



Conference of Major Superiors of Men

December 17, 2009

Sister Marlene Weisenbeck, FSPA
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
8808 Cameron Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Sisters in Christ,

The season of Advent with its rich array of liturgical readings and stories of salvation provide us all a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the great faith and fidelity exemplified by women throughout the centuries. During this special time of the year, we recall the vast number of women in sacred scripture who overcame tremendous odds and challenges so that the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, might become one with us.

For thousands of years preceding his birth women of faith, through their individual and collective openness to God's will, helped prepare a place for Christ in our hearts when there was no room for him in the inn. This is especially true of the one who became his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who exemplified *par excellence* what it truly means to entrust one's entire self to God out of love. In Mary's *fiat* generosity and goodness are given voice, and through her the One who is to be the savior of all is born.

Likewise during Advent season we the members of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, called by God in service of the Gospel of Christ as religious, are mindful of the tens of thousands of faith-filled women who have readily given all in service of Christ and the Church as faithful disciples and co-workers in the vineyard of God. As women religious you truly are living examples and models of fidelity and hope to our waiting world. Through your self-emptying prayerful service you embody and witness to all God's people what it means to love with all that one is and ever hopes to be.

We applaud your unrelenting generosity of spirit and service in bringing the Good News of God's love to so many throughout the years, despite many daunting and overwhelming circumstances and challenges which lay in your path. As women religious you continue to lift and shoulder the burdens and pains of God's people in many ways both great and sublime.

Through your consecration as women religious, deeply rooted in prayer and impelled by God's Holy Spirit, together you speak love in truth through hosts of ministerial endeavors and commitments in seemingly endless ways: prayer, education, health care, pastoral care and outreach; to immigrants and migrants; in urban centers and

rural ministries alike, to name just a few. And you do it all with the conviction that it is your *fiat* to Christ's invitation: "Go out to all the world and tell the good news."

We, the National Board of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, join in chorus with so many others in thanking you for your generous presence among us as living witnesses to the boundless grace of the Spirit offered to all. We do this especially during this period of the Apostolic Visitation of Institutes of Women Religious in the United States. We want you to know that we are thinking of you and indeed are keeping you in prayer during this time.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to make God's love present among us, and for saying *yes* to the invitation to follow Christ. We are indeed blessed through you.

Be assured of our support and prayers as you continue to discern and respond to the invitation of God in our Church and throughout the world. It is a blessing to be co-laborers with you in the vineyard of Christ, furthering the work of the kingdom of God in our world today.

Sincerely your brothers in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Thomas P. Cassidy, SCJ". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long, sweeping underline.

Very Rev. Thomas Cassidy, SCJ
President