

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS
RELEASES PUBLIC STATEMENT CONCERNING
“CRISIS OF ALLEGATIONS OF CLERICAL ABUSE”**

(Silver Spring, MD) April 5, 2002 – The following is a public statement issued by the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).

As women religious leaders who are an integral part of our church and society, we, the Executive Committee of LCWR, are deeply troubled by the current escalating crisis of allegations of clerical abuse.

We are saddened by

- The suffering and violation of the victims and their families
- The actions of the perpetrators
- The allegations against the falsely accused
- The way in which the actions of some have implicated the whole clergy
- The institutional Church’s pattern of silence
- The erosion of trust in church leadership among the faithful
- The deep hurt experienced in all parts of the Body of Christ

Acknowledging the wrong that has been done, aware of the hurt and the scandal, we ask how can we use this moment to address the causes that permitted the current crisis. This calls for openness, radical honesty, and transparency. We believe that, in this crisis, there is an opportunity for us to be self-critical rather than defensive, thereby creating together a more whole and healthy church. We reach out compassionately to all who have been affected: the victims and their families, our brother priests and bishops, the unjustly accused and the perpetrators. We support the countless priests and bishops who continue in faithful and selfless ministry in the Church.

In spite of the dark place in which we find ourselves at this time, we are filled with hope. We know that we are all part of a broken world; and, in our faith, we trust that the brokenness can be healed. The journey toward wholeness is long and hard. We see this time as part of the Paschal experience moving toward a new Pentecost. As we journey together, we are confident that the Spirit is working in us to renew our Church and our world.

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) has more than 1,000 members who are the elected leaders of their religious orders, representing 75,000 U.S. Catholic sisters. The Conference develops leadership, promotes collaboration within church and society and serves as a voice for systemic change.

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