

Apostolic Visitation

OF INSTITUTES OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS IN THE UNITED STATES

May 19, 2009

Dear Superiors General,

To those of you whom I have already had the privilege of meeting or who have written to me, I thank you for your collaboration in this first phase of the Apostolic Visitation. It has been personally enriching to discover from my conversations with you another piece in the great and beautiful mosaic that is apostolic religious life in the Church and particularly in the United States. I thank you for sharing your story, your hopes and your concerns for the sisters whom you clearly love and support. To those superiors general whom I have not met, I assure you of my prayerful support of your congregation and of my willingness to meet and converse with you as well.

Our conversations are not only widening my understanding of the diversity of religious life, with all of its lights and shadows, but are also helping me to shape the subsequent phases of the Apostolic Visitation. It is, in fact, for this reason that I am writing to you today.

In August each generalate and/or province of the apostolic congregations in the United States will receive a questionnaire regarding various aspects of its life and ministry. After careful study of the results, various congregations will be designated for an on-site visit during the year 2010. At the conclusion of the entire process I hope to have gathered all the data necessary to prepare an objective and representative report for the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

To assist me in the current process of selecting religious who will be members of visitation teams, I am offering each superior general the opportunity to suggest names of potential team members, principally among her own sisters, but not excluding religious of other congregations who meet the criteria listed below. Male religious may also be appointed as members of visitation teams and will be assigned to those congregations who will have indicated on the questionnaire that they would welcome a member of a men's religious congregation.

Please note that all those who take part in the work of the Apostolic Visitation will be acting in the name of the Apostolic See. For this reason, they must be willing to make a public profession of faith and take an oath of fidelity to the Apostolic See.

The names of the person(s) you suggest will be placed on a list of potential team members from which the final selection will be made. Listed below are criteria which will be used in the selection of those who will be chosen to take part in the on-site visitations:

- at least twenty years of religious profession in an institute of Pontifical or Diocesan right
- current membership in good standing in her/his own religious institute, with active and passive voice therein
- clear and consistent witness to faithful religious living, in accord with congregational and ecclesial norms
- spiritual, human and practical wisdom drawn from extensive experience in interpersonal relationships, both within the community and in ministry
- ability to respect confidentiality, listen attentively, and dialogue honestly
- capacity for working collaboratively with a team in drawing clear and fair conclusions
- ability to perceive, verify and clarify essential ideas and data
- ability to prepare a written report in a timely manner which is objective, unbiased, accurate and succinct
- ability to identify strengths and areas of concern based on data gathered

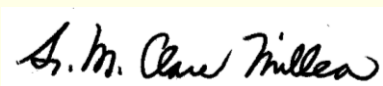
I ask you to prayerfully consider participating in this process of recommending qualified visitation team members. Since I anticipate that many fine candidates will be suggested, I remind you that not all those nominated will be chosen.

Please use the attached form to indicate your suggestions for visitation team members. **I ask you to limit your suggestions to 3 (three) religious and to use a separate form for each person suggested.** Please sign and mail your completed forms to the address listed on the attached forms by June 5, 2009.

We are also soliciting names of resource persons who will not be conducting interviews but may serve as administrative assistants to the visitation teams during some of the on-site visits. The qualities sought in these persons are similar to those listed above, with the exception that they need not be professed religious. I invite you to suggest **(1) one or (2) two qualified persons** to serve as resource persons to visitation teams. Please complete, sign and return their data on the second form which is attached to this letter. Please use a separate form for each person you suggest.

Thank you once again for your collaboration in this initiative of the Holy See to strengthen the vitality of our religious congregations. Many of you have expressed the support of your prayers and those of your members. For this I am deeply grateful. I promise you a daily remembrance in my prayers as well as we collaborate in bringing this important endeavor to a successful conclusion.

In the Heart of Christ,



Mother Mary Clare Millea, ASCJ
 Superior General, Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
 Apostolic Visitor