

Membership in CLA is open to individuals and organizations. For more information, contact:

Membership Services

8550 United Plaza Boulevard, Suite 1001
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
phone: 225-408-4417
email: office@CathLA.org
website: www.CathLA.org

CATHOLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bland O'Connor

P & N Association Management
8550 United Plaza Boulevard, Suite 1001
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
phone: 225-408-4417
e-mail: boconnor@pnca.com

PRESIDENT

Mary Kelleher

Cardinal Beran Library
St. Mary's Seminary
University of St. Thomas School of Theology
9845 Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77024
phone: 713-686-4345 x 248
e-mail: kellehm@stthom.edu

VICE PRESIDENT/TREASURER

N. Curtis Le May

University of St. Thomas
260 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
phone: 651-962-5451 fax: 651-962-5460
e-mail: nclmay@stthomas.edu

PAST PRESIDENT

Sara Baron

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Pat Lawton (2017)

Catholic Research Resources Alliance
(University of Notre Dame)
214 Hesburgh Library
Notre Dame, IN 46556
phone: 574-631-1324
e-mail: plawton@nd.edu

Ann O'Hara (2017)

Marquette University High School
3401 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53208
phone: 414-933-7220 x 3076
e-mail: ohara@muhs.edu

Elyse Hayes (2018)

Seminary of the Immaculate Conception
440 W. Neck Road
Huntington, NY 11743
phone: 631-423-0483 ext. 140
e-mail: elysehayes@yahoo.com

Kathryn Shaughnessy (2018)

St. John's University
St. Augustine Hall, Library 306
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, NY 11439
phone: 718-990-1454
e-mail: shaughnk@stjohns.edu



Member of American
Library Association
ala.org



Affiliate of NCEA
ncea.org

DEAR FRIENDS

A Letter from the CLA President



Evangelization and the Catholic Librarian

I've been reading a lot of Catholic library history lately, as well as Sherry Weddell's *Forming Intentional Disciples*. When I threw in Michael Gorman's *Our Enduring Values Revisited: Librarianship in an Ever-Changing World* that I'm reviewing for *CLW*, they became a serendipitous combination of texts, all nicely dovetailing.

The clarion call to the laity by the Church from the 1920s right up to Vatican II was a call to "Catholic Action." Catholic Action was the ministry of the laity and the way in which the average man or woman or child served the people of God and brought the Word of God to them. Catholic Action mainly concerned ministering to the needs of people, but it also included a desire to bring people closer to the faith. Catholic librarians saw their work as one of the purest forms of Catholic Action. By creating collections of Catholic theology and literature that were well organized and accessible and by serving patrons with intelligence and Christian charity, Catholic librarians strove to raise the level of knowledge in their patrons and to bring them into the Church through the power of words.

Librarians in our time—including Catholic librarians—still believe in service to their patrons through acquisitions, cataloging, and reference, but we are no longer quite comfortable with the notion of warning patrons against "bad books." Nor are we comfortable with trying to mold the taste and intellectual and spiritual growth of our adult patrons. (Children's librarians have a little more flexibility in this area.)

However, the new clarion call of the Church to her members is Evangelization. We probably hear a lot about the New Evangelization in our pews and in the Catholic press, but most of us are probably not very good at going door to door like Jehovah Witnesses or Mormons. Nor are we probably very well equipped by nature and education to become street preachers standing on a corner or to become televangelists. So how do we evangelize people? How do we become intentional disciples of Jesus Christ?

Whether you call it Catholic Action or Evangelization or Intentional Discipleship, Catholic librarians still serve the people of God by the work they do in libraries. We still serve by creating collections that have the best in Catholic writing—from the past and in the present. We still serve by making these collections accessible to patrons through cataloging, shelving, signage, and other means so that patrons feel comfortable using the collection. We still serve through spreading the Word through words with reader's advisory. We may not try to form a patron's spiritual life to what we think it should be, but we still serve spiritual growth through the art of librarianship and by helping the patron find what he/she needs at that particular moment.

Catholic librarians do this every day in school libraries, academic libraries, and parish libraries. But do we do this intentionally? Do we think about what we're doing and claim it? Do we articulate what we do as discipleship (or vocation or Catholic Action or Evangelization)? I do sometimes, but not enough. I think that we all need to articulate this aspect of our careers more—to ourselves and to our patrons the way our predecessors did regarding Catholic Action.

By its very nature evangelism is about community. We evangelize to bring others into our faith community. But we also evangelize best through community. For Catholic librarians our community is the Catholic Library Association. We are better able to evangelize through the strength of CLA. Therefore, let us remember to also evangelize about our community and bring more members into it. CLA is beginning a new membership drive "Building the Future of CLA...Together." We are asking each of you, of us, to be evangelical about CLA. ■

Mary Kelleher, President