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At the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) [annual meeting August 8-11](#), some of the themes were living in communion, preparing for and going forward to meet the future, inclusion, and listening to each other and to the farther neighbor. At one panel discussion, a participant said that she thought about the future not as us moving forward, but as the future coming to us.

Afterwards, during a brief period of responsive silence, an image came to me that built on [the 2016 presidential address](#) by then president Marcia Allen. She had asked us to imagine a horizon and to look out into the periphery of that horizon. Now I imagined all of us Catholic sisters standing on a plain, looking out into that horizon. We had given away our schools and hospitals, and so we stood, empty-handed, no shelter from any storm. The future is coming to us and we have prepared as best we can by letting go of the nonessentials and standing together.

During the meeting I was reminded we sisters have close and complex ties, built over a lifetime. One Benedictine told me details of the death of a sister to one of our Loretto sisters. Another is prioress of a community where I spoke at a conference for peace. A third is from the community where I stayed while being with my mother as she was dying. A sister of St. Joseph and I went to the same Catholic high school — a long time ago. A Loretto co-member is a former member of a community whose representative and I were in a small discussion group together. A School Sister of Notre Dame brought me up with a start, reminding me of my dear SSND friend Frances Padberg, who died several years ago.

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We have always stood together. We have always been in communion, and now, our LCWR President Mary Pellegrino has called us to be experts in communion and witnesses to communion in our broken world. That's what I saw in my little vision of sisters standing on the plain, open to the future: a community of witnesses to communion in our broken world.