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Increase book sales: Get a Vatican denunciation

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NCR Today

After I heard about the Vatican's denunciation of Mercy Sr. Margaret Farley's book on sexuality, I was, first of all, dismayed. Yet another Vatican assault on a nun! For daring to think new thoughts, no less. But then came the headline in *The Washington Post*, telling a different story: The sales of her book soared since the denunciation.

Dr. Marie Fortune of the FaithTrust Institute, a former student of Margaret Farley at Yale Divinity School, echoed the same message in an online commentary, "Dear Pope: About Sr. Margaret...":

I am just writing to thank you for denouncing Sr. Margaret Farley's excellent book, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*. This is the best PR any author could possibly get and, as a result, the book has soared to the Best Seller list at Amazon overnight. I realize that God works in strange and mysterious ways, but this is too good.

I suspect people interested in sexual ethics are thinking, "If these guys in the Vatican don't agree with what's in that book, it must be worth reading."

As I watch recent developments -- the attack on LCWR, the bishops' public concerns about the Girl Scouts, and now the denunciation of Margaret Farley's book -- I wonder if the men in the Vatican and the bishops' conference need something else to do.

And NETWORK may have an answer: They are sponsoring a multistate bus tour called "Nuns on the Bus." They plan to tour several Midwestern and eastern states to denounce the many ways Rep. Paul Ryan's budget, which passed the House, will severely hurt the poor. Now, the U.S. bishops (some of whom actually think about topics other than sexuality from time to time) also oppose Ryan's budget.

This is a move that is both cooperative and yet wonderfully subversive. Here are those nuns, once again concentrating on social justice. And since nuns are suddenly "news," they are using this moment to call attention to issues any Catholic should care about.

Great stuff from NETWORK. The Bishops and the Vatican might take notice. Better yet, they could denounce it. I suspect such a move would ensure that thousands would join to condemn Paul Ryan's budget. And NETWORK's membership would soar!

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