I. TITLE

The Sister Formation Conference, 1954 - 1971: An American Catholic Case Study in Authority and Obedience

II. THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM

A. BACKGROUND TO THE SISTER FORMATION CONFERENCE

The Sister Formation Conference (SFC) is central to an understanding of the history of American women religious in the 20th century. The Conference began in the 1950s as an intercongregational effort to enhance the professional lives of their sisters. In this dissertation, I will focus on the crisis that erupted in the SFC during the years 1961 to 1964, a crisis resulting from the emergence of a new theology of authority and obedience among American sisters. Influenced by American culture, a new emphasis on education, and the Second Vatican Council, this newer theology collided with an older, more traditional understanding of authority and obedience in the Church.

---

1 The Sister Formation Conference, as an official organization, is to be distinguished from the sister formation movement, which, of course, embraced many of the ideas and goals of the Conference. Although it did have definite preferences, the Conference advocated no single plan or approach as the only way to reach the goal of an integrated formation. The Conference also helped to serve as a network for many ways that religious congregations incorporated into their own formation programs the goals and ideas of the Conference--hence, the concept of the sister formation movement.
The Sister Formation Conference had a great impact on the post-conciliar history of women religious in the United States. We lack, however, careful historical studies which deal with the collective experience of American women religious and which include a cross-congregational emphasis.

Mary Schneider points out the lack of a collective internal history of women religious when she states that the post-Vatican II response of American sisters can be understood only in the light of pre-conciliar events and internal movements to adapt religious life to the needs of the contemporary world. She notes that because both pre-and post-Vatican changes were obedient responses to a call from Church leaders for renewal on the part of sisters, more research is needed regarding this legacy of change in the understanding and practice of religious obedience in the pre-


5 Schneider, "American Sisters and the Roots of Change: The 1950s," 72. Mary Schneider's approach is more comprehensive than most interpretations which perceive sisters' post-Vatican reform solely as the result of the Council's theological shift regarding the Church's identity and its relationship with the world.
Research on the experience of American religious women will also have to take into account the cultural milieu in which their distinctive contributions have been made. This would include, for example, the adaptation of European congregations to the unique demands of the American geographical, social, religious and political environment. Also important is the extent to which these communities have incorporated cherished American values such as independence, autonomy, and democracy into congregational policies and structures. While the hierarchical structure of Roman Catholicism has negotiated a generally peaceful co-existence in U.S. society, religious communities have had to incorporate certain American values so as to eventually attract U.S. vocations to grow and to meet apostolic demands.

These adaptations began especially in the 1950s and 1960s, as American religious congregations underwent, along with the larger Catholic culture, the disintegration of an earlier comprehensive and tightly unified Catholicism. Due to a new emphasis on education and the phenomena of tremendous ecclesial and social change, women's congregations embraced new

---


8 See Philip Gleason, Keeping the Faith: American Catholicism Past and Present, (ND,
anthropological assumptions--especially with respect to the interplay of human freedom and autonomy in a social institution predicated on obedience.9

B. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Sister Formation Conference offers an important example of how cultural and ecclesial tensions were worked out in the growth and renewal of religious life in the United States during this period. Little study has been done on this Conference, an organization initiated in the mid-1950s for the purpose of enhancing the educational preparedness of American women religious. However, to limit the significance of SFC to this educational agenda alone would be an oversimplification of its greater impact on religious life and the Church in the United States.

In this dissertation, I will argue that the conflict between two theologies of authority and obedience, both operative in the SFC from the beginning, resulted in the Sister Formation crisis. One theology was rooted primarily in traditional Roman Catholicism. The other was shaped by American cultural and intellectual influences, and the Second Vatican Council whose deliberations paralleled the SF crisis.

The focus of this dissertation will be on a significant moment in the history of the Sister Formation Conference, in the early 1960s, that profoundly influenced the renewal of religious in the United States and U.S. Catholicism as a whole. The original organizational vision of the Sister Formation Conference contained not only the traditional understanding of authority and obedience but also the quite visible beginnings of a new theology of authority and obedience. Although the crisis that erupted was played out among a limited number of sister-leaders and ecclesiastical authorities, the end result signaled the temporary silencing of an emerging theological vision of authority and obedience among members of the SFC and the Conference of Major Superiors of Women (CMSW).

The Sister Formation Conference began in 1954, growing out of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), as an intercongregational effort by sisters for sisters to improve the pre-service and in-service professional and apostolic training of women religious. They were brought to this moment by increasing demands from society for better-trained teachers, by Pope Pius XII's calls for adaptation of religious life to modern times, and by a new tendency to question the anti-intellectualism traditionally associated with religious life. The aim of the SFC was not to promote any particular program for intellectual and spiritual renewal but to stimulate the sharing of resources and ideas which would enhance sisters’ mission in the contemporary world. A newsletter, the Sister Formation Bulletin, provided an important forum for the dissemination of new thinking about intellectual and apostolic formation. The first
publication "ever undertaken by sisters for sisters," it was distributed to numerous American congregations. It offered a superb bibliography section and featured articles translated from the best contemporary, European theologians. This vehicle provided an opportunity for intelligent women to surface intellectual questions in the context of an official movement in the Church.

The year 1961 brought new leadership to the SFC national office, however, and the beginning of what became known as the "Sister Formation crisis." The autonomous status of the Conference--led by a number of highly creative and innovative women--coupled with its collaborative mode of decision-making, had been increasingly perceived by the Conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious as a potential threat to the traditional authority of superiors in religious life. In August of 1964 the original organizational pattern of SFC was re-structured so that it became a "committee" of the CMSW. With newly re-written by-laws, full power was placed into the hands of the major superiors. From then on, any elected Sister Formation personnel were reduced to exercising a mere consultative role. At the heart of the crisis were profound differences in the theological understanding of religious obedience and authority, and, correspondingly, a disagreement about the place of liberty of conscience and the person within the centuries-old, traditional structure of religious life. The crisis was rooted in a new sense of self-identity on the part of many American women religious--from an earlier "obedience to authority" to a new attitude of "obedience to the gospel," and from the older "authority of rank" to a newer "authority of competence."

The years of the Sister Formation crisis coincided, for the most part, with the years
during which Vatican II was in session. The crisis, therefore, paralleled a larger struggle among
the Council Fathers over the nature and place of religious life in the world. Theological
differences over authority and obedience among key leaders of the SFC and the CMSW on the
American scene mirrored struggles and prevailing differences over renewal within the larger
hierarchical Church during the Second Vatican Council.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11} See Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D., \textit{The Rhine Flows into the Tiber} (New York: Hawthorn
Although some have viewed the Sister Formation "crisis" as merely a "squabble among nuns,"\textsuperscript{12} the passage of time clearly illustrates the contrary. It symbolized a revolutionary change in perspectives on renewal for American women religious as these options were played out in the relationships between significant leaders of the SFC, the CMSW, and key members of the hierarchy in Rome. The theological issues involved and the significance of this revolution---a revolution because it signaled a fundamental shift in the attitudes and theology of U.S. women religious--largely escaped the consciousness of the majority of religious leaders at the time, even those who voted on the "dissolution" of the SFC as it was originally structured.

The virtual "invisibility" of this crisis, as it evolved, was due to two elements. First, it did not occur within the everyday ranks of the ordinary sisters but among a relatively small group of religious women whose high level of education and extensive influence on others made them particularly susceptible to the charge of scandal, and seemed to require (some superiors thought) that they be silenced. Secondly, as Sandra Schneiders observes, many developments in religious life during this period were so original as to have no real relationship to existing Church laws and structures. Thus, having felt called to venture beyond the limitations of traditional laws and structures, sisters in conflict situations with their superiors found the time-worn schema of "obedience/disobedience" to be the only context in which to situate their dissent.\textsuperscript{13}


Sisters were taught that God spoke directly to them through the voice of their superior whose judgment, in fact, represented God's will. Only if the superior's command was immoral or contrary to the community's constitutions, could the sister refuse to obey. Indeed, as one manual defined it:

[T]he truly obedient person does not go astray even when the superior is wrong and commands what is less than good than what we ourselves would choose. Then as a matter of fact God, to whom the submission is given and who sees the heart, rewards this obedience by assuring success. In other words, a superior may err in commanding, but we make no mistake in obeying.14

In the 1950s, at the same time that American women religious--through the SFC--were developing new patterns of obedience and intellectual questioning, John Tracy Ellis was bemoaning the lack of Catholic intellectual life.15 As Patricia Byrne observes, Sister Formation emerged as "an intellectual critique of American Sisters," paralleling the "Catholic intellectualism furor of the mid-1950s." She sees it as having profound consequences on both the external and internal life of American sisters, setting them "on the path of intellectual independence."16

Ritamary Bradley, C.H.M./S.F.C.C., one of the key players in the SF crisis, foresaw the potential repercussions emerging from the increased education of sisters when she wrote in 1957:


Yet is it not government, rather than obedience, that is possibly made harder with the extension of educational advantages? It would seem to be easier to guide children than to direct adults, and if religious remain children in their emotional dependence on others and in their uninformed judgments, the task of superiors may in some ways be less demanding. Growth in maturity, however, may have other advantages worth weighing in the balance against the loss of this surface submissiveness, not the least of which is the opportunity for progress in deeply-rooted virtue on the part of the obedient subject who has, at the same time, put away the things of a child.¹⁷

Marie Augusta Neal, S.N.D. de Namur, a leading sociologist of religion who conducted the Sisters' Survey of 1967, 1980 and 1989, locates this shift from "blind obedience" to responsible decision-making in the sisters' formal education for mission. She writes:

This new responsibility not to obey arises with her education because she becomes primarily a human person . . . So, too, if one who exercises authority in any administrative system asks for an obedience that violates reason, justice or compassion, obedience cannot be accorded by an informed and aware woman or man in good conscience.

It becomes clear that the Sister Formation Conference was on the cutting edge of renovation and adaptation of the Church to the modern world, wielding influence as a communal

---

18 The Sister's Survey began as a way of assessing the responses of U.S. sisters to the decree on renewal, Perfectae Caritatis. Neal commented in her report in 1967 that "The formation programs for sisters has been radically revamped since the Sister Formation program was introduced in the early 1950s. This factor is without a doubt the major single factor explaining the current Post-Vatican stance of so many sisters." See her article "Implications of the Sisters' Survey for Structural Renewal," CMSW Annual Assembly Proceedings, 1967 (Washington, DC: Merkle Press, 1968), 1-33.

body in terms of creative thought, initiative, competence, sharing of resources and decision-making. By the early 1960s it had begun to parallel or surpass the traditional authoritative voice of any single superior in the United States. Previously inclined to avoid any kind of interaction with one another, religious communities had begun to join forces through the agency of the SFC. This was facilitated through regional and national assemblies, increased correspondence, extensive travel on the part of SFC personnel, the publication of the *Sister Formation Bulletin*, annual workshops and lectures, the promotion of scholarships for study at home and abroad, ecumenical sharing, and even travel to Latin America--all for the sake of the adaptation of mission to the modern world. This interaction stimulated and channeled the dissemination of new ideas--serving as a seedbed for growth and change, as well as a potential threat to all those firmly committed to the status quo. Time would reveal that the basic position taken by a few leaders of the SFC in the Sister Formation crisis would eventually come to be a part of the ecclesial life of American women religious. Today, however, few people recognize the importance of these battles now long past.

III. BIBLIOGRAPHY  (see attached pages at the end of the programmatic essay)

V. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

SECONDARY SOURCES

Comparatively little research has been devoted to the Sister Formation Conference. Marjorie Noterman Beane's *From Framework to Freedom: A History of the Sister Formation Conference* broadly surveys the contribution of the Conference to the educational history of
women religious from 1954-1964. Mary L. Schneider, OSF, in her paper out of the Cushwa Center, "The Transformation of American Women Religious: The Sister Formation Conference as a Catalyst for Change (1954-1964)" indicates the variety of activities, workshops, goals and influences of the Conference during those years. Two other articles by Schneider, "American Sisters and the Roots of Change: The 1950s" (U.S. Catholic Historian, Winter 1988) and "Educating an Elite: Sister Formation, Higher Education and Images of Women" (in A Leaf from the Great Tree of God: Essays in Honour of Ritamary Bradley, S.F.C.C.) are further adaptations and extensions of her work. The works of both Beane and Schneider allude to the Sister Formation crisis but neither deal with it in depth.

Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., in "Living in Ambiguity: A Paradigm Shift Experienced by the Sister Formation Movement" (Catholic Historical Review, July 1993) sketches the intellectual movement in Sister Formation from a Neo-Scholastic worldview to one that embraces the primacy of reflection on experience and identity, amidst massive ecclesial and social change.

There have been only two dissertations or theses written on Sister Formation. A dissertation completed at Loyola University of Chicago in 1988, by Marjorie Noterman Beane entitled "An Interpretative History of the Sister Formation Conference, 1954-1964" was subsequently published. A largely descriptive work of the educational agenda of the SFC, it does not address the theological issues proposed by the present dissertation. A master's thesis by Danno Richard Monahan, "Educating Women Religious: The History of Marillac College, 1955-
69" (St. Louis University, 1972), spoke marginally of the movement.

Several articles in popular journals discuss the Sister Formation Conference during its earlier years, especially as it caught the attention of lay people and clergy alike. These articles were largely journalistic, lacking much interpretative focus.21

PRIMARY AND ARCHIVAL SOURCES

20 Marillac College, run by the Daughters of Charity in St. Louis, was a liberal arts college exclusively for sisters that crossed congregational boundaries. See Ritamary Bradley, "Marillac--A Sister Formation College," Sister Formation Bulletin 6 (Spring 1960): 1-6.

A great deal of archival, primary material exists on the Sister Formation Conference, much of it practically untouched. Several sources, in particular, are important for the purposes of this dissertation. Historical background can be found in The Education of Sisters (1941) by Sister Bertrande Meyers, D.C., a national survey scrutinizing the educational efforts of sisters from 1918 to 1930. In 1949 Sister Madeleva Wolff's presentation at the NCEA, "The Education of Our Young Religious Teachers" (popularly known as the "The Education of Sister Lucy"), highlighted the dream and the reality of an educational formation for a hypothetical young sister. Concerns expressed in these works led to the establishment of the Sisters Educational and Professional Standards Association at the 1953 NCEA Convention, a group later renamed as the Sister Formation Conference in 1954.

The literature of the Institutes of Spirituality (later known as the Theological Institute for Local Superiors) which were established for the in-service training of sister superiors and novice mistresses, provides further background, as does the National Catholic Education Association Bulletin, which contains pertinent speeches and other information on the period both

22 Also influential was Sr. Richardine Quirk's thesis entitled "Some Present-Day Problems in the Education of Teaching Sisters in the United States" (Marquette University, 1953). This work displayed contemporary difficulties in the practices of pre-service formation and education within religious communities. In addition, Pope Pius XII's efforts in the 1950s to promote the adaptation of religious communities to the modern world provided further impetus.

23 These Institutes were sponsored by the Theology Department of Notre Dame University and eventually collaborated with the Conference for Major Superiors of Women (CMSW) and the SFC. They took place at Notre Dame every year after the suggestion initially arose at the 1952 National Congress for Religious. In 1961 the Second National Congress of Religious, also held at Notre Dame, interrupted this series of Institutes.
before and after the beginning of SFC.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24} Published material from the 1952 and 1961 National Congresses for Religious in the United States gives relevant background for other factors surrounding the SFC’s story.
Two primary sources of greatest importance are the *Sister Formation Bulletin*, the official newsletter of SFC, founded in 1954 and edited by Sr. Ritamary Bradley, and the published proceedings of the Sister Formation workshops held through the 1950s and 1960s.\(^{25}\)

The largest and most valuable repository of archival materials is located in the Department of Special Collections and University Archives at Marquette University. This archive includes the official records and correspondence of the Sister Formation Conference, as well as the private papers of Sr. Annette Walters, C.S.J. and Sr. Ritamary Bradley, S.F.C.C. from 1954-1979. Another extensive collection is located in the archives of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Further archival materials of importance include those of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary (the former religious community of Ritamary Bradley, S.F.C.C.) and those of the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Louis and in St. Paul (to which Annette Walters, C.S.J., belonged).\(^{26}\) The

\(^{25}\) These include, among others, *The Mind of the Church in the Formation of Sisters* (1956); *The Spiritual and Intellectual Elements* (1957); *Planning for the Formation of Sisters* (1958); *The Juniorate in Sister Formation* (1960); *Program for Progress* (1966); *The Local Superior: Capstone of Formation* (1967); *Prayer and Renewal* (1969).

\(^{26}\) Since both Ritamary Bradley and Annette Walters were involved in Sister Formation as
archives of the Conference of Major Superiors of Women--which later became the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR)--are housed at Notre Dame University.

well as the "Sister Formation crisis," these archives are important. This would also be true of the archives of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas since Mother Regina Cunningham, R.S.M., general superior of the Sisters of Mercy at the time, was national chair of Sister Formation during the "SF crisis."
In addition to these archival resources, I have conducted eleven interviews with a number of individuals who were involved with the SFC and/or the CMSW during these crucial years. Five more interviews are scheduled.

GENERAL SECONDARY SOURCES -- U.S. WOMEN RELIGIOUS

Sources providing pertinent background on the historical and theological context of women religious (and of women in general) in the United States include Women in American Religion, a collection of essays edited by Janet Wilson James, and Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller's three volume series on Women and Religion in America (as well as their recent In Our Own Voices: Four Centuries of American Women's Religious Writing). Mary Jo Weaver's New Catholic Women: A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority, and American Catholic Women: A Historical Exploration, edited by Karen Kennelly, CSJ, provide solid insights into the experience of American women and women religious.

V. PROCEDURE

My interest in this topic emerged out of a course on the Second Vatican Council with Dr.__________________________________________________________

27 Materials for the interviewing procedure have been obtained from the Institutional Review Board and are being processed according to proper procedure.

28 Extremely helpful for understanding the experience of women religious in America are the following: Marie Augusta Neal, S.N.D. de Namur, Catholic Sisters in Transition: From the 1960s to the 1980s and From Nuns to Sisters: An Expanding Vocation, and Mary Ewens, O.P., The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth-Century America, Sandra Schneider, I.H.M., New Wineskins: Re-imagining Religious Life Today, presents solid historical and theological observations regarding religious life.
Ron Modras where I studied the document on the renewal of religious life. During my research I realized the impact of the Sister Formation Conference on the post-conciliar history of women religious in the United States. This dissertation is a natural outgrowth of my study in the Department of Theological Studies.

By focusing this dissertation on the Sister Formation Conference from the years 1954 to 1971--the latter being when the SFC once again became an autonomous organization with increasingly democratic modes of decision-making--I hope to illustrate the influence of the American experience and character as well as the influence of new ecclesial and theological understandings on the Conference. By 1971, when SFC once again became autonomous, the shift towards a theology of authority as service, obedience to the gospel as requiring discernment and dialogue, and collaborative and participative modes of decision-making can all be easily seen taking place in many religious congregations. While SFC cannot claim to be the sole reason for this shift, it can claim to have laid a clearly articulated intellectual and theological framework which was implicit in the very beginning organizational structure. For these reasons, my methodological approach will require a careful historiographical attention to the cultural context of U.S. Catholicism in the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar periods. The interplay of historical, cultural, and theological factors in the life of women's religious congregations will be examined, taking special account of new initiatives, shifting models of leadership, and the development of personal and communal identities.²⁹

²⁹ It should be noted that since the SFC was geared specifically towards the needs of U.S. apostolic congregations of women in their efforts to respond to the demands of the twentieth-
A sensitivity to varieties of leadership styles will also be required in the process of research. I will focus on the pertinent events, issues, and interactions within the Leadership Group--the national board involved in establishing policies, directions and new initiatives--of the Sister Formation Conference.\(^{30}\)

I have conducted research at Marquette University, using their collection on the Sister Formation Conference. I have explored materials at the international office of the Sisters of

Mercy of the Americas. I have visited the motherhouse of the I.H.M. Sisters in Monroe, Michigan where Sr. Mary Emil Penet, the official founder of the Sister Formation Conference resides. Several visits have also been made to Davenport, Iowa to do work in the Diocesan archives, and to visit Sr. Ritamary Bradley, the founder and editor of the Sister Formation Bulletin and the assistant executive secretary of SFC from 1961 to 1964. I plan another visit to do research in the archives of the CHM sisters in Davenport. In addition, I have investigated the Sisters of Mercy regional archives in Pittsburgh, PA, and interviewed Sr. Elizabeth Carroll who was part of the Sister Formation Leadership Group for many years, as well as a member of the CMSW. Visits to the LCWR archives in Notre Dame and to the CSJ archives in St. Louis need to be completed. Therefore, it is clear that extensive materials are available and I will be permitted to use them freely.

If the department and the Graduate School approve, Dr. Belden Lane has agreed to be the primary reader of this dissertation. Fr. J.J. Mueller, S.J., and Sr. Regina Siegfried, A.S.C., have consented to serve as second and third readers. Sr. Siegfried, currently an adjunct professor in the Theological Studies Department, has taught courses in the history and formation of women's religious communities in the United States.

Ritamary Bradley, S.F.C.C., professor-emerita at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, has graciously agreed to give her assistance as a consultant because of her extensive experience and knowledge of the Sister Formation Conference.

VI. PROBABLE CONTENTS
THESIS STATEMENT:

The conflict known as the "Sister Formation crisis" (1961 - 1964) in the overall history of the Sister Formation Conference (1954 - 1976) was the result of differing theological visions of religious authority and obedience in the renewal of U.S. religious congregations of women in the 1950s and 1960s. The origin and development of the Sister Formation Conference was a distinctively American phenomenon emerging in response to particular historical, social, and theological currents of the 1950s and 1960s.

CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE: Context: Historical, Social and Theological Currents of Pre-Conciliar U.S. Catholicism

This chapter will deal with pre-conciliar Roman Catholicism, its emphasis upon authority and obedience and its own history of struggle with an American culture and identity which increasingly encouraged freedom, independence, and democracy. The 1917 Code of Canon Law reinforced the ecclesial image of the church as a “perfect society,” emphasizing authority and obedience and immunity to change and culture. After the First World War, the Catholic community worked enthusiastically toward establishing itself at the center of American social, political and cultural life through its emphasis on a Catholic synthesis of religion and culture. In this context of Roman Catholicism and the American experience, religious congregations of women also experienced their own history of growth. The nature and history of the American experience for women religious set the groundwork for a new way of thinking about authority and obedience in relationship to the mission of these congregations.


This chapter will deal with the origin and development of the Sister Formation Conference (SFC), providing a context for understanding the "Sister Formation crisis" in the early 1960s. The SFC was born out of obedient response to the Pope Pius XII's call for renewal of women's religious congregations in the 1950s and out of an awareness of the need to improve the quality of sisters' formation and education for mission. This movement risked suppression at almost every point since it represented an unprecedented phenomenon of twentieth-century religious life, one that could only have happened on American soil. Since this movement took place within traditional theological and juridical constructs of authority and obedience for women's religious life, structural elements of the SFC would, in time, challenge the traditional understanding of authority and obedience within the SFC itself, within U.S. religious life, and within the larger life of the Church, thus leading to the "Sister Formation crisis."

CHAPTER THREE: The Sister Formation Crisis (1961-1964)

24
This chapter will deal with what is known as the "Sister Formation crisis." While the "crisis" involved the suppression of the original structure of the Sister Formation Conference—namely its restructuring and subordination to the Conference of Major Superiors of Women—it also signaled a radical shift of self-understanding which emerged after the Second Vatican Council among U.S. religious congregations of women. The Sister Formation Conference, by promoting a public reflection on the unity of the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of their lives, set in motion a new the awareness that their theology, their lives, and their mission in society had outstripped the traditional structures of authority and obedience. The Sister Formation crisis became a barometer of the growing tension over shifting theological models of authority and obedience in American Catholic religious life, during this period which paralleled the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Emergence of a New Theology of Authority and Obedience

This chapter will deal with the emergence, growth, and temporary silencing of the Sister Formation Conference, of a theology of authority and obedience which would eventually become an integral aspect of a majority of women's religious congregations in the United States. This theology was the influenced by several sources: 1) certain contemporary theologians; 2) the social sciences; 3) concurrent social issues within American culture; 4) the promotion of education and networking among religious women in an intercongregational forum; and 5) significant events during the sessions of the Second Vatican Council.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Final Acceptance of New Patterns of Authority and Obedience (1964-1971)

This chapter will analyze the events and influences which restored the original organizational vision of autonomous and democratic structures to SFC. Many U.S. Catholics after Vatican II were re-orientating their ideas, identity and values to their social milieu. In this re-evaluation, the modern world in its American form was of utmost importance. Similarly, the influence of the American experience, the social upheavals of the 1960s with their emphasis on freedom, equality and human rights, as well as the post-Vatican II stance of women religious resurrected and further developed the original vision of SFC. What had once been an innovative and implicit element in SFC's ability to create a new theology of authority and obedience—distinctively shaped by the American character--became a part of its organizational structure and vision once again. By the 1970s, however, it was clear that SFC's emergent theology of authority and obedience--although silenced in 1964--had already become an obvious dimension of the life of numerous religious communities, as well as a basic principle within newer intercongregational organizations of women religious.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

SISTER FORMATION CONFERENCE --- PRIMARY SOURCES:

Department of Special Collections and University Archives. Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Archives of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Silver Spring, Maryland.


Diocesan archives of Davenport. Davenport, Iowa.

Archives of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary. Davenport, Iowa.


SECONDARY SOURCES


Dissertations and Theses


Monahan, Danno Richard. "Educating Women Religious: The History of Marillac College, 1955-
HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL WORKS REGARDING U.S. CONGREGATIONS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS

COLONIAL TO PRE-CONCILIAR PERIOD


University of America, 1931.


Lovasik, Lawrence G. The Sister for Today: Meditations on the Religious Life in the Spirit of


Pius XII, Pope. The Address of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, to the Congress of Religious, Rome, 8 Dec., 1950. s.l.: s.n., 1950 [?].


AUTHORITY/OBEDIENCE

Allen, Rev. J, DD. Our Own Will. St. Louis: Benziger Brothers, 1885.

Cotel, Peter. *Principles of the Religious Life; An Explanation of the "Catechism of the Vows."
Revised and adapted to the Code of Canon Law, by Emile Jombart. New York: Benzinger, 1926.


Geser, Fintan, OSB. *The Canon Law Governing Communities of Sisters.* St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1938


INTELLECTUAL LIFE


Mize, Sandra Yocum. "'A Catholic Way of Doing Every Important Thing:' U.S. Catholic Women and Theological Study in the Mid-Twentieth Century." U.S. Catholic Historian 13


POST-CONCILIAR


Neal, Marie Augusta, SND de Namur. Catholic Sisters in Transition: From the 1960s to the


_______. "American Sisters: Organizational and Value Changes." In Vatican II and U.S. Catholicism, ed. Helen Rose Ebaugh, 105-121.


WOMEN'S STUDIES


_______. In Our Own Voices: Four Centuries of America Women's Religious Writings. New


VATICAN II


**AMERICAN CATHOLICISM**


