

May 6, 2012

An Appeal:

May is the month of Our Lady. Mary is the feminine exemplar for Catholic spirituality. Over so many years, religious sisters have worked tirelessly to serve Mary and Jesus in the many ministries they performed. So many of us are indebted to them. Instead of a reproach, they should be receiving our thanks and appreciation. Many of them are now in their final years. The median age for the Mercy Sisters in Omaha is now 78 years.

Instead of appreciation, the Vatican Office—Congregation for the Defense of the Faith, (Previously known as “The Inquisition” has issued a severe critique of the U.S. nuns. The Vatican feels they are “too concerned with social justice” and not enough with abortion!

They also want the nuns to be more opposed to homosexuals. So they have appointed some men—bishops to “reform” the attitudes of the women leaders of most religious women in the USA.

It is time for those of us who know the American nuns, appreciate all they have done, to stand with them against this unjust and mean spirited affront. If you would like to sign a petition supporting American sisters, Google [Call To Action Petition For Nuns](#) and sign their petition and share it with like minded friends.

May 6, 2012

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

*The Church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.* Today’s Second Reading

The Catholic Church in the USA has been built up and major contributors to that build up have been the Catholic sisters. Since the first immigrants arrived, pioneer nuns built hospitals, staffed schools, and provided social services. The Catholic Church would not be where it is today if it were not for the tireless and often unpaid services of these Catholic women. Yet, then and today, men in authority had the final say as to what they could or could not do. Prior to Vatican II they had little recourse, although many courageous women superiors had to work their way around hardnosed and authoritarian bishops who always felt that “Father knows best.”

One such was recently canonized: Saint Mother Theodore Guerin who had the backbone to stand up against a reactionary bishop in Indiana. Other sainted women religious leaders in the USA include: Saint Frances Cabrini, Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, Saint Katherine Drexel, Saint Elizabeth Seton, and the martyred Maryknoll sisters. Their good works fill books! And by the way, the canonized American nuns outnumber canonized American bishops as well as canonized men, (if there are any, for the Congregation For Defense of the Faith). As the Gospel says, “By their fruits you shall know them!”

Today, in the Gospel, Jesus speaks of pruning the vine. No doubt the Congregation for the Defense of the Faith believes that pruning the nuns is what they need to do. But do they really know what they are doing? Those of us on the ground where the vine grows know that American nuns from the beginning until this very day have planted vines of compassion, mercy, caring, and education. There has been no sexual abuse scandal arising from their work with the young as there has from the priests and bishops, so who exactly is in need of pruning?

Jesus says "I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch that does not bear fruit..."

So what fruit bearing comes forth from the Congregation for the Defense of the Faith, the Vatican? The fruit seems bitter: recrimination, condemnation, and reproach for women who have borne the heat of the day in the vineyard and whose harvest is bountiful!

The religious women of the USA studied the documents of Vatican II and took them seriously. Since 1958, I have worked side by side with them as partners in ministry. I have personally found their devotion to the Church exemplary, their growth in spirituality is noteworthy, and their desire to call forth the gifts of the laity, far sighted.

The time has come for the laity to stand with them. Enough!

The time has come for gratitude and praise, not for anti-feminine reproach.

Google the website *Call To Action—Petition For Nuns*. Sign the petition and share it with your friends.