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\"Band of Sisters\" premiere tonight

Heidi Schlumpf | Sep. 14, 2012 NCR Today

I'm excited to be attending a sold-out movie premiere tonight, but it won't be a traditional Hollywood affair. The "stars" of this film are women religious who have answered the call of Vatican II to serve the poor and disenfranchised and to become activists in the work for social justice.

I expect many of those women will be in attendance tonight at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago for the premiere of "Band of Sisters [1]," a documentary by Chicago producer/director Mary Fishman.

"Band of Sisters" follows the story of Catholic sisters from different congregations across the U.S. in their work for civil rights, women's rights, immigration reform, environmental justice and other causes. It also covers how the sisters increasingly find themselves on a collision course with more conservative elements in the church today.

"I did exactly what the church asked me--and now, the church is looking at me like, where have you come from... who are you?" says Sister Nancy Sylvester, IHM, in the movie.

The film coincides with the recent investigation of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) as well as the 50th anniversary of the second Vatican Council.

Fishman, who was educated by Dominican and Mercy sisters in Chicago before attending the University of Notre Dame, will lead an audience discussion tonight with Mercy Sisters Pat Murphy and JoAnn Persch, whose work with immigrant detainees and deportees is featured in the film.

Tonight's show is sold out, but additional screenings are scheduled for this week:

- Saturday, Sept. 15 at 8 p.m., with audience discussion with Fishman and Providence Sister Kathleen Desautels of the 8th Day Center for Justice [2].
- Monday, Sept. 17 at 8 p.m., with audience discussion with Fishman.
- Wednesday, Sept. 19 at 6:15 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 20 at 8:15 p.m., with audience discussion with Fishman and Mercy Sister Lillian Murphy of Mercy Housing [3].
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For more information, visit the film's website here [4], or listen to this NPR interview with Fishman here [5].

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Links:
[1] http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/bandofsisters
[2] http://www.8thdaycenter.org/
[3] https://www.mercyhousing.org/
[4] http://www.bandofsistersmovie.com/home.wml.html
[5] http://www.wbez.org/sections/religion/chicago-filmmaker-explores-new-roles-us-nuns-102408