Blog

Monday Starter



by Soli Salgado

View Author Profile
ssalgado@ncronline.org

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Environmental activists protest June 30 outside the White House in Washington. Franciscan Sr. Joan Brown urged participants in a July 26 webinar hosted by the Laudato Si' Movement (formerly the Global Catholic Climate Movement) and their congregations to consider divesting from fossil fuels. (CNS/Reuters/Evelyn Hockstein)

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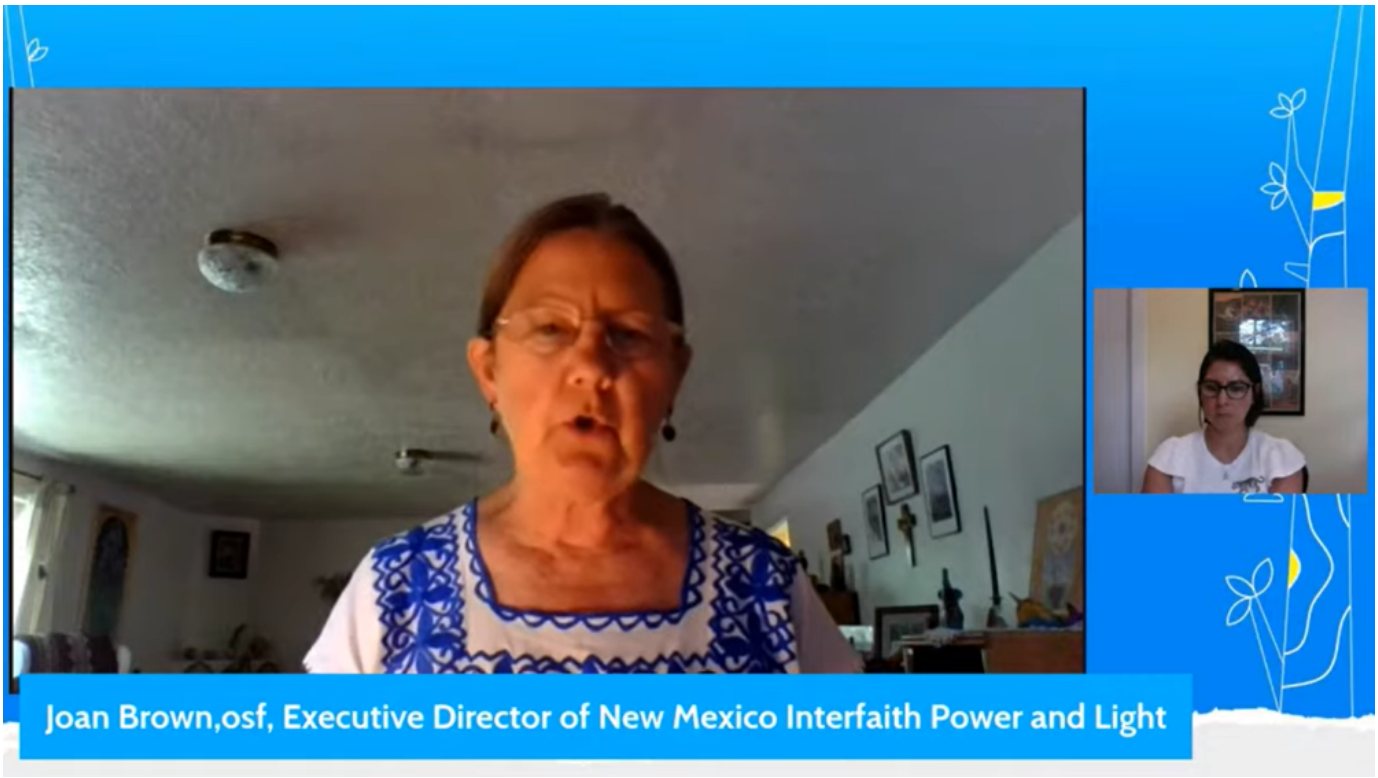
Editor's note: *Global Sisters Report's Monday Starter is a weekly feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.*

Rochester Franciscan Sr. Joan Brown spoke from experience as she urged participants in a July 26 webinar hosted by the Laudato Si' Movement (formerly the Global Catholic Climate Movement) and their congregations to consider divesting from fossil fuels.

Brown, the executive director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light, said the decision is a response to the urgency of climate change, "seeing that as the most critical ethical and moral issue of our moment," she said. "We have that spiritual and ethical responsibility to do what we can."

She noted that in addition to financial divestments, her congregation has also incorporated energy-efficient habits, such as using solar energy at their motherhouse.

Caring for the environment should be considered an expression of the corporal works of mercy, Brown said.



Rochester Franciscan Sr. Joan Brown speaks at a July 26 webinar on divestment from fossil fuels and mining hosted by the Laudato Si' Movement. (GSR screenshot)

"You can't give water to the thirsty if there isn't clean water," she said, adding that providing "clean air for the gasping" should be part of those acts.

Although her community spent decades working to influence oil and gas companies "to do the right thing," Brown said, "we saw that was having little effect."

And while many sisters felt it was important to keep fossil fuel stocks so they can participate in responsible corporate negotiating, Brown said they ultimately decided, "No, they had a chance. We need to move in this direction."

Since then, she said they've been surprised to see their finances grow as opposed to being jeopardized.

"That wasn't the intent for doing it, but it shows that when we do the right things, it's important just to do them and not worry about those things, and somehow, we'll be taken care of," she said.

Quoting St. Francis of Assisi — "I have done what is mine to do; may God teach you what is yours" — Brown closed by calling all Catholics to seek and claim what is theirs to do in this moment.

Related: With congregation-wide commitments, sisters are active in sustainable living

Registration open for theological formation courses

An institute for theological formation is inviting men and women religious in the Americas to participate in its second semester courses, which run from Aug. 16 to Dec. 6.

The Theological Institute for Religious Life in the Americas is an ecclesial, academic institution recently founded to promote theological, social and pastoral formation for religious life and pastoral leaders in the Americas.

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This semester's courses — which one can attend without previous involvement in the first semester — cover the following themes:

- Linking with the sacred in America: from the Indigenous and Afro world to the forms of consecrated life;
- Ways of approaching biblical texts today; and
- Our interrelated roots: theology of Christian ways of life.

Registration is open until Aug. 10. The biennium courses are offered in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Gun violence survivors speak April 29 on the National Mall in Washington. Sisters from Region 10 of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious are hosting a conversation on gun violence as a human rights and public health issue Aug. 11. (CNS/Reuters/Leah Millis)



Gun violence survivors speak April 29 on the National Mall in Washington. Sisters from Region 10 of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious are hosting a conversation on gun violence as a human rights and public health issue Aug. 11. (CNS/Reuters/Leah Millis)

LCWR Region 10 to host conversation about eliminating gun violence

Sisters from Region 10 of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious are hosting a conversation on gun violence as a human rights and public health issue at 3 p.m. Central time Aug. 11. The event is free and open to the public.

In this webinar, Region 10 (which includes Iowa, eastern Missouri and Nebraska) aims to discuss "reasonable measures that can be taken that would have immediate security implications," according to a press release, as well as ways to "address the underlying contributors to gun violence" and how to "create a culture of gun safety."

Panelists will include Sr. Donna Liette, a grief counselor and Missionary of the Precious Blood; Leslie Washington, an advocate and survivor of gun violence; and Kim Westerman, a gun violence prevention activist. Charish Badzinski, a writer and founder of Rollerbag Goddess Global Communications, will host the session.

Participants can join via Zoom or watch the livestream on YouTube. For more information, email Westerman at communications@csjcarondelet.org.



Staff and volunteers fill drive-through orders at the 2020 School Sisters of St. Francis' Sister Water Beer Garden in a Box fundraiser. (Courtesy of the School Sisters of St. Francis)

Franciscans' beer garden fundraiser continues through pandemic

The School Sisters of St. Francis in Milwaukee are continuing their beer garden fundraiser for the third year in a row and once again are adapting to the pandemic with a drive-through experience.

Attendees order their beer garden in a box ahead of time. Those in the area who wish to participate in the Aug. 14 fundraiser must preorder by Aug. 9.

The event, Sister Water Beer Garden, is named after St. Francis' "Canticle of the Creatures," which refers to "Sister Water" and "Brother Wind." According to the website, proceeds benefit sisters around the world, including:

- Sisters in their formation house in Tanzania "who otherwise would have to drink and bathe in water with dangerously high mineral content";
- Sisters in rural India "who can use clean-burning bio-gas generators to produce convenient, inexpensive energy for convents, schools, and clinics";
- Sisters "who can harness solar energy to light and cool classrooms and living spaces in scorching summer heat"; and
- Schoolchildren in India and Peruvian families "who receive clean water from our rain harvest and filtering system."

Some of the beers listed as part of the fundraiser this year are the Ale Mary, Our Lager, and the Righteous Root Beer.

Related: Adapted for COVID times, sisters' beer garden fundraiser breaks record