Blog



by Chris Herlinger

View Author Profile
cherlinger@ncronline.org

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Editor's note: *Global Sisters Report's 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.*

Amid an alarming rise of new COVID-19 cases in the United States, the president of the Catholic Health Association of the United States is imploring all health care workers in the country to get vaccinated.

Doing so, will help "protect themselves, their co-workers, their patients, their loved ones, and their neighbors," said Mercy Sr. Mary Haddad in a July 23 statement, adding the association "also strongly supports member health systems as they take necessary steps toward ensuring as many health care workers as possible receive the vaccines."

"The alarming rise in COVID-19 cases over the past several weeks due to the Delta variant and vaccine hesitancy is a stark reminder of the serious health threat the virus poses, particularly for the elderly and individuals with underlying medical conditions," Haddad said.

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"The escalation in COVID-19 cases also threatens our ability to be in communion with one another. Attending family gatherings, visiting friends and worshiping together safely are all critically important to our individual and collective well-being."

The high level of vaccine hesitancy, she said, may force authorities "to reinstate restrictions to stem the spread of the virus. Limiting social interaction, economic activity and in-person learning would be a step backwards as we try to emerge from the pandemic. Such restrictions would also disproportionately impact essential workers and families who are struggling financially."

Haddad said the COVID-19 vaccines have been proven to be safe and highly effective at mitigating the risk of infection. "Those who are vaccinated are protecting themselves and contributing to the common good by helping reduce the spread of the virus," she added.

Those serving in Catholic health care facilities have accepted a call "to provide compassionate healing to the sick and suffering, especially those who are the most vulnerable in our society. It is imperative that all of us who have dedicated our careers to bring hope and healing to others answer this call by getting vaccinated."

In agreeing to get vaccinated, Haddad said, "Catholic health care professionals working in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities and in the community give witness to Christ's call to love one another."

The Catholic Health Association of the United States is the national leadership organization of the Catholic health ministry in the U.S. It represents the largest

nonprofit provider of health care services in the nation. CHA has been urging Americans to become vaccinated through its #LoveThyNeighbor social media campaign.



Sr. Kathie Uhler, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, New York, is the founder of the House of Prayer for All People on the grounds of Trinity Episcopal Church in Gulph Mills, Pa. (Courtesy of House of Prayer)

House of Prayer opens under leadership of Franciscan sister

The House of Prayer for All People, on the grounds of Trinity Episcopal Church in Gulph Mills, Pennsylvania, opened to the public July 11.

The founder and residential contact for the House of Prayer is Sr. Kathie Uhler, a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, New York.

The facility is described as "not a church or a mosque or a synagogue but a place made holy by the people who come there." It includes a hospitality room, "where core group members offer welcome; the prayer room; and accommodation for two members," said the Trinity site.

The idea for the ministry is based on Uhler's experience with the Palestine/Hebron team of Christian Peacemakers.

The mission is a collaboration of Trinity parish, the board of directors of the House of Prayer and the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany.

Sister of Charity of Leavenworth named new director of A Nun's Life Ministry

Sr. Rejane Cytacki has been named executive director of A Nun's Life Ministry, an online ministry founded in 2006.

Cytacki, a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, succeeds Sr. Maxine Kollasch, a co-founder of the ministry.

"Sister Rejane's experience in leadership, administration, and pastoral ministry will help advance the mission of A Nun's Life into the future, building on a solid foundation," Julie Brown, who chairs the ministry's board of directors, said in a July 29 statement.

"Sister Rejane resonates deeply with the mission of A Nun's Life, which is to help people discover and grow in their vocation, wherever God is calling," said board member Sr. Jessi Beck, a member of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "Throughout her ministries, she has encouraged people to be attuned to God's presence in their lives and be open to God's call of love and care for one another and the world."

In the announcement, board members praised Kollasch, a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of Monroe, Michigan, for her work in co-founding the ministry with Sr. Julie Vieira, also an Immaculate Heart of Mary sister.

"We are grateful to Sister Maxine for her visionary leadership and commitment to mission over these past 15 years," said board member Sr. Jan Cebula, a former liaison for Global Sisters Report and a Sister of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa. "The founding spirit of joy, creativity, and innovation continues to energize the ministry and the communities it serves. "

Cytacki previously served as executive director of Eco-Justice Center, an environmental education nonprofit organization in Racine, Wisconsin, a ministry sponsored by the Racine Dominicans. Prior to her work at the Eco-Justice Center, Cytacki served in campus ministry at the University of St. Mary in Leavenworth and as an elementary school teacher in Denver and Kansas City, Missouri. She holds master's degrees from the University of Kansas and St.-Mary-of-the-Woods College.

Cytacki is active in Giving Voice, a network of young Roman Catholic sisters striving to empower young women religious to live their vocation fully.

Founded in 2006, A Nun's Life Ministry, according to their website "helps people discover and grow in their vocation. A Nun's Life connects people with Catholic Sisters and the tradition of religious life through podcasts, videos, livestreaming events and blogs at aNunsLife.org and on social media." A Nun's Life Ministry engages with people in 175 countries.

Good Shepherd group advocates for path to citizenship

The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd's National Advocacy Center held a July 27 vigil across the U.S. Capitol urging Congress to approve legislation seeking a path for citizenship for undocumented essential workers, "Dreamers" and those with Temporary Protected Status.

Citing the workers' pandemic-related work, Fran Eskin-Royer, executive director of The National Advocacy Center said in advance of the vigil, "Who was underneath the PPE saving lives and offering comfort? Who was behind the mask picking tomatoes and ringing the cash register? They risked their lives. Their blood, sweat and tears held America together. They were essential; they should be recognized as one of us."

The National Advocacy Center educates and advocates on social justice issues, and advocates at the U.S. federal level for "people living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations."