

## More Than a Footnote: The Footprints of Mary Luke Tobin at Vatican II

By Elizabeth McCloskey

In a footnote in the *History of Vatican II*, a vignette is told of Sister Mary Luke Tobin, SL, one of twenty-three women auditors at the Third and Fourth Sessions of the Second Vatican Council. When given her Vatican pass, the fifty-six year old Tobin was told that it enabled her to attend any sessions of particular interest to women. She replied, “Good, then I can attend them all.”<sup>1</sup> This resolve defined Tobin’s participation at the Council, including her little known dogged efforts to influence the development of the schema on religious life which became *Perfectae Caritatis*, one of the sixteen documents promulgated at Vatican II.

At the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council, the schema on religious life was regarded by some as a “minor” schema,<sup>2</sup> which was “rendered superfluous by the treatment of the topic in *De ecclesia*,”<sup>3</sup> or chapters V and VI of *Lumen Gentium*. To some, Mary Luke Tobin may not have appeared any more significant. An article in September, 1965 praising the presence of women at the Third Session of Vatican II observes, “At first glance Sister Mary Luke has all the plainness of a pair of house slippers and is about as unobtrusive as – well – a nun. Just to see her sitting quietly at the U.S. Bishops’ press panel meetings in Rome, one would never guess that she is superior general of the Sisters of Loretto, one of the largest communities (founded in Kentucky in 1812) of religious women in the United States and also chairman of the National Conference of Major Superiors of Women.”<sup>4</sup> It turns out that Mary Luke Tobin did not just sit quietly, nor did she view the schema on religious or any other Vatican II document as either minor or superfluous. She immediately grasped their significance for religious as well as for the renewal of the Church as a whole. Therefore during the course of the Council she made every effort to shape the document so that it would reflect and guide the renewal of religious life, while at the same time doing her best to prepare those in her community and in other communities to receive and act on the document upon the conclusion of the Council. Her enthusiastic and constructive contribution to this two-front process of religious renewal displays a combination of personality, intelligence and providence that is fascinating to trace.

Sources culled from the archives of the Loretto Community, the Thomas Merton Center, the Catholic University of America and the University of Notre Dame, as well as interviews, speeches, published articles and books, tell of a woman at the Second Vatican Council determined to “make a little dent by being there.”<sup>5</sup> In the overall history of the renewal of religious life after Vatican II, she is unquestionably considered one of the giants who made more than a little dent.<sup>6</sup> In 2003 she received the first “Outstanding Leadership” award from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious for her “foundational role in remodeling religious life



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in light of the Council” (Reher 91). Yet what is less known is exactly what her actual contribution amounted to during the Second Vatican Council, beyond the symbolism of being a woman who was officially invited to be there as an auditor, as well as the anecdotal stories and accounts of the extra-conciliar activities that are told in books such as Carmel McEnroy’s *Guests in Their Own House: The Women of Vatican II*,<sup>7</sup> Rosemary Goldie’s *From a Roman Window* and Mary Luke Tobin’s own book, *Hope Is an Open Door*. One of Luke’s most intimate companions from the Sisters of Loretto, eighty-two year old Sister Cecily Jones, who plans to write Tobin’s biography, explains the sketchy story of Luke’s actual Council experience by describing Luke’s dynamic nature: “She wasn’t one to look back at past accomplishments. She was always looking forward.”<sup>8</sup>

If Mary Luke Tobin’s forward movement explains why her contribution at Vatican II has not been fully documented, it turns out that this quality also characterizes the contributions she did make at that time. Mary Luke Tobin went to the Third and Fourth Sessions of Vatican II with her eyes wide open, poised and ready not only to ride the wave of renewal but to accelerate its strong undercurrent. As the first draft of the schema on religious life (*Schema constitutionis de statibus perfectionis acquirendae*)<sup>9</sup> was being formulated for the Preparatory Commission in Rome in 1961 and 1962, Mary Luke Tobin was undergoing her own preparatory work for renewal through her exploration of new currents in liturgy and theology. She seemed in those years already to embody the four characteristics of renewal that Rev. Elio Gambari enunciated in the immediate wake of Vatican II that would come to define the post-conciliar adaptation of religious life: (1) interiority; (2) dynamism; (3) constant enrichment and (4) the Church’s presence in the here and now.<sup>10</sup> To understand her input during the Council with respect to the schema on religious life it is illuminative to examine the way in which these four characteristics were operative in Mary Luke Tobin in the years leading up to her invitation in September 1964 to audit the Council sessions and how these preparatory years influenced her contributions at the Council during 1964 and 1965.<sup>11</sup>

### **Mother Mary Luke’s Preconciliar Years: 1958-1964**

#### **Interiority**

Sister Mary Frances Lottes, a Sister of Loretto who studied in Rome in the early sixties and was a close associate of Mary Luke Tobin for sixty years, relates an amusing story that typifies “Luke,” her sense of humor and matter-of-fact demeanor. Sister Mary Luke spent her last years in the infirmary at the Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Kentucky. She died there at 98 years old on August 24, 2006, having spent almost eighty years as a Sister of Loretto. A few weeks before she died, Sister Mary Frances paid her friend a visit in the infirmary:

She was lying in bed and I came up and stood beside her, so my head was right near her head, and she had her eyes closed. At that time she is in and out of it. I presume she is out of it. So I just – something to say, you know – I said, “Luke, God loves you *very* much.” She opened her eyes and looked up at me and she said, “WHAT brought that on?!”<sup>12</sup>

Though clearly not one for outward forms of piety and spiritual platitudes, she did have a rich interior life and encouraged others to as well. Those closest to her, including Sister Mary Frances Lottes, acknowledge her contemplative as well as her down-to-earth quality. Sister Cecily Jones, who lived with her for over thirty years in Denver and Kentucky, says that meditation on the Gospel was Luke’s way of praying: “I think she was really a contemplative. I think she was into centering or centered prayer long before it was called that” (Jones interview).

In 1958, at the age of fifty, Mary Luke Tobin was elected Superior General of the entire order and served in that capacity until 1970. Mother Mary Luke (as she was known then) was the spiritual leader of the Sisters of Loretto, as well as the functional head of the order. From 1952 to 1958, she had served on the leadership team of the order as a provincial superior and a member of the General Council. In those capacities, she promoted and taught the Liturgy of the Hours as a way of prayer for the Loretto sisters, a move designed to root the spiritual life of the community more deeply in Scripture. Previous to that, according to Sister Cecily Jones, the sisters “used to say a lot of litanies and ‘Our Fathers’ and ‘Hail Marys’ and rosaries of the Seven Doors – a lot of vocal prayers at different times of the day” (Jones interview). Mother Mary Luke had attended the first meeting of the Liturgical Conference in Chicago in 1940 and says of that time, “I hoped for a richer and more profound exposé of Scripture, and found my own prayer life enormously enriched by the writings that followed Rome’s encouragement of scriptural scholarship. . . . Although I am not a professional theologian, my interest in these writings was keen, and my understanding was growing” (Tobin, *Hope* 49). At the General Chapter of the Loretto Community in 1958, the Divine Office was adopted for the whole order. In that year, Mother Mary Luke sent a circular letter to all the sisters in which she encouraged an embrace of this change: “Growing interest in the liturgy as the prayer of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, has resulted in our adoption of the shortened form of the Divine Office as our communal prayer. One of the most beautiful suggestions of the Chapter urged us to study the relation of the liturgy to our special devotion. . . . The radiation of the moment throughout the day is the purpose of the Church’s official prayer of praise, the Divine Office.”<sup>13</sup> Mother Mary Luke enclosed with this letter a lengthy excerpt from Rev. Louis Bouyer’s book *The Meaning of Sacred Scripture* in which Bouyer identifies the Psalter as the foundation of all liturgical prayer. In 1960, the Superior General sent out another lengthy reading selection on the Divine Office, an excerpt from *The Worship of the Church* by William O’Shea on the fruitfulness of community prayer rooted in the Psalms. With respect to the hour of Matins, O’Shea offered this observation: “Like so many other prayers of the liturgy, we have long taken it for granted, unaware that we are passing treasures hidden in the field” (Tobin, *Circulars*: 8/15/58).

Mother Mary Luke also shared some thoughts from Thomas Merton in another of her letters to the Loretto community:

We have been reading some notes on the Liturgy sent us by Father Louis (Thomas Merton). We believe you will enjoy some of them, particularly the following: The liturgy is the expression of the Church’s love for God. Hence it is a school of love. It forms our hearts, minds, wills, sensibilities, and taste. But this formation is not merely psychological. We are formed by the objective reality of God’s love for us acting upon us in and through the liturgy. This formation gives us a “mind” greater than our own. It takes us above and beyond ourselves. We rise to the level of the liturgy and this makes us greater than we were before. The liturgy elevates us, it broadens our horizons, makes us capable of greater things. Jesus Himself forms our souls as we pray with



the liturgy (Tobin, Circulars: 10/28/60).

Merton also offered the Sisters of Loretto some thoughts on prayer in 1962, which Mary Luke wholeheartedly embraced: “Don’t let your prayer be a fight against reality. And the first reality you’ve got is yourself, and that’s where prayer begins. It begins with you and you don’t have to go from you to God, because God is in you. All you’ve got to do is to stay where you are. You don’t have to get out of this earthly being which you are and climb Jacob’s ladder and get way up in the heavens where God is, because if you do that, you’ll never pray. You couldn’t pray” (Tobin, *Hope* 71).

During Holy Week in 1961, Mother Mary Luke made a retreat at the invitation of a Sister Elizabeth Ann of Los Angeles. In a subsequent letter to Sister Elizabeth Ann, she mentions the profound impact that Fr. Noel Mailloux of Canada had on her: “If you knew how much good I derived (and through me, the Sisters of Loretto, I hope) from that excellent retreat of Father Mailloux’s, your charity would be at once rewarded.”<sup>14</sup> In *Hope Is an Open Door*, she describes this spiritual influence of Mailloux: “I owe my own education in the relationship between psychological insights and theology to a Canadian theologian-psychologist, Noel Mailloux, whose vast wisdom and knowledge opened my mind and heart to much new understanding” (Tobin, *Hope* 50).

As the early drafts of the decree of religious about the states of perfection were being written, Mother Mary Luke Tobin was encouraging her novices to think about perfection in a new way. She had asked her Trappist friend to say Mass for the women professing their vows at Loretto and Father Louis responded with a profound insight about the meaning of the religious vows. Merton’s reflections and Mary Luke Tobin’s assent toward them reveal a shifting notion of the “state of perfection,” or the religious life:

I shall be delighted to do this, for in this way, though I cannot be there in person, I can be there “in Christ” and in His charity. I will go to the altar at about seven o’clock standard time. It will not be hard to keep you all in mind, with the morning sun streaming in the window (or perhaps the spring rain streaming down the window pane) and the woods alive with birds. Our chapel windows look out towards Loretto, on the east side. I will be conscious of the sisters “present” with me in the Holy Sacrifice. . . . I know that you all realize what bonds of fraternal interest bind me to Loretto. I do feel that we are really very much one family, and not just neighbors. And so the profession of the novices, many of whom I have met and to some of whom I am greatly indebted, is an event which moves me deeply . . . Perfection is so much more a matter of trust than of unflinching excellence.” Few of us can be excellent, I am afraid, but all can love. The love of the poorest is often the most pleasing to God. When we belong to Him by vow, this is what we can and must never refuse Him. We do not promise infallibility, but we do promise genuine trust, true confidence in His love, a confidence that will bring us back to Him always, with the realization He alone can never fail us.<sup>15</sup>

### **Constant Enrichment**

This emphasis on spiritual enrichment through the liturgy and genuine prayer was coupled for Mother Mary Luke with a theological renewal which her friendship with Thomas Merton helped propel. Merton and Tobin had met when a mutual friend of theirs suggested that Merton be in touch with the Loretto Superior General about whether a friend and former philosophy professor of his,

Dan Walsh, might give some philosophy lectures at the junior college for novices at the Loretto Motherhouse. Dan Walsh was planning to spend an extended period of time with the Trappists at the Abbey of Gethsemani and was looking for other places in the Kentucky area to speak.<sup>16</sup> Thus began a speakers' bureau of sorts in which Tobin and Merton exchanged visitors, books and ideas between the two houses, just twelve miles apart in Kentucky. A fascinating exchange of letters between Tobin and Merton exists at the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky in which the mutual admiration and encouragement one for the other is eloquently evident. After Merton's first visit to the Loretto Motherhouse to deliver Dan Walsh, he writes to Mother Mary Luke, "I was happy to get to know your convent which is so near to us and yet so unknown. I am sure this will create a deeper bond of prayer between our two houses" (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 10/14/60). In addition to Dan Walsh, kindred spirits Tobin and Merton shared an illustrious cast of theologians and thinkers between the houses from 1960 to 1964 which included Père Jean Daniélou, SJ,<sup>17</sup> Daniel Berrigan, SJ, Tony Walsh,<sup>18</sup> and Fr. Illtud Evans, OP.<sup>19</sup>

Sister Helen Sanders, who served on the Loretto General Council during Mother Mary Luke's first term as Superior General and was a close friend of hers, recounts how the two of them would walk to the gate at the edge of their grounds and discuss the new theology emerging from France:

Usually our conversation at such times centered on the ideas gleaned from books we were currently reading, many of which were in French, not yet available in translation. Coming out of Europe in those years in the writings of theologians, scripture scholars, philosophers and psychologists was a heightened consciousness of the dignity of each person and a new understanding of the humanity of Jesus and of his commission to those who would follow him. We pondered long and deeply these new insights and tried to see what application they might have to the lives of women in a religious community (Sanders 49).

At that time, in the preconciliar sixties, several of the Sisters of Loretto were studying abroad in Canada, France, Italy and other places. Sister Cecily Jones was studying at Marquette University under Bernard Cooke and remembers how eagerly Mother Mary Luke would grab hold of all that she was learning: "I would type up my notes and send her a copy. When anybody came home like that, the nuns who had studied in Rome, in Paris, when you came back to the Motherhouse – she would really – I never have liked the expression 'pick your brain' but that's what it was you know. I mean she really wanted to know everything you learned and she was always learning. And I think that's how she picked up a lot of her theology" (Jones interview). Tobin's avid reading was mentioned repeatedly in interviews at the Loretto Motherhouse.<sup>20</sup> She acknowledges this desire for intellectual enrichment herself in a published interview: "Even before the council . . . there were threads of so many new developments in theology, bible study, psychology and so on. I remember that I tried to learn as much as I could by questioning and listening to some of our sisters who had gone to study at good theology schools in Europe and this country. We paid attention to those new theological voices and psychological insights."<sup>21</sup>

Through the sisters studying abroad, Thomas Merton, the visiting theologians and her other contacts, Mother Mary Luke Tobin stayed current with the theological trends, especially the tendency toward an embrace of the human person and human experience as the locus for divine revelation. She also wanted very much to communicate these theological insights with others. Together Mary Luke Tobin and Helen Sanders translated excerpts from talks and writings of French and



Canadian theologians and circulated them throughout their own community and beyond as a basis for reflection and discussion. This twenty-seven page collection of translations became known as the *Blue Book* and was read and studied by the whole order. Assembled in this compilation were excerpts from the Most Reverend Paul Philippe, Bishop G. Huyghe, Louis Lochet, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Bernard Cooke, SJ on the renewal and adaptation of religious life, Christian charity and the theology of person.

Each of these talks and readings had human reality as its starting point and concern for the person as a focal point. From Bishop Huyghe, of Arras, France, Mother Mary Luke chose a passage that emphasized the psychology of love, recognizing the reality of flawed people and the grace of God that makes true fraternal love possible. Bishop Huyghe did not simplify or romanticize the commandment to love but instead underscored the real human difficulty of relationships. A theology of grace is operative in Bishop Huyghe's reflections: "Fraternal love is not simply a virtue, even of the first rank. It is the very life of God, for 'God is love' and 'all love comes from God.'"<sup>22</sup> Every individual embodies the life of God, so that our relationships with others can not be separate from our relationship to God: "Others are not a reflection of Christ, but they *are* Christ for those who live by faith" (*Blue Book*). A keenly perceptive passage from Louis Lochet's *Sons of God* expands on this theme of Christian charity as a gift from God, inseparable from God. Again, the psychological dimension and challenge of loving and living in community are frankly acknowledged: "There are differences of temperaments which bring instinctive and constant clashes: between active people, turned outward toward effective realities and those turned inward towards the intimacy of the heart; between 'primaries' with their immediate and lively reactions, and 'secondaries' in whom events cause deep repercussions and who express themselves only after long reflection; between the far-sighted and the improvisers; those who need order and rule and those who need fantasy and a little disorder; those who love open doors and those who need closed ones" (*Blue Book*).

Mary Luke Tobin put forward these insightful observations about human difference to encourage sisters to view personality differences as something beyond annoying distractions and barriers to love, but as the necessary crisis that allows for real love to operate: "The formula of the act of charity would not have any value if it were not related to the oppressive reality of experience. Yes, life reveals to me that my neighbor, my nearest neighbor, my brother, is truly 'the other,' the different one, whom I can finally love only in the love of God" (*Blue Book*). A passage from Bernard Cooke on the theology of the person echoed this theme of God's revelation in the context of lived reality and personhood: "At the root of all revelation about person lies the incomprehensible mystery of God's own personal life" (*Blue Book*).

This turn to the reality of persons in theological reflection resonated with Mother Mary Luke. She grasped the import of these ideas for the life of her sisters and for the whole Church community. They spoke to who God is and who each of the sisters were in relation to God and to each other and offered insightful observations on the spirit of love. Eager to spread this theological enrichment, she asked every member of the Sisters of Loretto to read them and to be prepared to discuss them in a series of gatherings throughout the community leading up to the summer 1964 General Chapter of the whole order. In the letter introducing the *Blue Book* to the community, Mother Mary Luke also commends Cardinal Suenens' book *The Nun in the World*: "Later we will send you copies of a questionnaire which was sent out this year to a number of religious communities in Belgium. There may be points of interest in it for your community discussion. We presume that you have all read Leo

Cardinal Suenens' book, *The Nun in the World*. It also has many pertinent ideas for us, and some beautiful quotations regarding our apostolic opportunities today" (Sanders 72). She also seems to have sent the *Blue Book* to other communities as well; she writes to Sr. Elizabeth Ann: "Under separate cover I am mailing you a copy of the talks on community charity we translated from the French recently. Make use of them any way you wish. I am also sending copies of these talks to Mother Regina and Mother Humiliata. I am sure they will enjoy them" (Tobin, Correspondence: 10/26/63).

### **The Real Presence of the Church in the Modern World**

The community discussions referred to in Tobin's letter were conducted throughout the early part of 1964 in preparation for the summer 1964 General Chapter of the Sisters of Loretto. The first phase of these discussions centered on the spirit of love, as described in the *Blue Book*. The second phase of these discussions moved to the relevance of this spirit of love to the daily life and work of the Loretto community. Mother Mary Luke wrote at the beginning of 1964: "All discussion of adaptation must flow from the basic conviction that love of God, the Church, and all souls impels us to ask the question, 'How can the Sisters of Loretto respond best to the call of the Church in our day?'" (Tobin, Circulars: 1/28/64). Each of the sisters was sent an outline for discussion called "Reflections on Freedom and Obedience." Sisters were called upon to discuss, among other aspects of freedom, its nature, its purpose, its characteristics, its limitations and the responsibility it entails. With respect to obedience, they were asked to discuss its nature, purpose, motives and initiative. One of the aspects of freedom and obedience that is hinted at in this preparatory document is the necessity for mature decisions in the life of the religious. Four committees were formed to help prepare for the Chapter discussions: theology, common life and daily work, common works (the apostolate) and the religious habit. At the conclusion of the General Chapter, two new and important ordinances were announced in a short circular letter from Mary Luke Tobin:

Dear Sisters:

The following ordinances of the General Chapter of 1964 are effective immediately:

1. The wearing of the rosary will be discontinued.
2. All members of the Congregation will be called "Sister."

Asking a continued remembrance in your prayers, I am

Devotedly yours,

Sister Mary Luke (Tobin, Circulars: 7/20/64).

And just like that, Mother Mary Luke became Sister Mary Luke. In a note to Fr. Louis the next month, she wrote, "I really enjoyed your autographing an article 'Brother Louis.' The only disadvantage I see to the new (or old) title 'Sister' is that I find myself addressing other Mother Generals as 'Sister' now. This is awkward!" (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 8/20/64).

Many other ordinances were promulgated at the General Chapter, including the sanction to continue experimentation on the religious habit. The full text of those ordinances was sent to the sisters in August, 1964 with a cover letter from Sister Mary Luke explaining that the changes reflect the importance of the human person and call for a wider distribution of responsibility in the making of decisions (Sanders 100). A few of the new ordinances would necessitate a change in the Loretto rule of life, thus requiring approval from Rome's Sacred Congregation for Religious Life. In the postconciliar years, Sister Mary Luke would help guide a total rewriting of the Loretto rule of life. These new 1964 ordinances mark the beginning of that process.<sup>23</sup> An important step of the Chapter was to leave open the possibility of meeting again before the regular interval of six years' time, in

order to continue the work of adaptation and renewal in light of the Vatican II documents.

This attentiveness to the work of the Second Vatican Council characterized Mary Luke Tobin's leadership at both the congregational level and at the national level. A speech given at Loretto Heights College in September 1964, "The Christian Educator and the World of Vatican II," expresses Sister Mary Luke's excitement about the still unfolding drama of Vatican II. She extols the already promulgated Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) as a "magnificent document flowing from patient research and study. It is important to realize that the work of scholars seventy or eighty years went into its construction as the fruit of liturgical and biblical movements. Contributions made to Christian life and thought by Protestant theologians were certainly other factors in its development."<sup>24</sup> She counsels those religious educators in her audience to be prepared for the two key documents of the Council to be considered in the coming session, the Constitution on the Church and the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, and encourages them to even then begin teaching in light of Vatican II: "Since the world of Vatican II is a world of dialog and a world in which the Christian is being urged to take more responsibility for his own actions, every teacher can and must prepare the student for this role, by encouraging initiative, by stimulating creative discussion, by exploring new areas of thought" (Tobin, "Confrontation" 10). She outlines the persona of the educator who teaches in light of Vatican II as a teacher who will:

- show genuine reverence for the person; for every student in his inviolable personality; understand the Church as the community of the people of God;
- value the liturgy as the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, and the font from which all her power flows;
- see the layman as member of the family of God, one of the people of God, gifted with the baptismal life, called to perfect communion with God and with all men;
- recognize and appreciate the secular order as the place for the redemptive work of the layman;
- view the world of today with joyous courage, committed concern, and great Christian confidence.

If these are the attitudes of the Christian educator, he is indeed ready for his confrontation of the world of Vatican II (Tobin, "Confrontation" 12).

Sister Mary Luke could just as well have been describing the attitudes she deemed necessary for the Superior General who is indeed ready for her confrontation of the world of Vatican II. They certainly typify her relationship to the sisters of her order and her approach to the world.

Sister Mary Luke also prompted other groups to be prepared for the world after Vatican II. At Mary Luke Tobin's memorial service in October, 2006, where stories and memories of Luke were told for two hours by those who knew her best, Sister Mary Daniel Turner, Sister of Notre Dame and past President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, recalled Mary Luke's ardent appeal to the other leaders of American religious orders between 1962 and 1964 that they be actively attuned to the changes in the Church:

I met Mary Luke in 1962. She was then traveling around the country for the Conference of Major Superiors of Women. I was a very young provincial then. This was a gathering in Emmitsburg, Maryland and I was simply awed. I was awed. Now, I am an Easterner, from Washington DC and I had never witnessed such freedom of spirit. I kept saying to myself, "I bet that's exactly what the American



pioneer woman looked like, acted like, spoke like.” She was *refreshing*. And the message she delivered – I still remember the exact words – what she communicated so brilliantly and so simply was: “*The Church is for the world. We are to be in the world, trying to be Church women.*” And I have to say I was star struck.

The other gathering when I was with Mary Luke was in Grailville, and there were quite a few participants from the Conference of Major Superiors of Women. And it was a workshop given by Charles Davis and of course we were being educated into viewing Church differently and viewing ourselves differently as members of the Church. Well, one night Mary Luke gathered all the participants of the Conference of Major Superiors in a room together, which was her great gift – she gathered – she needed folks to be around – and she said, “You know there’s going to be a document coming out on religious life from the Vatican. We have to be *ready* for that document. We have to be ready to really take action on the document.” Well, we brainstormed that night and many of you in this room, the Sisters especially, will remember the Sister Survey that was done, I think there were 162 questions on the Sister Survey. It was taken by almost over 90% of religious in this country. That survey was birthed in Grailville. And she said, “When we get back to the Conference we’re going to organize a committee and we are going to anticipate and be educated to Vatican II.”<sup>25</sup>

Even before Sister Mary Luke was elected to the Conference of Major Superiors and invited to be an auditor at Vatican II she was keyed in to the documents being formulated in Rome. She may have sought to have input into the schema on religious as early as March, 1963 when she represented her community at the beatification of Elizabeth Ann Seton.<sup>26</sup> In an undated Rome postcard, which must have been from her 1963 trip since John XXIII was still alive, “Mother” Mary Luke writes to Father Louis, “What a glorious experience to visit Rome! Pope John looked tired, but read the beatification decree with a strong, clear voice. I prayed for you especially before the beautiful mosaic in St. Cosmas and Damian. Very best wishes and prayers, Mother M. Luke” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence). Later in the summer, Merton writes to Sister Mary Luke: “Glad to hear about your trip. . . . By the time this reaches you, you will have met Bishop Paul Philippe and given him, I am sure, my greetings. I hope the meeting will have been successful. I have some ideas about vows in monastic orders which I have summarized in a memorandum, but I will mail it to him sometime. Thanks for everything else” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 8/23/63).

It was likely during this 1963 trip to Rome that Sister Mary Luke obtained the text that was included in the Sisters of Loretto October 1963 *Blue Book*, of a talk on “Renewal and Adaptation of Religious Institutes” given by Philippe, Secretary for the Congregation on Religious.<sup>27</sup> At this time, before the Second Session of the Council, the draft schema on religious still had a long way to go before its promulgation in October, 1965. Other opportunities for Mary Luke Tobin to contribute her input to this schema would arise two years after this first trip to Rome. Perhaps her initial meeting with Philippe in 1963 helped to lay the groundwork for this later participation.

### **Dynamism**

Sister Mary Luke’s embrace of liturgical and theological renewal and her pioneer spirit which readied her for the new challenges and opportunities of Vatican II are traits that demonstrate the fourth characteristic of renewal identified by Elio Gambari in 1967 which can be applied to To-

bin: dynamism. Dynamism is a trait that captures Sister Mary Luke in her preparatory stage and throughout her life. She is consistently described as having been eager for any opening to know and understand more, always delighting in and learning from the people around her, seizing opportunities whenever they presented themselves and creating possibilities in varied situations. This dynamism was rooted in her liturgical life, her reading of Scripture, her real experience of community. Gambari describes this dynamism in a way that aptly captures the religious spirit of Mary Luke Tobin: “religious life requires uninterrupted contact with these sources, so as to receive and assimilate the energy emanating from them at the present moment, losing none of it. . . . This current quality and this complete effectiveness keep the religious young with a youthfulness that knows no sunset, but is ever renewed, for it is always rich, fruitful and operative, today as yesterday” (Gambari 37).

### **Sister Mary Luke’s Council Years: 1964-1965**

When Sister Mary Luke was invited to participate as an auditor during the Third and Fourth Sessions of the Second Vatican Council, she was already on a ship to Rome at the behest of the Conference of Major Superiors, of which she had been elected president one month prior. They sent her as a representative of American sisters simply to see what she could learn while there. In May 1964, Leo Cardinal Suenens of Belgium had met with Mary Luke and he had also encouraged her to go to the Council.<sup>28</sup> Though it was difficult to leave her Congregation, the Sisters of Loretto, just as the new ordinances from the 1964 General Chapter were permeating the order, she felt it was valuable simply to be there. She was completely surprised when she learned from a reporter who contacted the ship by radio that she had just been invited as an official auditor! As an auditor at the last two sessions of the Council, and during the inter-sessions, she seized the opportunity to do as much as she possibly could to make a contribution at the Council, while also addressing the concerns of her own order regarding brewing changes in religious life, including the order’s developing views on the meaning of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and the hot-button issue of the adaptation of the religious habit to modern needs.

In Rome, at the Third Session in 1964, her first session, Sister Mary Luke appears to have been the only woman and one of a handful of lay people to serve as a guest panelist at the U.S. Bishops’ Press Panel where she spoke about women’s religious communities.<sup>29</sup> In a letter to the Sisters of Loretto back home, Sister Mary Luke describes her daily pattern of attending the press panel in the afternoons, which was “always sparkling with interest” (Tobin, Correspondence: 9/22/65). Some of the women auditors, religious and lay, gathered on occasion during her first Vatican session for the following purpose: “Determiner les questions sur lesquelles une collaboration pourra s’établir entre auditrices religieuses et laïques, et la procedure à suivre pour assurer cette collaboration.”<sup>30</sup> It was through these different meetings that Sister Mary Luke established a close bond of friendship with Rosemary Goldie, an Australian curial laywoman, a friendship which was to continue after the Council.<sup>31</sup> She delighted in new friendships with women from France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Egypt and other places, as well as with the Protestant and Orthodox observers that she came to know from around the world. In a November 6, 1964 postcard to Father Louis that catches the



**Sr. Luke, Bps. Helmsing  
& Reed, Cardinal Ritter**

excitement and drama of this session, she described some of her international experiences. Sister Mary Luke was a lifelong dancer. Perhaps the Mass she describes sparked her own inspired liturgical dances which she is reported to have done many, many times through the post-conciliar years during Loretto community celebrations: “We had a very nice visit with the Gethsemani students at the House of Studies here. I have also met Prof. Quanbeck and Douglas Steere, some of the Orthodox observers are delightful, especially the Armenians. Today was especially thrilling – to see the Holy Father among his Bishops. We also had an Ethiopian Mass (Holy Communion under both species) with a special finale with bongo drums, cymbals and a sort of dance. Great!” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence).

During this first of her sessions as an auditor, Sister Mary Luke also followed with great interest the development of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, and the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, both promulgated on November 21, 1964. She was particularly keen during this Third Council Session to be present during the floor debates and drafting developments of Schema XIII, on the Church in the Modern World, which became *Gaudium et Spes*, and of the schema on religious life, which became *Perfectae Caritatis*, both ultimately promulgated in the last session of the Council in 1965.

A breakthrough in terms of her ability to contribute to the drafting of documents came when she was invited to participate in the intersession meetings of the sub-commission for Schema XIII. Rosemary Goldie wrote to Sister Mary Luke in December, 1964: “An extra ‘Happy Christmas’ to you! This is also to ‘warn’ you that you may receive in early January an invitation to attend the meeting on Schema XIII which will be held February 1-6 in the ‘castelli romani.’ I say ‘may’ because it is not yet official, but it is practically certain. . . . If you should be able to arrive in Rome, there is no danger of your not being allowed to take part in the meeting, and your presence would certainly be useful – as well as being most welcome to fellow Auditors!” (Tobin Vatican II papers: 12/16/64). The invitation did come and in a letter to the Sisters of Loretto, Sister Mary Luke wrote, “In Tuesday’s mail I received word from Rome that I have been named to attend a meeting of the sub-commission on the ‘Church in the Modern World.’ . . . I am sure that I will gain much from this unusual opportunity, but I earnestly ask your prayers that I may make some useful contributions to this committee” (Tobin, Circulars: 1/15/64).

Mary Luke Tobin credits Bernard Haring for the inclusion of her and a handful of other women auditors. Bishop Emilio Guano was the chair of the sub-commission on Schema XIII and was open to Haring’s suggestion that women be included. When presented with a list of names from Haring, Bishop Guano said, “This list is quite good. These are women of the church of today” (McEnroy 127). Fr. Haring then took it upon himself to invite the women: “I did not appoint, nor request appointment. I just took it into my own head to invite them for active participation” as members of the sub-commission (McEnroy 127-29). In addition to Mary Luke Tobin, Rosemary Goldie and Mère Guillaume, a French nun who was head of the forty-five-thousand-member Daughters of Charity, served as full members of this working sub-commission and also participated in follow-up working sessions back in Rome (Tobin, *Hope* 21). Tobin asked other American women religious to send her their ideas on the schema for her to bring to Rome, including Sister Charles Borromeo, CSC from St. Mary’s in Indiana to whom she wrote on January 20, 1965, “I’m sorry there is so little time. Our participation (religious women) is late and limited, but I feel we must do the utmost with our opportunity” (Tobin, Correspondence). Sister Mary Luke gave a speech to the American bishops in Rome

on the sisters' participation at the Council, which she concludes with these rousing words:

Lastly, a simple and encouraging remark: sisters are not afraid! Their ecumenical task, like their other apostolic tasks, is a stirring challenge, admittedly difficult but unquestionably inspiring. Sisters believe firmly that whatever is truly human and Christian can never be opposed to the genuine good of faith; on the contrary, it can lead into the heart of the Christian revelation. The very deepest desire of sisters is surely that the mystery of Christ and his Church be more perfectly understood and more universally embraced. Thus you may count on them. They are with you 100%.<sup>32</sup>

Yet it is difficult to trace Tobin's actual contributions during this intersession and at the final period of the Council later that year. In interviews, letters and writings in the years during and after the Council, Sister Mary Luke recounts the contributions she and other women could and did make, but only in general terms: "I believe the presence of Sisters at these and similar meetings is setting a certain precedent that will not be disregarded in the future. I am daily more convinced that Sisters must participate on commissions, conferences, policy-making boards, etc., having to do with the life of the Church" (Tobin, Circular: 11/2/65). "We were not a deciding voice, but we were involved . . . we knew where we stood, but at the same time we had chances to participate through speaking to bishops off the floor."<sup>33</sup> "These commissions prepared the documents. And really in a way it was a very influential thing because we helped finalize those documents. I think that, although it was too early for us to have any great impact, we did make a little dent by being there.



**Sr. Luke, Bp. Guano,  
Pope Paul VI**

I made up my mind I was going to say something just for history. So, you couldn't say we didn't talk. We did that. We weren't official speakers, but we were able to speak at the commission meetings so that we could put our influence into the documents" (Tobin, "Growing" 54). "[S]ome were invited to attend commission meetings. There we were allowed to speak as freely as we wished, and each of us did speak. Although we did not create a countervailing current turning around the attitude toward women, our presence was noticed immediately by the press, and at least a few bishops began to see the problems more clearly" (Tobin, "Women" 243). "Even though there were many limitations on an auditor's role, nevertheless the experience itself and the chance

to see, hear and even take part in a minor way were greatly enabling for me, and through me, I think, for others" (Ware 184).

In both Carmel McEnroy's book, *Guests in Their Own House*, and Rosemary Goldie's book, *From a Roman Window*, this difficulty in tracing the specific contributions of Sister Mary Luke and other women auditors is acknowledged. According to McEnroy, "Because the lay auditors, women and men, worked together in compiling joint responses to the conciliar texts, the *women's* specific contributions cannot be easily isolated" (McEnroy 129). Goldie, describing the hectic pace of the final stages of drafting, notes, "Under these circumstances, it is difficult, if not impossible, to trace the source of certain changes" (Goldie 75). The Loretto Motherhouse Archives do not contain any contemporaneous drafts, comments or notes on Schema XIII that have Sister Mary Luke's imprint. Yves Congar's journal entry for February 4, 1965, lists "sister Mary-Luke" as part of a small group

that would examine the personhood of women from an anthropological perspective: “la personne humaine en elle-meme, l’anthropologie: Moralejo, Daniélou, Tromp, Mlle Goldie et sister Mary-Luke.”<sup>34</sup> The one documented contribution of the women participants is Rosemary Goldie’s response to Yves Congar when asked for her input on a passage on women: at the time, Sister Mary Luke wrote a letter to one of the German auditors, Sister M. Juliana, the secretary general of the Union of Major Religious Superiors in Germany, in which she mentioned Rosemary’s contribution: “Our little inter-session work is moving along. I attended the meeting of the sub-commission on the Church in the Modern World. Rosemary Goldie made some excellent points about the position of women in the modern world” (Tobin, Correspondence: 2/17/65). Over time, Sister Mary Luke gave more details of Goldie’s comments in interviews and articles, which she obviously appreciated and enjoyed, and it has now become Vatican II lore:

I recall vividly a question asked of Rosemary Goldie, an auditor from Australia, during one of the sessions of this commission. One of the authors of the commission’s document, in the process of constructing a statement about women, read a flowery and innocuous sentence to the commission members for their consideration. When he had finished, he noticed that the women present were unimpressed. “But, Rosemary,” he said, addressing the intelligent and able Rosemary Goldie, “why don’t you respond happily to my praise of women and what they have contributed to the church?” Pressed for a response, Rosemary answered: “You can omit all those gratuitous flowery adjectives, the pedestals and incense, from your sentence. All women ask for is that they be recognized as the full human persons they are, and treated accordingly” (Tobin, “Women” 23).<sup>35</sup>

Even though Sister Mary Luke was a member of the sub-commission of Schema XIII, she does not seem to have had access to the document in all the stages of its drafting. Father Louis was intensely interested in the document on the Church in the Modern World, particularly the material on nuclear war, and asked her in July of 1965 for a copy of the most recent text, to which she replied, “No, I don’t have a copy of the new text. Couldn’t Père Daniélou send you one? He’s been in on the inside of this commission” (Merton/Tobin correspondence: 7/12/65). Yet two months earlier, in May of 1965, Sister Mary Luke sent a letter to Father Louis in which she wrote: “I am sending you a confidential look at the schema as revised up to April 15. When I come over I will appreciate your thoughts on it. I am also enclosing a copy of the comments I returned to the Bishop who was kind enough to send me this copy for my suggestions” (Merton/Tobin correspondence: 5/4/65). Less than a week later, she confirms that they will see each on Thursday and writes, “I’m looking forward to discussing the document with you” (Merton/Tobin correspondence: 5/10/65). Is it possible that she did not consider herself on the “inside” of the Schema XIII Commission, but that she was more on the inside of the Commission on Religious than it would first appear? The schema which she refers to in the letters to Merton is not Schema XIII, the important document that would become *Gaudium et Spes*; it is the schema on the renewal of religious life.

### **Uncovering the Footprints: Mary Luke Tobin and the Decree on Religious**

Though it is difficult to discover precisely what particular contribution Mary Luke Tobin did make in the drafting of Schema XIII on the Church in the Modern World, I have uncovered some interesting involvement on her part as the decree on the religious was being worked out during that same period, and even earlier. Her input on the draft of the decree on religious was sought at least



at two points in the drafting process by bishops involved in the Council Commission for Religious. The comments and correspondence that I have discovered are very much in keeping with her traits of interiority, constant enrichment, dynamism and a grasp of the Church in the modern world.

In May 1962, a first draft of what would become *Perfectae Caritatis* was delivered to the Preparatory Central Commission. In the judgment of one Council historian, it exhibited the “narrowness which has plagued the official ecclesiastical concept of the religious state, especially since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>36</sup> At the end of 1962, a sub-commission of the Council Commission on Religious was appointed to revise the draft to make it less condemnatory. The appointed sub-commission had close ties with the Curial Congregation on Religious. Msgr. Paul Philippe, who was ordained a bishop in September, 1962, served on both the Curial Congregation and the Council Commission on Religious. The Council Fathers first saw this revised schema in April 1963 and were asked to return comments by July 1963. Over 200 pages of comments were returned, some positive and some negative. English and Dutch bishops were highly critical of the text.

It was during this first revision process in 1963 that Sister Mary Luke visited Rome. In August, 1963, Merton was eager to hear about her visit with Archbishop Philippe and was also keen to share his views on monastic vows with Philippe. I have not as yet uncovered any further documentation of this 1963 meeting between Philippe and Tobin, but it does prompt some intriguing questions. Just as Merton was eager to share his views on monastic vows with Philippe, did Tobin share her evolving views of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience with this Council Father? Did she meet with Philippe to discuss the schema and her views of how it could more adequately reflect the spirit of *aggiornamento*? Might she have had access to some of these first inadequate drafts of the schema on religious? It is possible that someone such as Cardinal Suenens gave her a copy of the schema which all the Council Fathers received, as the two met in May of 1963 when the Cardinal visited the United States.<sup>37</sup> The timing of her meeting with Philippe is intriguing as it was during the initial revision process of the schema and just as Council Fathers were beginning to send comments, both positive and negative, back to the Commission on Religious.

The schema on religious was not discussed on the Council floor during the fall 1963 session, but the drafting sub-commission was asked by the Central Coordinating Commission to revise and abbreviate it during the next intersession, between the Second and Third Sessions of the Council. The revision should “pay heed first and foremost to the pastoral intent of the Council” (Wulf 320). A shortened version, four pages containing nineteen propositions, became the basis for Council discussion and voting during the 1964 session, the first session that Mary Luke attended as an auditor. The Council Fathers discussed this text on the Council floor November 10-12, 1964, and voted in favor of keeping the draft for consideration November 12-14, though many Council Fathers expressed great dissatisfaction with it. A voluminous number (14,000!) of “modi” were submitted regarding the schema, many of which were repetitive so that the actual number of suggested changes was much smaller (Wulf 327).

Based on her resolution that she would never miss any Council sessions, Mary Luke Tobin was very likely at the Council for the discussion and vote of what was at that point called *De Accomodata Renovazione Vitae Religiosae*, which took place from November 10-14. If so, she would likely have agreed when Cardinal Suenens uttered his simple statement on November 11: “Schema non placet.”<sup>38</sup> One can imagine her even more animated assent the following day to the comments of Bishop Huyghe of Arras, France whose reflections on love of God and neighbor Tobin had circulated in the Loretto *Blue Book*. Huyghe asserted that, “A new schema should be prepared in harmony

with the schemas on the Church and on the Church in the modern world,” and that such a schema should be written in consultation with the women religious auditors at the Council: “Mother Generals designated as auditors should be consulted in the formation of the new schema. It should not be allowed that legislation for religious be set up by men only, as is, unfortunately, customary.”<sup>39</sup>

In an undated document from the Loretto Archives, a two-page statement from Council auditors regarding the schema on religious contains the same suggestion for cooperation and collaboration: “In view of the fact that a great many religious are women, it seems only normal and desirable [*sic*] that religious women be represented on the working commission which will prepare the revision of this schema . . . . Thus the final document could contain a complementarity and comprehension now absent. Conclusion: Such a schema on religious life, theologically and psychologically well-built, is the only kind of conciliar document worthy of this momentous Vatican Council.”<sup>40</sup>

Sister Mary Luke received a request on behalf of Cardinal Antoniutti, President of the Commission of the Council for Religious, in a letter dated January 20, 1965, in which she was asked as an “Auditrix” for “any remark or suggestion you might desire to express concerning the aforesaid schema.”<sup>41</sup> This letter was sent even though there were already a very large number of written and oral interventions and “modi” which the new secretary of the Commission, Fr. Rousseau, had collected and condensed from mid-December to early January in preparation for the February meeting of the experts of the Commission and the March meeting of the sub-commission.<sup>42</sup>

Mary Luke Tobin wasted no time, realizing that the working group of experts was going to revise the schema from February 12-23. By February 16, Sister Mary Luke had sent her comments to Cardinal Antoniutti. She wrote a letter to Bishop Emilio Guano of Livorno, Italy on that date thanking him for including her on the sub-commission for Schema XIII and including her comments on the schema on religious:

I thought you might like to see the suggestions for the schema on religious which I sent to Cardinal Antoniutti when he asked me recently for my reflections on the schema. Maybe the sub Commission on Religious will follow the example of that on Schema XIII and invite women religious to participate? I hope we will at least be permitted to see the revised schema before the Council opens (Tobin Vatican II papers).

She also sent them to Bishop Huyghe of Arras, France, who wrote to her on March 6, 1965 (in French), expressing his concurrence with her thinking and his appreciation for her input (Tobin Vatican II papers). Rev. Bernard Ransing, a Holy Cross father and member of the Congregation of Religious, also received a copy of her comments and reacted favorably on the same date:

Thank you most sincerely for sending me a copy of your observations on the Schema, or rather on the Propositions concerning religious, and also a copy of those of Mother Guillemin. Both of them show real thought, and an appreciation of the conditions, the problems, and the aspirations of our Religious. . . . Any kind of suggestion that you may have, that you would like to submit either to the Commission on Religious, or to the Sacred Congregation, please jot it down and send it on . . . *P.S. I've mentioned your suggestion about a confidential circulating of the Propositions. As yet, no action* (Tobin Vatican II papers: 3/6/65).

Based on letters from others preserved in the Loretto Motherhouse Archives, she sent the comments to several other women auditors at the Council. And not surprisingly, Sister Mary Luke sent

her schema comments to her friend, Father Louis, regretting that she and Merton had not had time to discuss her comments before she sent them: "P.S. I thought you would like to see a little paper on the Propositions for Religious which I sent to Cardinal Antoniutti. He wrote to me, asking me what my impressions of the schema were as an auditor. I was delighted to receive the request. I wish I had had more time to get it ready because I would have liked to have consulted you, but we had to whip it up in two days" (Merton/Tobin correspondence: 3/1/65).

Fortunately, a copy of Tobin's comments on the Nineteen Propositions sent in response to Antoniutti's request can be found in their entirety in the archives of the Congregation for Religious in Rome.<sup>43</sup> Her three pages of comments from February 1965 on the Schema on Religious as it stood after the Third Session are very much in keeping with her thinking as it had evolved in the years prior to the Council. She grasps that the schema is not of concern only to vowed religious but to all the Church. Proposition 1 of the conciliar schema articulates the basic principle of renovation in the following way: "The spiritual and religious renovation of every religious institute and its adaptation to the demands of modern life are to be pursued under the guidance of the Church, with the Gospel and the imitation of Christ as the supreme rule, and with due consideration for the aims of Founders and their genuine spirit." Luke maintains that a clearer expression of the foundations for renewal is necessary. Beginning her comments on the propositions with the statement, "The renewal of religious life should manifest the same characteristics as that of the whole Church," she goes on to list those characteristics as theological, ecclesial, scriptural, liturgical, ecumenical and sociological.<sup>44</sup> Her identification of the characteristics of renewal provides a succinct summary of the root and the fruit of the Church in the modern world. Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Gospel and the liturgy are all foundational to the role of the religious, as well as all of the Church. Ecumenism must be central as the Church makes a "concerted effort to fulfill Christ's prayer 'that all may be one'" and furthermore, "religious must contribute to the solution of contemporary problems" (Tobin, "On Religious").

She underscores the importance of adaptations being made "*everywhere*," something not made explicit in the Third Session schema. She also wants language that extends the boundaries of adaptation in religious communities: "Obsolete books and articles in books should be done away with: some are incapable of revision, in view of existing conditions" (Tobin, "On Religious"). The Third Session schema in Proposition 2 had called for the careful revision of constitutions, directories, custom books, book of prayers and ceremonies, but said nothing about obsolete laws.<sup>45</sup> While Proposition 3 in the schema on Religious recognized that, "No effective and well-ordered adaptation can be achieved without the co-operation of all the religious of an institute, under the guidance of legitimate authority," Luke wanted greater emphasis on the need for all members to be actively involved in the adaptations in their communities, "including consultation and dialogue with superiors and with one another" (Tobin, "On Religious": Proposition 3). Aware of how important such personal investment is, she looks for recognition in the document that, "Genuine reform cannot be imposed; it must come from within. The Holy Spirit works throughout the body" (Tobin, "On Religious": Proposition 3). The Holy Spirit was not mentioned anywhere in the propositions considered during the Third Session.

While she makes comments on all but four of the nineteen propositions, her comments on the relationship between contemplation and action, the renewal of vows, the role of the Eucharist in fostering loving community life, adaptation of the habit and the need for ongoing formation for reli-

gious are particularly noteworthy, either for the impact they had on the later document or the insight they offer on renewal efforts in the years to come. Luke echoes Thomas Merton in her commentary on the relationship between the love of neighbor and the love of God in response to Proposition 4 of the schema, which in the Third Session read as follows: “All religious must strive earnestly to acquire a perfect love of God, which is the source of love of neighbor, for the salvation of the world and the building up of the Church” (Schema: Proposition 4). Luke wants to see an even more integral connection between love of God and love of neighbor, citing John 13:34 as Christ’s new commandment (Tobin, “On Religious”: Proposition 4). She makes the point that this essential unity between love of God and love of neighbor means that the distinctions between contemplative and apostolic orders ought to be minimized: “Every religious and every religious institute is, by virtue of being Christian, both contemplative and apostolic, since these are exigencies of baptism in Christ” (Tobin, “On Religious”: Proposition 5).

She goes on to express some strong views on the nature and definition of the evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty and chastity. She takes issue with the scarce attention the evangelical counsels receive in this document and the passive manner in which they are expressed in Proposition 7 of the schema, which reads, “Religious shall effect a renovation in the obedience, the chastity and the poverty which they have professed, imitating Christ obedient, chaste and poor, and witnessing in a special manner to His presence in the world” (Schema: Proposition 7). With respect to religious obedience, she emphasizes in her comments the need for greater personal responsibility on the part of religious. She contends, “Religious obedience exacts initiative and responsibility from the subject, as well as promptitude in embracing the decisions of superiors. Religious should be encouraged to form opinions and to initiate plans, but be ready to surrender them if so requested” (Tobin, “On Religious”). Furthermore, she suggests language that would make clear that “religious authority has its source in Christ who came ‘to serve and not to be served’; its function is to build up the body in charity” (Tobin, “On Religious”).

Luke also wants to see the vow of chastity cast in a more positive light: “Perfect chastity implies a loving fidelity to Christ that necessarily goes out to his members in genuine affection and sometimes in deep friendship. Celibacy does not destroy human love but frees it from selfishness and exclusiveness” (Tobin, “On Religious”). Again, this positive approach to the vows is seen in her recommendations on religious poverty on both a personal and communal level. For individuals, the vow of poverty “should express itself in a wholesome freedom, respect and control in regard to all material things” (Tobin, “On Religious”). For the community, the vow of poverty “should be manifest by simplicity in buildings and furnishings, by communal and effective concern for the poor, and by a refined sense of justice and honesty in all its business affairs” (Tobin, “On Religious”).

Though the schema asserts, “The common life should witness to the charity of Christ, after the example of the early Church” (Schema: Proposition 10), Luke suggests that a richer view of the common life ought to be put forth, one that is both more realistic and more spiritual. Diverse personalities in religious communities can make living in community hard work, yet a unifying bond can be found in the Eucharist. Luke proposes including language about the efficacy of the Eucharist in increasing love for one another and in infusing the ministry of the Church with spirit.

Luke is clear in these February, 1965 comments that in regard to the religious habit, “experimentation must be permitted and encouraged” (Tobin, “On Religious”: Proposition 12). Finally, Luke’s suggestions regarding the formation and recruitment of religious exemplify the wisdom of a

proactive and future-oriented Superior General. While the schema calls for better formation of religious before beginning their apostolate and better preparation for superiors, Luke's experience with Sister Formation and the Loretto *Blue Book* gives her the insight to assert, "Continued in-service formation, both theological and professional, is essential for all sisters, both superiors and subjects" (Tobin, "On Religious": Proposition 13). She ends her comments with a farsighted prediction about vocations that reveals her optimism and hope for the future: "It is entirely conceivable that in the purification process of renewal now under way the number of religious vocations will decrease temporarily. As the lay Church comes more into focus, there must be expected a time of adjustment for all. This will not harm the Church" (Tobin, "On Religious": Proposition 19).

In her letter to Bishop Guano, Luke had expressed her desire to see a confidential draft of the schema after the February 12-23 meetings of the sub-commission to see whether any of her suggestions were considered. The desire to see this confidential draft was satisfied. Bishop Huyghe, one of the members of sub-commission to whom she sent her first comments, sent Sister Mary Luke a letter on March 29 in which he asks her to comment once again, now on the revised text, which he sees as a big improvement over the older text. Based on this letter from Bishop Huyghe, and his previous letter of March 6, this Council Father is appreciative of her earlier remarks on the text, thinking highly enough of them that he eagerly looks forward to any comments she has on this latest iteration of the schema on religious, hashed out in the February meeting of the experts and the mid-March meeting of the sub-commission. He communicates that he values her input and hopes to have her suggestions in time to bring them to the final meeting of the full commission. Again, Luke scrambled to put something together and was able to send a second set of comments on the confidential redaction of the schema. The two pages of comments she sent to Bishop Huyghe on the confidential redaction of the schema on religious reflect her approval of some of the changes made to the Session III propositions, while still hopeful that the document can be even more improved.

In this second set of comments from late March, 1965 her first question, to which she also proposes an answer, is: "Who will be the members of the post-conciliar group proposed to make specific applications of the general norms? It seems to me important to have representatives of each group named here, including also women" (Tobin, "Observations"). This is a position that the Conference of Women Major Superiors had taken as well in a resolution shared with Council Fathers by Sister Mary Luke during the Third Session.<sup>46</sup>

With respect to the section on Christ as the "ultimate norm" of religious communities, she wants to see a notion of Christ that includes the Gospel as well as Christ alive today in the Church. Using only the language of Christ of the Gospel "risks a false interpretation because too limited and truncates; one can consider the life of Jesus simply as lived in Palestine without understanding His attitudes, mentality, spirit, vision of reality; without understanding the needs of the Gospel today, without understanding that the real Christ living and glorious lives and acts in His Mystical Body, the Church, now" (Tobin, Circulars: 9/4/65). Her thinking on this can be found in cryptic and scrawled undated notes that are filed in the Loretto Motherhouse Archives in a Vatican II file in which she writes in a lively manner, "Renewal of Rel. Christ (circled) – Christ today (underlined twice) – Risen in his Body, X communicated." A line drawn from the circled word "Christ" leads down to these words: "ultimate norm, supreme rule, renewal spiritual—Scripture, liturgy" (Tobin Vatican II papers). In response to the phrase of the revised draft which reads, "hope lies in diligent observance of rules rather than in many laws," she includes in her two pages of observations on this



March, 1965 draft text the reminder that “hope for renewed life is founded much more on an awareness of the nature and meaning of religious life through a profound theology of Christ, the Church and Christian life” (Tobin, “Observations”). In her characteristically positive way, she also takes issue with language in this revised text that speaks of the goal of religious profession as a dying to sin: “The end of religious profession is not death – neither to sin nor to the world; it is life. To have life one must die, yes, but the ultimate end should be expressed positively: to participate as soon as possible in the life of Christ” (Tobin, “Observations”).

Her most extensive comments address the revised draft text’s language on the evangelical counsels, or religious vows, which she believes still contains a negative accent and does not yet seem consonant with the positive approach of the *Constitution on the Church*. She suggests an alternative word to capture what the vow of poverty entails: “If not in this text, perhaps in the future? For example, community of goods, or detachment?” She appreciates the efforts made already in the revision of the text “to be more open, more receptive to the mystery of Christian obedience.” But she still detects a narrowness and suspicion with regard to individual responsibility and adult decisions of religious: “The authority given to superiors is a conditioned power, one which has limits. God speaks to all; all must respond to Him.” She bristles at the phrase which describes superiors as holding God’s authority, saying it “seems a bit strong, even exaggerated.” She continues with constructive suggestions about changing other language that connotes an overly authoritative relationship between superiors and members of religious orders. She finds the phrase *voluntary subjection* offensive and suggests other language, “Perhaps ‘cooperation’? ‘Collaboration’? ‘Loyalty’? ‘Adherence.’” She notices that later in the confidential draft schema the term *moderators* is used and she commends that usage, suggesting again that the terms “‘moderators’ and ‘members’ or ‘collaborators’ could replace those of ‘superior’ and ‘subject’” (Tobin, “Observations”).

The influence of the *Blue Book* material on community charity from 1963 is evident in her comments regarding the common life of religious: “The discussion is thin and lacks a *human* basis. The lives of religious too often seem depersonalized, reduced to the level of function; frequently, politeness substitutes for charity. Some notes drawn from the behavioral sciences, so very highly developed today, might be helpful” (Tobin, “Observations”). Finally, with respect to the adaptation of the habit, Sister Mary Luke expresses some frustration that the revised text still does not state plainly the kind of change and the process of that change needed in this area. She bristles at the word “poor” that the text uses to describe what a habit ought to be, urging the bishops to “eliminate the word ‘poor’ – one cannot exercise certain apostolates (the majority) in a habit that is actually poor” (Tobin, “Observations”). From Luke’s perspective, based on experience, “experimentation is necessary and ought to be encouraged. Superiors look to Rome for a non-equivocal statement” (Tobin, “Observations”). While the drafts acknowledged that habits must be changed, Luke sees no room for the process of change that would need to ensue.

This second set of Luke’s comments from March, 1965 are extremely valuable. They are consistent with her earlier comments, sent in early February to members of the Commission on Religious in response to the version of the schema voted on in the Third Session and at the request of Cardinal Antoniutti. Those first set of comments would have reached the group revising the text in time to make some kind of impact during the February revision process. Bishop Huyghe’s request that she comment again on a later draft of the text indicates that her original comments were valued. Based on a close look at the final decree promulgated in the fall of 1965, it appears that those origi-

nal comments as well as the later ones did at least make a dent on the final decree.

The decree that was ultimately promulgated in the Fourth Session of the Council in October, 1965, the Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of the Religious Life, is a much richer document than the propositions heard in the Third Session. The final decree expands on the principles of renewal, offering a fuller description of the sources of Christian life. Reminiscent of Luke's language on the characteristics of religious renewal seen in her first set of comments from early February 1965, the final decree contained this language: "All institutes should share in the life of the Church, adapting as their own and implementing in accordance with their own characteristics, the Church's undertakings and aims in matters biblical, liturgical, dogmatic, pastoral, ecumenical, missionary and social."<sup>47</sup> There was also a new recognition in the final decree that religious orders may find it necessary to go beyond revising their constitutions "if they have become obsolete" (Decree: article 3), a phrase Luke used in her February comments.<sup>48</sup>

Further, the promulgated decree passed in the Fourth Session includes recognition of the role of the Holy Spirit in the renewal process, echoing Luke's language about the need for genuine reform coming from within, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The decree acknowledges that "even the best adjustments made in accordance with the needs of our age will be ineffectual unless they are animated by a renewal of Spirit" (Decree: article 2). While Luke's second set of comments urge an even greater effort "to be more open and receptive to the mystery of Christian obedience" (Tobin: "Observations"), the final decree does inch closer to a collaborative approach between superiors and subjects, encouraging Superiors to "take counsel in an appropriate way and hear the members of the order in those things which concern the future well-being of the whole institute" (Decree: article 14). The final text has dropped the phrase that Superiors hold the authority of God, which Luke had thought to be exaggerated. With respect to the discussion of community life in the revised text, Luke may have thought it still "too thin," but her point about the centrality of Eucharist in the love for one another does appear in the final decree.

Luke's two sets of comments, those from early February 1965 and from late March 1965 are valuable not only as a record of her involvement in the drafting and revision of the Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of the Religious Life. They have value for a second reason as well. Her comments reflect the views of a woman who in the years to come was to play a pivotal role in the renewal of religious life not only in her own community but throughout the United States as well as internationally.<sup>49</sup> Her efforts to shape the document enabled her to be intimately familiar with it and to offer an interpretive lens to religious in their reception of the document.<sup>50</sup> Tobin said in the 1980s that her role as an auditor helped her to shepherd the renewal of religious life in the U.S. and abroad (Ware 184). For her, *Perfectae Caritatis* was a document which had life, even as sparse and imprecise as the final decree may have been. Her involvement in the decree's development enabled her on October 27, 1965, just one day before its promulgation, to give an address at a private meeting convened by Cardinal Suenens in which she referred to this short document as "among the gifts of the Church in Council to the People of God."<sup>51</sup> Her talk lays out the highlights and weaknesses of the document, the practical possibilities that flow from it and the need for the participation of women religious in its implementation. She concludes with promoting greater trust in the "ingeniousness and diligence of Sisters, not only in their basic readiness for the new schema, but also in the contribution they can make to the Church of today and tomorrow" (Tobin, "Sisters").

The contribution that Sister Mary Luke made at the Second Vatican Council may seem a whis-

per compared to the volumes of commentaries, histories, public records and journals which trace the contributions of the theologians and Council Fathers ordinarily associated with this event. The voice of this auditor may have been less audible than other Vatican II voices, but it still reverberates, echoing the Gospel admonition of Jesus to the apostles: “What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; What you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops” (Mt. 10:27 [NAB]).

1. Joseph Komonchak, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Communion,” *History of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, English version ed. Joseph Komonchak, vol. 4 (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2003) 23; subsequent references will be cited as “*History*” parenthetically in the text. Mary Luke Tobin recounts this story as follows: “When I was first interviewed by the layman who was a sort of major domo in charge of auditors, he indicated that women had been invited in order to participate in those sessions ‘which would be of interest to them.’ At that point, I said that indeed, I was interested in whatever the bishops were discussing. I made a mental note that I would never miss a session; I now know that all the other women made the same note. And it soon was taken for granted that we would attend every day” (Mary Luke Tobin, *Hope Is an Open Door* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1981] 20; subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, *Hope*” parenthetically in the text). Rosemary Goldie, in her book *From a Roman Window*, also recounts her memory of the attitude of women auditors. She quotes Pope Paul VI’s announcement made on Sept. 8, 1964 that he intended to invite women to observe the Council: “We have given instructions that some qualified and dedicated women should assist, as Auditors, at several solemn functions and General Congregations of the forthcoming Third Session of the Second Vatican Council: at those Congregations which will be discussing matters of special interest for the life of women. In this way, for the first time perhaps, women will be represented in an Ecumenical Council. The women present will, naturally, be few in number; but it will be a significant and, as it were, a ‘symbolic’ representation.” Goldie remembers the women’s reaction: “We could not help wondering what aspects of the Church’s life are *not* of interest to women. Surely women are also ‘the Church’?” (Rosemary Goldie, *From a Roman Window, Five Decades: The World, the Church and the Catholic Laity* [Blackburn, Victoria: HarperCollins, 1998] 70-71; subsequent references will be cited as “Goldie” parenthetically in the text).
2. Hanjo Sauer, “The Doctrinal and the Pastoral: The Text on Divine Revelation” (*History* 4.195).
3. Norman Tanner, “The Church in the World (*Ecclesia Ad Extra*)” (*History* 4.364-65).
4. Adolph Schalk, “The Church and Women,” *U.S. Catholic* (September, 1965) 22.
5. “Growing into Responsibility: An Interview with Mary Luke Tobin,” conducted by Dewey Kramer, ed. Victor A. Kramer, *The Merton Annual* 2 (1989) 54; subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, ‘Growing’” parenthetically in the text.
6. See for example Margaret Mary Reher, “Sister Mary Luke Tobin: Architect of Renewal,” *American Catholic Studies* 115.1 (2004) 87-91; subsequent references will be cited as “Reher” parenthetically in the text.
7. Carmel McEnroy, *Guests in Their Own House: The Women of Vatican II* (New York: Crossroad, 1996); subsequent references will be cited as “McEnroy” parenthetically in the text.
8. Cecily Jones, SL, author interview, Loretto Motherhouse, Nerinx, Kentucky, October 8, 2006; subsequent references will be cited as “Jones interview” parenthetically in the text.
9. Jan Grootaers, “The Drama Continues between the Acts: The ‘Second Preparation’ and its Opponents” (*History* 2.477).
10. Elio Gambari, SMM, *Renewal in Religious Life: General Principles, Constitutions, Formation* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1967) 26-30; subsequent references will be cited as “Gambari” parenthetically in the text.
11. The story of how these traits of renewal remained in force in the postconciliar years is a fascinating one and can be found in several sources: see Tobin, *Hope*; Mary Luke Tobin, “Women in the Church since Vatican II,” *America* 155 (Nov. 1, 1986) 243-46 (reprinted in *America* 180 [April 17, 1999] 22-28) (subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, ‘Women’” parenthetically in the text); Helen Sanders, *More Than a Renewal: Loretto Before and After Vatican II: 1952-1970* (Nerinx, KY: Sisters of Loretto, 1982) (subsequent references will be cited as “Sanders” parenthetically in the text); Ann Patrick Ware, ed., *Midwives of the Future: American Sisters Tell Their Story* (Kansas City, MO: Leaven Press, 1985) (subsequent references will be cited as “Ware” parenthetically in the text); Kenneth A. Briggs, *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church’s Betrayal of American Nuns* (New York: Doubleday, 2006).
12. Mary Frances Lottes, SL, author interview, Oct. 6, 2006, Loretto Motherhouse, Nerinx, Kentucky.
13. Mother Mary Luke Tobin to Sisters of Loretto, August 15, 1958 (Mary Luke Tobin Circular Letters: 1958-1964, Loretto Motherhouse Archives, Nerinx, KY); subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, Circulars” with the date, parenthetically in the text.
14. Mother Mary Luke to Sister Elizabeth Ann, Oct. 26, 1963 (Mary Luke Tobin Correspondence, Loretto Motherhouse Archives, Nerinx, KY); subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, Correspondence,” with the date, parenthetically in the text.

15. Father Louis Merton to Mother Luke, May 19, 1961 (Tobin file, Thomas Merton Center, Bellarmine University, Louisville, KY); subsequent references will be cited as “Merton/Tobin Correspondence,” with the date, parenthetically in the text..
16. Father Louis Merton to Mother Mary Luke Tobin: “Reverend and Dear Mother Luke: We have here with us at the Abbey for about a year a friend of mine and Professor of Philosophy for many years at Manhattanville and Columbia, Dr. Daniel Walsh. He is here with us for a rest and recuperating from an illness. He is teaching some of our young men philosophy, and would be happy to give a few lectures in some of the neighboring colleges while he is here. Hence I am writing to you, to ask if you would be interested in having him speak a few times at Loretto. In order to discuss this, I suggest that he and I might come over there some time next week, at your convenience. Any time between the 26<sup>th</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> is convenient for us, but only in the afternoons. If this is agreeable to you, perhaps you will drop me a line or call up. (Father Prior would be the one you would get on the phone, Father Abbot being still away.) The fact that our mutual friend Dr. Wygal speaks so often of you has encouraged me to suggest an interview of this sort, and I shall enjoy meeting you if I have the good fortune to do so. With every good wish, Sincerely yours in Christ, Fr. Louis Merton” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: Sept. 24, 1960).
17. Father Louis to Mother Luke: “This is to let you know that I have written to Father Danielou telling him that you have offered to pay his expenses getting down here in July. . . . I look forward to seeing him again – I don’t know whether I will be able to come over with him to Loretto. But you never can tell. I would certainly enjoy doing so. The book *Au Sane de la Theologie* seems to me to be really first class. I should think it would be supremely useful in the formation of your sisters and I hope it will soon be translated as I think it can be of great help in providing a sane perspective, which is necessary if we are to be truly Catholic rather than just chip on the shoulder ‘catholics” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 5/9/61). Father Louis to Mother Luke: “We are looking forward to the arrival of Fr. Danielou and to his visit here. You can expect him over there Sunday morning” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 7/10/61); Father Louis to Mother Luke: “It was wonderful to be over there with Father Danielou and his last talk on the missions was the best of all those he gave both here and there. I enjoyed it very much and now I am doubly grateful to Sister Helen Jean for sending the tape, which will be much valued” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 7/28/61).
18. Mother Luke to Father Louis: “Happy Feast and a remembrance in prayer. Thank you for Father Berrigan. His compassionate love of the poor gave us all inspiration. Tony Walsh, too, is a beautiful character” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 8/25/62).
19. Father Louis to Mother Luke: “Next January our community retreat is to be preached by Fr. Illtud Evans O.P., editor of Blackfriars, in England. He needs to give a few talks around here to round out his traveling expenses and so on” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 8/15/64); Sister Mary Luke to Father Louis: “We are looking forward to Illtud Evans next month” (Merton/Tobin Correspondence: 12/23/64).
20. Rose Alma, SL, author interview, Loretto Motherhouse, Nerinx, Kentucky. Sister Mary Luke never learned to drive. Whenever she was driven anywhere, before there were “books on tape,” she would bring a book and read it out loud to whoever was in the car, according to Sister Rose Alma who was her personal secretary for many years. Another sister, Sister Carol, who lived with Tobin for many years in a Loretto house in Denver, echoed many of the sisters who said, “She was always reading and keeping up with everything” (Carol Dunphy, SL, author interview, Loretto Motherhouse, Oct. 8, 2006). One source of reading material for Tobin was her favorite bookstore, in Chicago, called St. Benet’s Shop, where she befriended the owner, Nina Polcyn, with whom she remained close through the years (Jones interview).
21. Mary Luke Tobin, “Doors to the World,” interview with Cecily Jones, SL (Ware 183-84).
22. Bishop G. Huyghe, “Community Love,” *Balance and Adaptation*, from the Loretto “*Blue Book*,” private circulation, Oct. 1963 (Loretto Motherhouse Archives, Nerinx, KY); subsequent references will be cited as “*Blue Book*” parenthetically in the text.
23. A comparison of the Loretto constitutions of 1952, *Constitutions of the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross*, with the provisional constitutions of 1968, *I Am the Way*, reveals just how comprehensive that rewriting was to be.
24. Mary Luke Tobin, “Confrontation: The Christian Educator and the World of Vatican II” (speech given at Loretto Heights College, Denver, Colorado, September, 1964) I (Loretto Motherhouse Archives, Nerinx, KY); subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, ‘Confrontation’” parenthetically in the text.
25. Mary Daniel Turner, private tape recording of Mary Luke Tobin Memorial Service, Loretto Motherhouse, Nerinx, Kentucky, Oct. 7, 2006. Sister Mary Daniel Turner ended her remarks with these words about Luke: “Mary Luke was truly an outstanding woman. For me, that which describes her best is her spirit of hope. She was never *not* creating. And I thank the Sisters of Loretto for this wonderful Church woman.”
26. “U.S. Nun at Council: Mother Mary Luke,” *New York Times* (Oct. 3, 1964) 11. When reporting on Luke’s trip to Rome for the Third Session of the Council, the *Times* mentions this 1963 visit: “This is Mother Mary Luke’s second visit to Rome. She was here in March last year as an official representative of her order to the beatification of Mother Seton, the

- American widow who founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.”
27. Most Reverend Paul Philippe, OP, “Renewal and Adaptation of Religious Institutes” (*Blue Book*); it is apparent that this text is a transcript of a talk because of phrases included in it such as, “As we said a few minutes ago . . .”
  28. In a community letter to the Sisters of Loretto, Mary Luke Tobin wrote, “His Eminence asked me if I could arrange to be in Rome at the end of September. I told him, of course, that we were having general elections this summer, and that I could make no personal commitment, although I recognized the value of such a request” (Sanders 79).
  29. See Elmer Von Feldt, “Report on the Operation of the Panel during the Third Session of the Second Vatican Council” (Rome, Nov. 18, 1964) to His Excellency the Most Rev. Joseph T. McGucken, Chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ Committee for the Press Panel (NCWC Archives, American Catholic History Research Center & University Archives, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC).
  30. “To determine the questions on which collaboration could be established among religious and lay auditors, and the procedure to follow to assure this collaboration” (minutes from a meeting of “auditrices”); those present were: Rev. Mères Baldinucci, Ghanem, Guillemin, Khouzam, Juliana, Luke; and Mlles. Bellosillo, Goldie, Miceli, Monnet, Roeloffzen. In this same document, Mary Luke Tobin is given the task of gathering information on the collaboration of lay and religious (Mary Luke Tobin Vatican II papers, Loretto Motherhouse Archives, Nerinx, KY; subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin Vatican II papers” parenthetically in the text).
  31. In a letter to Sister Mary Luke from July 25, 1968, Rosemary Goldie affectionately called Luke her “fellow conspirator” (Tobin, Correspondence).
  32. Mary Luke Tobin, “The Council, Ecumenism and Sisters,” copy of a talk, given to American bishops in Rome, and later sent to Cardinal Antoniutti, Sacred Congregation of Religious, January 31, 1965 (Loretto Motherhouse Archives, Nerinx, KY).
  33. Mary Luke Tobin, “A Woman’s View of Vatican II and the Modern Church: A Visit with Sr. Mary Luke Tobin, SL” (Chiloquin, OR: Inner Growth Books and Videos, 1996).
  34. Yves Congar, *Mon Journal du Concile*, vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2002) 315.
  35. See also Ware 193 and Mary Luke Tobin, “Women are also Church,” *Vatican II: Forty Personal Stories*, eds. William Madges and Michael J. Daley (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2003) 198-99.
  36. Friedrich Wulf, “Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life,” *Notes on the Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, vol. 2 (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968) 303; subsequent references will be cited as “Wulf” parenthetically in the text.
  37. See Sanders 72. Mother Mary Luke met Suenens one other time before her contacts with him in Rome as an auditor. In May, 1964, the two had a private meeting in Chicago. In a letter from John Meehan, secretary of Cardinal Suenens, Mother Mary Luke was told, “Cardinal Suenens is counting heavily on the assistance which you and the Sisters of Loretto can render to the implementation of his work in the methodology of the Apostolate with the religious as set out in the book, *The Nun in the World*” (Sanders 78). Suenens made the suggestion at this meeting that Mother Mary Luke go to Rome in September, 1964 for the Third Session of the Council (Sanders 79).
  38. Leon Cardinal Suenens, Council minutes from November 11, 1964 on *De Accommodata Renovazione Vitae Religiosae*, English text of Cardinal Suenens intervention on Council Floor (Fr. William Leahy Vatican II papers, Box 185, File 6, the American Catholic History Research Center & University Archives, Catholic University of America).
  39. Bishop Gerard Huyghe, Council minutes from November 12, 1964 on *De Accommodata Renovazione Vitae Religiosae*, English text of Bishop Huyghe intervention on Council Floor (Fr. William Leahy Vatican II papers, Box 185, File 6, the American Catholic History Research Center & University Archives, Catholic University of America); see also the different translation in the published speech: Gerard Huyghe, “Religious Life in the Church and in the Missions,” *Third Session Council Speeches of Vatican II*, ed. William K. Leahy and Anthony T. Massimini (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press/Deus Books, 1966) 294.
  40. Tobin Vatican II papers, which begins, “As men and women of the Church, profoundly grateful for the privilege of being officially present at this Second Vatican Council, we, the auditors and auditrices, both religious and lay, motivated by a great desire to see religious life prosper among the people of God, very humbly and simply present the following suggestions concerning the propositions on religious life.”
  41. Joseph Rousseau, OMI, Secretary S. Congregazione dei Religiosi, to Reverend Mother General Mary Luke, January 20, 1965 (Tobin Vatican II papers).
  42. Riccardo Burigana and Giovanni Turbanit, “The Intersession: Preparing the Conclusion of the Council” (*History* 4.586).
  43. Observations on the schema “Accommodation of the Religious Life in the Renewal in the Church,” with the handwritten title, “Response of S. M. Luke to request for comments from Commission on Religious Life (‘64-’65)” are found in the Tobin Vatican II papers at the Loretto Motherhouse Archives; subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, ‘Observa-



- tions” parenthetically in the text.. Yet when I studied these comments, I realized that they could not be in response to the Commission’s official request from Cardinal Antoniutti through Fr. Rousseau for comments on the propositions voted on in the Third Session. They contain language and passages from later drafts. Putting together the documented history of the schema on religious, the letters in the Loretto Motherhouse Archives and those of the Thomas Merton Center, it became clear to me that Sister Mary Luke was more involved in the later stages of drafting the decree on religious than was previously recognized. With the help of my good professor Joseph Komonchak of the Catholic University of America and Professor Joachim Schmiedl of Germany, I was able to obtain Mary Luke Tobin’s comments in response to the Commission’s official request. They are located at the **Archive of the Congregation for Religious** in a collection entitled: *Commissio Conciliaris “De Religiosis,” Acta et Documenta, Volumen VII: Expensio modorum et approbatio sollemnis schematis “De accomodata renovatione vitae religiosae”* 1964-1965.
44. Mary Luke Tobin, “Sup. Gen. of the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross, On Religious”; subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, ‘On Religious’” parenthetically in the text.
  45. “Schema on Religious,” Proposition 2, Session III Documentation, Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II, Ufficio Stampa (Fr. William Leahy Vatican II papers, Box 185, File 6, the American Catholic History Research Center & University Archives, Catholic University of America); subsequent references will be cited as “Schema” parenthetically in the text.
  46. See the letter of September 4, 1965: “As you probably read, through news notices, the Conference of Major Superiors has asked me to present the following resolution to the Council, through the Bishops of the United States, the Holy Father, and the Sacred Congregation of Religious: ‘The Conference of Major Superiors of Women’s Institutes in the United States earnestly requests that Sister representatives be asked to serve as permanent consultative or acting members of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, of the Commission for the revision of Canon Law, and of any post-conciliar commission that may be set up for the implementing of acts of Vatican II in regard to religious’” (Tobin: Circulars).
  47. “Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of the Religious Life,” A N.C.W.C. Translation endorsed by the Bishops of the United States, promulgated in public session Oct. 2, 1965 (Fr. William Leahy Vatican II papers, Box 185, File 6, the American Catholic History Research Center & University Archives, Catholic University of America); subsequent references will be cited as “Decree” parenthetically in the text. Compare to Luke’s language in her February comments: “The renewal of religious life should manifest the same characteristics as that of the whole Church; that is, it should be: theological . . . ecclesial . . . scriptural . . . liturgical . . . ecumenical . . . sociological” (Tobin, “On Religious”: Proposition 1).
  48. Tobin, “On Religious”: Proposition 2: “Obsolete books and articles in books should be done away with: some are incapable of revision, in view of existing conditions.” The added phrase in the final decree emboldened the Sisters of Loretto to completely rewrite their constitutions, resulting in their current guidelines, “I Am the Way,” which Thomas Merton much admired during its drafting stages.
  49. When the Second Vatican Council ended, Mary Luke Tobin held the post of Superior General until 1970; she was the President of the Union of Major Superiors in the United States until 1966; and she was a member of the International Union of Superiors General at its inception in 1965.
  50. Even before the decree on religious was promulgated in the Fourth Session, the fall of 1965, Mary Luke was educating sisters about its thrust. On the eve of her departure for the February 1965 Schema XIII sub-commission meetings in Rome, Sister Mary Luke informed the sisters that in the coming year the entire community would be studying the Council documents on religious life. Discussion group meetings would ensue in the coming months to take a fresh look at the evangelical counsels: “The first of these selected topics will concern the areas of freedom: authority, obedience and mature decision.” She commends this process of community discussion as a “decisive factor in the spiritual renewal of our Congregation, as well as our own individual renewal” and enumerates the qualities that ought to inform those discussions: “humble openness to each other, readiness to share, tolerance in allowing each to be herself, and willingness to continue the effort, even though results seem scanty or negligible. We should arrive at such confidence in each other that we will not fear to speak, but do so knowing that we ourselves will always be accepted, even though our opinions may differ” (Tobin: Circulars).
  51. Mary Luke Tobin, “Sisters and Vatican II,” Private Record of Discussions on Conciliar Themes, Held at the Villa Miani, Rome during the last Session of the Second Vatican Council, at the Invitation and Sponsorship of His Eminence, Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, November 2, 1965 (Bishop McGrath Vatican II papers, University of Notre Dame Archives); subsequent references will be cited as “Tobin, ‘Sisters’” parenthetically in the text.