**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Annmarie Sanders, IHM – LCWR Director of Communications

 301-588-4955 (office) -- asanders@lcwr.org

301-672-3043 (cell)

 June 1, 2012

**Statement of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious Regarding CDF Report**

**[Washington, DC]** The national board of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) held a special meeting in Washington, DC from May 29-31 to review, and plan a response to, the report issued to LCWR by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The board members raised concerns about both the content of the doctrinal assessment and the process by which it was prepared. Board members concluded that the assessment was based on unsubstantiated accusations and the result of a flawed process that lacked transparency. Moreover, the sanctions imposed were disproportionate to the concerns raised and could compromise their ability to fulfill their mission. The report has furthermore caused scandal and pain throughout the church community, and created greater polarization.

The board determined that the conference will take the following steps:

·         On June 12 the LCWR president and executive director will return to Rome to meet with CDF prefect Cardinal William Levada and the apostolic delegate Archbishop Peter Sartain to raise and discuss the board’s concerns.

·        Following the discussions in Rome, the conference will gather its members both in regional meetings and in its August assembly to determine its response to the CDF report.

The board recognizes this matter has deeply touched Catholics and non-Catholics throughout the world as evidenced by the thousands of messages of support as well as the dozens of prayer vigils held in numerous parts of the country. It believes that the matters of faith and justice that capture the hearts of Catholic sisters are clearly shared by many people around the world. As the church and society face tumultuous times, the board believes it is imperative that these matters be addressed by the entire church community in an atmosphere of openness, honesty, and integrity.

LCWR has approximately 1500 members who are elected leaders of their religious orders, representing approximately 80% of the 57,000 Catholic sisters in the United States. The conference develops leadership, promotes collaboration within church and society, and serves as a voice for systemic change. Created in 1956, LCWR has a history of being at the forefront of change and renewal in the US Catholic church as well as acting as a strong advocate for social justice in society.