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

The Spotlight on St. Louis

Ken Briggs | Aug. 2, 2012 NCR Today

My admiration for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious leads me to believe that its assembly next week will decide what to do about the Vatican's punitive mandate in a manner that witnesses to Christian charity and exemplary collaboration.

For many months, Conference officials have maintained a posture of distance and resistance to the harsh terms of that mandate, reflecting a calm but firm unwillingness to accept judgments about themselves they believe unfair, even demeaning.

That prelude may or may not predict the outcome. The leadership of the Conference has adapted to challenges before and has knowledge that only those closest to the tensions can fully understand.

With faith that LCWR will build on its special wisdom, I offer only one observation from the sidelines. Testimony from lay Catholcs indicate that their ardent support for the sisters'stand against the Vatican would fade if they saw a decision as backing away from their firm stand. One woman insisted that principled toughness was the only way to meet the Vatican on its own terms. Another thought offers of "continued dialog" would do nothing to stop a force determined to have its way on the basis of non-negotiable terms.

The hopes that accompany that support may or may be considered a worthy factor in St. Louis as LCWR seeks its own wise counsel. In any event, millions of its ardent supporters who have rallied to its cause as in no other time in American Catholic history will eagerly await the results.

Source URL (retrieved on *10/10/2015 - 06:11*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/spotlight-st-louis