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**Statement of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious Following August 11 Meeting with Archbishop J. Peter Sartain**

[St. Louis, MO] On August 11, Archbishop J. Peter Sartain met for the first time with the national board of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The LCWR board members believe they were able to express both their concerns and their feelings about the CDF report with great openness and honesty, and that Archbishop Sartain listened carefully. The archbishop asked for assistance from LCWR to learn more about the conference and about the members' experience and understandings of religious life. LCWR will provide Archbishop Sartain with resources they believe will be helpful, and its officers plan to meet with him again later in the fall.

The LCWR assembly, which closed the day before the board met with Archbishop Sartain, had charged the board to conduct their conversation with the archbishop from a stance of mutual respect, careful listening and open dialogue. The expectation of the LCWR members is that open and honest dialogue may lead not only to increasing understanding between the church leadership and women religious, but also to creating more possibilities for the laity and, particularly for women, to have a voice in the church. Furthermore, the assembly instructed the board to articulate its belief that religious life, as it is lived by the women religious who comprise LCWR, is an authentic expression of this life that must not be compromised.