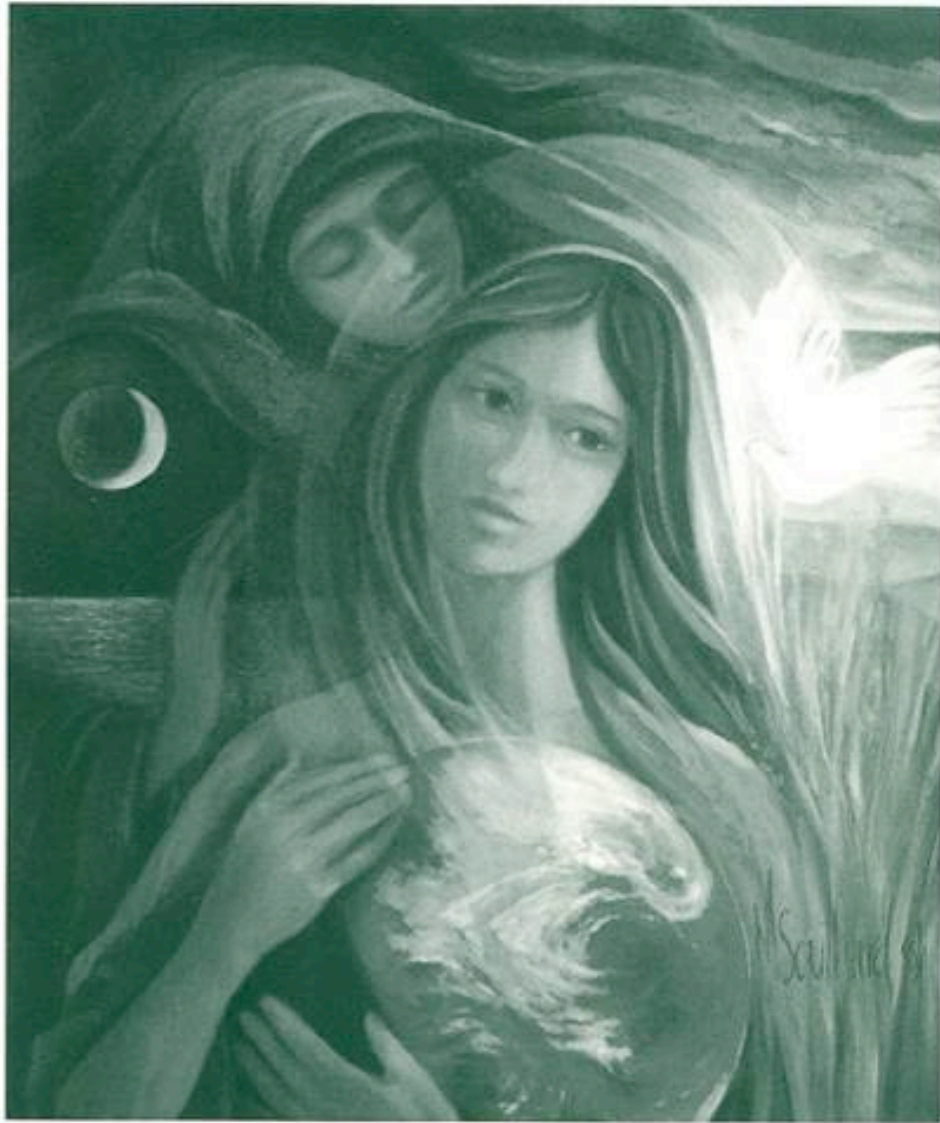


# THE Occasional Papers

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Winter 2011



*Behold, I am Doing Something New*

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Volume 40, Number 1

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## 3 The Journey to Newness: Mining the Wisdom of the Exilic Literature

Nancy Schreck, OSF probes the ancient utterances of promise, hope, and new life contained in the Exile stories of the First Testament and their relevance for religious life today.



## 6 What Calls for Our Attention in the Contemporary World

In an interview, Rev. Charles E. Curran reflects on current trends in the world and church today and the moral questions religious life leaders need to consider.



## 10 Reading Ourselves to See the New

Retreat leader and spiritual director Rose Mary Dougherty, SSND offers ideas for leaders on seeing the world with a contemplative gaze and thus preparing to see the new.



## 13 Contemplating the World and its Call to Religious Life through the Arts

Women religious poets and artists offer a contemplative look at the reality of the world through the arts.

Cover artwork and reflection by Mary Southard, CSJ

*"Mother of the Night, Daughter of Dawn"*

*Out of the darkness of our time, Sophia, our ancient Mother, Creator Spirit comes, doing something brand new. She draws close, whispering new wisdom, breathing into us the guidance of Earth we need, bringing forth a new dawn!*

## Mission

Always the ones in need,  
the door knocking at night,  
always the call from far away:  
"Send us women with strong hearts  
and searching eyes.  
Soon."

More always went  
than could be spared,  
pulses of fire,  
magnets of light,  
into grimy streets,  
rank caves,  
stark sheds,  
stern prairies,  
swelling fields,  
blinding trails,  
pouring their love like sweat,  
wearing the stench of the poor.

They served themselves up  
like food, like bread.

What love they had! They spent it,  
threw it into the wild wind,  
let their seeds be eaten alive  
or ground into furrows  
of stone and soot.

We who follow, decades later,  
find seeds sprouted, rooted,  
flowers of light  
to wave in the wind.  
We bless those green spikes  
that cracked the sidewalks,  
bless roots tight and twined,  
bless the stubborn love  
that linked the cobbled lives and  
streets,  
that holds them still,  
from the underside --  
sturdy legacy.

Regina Bechtle, SC  
Bronx, New York

### Photo and reflection by Margaret Egan, SC

*As we see God in this profound birthing of creation,  
let us seek to find this same loving God  
in the profound birthing of all that is to come.*

