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From South Korea, sisters' message to LCWR

Thomas C. Fox | Aug. 14, 2014
Seoul, South Korea [1]

The distance from Seoul, South Korea, to Nashville, Tenn., is 6,927 miles, but some "sister sisters" here feel close to Leadership Conference of Women Religious delegates now in the middle of their annual meeting [2].

By all appearances, LCWR has to make some tough choices this week. The basic question is how it responds to a Vatican demand to clear future program speakers and related activities with a Vatican-appointed overseer, Seattle Archbishop J. Peter Sartain.

I am in Seoul this week speaking to Catholic sisters about their work while keeping one eye on the Pope Francis' five-day pilgrimage, which began Thursday.

On Wednesday, I had an appointment to meet two women, members of the Little Servants of the Holy Family, a local congregation, that took the call of the Second Vatican Council seriously and renewed their congregation's charter and mission following the council.

Briefly, they went from being "caregivers" to "witnesses to the signs of the times," they told me. It meant giving away their hospital to the Seoul archdiocese. The move gave them new freedom, and they have used it to dig deeper into witnessing to the most pressing "justice issues" facing Korean society.

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