

Apostolic Visitation

OF INSTITUTES OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS IN THE UNITED STATES

September 18, 2009

I am happy to inform you that the *Questionnaire for Major Superiors*, which constitutes *Phase 2* of the Apostolic Visitation of Institutes of Women Religious in the United States, is now available to you. The *Questionnaire* is an extremely important part of the process of the Visitation requested by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

As stated in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, all major superiors who are responsible for an institute, province or house of initial formation of women religious in the United States will be asked to provide written information in response to the *Questionnaire*. The completed *Questionnaire* is due no later than November 20, 2009, together with a copy of fundamental congregational documents.

We are pleased that the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) is assisting in this effort to gain a clear picture of women religious in our country today. CARA has more than 45 years of experience in applied social science research about the Catholic Church and has conducted numerous studies for and about women religious. CARA has created paper and online survey options to gather the data for Part A and Part B of the *Questionnaire*. Part C of the *Questionnaire* requests documentation that must be sent directly to the Apostolic Visitation Office.

CARA has assisted in the wording of questions in Part A of the *Questionnaire*, that requests quantifiable data only. Your responses to Part A are to be returned directly to CARA, either by completing Part A online or by mailing or faxing a completed paper copy of Part A to CARA. The Apostolic Visitation Office will receive from CARA a copy of all Part A responses for each institute as well as a composite analysis of all religious institutes in the United States based on the responses to Part A. The composite analysis may eventually be included in some public document regarding results of the Apostolic Visitation. If so, anonymity will be maintained for all respondents.

All responses to Part B and Part C of the *Questionnaire* are to be sent directly to the Apostolic Visitation Office where they will be reviewed exclusively by persons authorized by me. Online responses to Part B of the *Questionnaire* will also be sent directly to the Apostolic Visitation Office. Those directly involved in the analysis and evaluation of any data received from the religious institutes are bound by strict confidentiality. Data regarding any participating institutes or individuals will not be shared with anyone except those whom I judge it necessary to consult directly to assist in fulfilling my appointment by Cardinal Rodé as Apostolic Visitor.

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Please follow the enclosed instructions to access and complete the *Questionnaire*. Each major superior has been assigned a unique ID and password for accessing the *Questionnaire* from the CARA website. This information was generated by CARA and is printed for you here:

Name of Major Superior

- Your ID is: **ID**
- Your password is: **PASSWORD**

You have the option to print out a blank copy of each part of the *Questionnaire*. You may also request a copy from CARA (cara@georgetown.edu or 202-687-8080) or the Apostolic Visitation Office (usvisitation@gmail.com or 203-287-5467).

After careful analysis of data received, a representative sample of religious institutes will be chosen for an on-site visit. This constitutes *Phase 3* of the Apostolic Visitation scheduled to begin in the spring of 2010.

In *Phase 4*, I will present a detailed and confidential report with recommendations to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life regarding each of the institutes, whether or not they will have received an on-site visit.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation in the current phase of the Apostolic Visitation by responding to the *Questionnaire*. Please provide the information requested regarding your own religious institute, avoiding theoretical or generic responses which reflect the situation of religious institutes in general. Your sincere and transparent presentation of the practical reality and direct experience of your own institute – in light of the Church's understanding of religious life – will provide a more comprehensive depiction of the quality of the life of sisters in each institute. It should also assist you and all your sisters to be more cognizant of your current status and challenges in order to formulate realistic, effective plans for the future.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary – ever ready in obedience, courageous in poverty and receptive in fruitful virginity – obtain from her divine Son the grace to follow Him more closely, so that we might bear witness to the great gift of our religious vocation by our transfigured lives.

Sincerely in the Heart of Christ,



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