

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Vatican Doctrinal Chief Rebukes LCWR

### Cardinal Müller

Using what he acknowledged was unusually blunt language, Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, rebuked officers of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious for honoring a Catholic theologian whose work was judged “seriously inadequate” and for promoting a philosophy he described as “opposed to Christian revelation.” The cardinal made the remarks April 30 in an address to the presidency of the LCWR, a Maryland-based umbrella group that claims about 1,500 leaders of U.S. women’s religious communities as members, representing about 80 percent of the country’s 57,000 women reli-

*“My concern is whether such an intense focus on new ideas such as conscious evolution has robbed religious of the ability truly to ‘sentire cum Ecclesia.’”*

gious. The text of Cardinal Müller’s remarks was posted on the Vatican website. In 2012, the Vatican announced a major reform of the LCWR to ensure its fidelity to Catholic teaching in areas including abortion, euthanasia, women’s ordination and homosexuality. The Vatican appointed Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle to implement the congregation’s “doctrinal assessment,” by providing “review, guidance and approval, where necessary, of the work” of the LCWR. At the April 30 meeting with LCWR officials, Cardinal Müller voiced “increasing concern” about the LCWR’s promotion of the “concept of conscious evolution” in various publications and in the “directional statements” of some member congregations. Cardinal Müller also said he was saddened by plans to give a major award at the group’s annual assembly in August to St. Joseph Sister Elizabeth A. Johnson. In 2011, the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Doctrine criticized one of Sister Johnson’s books as containing “misrepresentations, ambiguities and errors” related to the Catholic faith. The LCWR’s award to the theologian “will be seen as a rather open provocation against the Holy See and the doctrinal assessment,” the cardinal said. “Not only that, but it further alienates the LCWR from the bishops as well.” Cardinal Müller’s speech follows.

I am happy to welcome once again the presidency of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious to Rome and to the congregation. It is a happy occasion that your visit coincides

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