



Top left: Rosa Colmenarejo of Cordoba, Spain, and Marie Keefe, a volunteer at the Quixote Center, listen to Clarita Ajo tell stories from her work in Cuba. **Top center:** Clarita Ajo **Top right:** Visiting scholar Rev. Coralie Ling of the Uniting Church in Melbourne, Australia, came to WATER after attending the Parliament of the World's Religions in Salt Lake City. **Right:** WATER interns Emily and Elizabeth hang out with Pope Francis — 2 Dimensional Version. **Left:** Mary with María Consuelo Mejía and María Andrea González Benassini of Mexico at the Women's Ordination Worldwide meeting in Philadelphia, September 2015.



Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual • NEWSLETTER

Volume 23 • Issue 4 • 2015

Along the Way to Justice

by Mary E. Hunt

Surprises happen along the way to justice. Sometimes even the most cherished goals end up being realized in far different ways than originally envisioned. So it has been with the Catholic women's ordination movement that celebrated its 40th anniversary at a stimulating conference "Gospel, Gender, and Social Justice," along with Women's Ordination Worldwide in September 2015 in Philadelphia.

My observations about the movement's top ten successes are not just for Catholics only. They reflect the fruit of interreligious, international work of which WATER is a part. While the kyriarchal Roman Catholic Church does not validly and licitly ordain women, the accomplishments of the movement speak for themselves:

- **We** have successfully avoided being coopted by kyriarchal Catholicism.
- **We** have shaped, thanks to feminist and other liberation theologies, the changing field of theology, from a clerical, ecclesial science to a lay and communal art.
- **We** refuse, as women, to be divided and conquered into nuns and laywomen.
- **We** name and claim many role models as part of our movements for justice and liberation.



Diann and Mary celebrate WOC's 40th anniversary with Kate McElwee (L) and Erin Saiz Hanna, WOC Co-Executive Directors.

- **We** connect with each other through the deeply interreligious nature of our struggle.
- **We** engage in feminist ministry in myriad forms.
- **We** are instrumental in creating new models of church.
- **We** rejoice in the international nature of our movement.
- **We** create rich spirituality and liturgy that characterize our movement and are a resource for the whole church.
- **We** are just getting started.

Congratulations to all engaged in this struggle, and thanks to those who have gone on ahead having given their time and talent to these efforts. ■

Become a WATERgem!

Thirty-two years ago, Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu responded to a call to change women's lives by creating WATER. Our commitment is steadfast. Yours can be too. Making a recurring gift is an easy way to ensure that your favorite projects continue and benefit many across the world. Join our monthly giving program and provide a steady stream of support for people who need WATER. Visit the Donate page on WATER's website at www.waterwomensalliance.org for more information and to donate today.

Become a WATERgem. Give Every Month and change the world!



Please stay in touch
8121 Georgia Avenue, Suite 310
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301.589.2509
waterstaff@hers.com
waterwomensalliance.org

Who we are

WATER is a global network, an educational and spiritual space, a center for dialogue on feminism, faith, and justice. We connect activists, religious leaders, students, scholars, and allies who are using feminist religious values to create social change. Founded in 1983 by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, we have been empowering women to address structural violence for over thirty years — making WATER one of the oldest feminist religious non-profit organizations in the world. The WATER community needs you to work toward inclusive theologies and rituals, to push for social change, and to collaborate across many differences. Join us! **To learn more about what we do, visit us at waterwomensalliance.org.**

Mary E. Hunt Diann L. Neu | Co-directors
Emily Harder Mallory Naake Elizabeth Hardt | Staff Associates

WATER is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible. We thank you for your support. © 2015 Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual.



Nancy Sylvester IHM, and Carol Coston OP, former directors of NETWORK

Welcoming the "Nuns on the Bus"!

by Emily Harder

Tuesday, September 22, 2015, a full hour before Pope Francis showed up, NETWORK's "Nuns on the Bus" pulled into the National Mall, having just completed another successful tour of social justice hot spots around the country. In the 12-day, 8-state stop, resident concerns were heard and solutions were brainstormed. Regardless of how little airtime the sisters got during what became Pope Week, they certainly left an impression. These women, bonded by the desire to produce change in the U.S., were a welcomed contrast both in form and content from sights of priests, bishops, and cardinals all pointing to one Pope. The "Nuns on the Bus" reminded us that it takes everyone working together, not one super star, to do the work of justice.



WATER Welcomes New Staff Associates

WATER is pleased to welcome three new staff associates to the office for the 2015-2016 year. **Elizabeth Hardt**, a 2015 graduate of Transylvania University, comes to the office through the Loretto Volunteer Program. **Emily Harder**, a 2015 Bethel College graduate, is serving as a staff associate through the Mennonite Voluntary Service program. **Mallory Naake** joins the WATER community as an M.Div. student of Wesley Theological Seminary. Elizabeth, Emily, and Mallory all began in early September and will be at WATER for the remainder of the 2015-2016 year.

From left: Elizabeth, Emily, Mallory

Clara Luz Ajo Lázaro visits WATER

by Mallory Naake

Laughter, stories, scones, old and new friends, joyful tears, and Spanglish accompanied WATER's longtime friend, Clarita L. Ajo Lázaro of Cuba, as she made her first visit to WATER.

We were joined by WATER friends Cindy Lapp and Cynthia Tootle; Rosa Colmenarejo, a theologian visiting Georgetown University from Cordoba, Spain; and Marie Keefe, associated with the Quixote Center.

Clarita met WATER in the early 90s as a doctoral student at the Universidade Metodista de São Paulo where Mary was a visiting professor and later on Clarita's doctoral committee. Clarita's thesis examined the intersections of the Cuban Episcopal Church and the Santeria Religion of the Yoruba tradition.

In 1997, Clarita connected to WATER through *A Shared Garden*, a project focused on the eradication of violence against women through ecofeminism, which brought together communities of women in

Santiago, Chile; Recife, Brasil; and Washington, DC.

Currently, Clarita serves as vice rector and professor of systematic theology, ethics and anthropology at Seminario Evangélico de Teología in Matanzas, Cuba. Clarita attempts to open her students' minds and hearts to a variety of theologies and practices outside of their upbringing.

Beyond the seminary, Clarita works with a group of Episcopal Santeria women who are organizing their local congregation to reflect their lives and contexts.

Throughout her visit, Clarita's energy and enthusiasm infected us all. I saw how global relationships are formed through the connections between Clarita, Rosa, and WATER. If this is what feminism and the WATER community are about, this is where I want to be. ■

100 Women, 100 Miles

by Elizabeth Hardt

Pope Francis may have caused the influx of men in mitres around DC, but his presence brought extraordinary women striving for social change to the nation's capital as well.

In the "100 Mujeres, 100 Millas" Pilgrimage, women walked from York Detention Center in Pennsylvania to McPherson Square in Washington DC to show support for immigration reform.



WATER staff joined them for the final three miles.

While each had a personal story — seeing family deported, supporting children abroad, working towards citizenship — they all held dear a common cause: substantial and comprehensive immigration reform that gives dignity and community back to migrants, women, and children. ■

Upcoming Programs

WATERtalks

Our series of WATERtalks features conversations with feminist activists and theologians for an open dialogue of ideas, research, and experiences. Wednesdays, 1-2pm ET.

November 11 with *Kelly Brown Douglas*

December 9 with *Beverly Lanzetta*

January 13 with *Grace Kao*

February 10 with *Joanna Brooks*

Contemplative Prayer

Mondays, 7:30pm ET

November 9 with *Janet Bohren*

December 6 with *Kate Stoltzfus*

WATERrituals

WATER is re-launching our monthly communal ritual series. All at 7:30pm ET.

November 17: *Thanks for Wise Women*

December 17: *Holiday Ritual*

Catholic Lesbian/Queer Women's Discussion

Sundays, 11:30am ET

November 15 with *Michelle Scheidt*: "Yes, I Am Catholic. And I'm Staying."

Join us at WATER or by phone. Register for upcoming events on our website or email waterstaff@hers.com

Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network

FLTN Annual Gathering, Atlanta, GA:

Friday, November 20, 4-6pm ET

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting
Sheraton Downtown Hotel, Georgia Hall 1 (Level 1)

Presenters include:

Katie Cannon, Union Presbyterian Seminary - "Antecedents of Womanist Artistic Expressions"

Cynthia Kittredge, Seminary of the Southwest - "Poetry as Biblical Interpretation: A Lot of the Way the Trees Were Walking"

Monica Maher, Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Ecuador - "Feminist Liberation Theologies Within the Museums of Quito, Ecuador"

Elizabeth Ursic, Mesa Community College - "Making Things Rite: The Importance of Ritual in Feminist Liberation Theologies"

All are welcome. RSVP to Mary E. Hunt at 301-589-2509 or mhunt@hers.com

Ritual: Lighting the Holidays

by Diann L. Neu

Center three candles on a table, one for the past, a second for the future, a third for the present.

Candle Lighting

Many holidays are ushered in with the kindling of lights. As we light these candles, let us remember this festive season and the festivals of light celebrated around the world at this time of year. Today we light three candles: one for the past, a second for the future, a third for the present.

*The **eldest** says:*

We kindle our first candle with thanks for the past year. In this lighting may we remember our roots and our connections to those who have walked with us. (*The eldest lights one candle.*) Think of one thing about the past year for which you are grateful. Tell us about it.

*The **youngest** says:*

We light our second candle with hope for the future. Let us remember our wings and our dreams. (*The youngest lights the second candle.*) Think of a wish you have for the coming year. Share it.

*The **host** says:*

We light the third candle to insure that these lights remain part of our journey long after the candles burn away. Pass the candle, saying, "This is the light of joy."

Prayer

Gracious and Loving Light of the World, You gather us around our table to kindle festive lights for our holidays. Open our eyes to wonder and fill our hearts with joy, so that we may give thanks for one another and bring social justice to all.

Song: "This Little Light of Mine," Traditional

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

© Diann L. Neu is Co-founder and Co-director of WATER.

