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

LCWR officers, Vatican-appointed overseers to meet Sunday

Joshua J. McElwee | Nov. 9, 2012 NCR Today

The leaders of the group which represents the majority of U.S. Catholic sisters are to meet Sunday with three U.S. bishops appointed by the Vatican to oversee their organization.

Four officers of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which represents some 80 percent of women religious in the U.S., will meet with Seattle Archbishop Peter Sartain, Springfield, Ill., Bishop Thomas Paprocki, and Toledo, Ohio, Bishop Leonard Blair.

Sartain, who met previously with the LCWR's board following the group's annual meeting in August, was appointed by the Vatican in April to be the group's "archbishop delegate."

In a formal report announcing the move April 18, known as a "doctrinal assessment," the Vatican's powerful Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith alleged there was a "prevalence of certain radical feminist themes" in LCWR's programs. It gave Sartain wide authority [1] to revise LCWR's statutes and review its plans and programs.

LCWR leaders have sharply disagreed with the Vatican's portrayal of their group, saying in June [2] it came about from a flawed process and has caused "scandal and pain throughout the church." They have also sought to initiate a process of dialog on the matter.

Following a meeting of some 900 of its members at the August meeting, LCWR announced [3] it would seek to continue that dialog, but ?will reconsider? if it ?is forced to compromise the integrity of its mission.?

Sunday's meeting between LCWR's officers -- Franciscan Sr. Florence Deacon, St. Joseph Sr. Carol Zinn, Franciscan Sr. Pat Farrell, and St. Joseph Sr. Janet Mock -- and the bishops will be held in Baltimore on the eve of the annual meeting [4] of the U.S. bishops, being held there Nov. 12-15.

In an email announcing the meeting Friday, which was obtained by *NCR*, LCWR asked for prayers for those taking part.

"We wanted to let you know that on the afternoon of Sunday, November 11 Florence Deacon, OSF; Carol Zinn, SSJ; Pat Farrell, OSF; and Janet Mock, CSJ will be meeting with the delegate appointed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to oversee the implementation of the doctrinal assessment of LCWR, Archbishop J. Peter Sartain, as well as his two assistants, Bishop Leonard Blair and Bishop Thomas John Paprocki," states the email.

"The meeting will take place in Baltimore prior to the meeting of the USCCB, which the LCWR officers will also attend as observers. We ask for your prayers for all who will participate in Sunday's meeting."

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