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60 Minutes targets LCWR and Vatican mandate

by Thomas C. Fox

NCR Today

60 Minutes will air a segment March 17th on the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's controversial doctrinal assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

CBS describes the upcoming segment this way: "One of the pressing problems newly elected Pope Francis may want to address is the disillusionment among American nuns. Many were shocked last year when the group that represents most of them was reprimanded by the Vatican, which said the nuns' liberal ideas were undermining the Church. Bob Simon reports. Tanya Simon and Andrew Metz are the producers."

The segment, nine months in the making, comes at a time of considerable uncertainty in the church, including LCWR. Pope Francis only been pope for a few days, with his attitudes toward the U.S. women religious uncertain. Also Archbishop Gerhard Müller, CDF prefect, submitted his resignation last month, as canon law required when now Pope Benedict resigned.

While it is customary for a new pope to temporarily reappoint curial officials, at least for a period of months, there is no requirement that the new pope will so act. Without a CDF prefect, the authority of Seattle Archbishop Peter Sartain, who officially serves as the Vatican "archbishop delegate" for LCWR is in question, at the very least.

It was last April that the CDF released a critical doctrinal assessment of LCWR after years of secret study. The CDF stated LCWR assemblies offered problematic statements involving ideas that are "moving beyond" church teachings, that LCWR had offered forums for women religious whose positions on human sexuality are not in agreement with the church, and that it had allowed "radical feminism" to enter into its thinking and critiques of church "patriarchy."

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