

## Sister Italy

by Michelle K. Beckett



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An Italian priest said he is organising the world's first online beauty contest for nuns to give them more visibility within the Catholic Church and to erase the stereotype that they are all old and dour.

The "Miss Sister 2008" contest will start in September on a blog run by the Rev. Antonio Rungi and will give nuns from around the world a chance to showcase their work and their image.

Nuns will fill out a profile including information about their life and vocation as well as a photograph. Father Rungi stressed that nuns were not being invited to parade in bathing suits, saying they can decide to pose with the traditional veil or with their heads uncovered. He added that the idea for the contest was suggested by nuns.

Visitors to the site will have a month to "vote for the nun they consider a model."

The contest drew criticism from the association of Catholic teachers. "It's an initiative that belittles the role of nuns who have dedicated themselves to God," says the group's president, Alberto Giannino.