

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

February 5, 2010 at 5:46am

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## So much for an 'objective' investigation by Cardinal Rod 

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NCR Today

If anyone actually entertained the thought that Cardinal Rod  was 'objective' in launching an investigation of women religious in the United States, she or he need only read what he said in a talk on Feb. 3 in Naples, Italy to be disabused of that idea.

He said, for example, that "the secularized culture has penetrated into the minds and hearts of some consecrated persons and some communities, where it is seen as an opening to modernity and a way of approaching the contemporary world."

He also said the decline in the numbers of men and women religious became precipitous after the Second Vatican Council, which he described as a period "rich in experimentation but poor in robust and convincing mission."

I would describe it as just the opposite. The period after the Second Vatican Council was a period when Catholic sisters followed the call of the Council and read the 'signs of the times.' (Remember that phrase?) They adopted a sense of expansive mission that moved beyond church institutions in a holy and healthy way, embracing the downtrodden wherever they were found, joining movements for liberation as sacred causes that furthered human dignity. They opened themselves to the modern world to bring alive the gospel message of justice and peace.

Rod  would also do well to read the statistics on religious community membership. The precipitous rise in membership after World War II was very likely an aberration, and the trend downward today is perhaps a movement toward 'normality.'

Cardinal Franc Rodé is the Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in the Vatican. And, it seems, he just ?doesn?t get it.?

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