

# Herbert Haag-Stiftung für Freiheit in der Kirche

Postfach 15138, 6000 Luzern 15  
Telefon +41 (0) 41 370 39 71  
Geschäftsführer: Andreas Heggli  
andheg@gmx.ch  
www.herberthaag-stiftung.ch

Stiftungsrat:  
Prof. Dr. Hans Küng, Tübingen – Präsident  
Dr. Erwin Koller, Uster / Zürich – Vizepräsident  
Herbert N. Haag, Zürich  
Prof. Dr. Sabine Demel, Regensburg (BRD)

## Media announcement of the Herbert Haag Foundation

### **American Women Religious awarded the Herbert Haag Prize 2013 for Freedom in the Church**

The Herbert Haag Prize for 2013 for Freedom in the Church has been awarded to 46,000 American nuns and to the leadership team of their representative organization, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Their struggle for the marginalized and people in difficult circumstances, their presence to the needs of today's world, and their careful reflection of the signs of the times in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, have made them a pillar of the Catholic Church in the United States of America.

For all that, women religious, and especially their leaders, stand in the eye of an ecclesiastical storm triggered by the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in April 2012. The report of CDF's investigation of LCWR claims grave shortcomings in doctrine in the organization's proceedings. It accuses LCWR of positions regarding abortion, the ordination of women, feminism and homosexuality that deviate from Catholic teachings. A committee of three bishops under the leadership of Archbishop J. Peter Sartain of Seattle has been appointed to put these matters right. In the coming five years it can intervene in all the proceedings of LCWR, formulate new statutes, and censor publications, future activities, and statements.

The LCWR leadership claims that the Vatican criticism is unfounded. The accusations of the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are without any substantial foundation and are the result of an unsatisfactory investigation process that lacks transparency. The Vatican was not able to prove any of the accusations in official documents to the leaders of the Orders. On June 12, 2012, LCWR's top representatives, President Pat Farrell, OSF and Executive Director Sister Janet Mock, CSJ met in Rome with Cardinal William J. Levada, then prefect of the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and J. Peter Sartain to present their case "openly and honestly" and to defend themselves against what they consider to be false accusations.

The intervention of the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is looked upon as a scandal by many Catholics, especially in the United States, a response that has found enormous echo in the general public. Numerous Catholic organizations and uncountable members of the faithful from around the world have demonstrated their solidarity with the American nuns. The good name of US women religious has been known for a long time, far beyond the United States and stands in contrast to the scandals of clergy sexual abuse and financial mismanagement within other sectors of the Church.

With great respect, the Herbert Haag Foundation honors the LCWR, its nearly 1500 member organizations, and the ten thousands of dedicated women religious for their candid stance in this crisis, for their persistent loyalty to the Christian message and for the spiritual energy with which they carry the conflict. It reflects the energy and initiative with which the women religious renew and shape a Church open to the future. This award also wishes to give weight in Europe to the strong voice of these women, giving encouragement to those resigned to silence. If the Church wants to give hope to the coming generations, then it finds expression in the voice of Sr. Pat Farrell when she said at LCWR's national assembly in August 2012: "We are in a time of crisis and that is a hopeful place to be. Crisis precedes transformation."

The prize for Freedom in the Church was endowed by Herbert Haag (1915 – 2001), professor for Old Testament at the University of Tübingen (Germany). This prize honors people and insti-

tutions that engage themselves in the spirit of the apostle Paul for freedom in the church and in doing so give witness to the world.

The prize-giving ceremony takes place on Sunday, April 14, 2013, at 16:30 in the Hotel Schweizerhof in Lucerne (Switzerland). The Franciscan Sister, Pat Farrell, will receive the prize on behalf of the leaders of the LCWR.

For further information about LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) in America, see <https://lcwr.org>; for information about the Herbert Haag Foundation for Freedom in the Church see [www.herberthaag-stiftung.ch](http://www.herberthaag-stiftung.ch).

**Quotes from Sr. Pat Farrell OSF**

(Presidential Address, LCWR Assembly August 2012: **Navigating the Shifts**)

“We are in a time of crisis and that is a hopeful place to be... Crisis precedes transformation.”

“And now, here we are, in the eye of an ecclesial storm, with a spotlight shining on us and a microphone placed at our mouths. What invitation, what opportunity, what responsibility is ours in this? Our LCWR mission statement reminds us that our time is holy, our leadership is gift, and our challenges are blessings.”

“It is not the first time that a form of religious life has collided with the institutional Church. Nor will it be the last... There is an inherent existential tension between the complementary roles of hierarchy and religious which is not likely to change. In an ideal ecclesial world, the different roles are held in creative tension, with mutual respect and appreciation, in an environment of open dialogue, for the building up of the whole Church.”

“Through it all, we can only go forward with truthfulness and integrity. Hopefully we can do so in a way that contributes to the good of religious life everywhere and to the healing of the fractured Church we so love.”

Lucerne 15th November 2012 / Dr Erwin Koller

Contact address: Erwin Koller, Stauberbergstrasse, CH-8610 Uster, Switzerland  
Vice president Herbert-Haag-Foundation for Freedom in the Church  
E-Mail: [erwin.koller@setarkos.com](mailto:erwin.koller@setarkos.com); Phone: +41 44 940 8642