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Apostolic Carmel Sr. Maria Nirmalini (CNS/GSR/Thomas Scaria)



by Thomas Scaria

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Apostolic Carmel Sr. Maria Nirmalini, who heads Catholic women religious in India, has been appointed a consultor to the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life for five years.

The appointment by Pope Leo XIV was formally announced in the Aug. 6 Vatican bulletin.

"I am humbled by this appointment and seek the prayer support of all my religious brothers and sisters in India," Nirmalini told Global Sisters Report Aug 7.

While accepting this offer, she expressed the hope that she would be able to function from India without "relocating to Rome."

She will join other appointees, Loreto Sr. Patricia Murray, former executive secretary of the International Union of Superiors General; Sr. Chiara Lorenzato, superior general of the Franciscan Clarist Congregation; Teresian Sr. María Rosaura González Casas, pro-director of the Institute of Psychology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome; Sr. Mary (Makamatine) Lembo, vicar general of the Sisters of St. Catherine Virgin and Martyr; and Cordimarian Sr. Maria do Disterro Rocha Santos, president of the Conference of Religious of Brazil.

Currently, Nirmalini serves as the vice president of the Conference of Religious India and the head of over 103,000 women religious in the country.

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While accepting the Vatican appointment as a recognition to the church in India, some said her absence in the country will be a loss, especially to the women religious.

"She has given an able leadership to the consecrated life in India as the head of the Conference of Women Religious and initiated several wellness programs among them," said Claretian Fr. George Kannanthanam, who has worked with Nirmalini for several years in reaching out to people living in poverty.

He also said Nirmalini is a fitting person for the consultor post as she has already served the Indian religious in the field of mental health promotion, leadership training and personal empowerment programs.

Nirmalini said her new role may address various challenges in religious life globally, accompanying the religious to live out their charisms and contribute to the church's mission.

"I see the appointment as an opportunity to experience global sisterhood and brotherhood and walk together for the common good," she said.