

## LCWR meets under tight media security

Thomas C. Fox | Aug. 10, 2010 NCR Today

You have to feel sorry for U.S. women religious leaders. They are under attack from the Vatican for being followers of the gospels and servants of the church. The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), meeting here in Dallas for the next three days, is facing twin Vatican investigations, one a "doctrinal" inquiry and the other a look into the "quality of life" of women religious communities in the U.S. This has been very upsetting to the women, especially given the fact they believe they have been very faithful to the church. Visitations are being made to the religious communities and all community leaders have been asked to keep their silence on these visits.

Most of the women want to cooperate ? or at least to appear to cooperate --with the investigators, knowing that any appearance of defensiveness will be used against them. So the pressure is on and it is showing here in Dallas.

The LCWR leadership has almost entirely cut itself off from the media, wanting to say nothing about the investigations, apparently believing anything they might say could be misconstrued. Truth is, it is easier to get an interview with a Vatican cardinal these days than a LCWR leadership team member. Maybe that will change. Meanwhile, security at the Hyatt Regency is tight. Media coverage is restricted, seemingly more than ever. This reporter was told he could not even enter the conference exhibit hall, let alone take photos, until the conference media guidelines are spelled out to him. Hopefully that will happen soon.

Meanwhile, LCWR appears to be a tightly run organization, at least from the media security viewpoint. Much of its public transparency of earlier years is gone. Let's hope that will change soon and it will once again model the openness it has stood for these many years.

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