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International Catholic peace group announces support for LCWR

Joshua J. McElwee | Jun. 13, 2012 NCR Today

Pax Christi, a global organization which bills itself as the "international Catholic peace movement," announced today its support of U.S. women religious following the Vatican?s order that the group representing the wide majority of U.S. sisters revise and place itself under the authority of an archbishop.

Writing in a letter posted on the website of Pax Christi USA, the national arm of the group, its leaders say the Vatican move has "greatly saddened" many in the group.

"To this great Gospel wit-ness of U.S. women reli-gious, we believe that LCWR has made a faithful and ex-tremely valuable contribution," the letter continues.

"Catholic women everywhere are grateful to these mature Catholic women leaders. Pax Christi International women and men, lay people, religious, priests and bish-ops around the world hold them in the highest re-gard. We believe that their experi-ence of faithful discipleship has much to offer the institutional Catholic Church in terms of building right relationships, inclusive process, respectful dialogue, theological reflection and the ability to honour the gift of diversity.

"We pray that, rather than scrutiny, humiliation and rep-rimand, the Holy See will give the LCWR and women?s reli-gious communities in the United States the respect and grati-tude they so richly deserve. For this, Pax Christi International members around the world will be praying."

Following is the letter from Pax Christi, which can also be found at Pax Christi USA?s website [1]:

Following the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) response to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) report, Pax Christi International?s sections and member organizations from around the world joined together in releasing a letter of support for LCWR.

Sr. Josie Chrosniak, HM, National Council Chairperson, and Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, Executive Director, signed the letter on behalf of Pax Christi USA. The letter was circulated, at Sr. Patty?s request, to PCUSA regional leadership with an invitation to also sign. The letter was released this week.

As Pax Christi International Co-Presidents Marie Dennis and Bishop Kevin Dowling wrote, ?In the United States and in many other corners of the world, women religious have been at the heart of Pax Christi?s work for peace. Their faithful presence, deep theological grounding and remarkable leadership have made an extraordinary contribution to our movement.?

Here is the letter:

The Holy See?s recent disciplinary action against the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) has greatly saddened members of Pax Christi International around the world. Women religious in the United States

have been deeply committed to promoting the peace of Christ. They are at the heart of our movement, proclaiming with clarity and love the possibility of a world without war, a future beyond dehumanizing violence.

The Sisters? ministries to people on the margins of our world is often lived out in situations of immense violence. We have seen their compassion in local neighbourhoods across the United States; in war-torn communities of South Sudan, El Salvador, Cambodia and beyond; in situations of repression and horrific human rights violations. We have seen them respond with wisdom and courage to trafficked women and children; to domestic violence; to rape as a weapon of war; to torture and abuse in prisons on every continent; to people uprooted by war or poverty.

U.S. women religious are making peace inside and outside centres of power. Locally, nationally and internationally, they are tireless advocates for the dignity of human life and the protection of the whole earth community. Their commitment to accompany those who have been discarded and forgotten; to listen with care to their stories; to act with compassion; and to address the roots of injustice and violence in the light of the Gospel make the Sisters immensely credible in the public arena among people of faith and good will. Network, founded by Catholic Sisters 40 years ago, gives daily witness to that credibility. LCWR gives it careful, collective expression.

Pax Christi International has also been enriched by the deep spirituality and wise theological insights of U.S. women religious. These Sisters and other Catholic women, with excellent theological training and rich experience in grassroots communities dealing with terrible violence, are helping to articulate a new theology of Catholic peace-building.

To this great Gospel witness of U.S. women religious, we believe that LCWR has made a faithful and extremely valuable contribution. Catholic women everywhere are grateful to these mature Catholic women leaders. Pax Christi International women and men, lay people, religious, priests and bishops around the world hold them in the highest regard. We believe that their experience of faithful discipleship has much to offer the institutional Catholic Church in terms of building right relationships, inclusive process, respectful dialogue, theological reflection and the ability to honour the gift of diversity.

We pray that, rather than scrutiny, humiliation and reprimand, the Holy See will give the LCWR and women?s religious communities in the United States the respect and gratitude they so richly deserve. For this, Pax Christi International members around the world will be praying.

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Links:
[1] http://paxchristiusa.org/2012/06/13/statement-pax-christi-issues-letter-of-support-for-lcwr/