

Religious meet in St. Louis to train for Apostolic Visitation on site visits

Thomas C. Fox | Mar. 1, 2010 NCR Today

Mother Mary Clare Millea, Apostolic Visitor for Institutes of Women Religious, conducted an orientation workshop in St. Louis Feb. 26-28 for religious assisting with on-site visits of the Apostolic Visitation, according to a press her group released today.

According to the release, 78 women and men religious who will serve as on-site visitors to selected religious congregations were invited to attend the training session.

Sister Joan McGlinchey, MSC, Vicar for Religious for the Archdiocese of Chicago, served as facilitator for the weekend event.

Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis, chairman-elect of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, and Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport celebrated the Eucharist for the assembly.

Keynote speakers included Sister Mary Bendyna, RSM, Executive Director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), who spoke on the CARA Report for the Apostolic Visitation; Bishop Lori, who spoke of the Apostolic Visitation as an expression of ecclesial communion; and Sister Melanie Di Pietro, SC, Director of The Center for Religiously Affiliated Corporations and Professor at Seton Hall University Law School, who addressed issues of civil and canon law.

A group of consultants to the Apostolic Visitation presented various aspects of the on-site Visitation process. Brother Ignatius Perkins, OP, Project Director and Coordinator of Health Care Ethics Programs for the Dominican Friars Health Care Ministry of New York, addressed the topic of the Visitation interviews. A panel composed of Sister Sara Butler, MSBT, Professor of dogmatic theology at St. Joseph Seminary; Mother Shaun Vergauwen, FSE, Superior General of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist; and Apostolic Visitation staff members Sister Kieran Foley, FSE, Sister Mary Grace Giaimo, ASCJ, and Sister Anne T. Walsh, ASCJ, discussed the logistics of the on-site Visit. Sister Dolores Liptak, RSM, Adjunct Professor of Church History at Holy Apostles College and Seminary, presented an overview of the development and contributions of women's religious congregations in the United States.

"I was profoundly moved by the participants' active engagement in the process, their collaboration with one another and their obvious dedication to religious life," Mother Clare said at the conclusion of the workshop. "They are well prepared and eager to hear the stories of the sisters they will visit and experience through them the rich living heritage and promise of religious life in the United States."

On-site visits to a representative sample of religious congregations are scheduled to take place between April 11 and June 4, 2010. A second series of visits will be scheduled for the fall of 2010.

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