

A struggle for the Holy Spirit

Pat Perriello | Aug. 13, 2012 NCR Today

I appreciated the wisdom and insights contained in your responses to [my recent blog](#) [1], "Nuns struggle with Rome over the future of the church." I wanted to highlight a few of what I thought were the more significant comments.

Justmaybe points out both the earthly power politics involved in this struggle as well as the discernment of the Holy Spirit. Much could be said on this subject, but I think his words highlight where we would all want to be, reminding us that "the nuns, like you and me, are struggling with discerning the will of the Spirit." I would concur, and only wish the bishops better understood that they, too, are part of that same struggle.

Claudia Windal dared to watch EWTN to get its take on the issue. The Vatican emphasis on obedience and submission to Rome was apparently echoed by the president of the Knights of Columbus. Claudia then says, "God did not give us hearts only to circulate blood to and through our brains." She then goes on to speak glowingly of the compassionate work of the nuns in their varied ministries. Her words, however, reminded me of the words of my first religion teacher, my mother, who forcefully taught me that God had given us a brain and he expects us to use it.

Many spoke of the age gap of those on both the right and the left who are caught up in this struggle, and how the young aren't involved. Anonymoustoo, however, tells us that "we older Vatican II Catholics have lifetimes of love for the Church," whereas the young are indifferent. She suggests that the young find such issues as the Middle Ages and authoritarianism silly and irrelevant in their 21st-century worlds.

Finally, it appears that the nuns in St. Louis have chosen to continue dialogue with Rome but reserve the right to take further action. I think their stance is a prudent and wise one. Although there is little evidence Rome will budge in this fight, it gives the nuns the ability to say they have made every effort to work with the hierarchy, but the hierarchy has given them no other choice. As indicated by many of you, prayer for the nuns and the church would be tremendously important at this point.

Again, thanks to all of you for your comments.

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