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An academic look at the apostolic visitiation

Dawn Cherie Araujo | May. 19, 2014

When Sr. Jean Bartunek, a professor of organizational theory at Boston College, was asked to contribute to an academic volume on religion and organizational theory, it didn't take long for her to land on the perfect topic.

It was 2011 and Mother Mary Clare Millea, accompanied by a cohort of visitation teams, had just wrapped up their rounds of on-site audits [1] of U.S. women religious on behalf of the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. While the congregation defines an apostolic visitation as nothing more than an opportunity for members of a religious community to comment on their lives, many around the world saw the visitation as an indictment of U.S. sisters and a thinly veiled attempt to corral them back under the wings of patriarchy.

Bartunek got in touch with Simona Giorgi, a colleague in the college of management and organization, and Sr. Margaret Guider, a Boston College theology professor who, at the time, was also serving as vice president of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate. The trio decided to tackle the effect of the apostolic visitation through the lens of organizational theory -- the study of organizational structures.

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Read the full story at Global Sisters Report. [2]

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