Blog



A demonstrator in San Diego holds a placard April 5 urging support for a bill in Congress called For the People Act, which backers say will expand voting rights and change campaign finance laws to reduce the influence of money in politics. Opponents say it will unconstitutionally federalize how states handle their elections. (CNS/Reuters/Mike Blake)



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Editor's note: *Global Sisters Report's blog, Monday Starter, is a weekly feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.*



In a joint statement, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the National Black Sisters' Conference addressed the "critical importance" of ensuring all people have the right to vote regardless of their race, party affiliation, ZIP code and economic situation.

The statement was released ahead of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Action Day, May 8, an event spanning 100 cities that combined street and virtual activism to protest the filibuster and support the Voting Rights Act.

As women of faith, the statement said, the sisters "strongly oppose all attempts to restrict that participation [in our democracy] by limiting the sacred right to vote," noting that the "vibrancy of our democracy" is dependent on that accessibility.

Noting the discriminatory practices that led up to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — intimidation and violence, literacy tests, property tests and grandfather clauses — the conferences said "it falls to us to continue their work," as the right to vote "is under attack once again."

The statement also cited Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, which reminds sisters that the vocation is inherently political: "An authentic faith — which is never comfortable or completely personal — always involves a deep desire to change the world ... [The church] cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice."

LCWR and NBSC said sisters must support legislation that ensures all people the ability to exercise their right to vote and call out and oppose elected officials at all levels who continue measures reminiscent of the Jim Crow era.

"It is long past time we established national standards for voting to ensure all of us have a voice in decisions that affect our lives and protect our common home," the statement concluded. "We call on the Senate to immediately take up the For the People Act and we call on members of both the house and Senate to introduce the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act."

Advertisement

Amityville Dominicans help build new well in Salvadoran village

A new well and clean running water are now accessible to the homes of 38 families in El Salvador thanks to a mission trip that helped the village of Amityville Dominican Sr. Flor Buruca develop relationships in the local community to continue this effort.

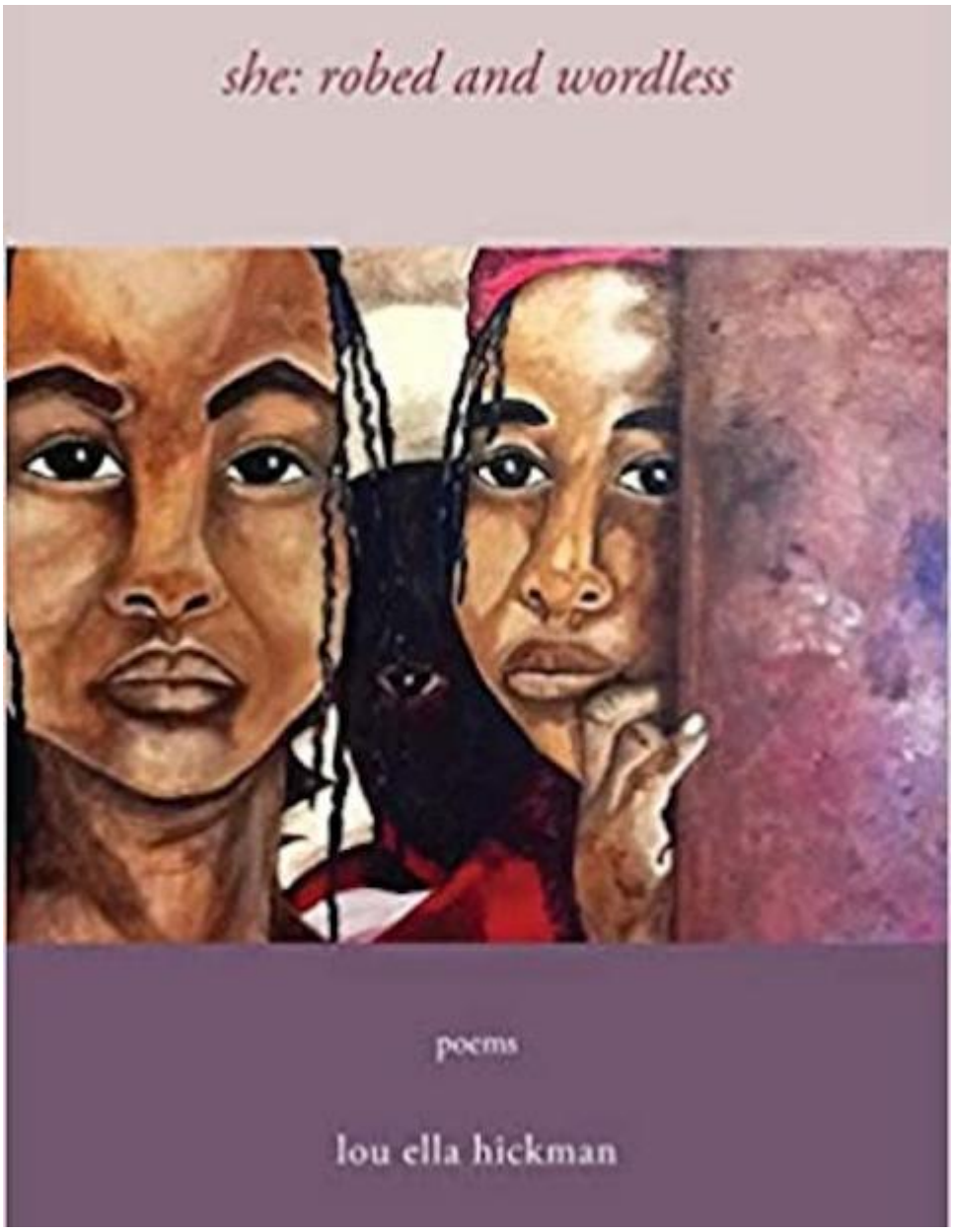
Now, the Village of Once and the community of Sol Naciente (a community of displaced people) no longer have to share well water with a neighboring town. They once had to walk miles several times a week and store the water in unsanitary conditions. Now, for $6 a month per family, clean water is delivered to the villagers' homes.

Molloy College and Dominican College participated in the mission trip that prompted the project.

"My heart is filled with joy knowing the beautiful people of Sol Naciente and the neighboring Village of Once are now receiving clean water," Amityville Dominican Sr. Diane Capuano, former campus minister at Molloy College, said in a press release.

"This water project was a labor of love. I can't wait to go back to Sol Naciente to see the well and, of course, to be with the people. Hopefully, a group of us will return in

January 2022 to continue to assist Sr. Flor in this Dominican Mission."



Cover art for "she: robed and wordless" by Sr. Lou Ella Hickman (Courtesy of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament)

Sister's poems are the basis for classical music concert

A handful of Sr. Lou Ella Hickman's poems from her book, *she: robed and wordless*, have been set to music and will be featured in the Marshall Weinberg Spring 2021 Classical Music Season concert May 11 in New York City.

James Lee III, a famous composer, brought five of Hickman's poems to life with the help of opera star Susanna Phillips, clarinet and star soloist Anthony McGill, pianist Myra Huang, and others.

Hickman is a member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Corpus Christi, Texas. Her poems and articles have been published in the anthology *After Shocks: Poetry of Recovery for Life-Shattering Events* and magazines.

Tickets are $20 and can be purchased here; for those who cannot attend in person, a concert stream will be available for a week after the broadcast, with a link emailed to you after purchase.

Giving Voice Encuentro on liberation, justice and healing set for August

Building upon a previous session that focused on cultural diversity and inclusion, this year's "Giving Voice Encuentro: Liberation, Justice, and Healing" will be held Aug. 19-22 at the Carmelite Spiritual Center outside Chicago. All participants of Giving Voice are invited.

In order to "create a space of encounter as we continue to engage in the process of liberation, justice, and healing," the press release said, Giving Voice will host three virtual pre-work sessions once a month before the in-person *encuentro* (Spanish for "gathering" or "encounter"). Those sessions will be facilitated by AnaYelsi Velasco-Sanchez.

All Giving Voice members are invited, regardless of their plans to attend the August *encuentro*, but the three sessions are mandatory for those who do plan to attend the in-person event in August. A single registration fee of $75 covers all three pre-work sessions, and registration for those monthly sessions is now open.

Anyone who registers for the pre-work sessions will automatically be included in an email list when it is time to register for the *encuentro*. The press release adds that if you cannot make all three sessions and are still interested in attending the *encuentro*, email Sophie Vodvarka at sophie@giving-voice.org to discuss options.



A baby sits in his stroller March 23 at La Colaborativa in Chelsea, Massachusetts, while his mother fills out paperwork for help with her rent payment. (CNS/Reuters/Brian Snyder)

US federal judge strikes down eviction moratorium

After almost a year of moratoriums against evictions because of the coronavirus — a move that began under former President Donald Trump and continued under President Joe Biden — a federal judge struck down the nationwide pause on evictions May 5.

The New York Times reported that the decision by Judge Dabney Friedrich of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia "is the most significant federal ruling on the moratorium yet, and follows three similar federal court decisions. The Justice Department immediately filed an appeal, and requested an emergency stay on the order pending a decision by the higher court."

Sisters involved in housing previously told Global Sisters Report that while the moratorium on evictions is helpful in the short term, the mounting bills it induces for

tenants inspired them to create fundraisers to alleviate their debts. Read more about how sisters are helping tenants.