

320 E. Ripa
St. Louis, MO
January 6, 1985: Marquette University Archives, Used with permission.

Dear Sister Mary Margaret,

From January 4-6, Sister Dorothy Olinger, from Mankato presented to the Social Concerns, Mission and Spiritual development Councils a workshop entitled "Toward a New World View." While we're discussing "New Ways of Seeing: Feminist Movement," the topic of our sisters involvement in the signing of the New York Times ad surfaced.

We are concerned with the "no win" solution proposed by SCRIS: retraction or dismissal. Though abortion appears to be the main issue, during discussion and dialogue in both small and large groups we identified the following as vital issues:

- 1) the individual's right to freedom of expression: (Is this being denied?)
- 2) authority – power struggle: (Are we caught in the middle of a Vatican power struggle?)
- 3) scandal given to others: (What kind of image of the church is being given by the "either/or" manner of response?)
- 4) membership in a religious congregation: (Can this be terminated by authority outside the congregation?)
- 5) secrecy on the part of the Vatican in handling this matter: (Why were some some of the people associated with SCRIS and/or the American Apostolic Delegate not informed of the proceedings?)
- 6) language: (Can someone of another culture and language interpret accurately what this ad was expressing?)
- 7) manner of response: (Why was there no dialog or consultation with those involved before a sanction was imposed?)

As thinking women we believe there are more options that these two proposed by SCRIS and we encourage you to continue dialoging with the Vatican officials and other Major Superiors involved. Taking other alternatives into consideration would it be possible for the Congregations to reach a common stance in response to this matter? Such a course seems to be less devisive within the church.

Thank you for communicating your concerns to us and know that we are just sharing our corporate reflections with you (not expecting an answer.) Like the three kings (whose feast of Epiphany was being celebrated) we are also visionaries, adventurers, and voyagers. You have our prayers, love and support.

Sincerely yours, (signed by 20 School Sisters of Notre Dame).