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Pope names record number of women to Synod on Evangelization

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service | Sep. 24, 2012

VATICAN CITY -- Choosing men and women from every part of the world and from a wide variety of professions, Pope Benedict XVI nominated 45 experts and 49 observers for the upcoming world assembly of bishops.

The Oct. 7-28 gathering will include the largest bloc of women -- 10 experts and 19 observers -- ever to participate in a world Synod of Bishops. The special Synod of Bishops for Africa in 2009 had 10 experts and 20 observers who were women.

Europe accounts for the overwhelming majority of the appointees, followed by North America, with 10 people from the United States, two from Mexico and one from Canada. A number of the appointees are also advisers to the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization and other Vatican offices.

The Vatican published the list of papal appointments to the synod Saturday.

Experts and observers, who include laypeople, are not voting members of the synod. According to Vatican rules, only priests, bishops and cardinals can be full members who vote and determine the propositions to be presented to the pope at the end of the gathering.

The 45 experts include priests, nuns and laypeople, many of whom are professors, rectors or supervisors of catechetical or pastoral programs. They will serve as resources for the more than 200 synod members as they discuss the theme, "New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith."

The experts from the United States and Canada include:

- Sr. Sara Butler, a professor of theology at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Ill. A member of the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity, Butler was one of two women Blessed Pope John Paul II named to the International Theological Commission in 2004.
- Benedictine Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, a professor at Rome's Pontifical Athenaeum of San Anselmo and at Mount Angel Seminary in St. Benedict, Ore.
- Ralph Martin, president of Renewal Ministries in Ann Arbor, Mich., and director of graduate programs in the new evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. He has been a leader in charismatic renewal since the 1970s.
- Sr. Paula Jean Miller, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist and professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas in Houston.
- Edward N. Peters, who holds the Edmund Cardinal Szoka chair in faculty development at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. A professor of canon law, Peters was the first layperson to serve as a referendary, or consultant, to the church's highest court, the Apostolic Signature. He is also the author of the blog, "In the Light of the Law."

- Sr. Gill Goulding, a sister of the Congregation of Jesus and professor of systematic theology and

spirituality at Regis College of the University of Toronto.

The experts also include: Salesian Sr. Enrica Rosanna, undersecretary of the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life; Fr. Eamonn Conway, head of the department of theology and religious studies at Mary Immaculate College at the University of Limerick, Ireland; Caroline Farey, academic assistant in ecclesiastical development at the Maryvale Institute in Birmingham, England; Petroc Willey, dean of graduate research and course director for studies in the catechism at Birmingham's Maryvale Institute; and Msgr. Rafiq Khoury, professor of liturgy at the Major Seminary of Beit Jala in the Palestinian territories.

The 49 observers can attend all synod sessions, participate in the synod working groups and have an opportunity to address the entire assembly.

Many of the observers are leaders of religious orders, founders or leaders of lay movements or large Catholic associations, or professors or organizers of catechetical and pastoral programs.

The U.S. observers are: Carl Anderson, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus; Peter Murphy, executive director of the Secretariat of Evangelization and Catechesis at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; Curtis Martin, founder and president of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, "FOCUS"; Marylee J. Meehan, the U.S.-based president of the International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants; and U.S. Sr. Mary Lou Wirtz, president of the International Union of Superiors General and general superior of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Other observers include: Kiko Arguello, co-founder of the Neocatecumenal Way; Maria Voce, president of the Focolare movement; Michel Roy, secretary-general of the Vatican-based umbrella group of Catholic aid agencies, Caritas Internationalis; Marco Impagliazzo, president of the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio; and Chiara Amirante, founder and president of the international Catholic organization, New Horizons.

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