NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Religious Sisters of Mercy issue statement, do not support LCWR position

Alice Popovici | Jun. 19, 2012

Earlier this month the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Mich., issued a statement on their website [1] addressing, in part, the recent response to the Vatican by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Here is what they posted:

> **Religious Sisters of Mercy Physicians' Statement Concerning Appropriate Response to the Magisterial Church and A Vision of the Religious Woman in Medicine**
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> We, the physicians and future physicians of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan, met on June 2, 2012, to articulate the vision of the call and contribution of religious women in the redemptive healing ministry of the Church. We also addressed statements issued by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), various news agencies, and other organizations which have created confusion, polarization, and false representations about the beliefs, activities, and priorities of a significant number of women religious in the United States.
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> As religious women, our whole life is based in faith. Apart from faith, religious life has no meaning. The doctrinal assessment from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) regarding the LCWR is in the language of faith. The responses of opposition are being expressed using the language of politics. There is no basis for authentic dialogue between these two languages. The language of faith is rooted in Jesus Christ, His life and His mission, as well as the magisterial teaching of the Church. In addition, the language of faith does not contradict reason, but elevates it and secures its integrity. The language of politics arises from the social marketplace. The Sisters who use political language in their responses to the magisterial Church reflect the poverty of their education and formation in the faith.
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> The call to religious life, begun in Baptism, is lived through the practice of the evangelical counsels. A religious call is a gift from God, not a right. The charism of the religious community is given to enrich the Church, and its authenticity must be discerned by the hierarchy. A woman religious participates in the charism and cannot separate her work from the Church. As women religious physicians who uphold the teachings of the Church, we defend the dignity of each human person. This dignity is under attack, as evidenced by our government?s and social media?s use of the language of ?women?s rights? to promote birth control, abortion and sterilization as benign health care services. This is a naïve position and demonstrates ignorance of the serious effects of these health care services on women?s physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being.
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> The Incarnational significance of God becoming man brings to a point of convergence the suffering of mankind and the mercy of God in His redemptive mission. This convergence within the call of the woman religious physician unites the profession of medicine to the transcendental reality of faith, drawing patients and our physician-colleagues into the redemptive mystery of suffering. The redemptive power of Jesus was most tangibly revealed in His ministry to the sick, and by His words, He frequently related a

miracle of physical healing to the more profound healing of the spiritual wounds inflicted by sin.

We praise the generosity and service of religious women who have gone before us. We see great hope for the future of religious life within the Church and for a continuation of its health care mission in the service of all people. This hope lies in remaining within the deposit of faith and the hierarchical structure of the Church. We cannot separate ourselves from sacred Tradition or claim to advance beyond the Church. There will be new expressions of the faith to meet the needs of this present day, but these will be contained within and directed by the Magisterium of the Church. As Saint Augustine exclaims, ?O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new!?

Any responses would be appreciated. Please send your comments to rsmphysicians@sacredheartmercy.org

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Source URL (retrieved on *10/08/2015 - 19:10*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/religious-sisters-mercy-issue-statement-do-not-support-lcwr-position

Links:
[1] http://www.sacredheartmercy.org/index.html