

# *Apostolic Visitation*

## OF INSTITUTES OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS IN THE UNITED STATES

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### **Apostolic Visitation closes with final report submission**

HAMDEN, Conn. — Mother Mary Clare Millea, A.S.C.J., Apostolic Visitor for Institutes of Women Religious in the United States, recently presented an overall summary of her findings to Archbishop Joseph Tobin, C.Ss.R., Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL).

In addition to the comprehensive report, which fulfills the mandate's original decree, she has submitted most of the individual reports for each of the nearly 400 religious institutes that were a part of the Apostolic Visitation. The target date for completion of the remaining institute reports is spring 2012.

The Apostolic Visitation was initiated Dec. 22, 2008, by former CICLSAL Prefect, Cardinal Franc Rodé, C.M., to "look into the quality of the life" of apostolic institutes of women religious in the United States.

Mother Millea and her team completed the review of the religious institutes at the end of 2010. The time since then has been spent in compilation and summation of findings, which led to the final report. CICLSAL has not yet specified when it will announce its conclusions pertaining to the Apostolic Visitation.

The initial three phases of the Visitation's four-phase process included Mother Millea's personal meetings or communication with interested superiors general, a comprehensive questionnaire to major superiors in the United States and on-site visits by teams of selected religious to approximately one-fourth of the institutes. The fourth phase involved the preparation of the general summary report as well as a report on each of the institutes that were a part of the Visitation.

"The Apostolic Visitation generated widespread interest," said Mother Millea. "The attention to it has resulted in a renewed appreciation for the role of religious in the Church and society and has increased dialogue and mutual awareness among the various communities in the United States. These tangible benefits of the Visitation will continue to be realized."

Mother Millea added that the three-year charge was "demanding, but equally refreshing."

"As a religious myself, I am keenly aware of our history and vital role in the Church in the United States," she said. "I also see the joys and hardships of religious life daily in my own community. But as I learned of and observed firsthand the perseverance of the religious in the United States in their vocations, in their ministries and in their faith – and witnessed the fruits of their service – I have been both inspired and humbled. Although there are concerns in religious life that warrant support and attention, the enduring reality is one of fidelity, joy, and hope."

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