

Apostolic Visitation

OF INSTITUTES OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS IN THE UNITED STATES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 8, 2011

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Apostolic Visitation gathers religious in review of on-site visits

HAMDEN, Conn. — Mother Mary Clare Millea, ASCJ, Apostolic Visitator for Institutes of Women Religious in the United States, held a concluding workshop March 4-6 for the religious who assisted last year with on-site visits to congregations of women religious. The event took place at the U.S. provincial headquarters of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Archbishop Joseph Tobin, CSsR, Secretary of the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), attended the three-day gathering. Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport served as concelebrant and homilist for one of the weekend Eucharistic celebrations.

The 58 participants included the core team and consultants for the Visitation along with more than half of the women and men religious who served as on-site Visitors to selected religious congregations. Sister Joan McGlinchey, MSC, facilitated the meeting sessions.

In view of the summary report which Mother Millea is preparing for CICLSAL, she invited the visitors to share their personal impressions of their on-site visit experience, as well as their observations of the common hopes, challenges and concerns that women religious presently face. The group also offered suggestions for further promoting respectful dialogue and collaboration among religious congregations and within the Church.

Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, executive director of the National Religious Vocation Conference addressed the assembly on the Moving Forward in Hope project, which charts a path of renewal for religious life and the promotion of new vocations.

"Archbishop Tobin listened attentively to the heartfelt sharing of the participants," Mother Millea said at the conclusion of the weekend. "He expressed his deep understanding of our reality and expressed the continued support of the Congregation for Consecrated Life in fostering the ongoing revitalization of religious life in the United States."

Mother Millea added that "our American systems of education, healthcare and social service owe much to the vision and labors of our predecessors. The Apostolic Visitation has given American Catholics the opportunity to voice their appreciation and esteem for our early sisters and for us who revere them as our models of courage and faith."

She also stated that "this gathering has been a great grace and joy and gave me much with which to enhance my final reports. Even more important, the deepened bonds of mutual understanding and collaboration among us and with CICLSAL do much to promote the vitality of religious life in the context of respectful dialogue and ecclesial communion.

The Apostolic Visitation was initiated by CICLSAL in December 2008. Mother Millea's final reports will be submitted by the end of 2011. For more information, visit apostolicvisitation.org.

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