

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**As World Examines Vatican on Sexual Abuse;
Vatican Quietly Launches Investigations Against Nuns**

While the world's attention focuses on the Vatican this month in the continuing revelations of sexual abuse cover-up, the Vatican also quietly launched its on-site investigations of women religious in the United States.

As part of a multi-year investigation that began in 2009, these on-site visitations are the third of a four-phase investigation into the lives of approximately 53,000 women religious. Teams of visitors chosen by Mother Clare Millea, the Vatican-appointed investigator, will visit selected congregations during the weeks of April 11th to May 30th and again from September 12th to December 12th.

"Where are the church's priorities?" asked Jim FitzGerald, Executive Director of Call To Action, the nation's largest progressive Catholic justice organization. "Instead of focusing on how they can prevent additional sexual abuse of vulnerable children, the Vatican is spending time and money on an investigation into women's religious communities and ministries that have often been at the forefront of caring for children in schools, hospitals, food kitchens and parish communities."

"The Vatican has estimated that their investigation will cost \$1.1 million dollars. It is unconscionable that a church that prides itself on helping the poor would spend over a million dollars investigating its own people due to a small group of conservative male leaders who do not like the fact that women religious do not always fall under their control. It is an egregious example of the sexism that still pervades our religious structures."

"Our prayers remain with the women religious during this time of trial," said FitzGerald. "We urge the Vatican to focus on real priorities now: caring for the survivors of sexual abuse and creating new structures of accountable leadership so that our churches may become safe places, true sanctuaries, for children and families everywhere."

For more information, see:

Vatican asks U.S. bishops to fund \$1.1 million sisters study

<http://ncronline.org/news/women/vatican-asks-us-bishops-fund-11-million-sisters-study>

Apostolic Visitor details on-site visit guidelines

<http://ncronline.org/news/women/apostolic-visitor-details-site-visit-guidelines>

Official Apostolic Visitation Website

<http://www.apostolicvisitation.org/en/index.html>

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Call To Action (CTA) is a Catholic movement working for equality and justice in the Church and society. An independent national organization of over 25,000 people and 53 local chapters, CTA believes that the Spirit of God is at work in the whole church, not just its appointed leaders. Visit our website at www.cta-usa.org.