

### **Apostolic Visitation begins Phase 3**

An orientation workshop for visitors, held Feb. 26-28, 2010 in St. Louis, Mo., inaugurated Phase 3 of the Apostolic Visitation (on-site visits to selected congregations). Sixty-four of the 78 women and men religious who accepted the invitation to serve as Visitors gathered to learn the design and procedures of the Visitation process, to pray together and to become acquainted with one another as potential team members. Various consultants and Visitation staff members aided Mother Clare Millea in presenting topics pertinent to this phase of the process. Each participant made a profession of faith and an oath of fidelity during a Eucharistic liturgy at the conclusion of the workshop. Those invited religious who were unable to attend the meeting due to inclement weather will participate in a similar workshop at a later date.

Teams of Visitors will be appointed by Mother Clare Millea to visit selected congregations during the weeks of April 11 to May 30 and Sept. 12 to Dec. 12. The number of sisters who wish to meet a Visitor will determine the length of the visit and the size of the Visitation Team. The Visitors will receive a personal mandate from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL), authorizing them to carry out their service in the name of the Holy See.

Mother Clare is in the process of choosing approximately 25 percent of the congregations involved in the Visitation to receive an on-site visit. This representative sample will be based on congregation size and growth patterns, principal apostolic works, and geographical location. On-site visits will be made to both diocesan and pontifical right congregations.

During on-site visits, the visitors will invite the major superior and her council, formation personnel, sisters in initial formation, and any other sisters from the congregation who wish to do so to dialogue with the visitors. The major superior may also select a representative group of non-members of the community to share with the visitors their views of the vitality of the congregation and its impact on their lives and on the life of the local Church.

The visitors will not have access to any congregational information submitted to the Apostolic Visitation Office. The on-site visit will give the members of the visited congregation an opportunity to “tell their story” first-hand. Through personal and group interviews, sisters will be invited to share their lived experience, their hopes and concerns and their manner of living the unique charism of their congregation. The on-site visit will help provide an overall picture of the congregation and its lived expression of religious life.

Visitors will prepare a written summary of the on-site visit for Mother Clare Millea, who will in turn compile a report for CICLSAL about each of the congregations participating in the Visitation, whether or not they had an on-site visit. She hopes to submit her reports as well as an overview of religious life in the United States to the dicastery by December 2011. CICLSAL will subsequently provide appropriate feedback to the individual congregations.