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Dorothy Day is Smiling: The Nun's Story of the 21st Century

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I was both amazed and pleased to read Tom Fox?s story about the ?almost universal resistance? among the leadership of women?s religious communities in answering the intrusive questionnaire from the Vatican about American nuns? ?quality of life.? These responses are no doubt rooted in years of prayerful, non-violent struggle against global human rights violations, injustice and war. Dorothy Day must be smiling!

According to Fox, who interviewed several community leaders on condition of anonymity, most either left large sections of the questionnaire unanswered, sent a letter, or sent a letter with a copy of the community?s constitutions to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life. Reportedly, the letters were a model of polite, positive, non-violent resistance. The women did what they could do and maintain their own sense of integrity, and that of their communities.

tIn light of this, the Vatican might try to read the ?signs of the times,? re-assess this whole project, and call off the inquisition. Even before this resistance, officials were forced to withdraw some of the most offensive questions in the questionnaire. The sentiments of the Catholic laity are clearly on the side of the Sisters. Some bishops have written public letters of support for the nuns. And apparently, the Congregation has a major problem funding the process. So, why not transfer any money that has been raised for this project to works that nuns do every day: like feeding the world?s poor.

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