

LCWR raises \$7 million to assist New Orleans needy

Thomas C. Fox | Aug. 11, 2009 NCR Today

Under twin investigations from the Vatican, U.S. women religious leaders from around the nation have gathered in New Orleans for the three-day conference of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The Vatican has called for twin investigations of the women, one of the leadership conference itself and the other of women religious communities. But instead of focusing on these investigations, the top agenda item on the first day of the gathering has been to board some 250 women on buses (they ran out of buses) to set off to visit the work of rebuilding the city that has been made possible by money raised by women in conjunction with Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA).

Briefly, this is the story ? and it is a telling one.

At the 2006 LCWR assembly, members called for an effort to assist the women religious of New Orleans in their recovery from the previous year's hurricanes. In response, LCWR established the New Orleans Recovery Project. Under the direction of Sister of Notre Dame Suzanne Hall, the project has raised more than \$7 million.

With the funds received, the women religious congregations in New Orleans have been able to reconstruct schools, senior citizen centers, nursing homes, early childhood learning centers and have started a number of other social programs. These are ongoing.

In all, according to LCWR, the women religious of America have been able to raise a total of \$7, 273, 608. This bottom line says firmly that whatever else some might say of these women, they continue to set their primary focus on their social ministries, living out the gospels as they see called to do.

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