Blog



From left: Sr. Jane Wakahiu, head of the Catholic Sisters Initiative at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation; Gail DeGeorge, editor of Global Sisters Report; Ursuline Sr. Michele Morek, GSR sister liaison; Benedictine Sr. Helga Leija, sister liaison for Spanish; and Soli Salgado, newly appointed international editor, at the GSR exhibit booth at the 2022 assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in St. Louis, Missouri, in August. (Courtesy of Gail DeGeorge)



by Gail DeGeorge

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Expanding the reach of Global Sisters Report into Latin America and to Spanish-language audiences has been a long-sought-after goal. We are pleased to announce some changes that will help us in this effort while also elevating our coverage in other parts of the world.

Soli Salgado, GSR Latin America regional correspondent, has been promoted to international editor. This new position combines the part-time editing work that Stephanie Summers did for Global Sisters Report from 2014 until her retirement in June along with an expansion enabled by GSR's renewed grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and support by individual donors. We are in the process of hiring a new Latin America regional correspondent who will report and write stories from the region and help oversee a network of freelancers. (The job description is available here.)

Sr. Helga Leija joins Global Sisters Report as a trained and experienced translator from the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas. She will work with sisters who write in Spanish for a new Spanish-language edition. She will also select and translate columns from the English version of Global Sisters Report to publish in Spanish.

Sister Helga will work with Sr. Michele Morek, an Ursuline Sister of Mount St. Joseph, Kentucky, and Sr. Joyce Meyer, a Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in fulfilling a central part of GSR's mission to be "a dynamic online community that reports on and gives voice to women religious around the world."

Global Sisters Report, along with National Catholic Reporter and EarthBeat, are in the process of a website redesign and an upgrade of our content management system. GSR will offer a translation option that will enable users to read stories and columns in multiple languages in a largely automated system. We will rely on readers to tell us of egregious translation issues, and we will notify the translation system, but we do not anticipate having the people power to do full translations of all of our content in multiple languages (though how exciting that would be!).

For the Spanish-language edition, "Global Sisters Report en Español," the vision is to curate a selection of stories by journalists and columns by sisters published in English and translated into Spanish, plus new content produced in Spanish. Much of that content will also be translated and used on the English-language website. Look for these changes to roll out by the end of this year.



Soli Salgado meets Pope Francis in 2019 during a private audience with Talitha Kum, the international network for sisters against human trafficking. Salgado was reporting on Talitha Kum's 10th anniversary celebration in Rome. (Courtesy of Soli Salgado)

Before becoming Latin American correspondent, Soli — who grew up in Wichita, Kansas — joined National Catholic Reporter as a Bertelsen intern in 2015. Even then, an assignment sent her to Latin America: Ahead of the Synod of Bishops on families, Soli traveled to her birthplace of Buenos Aires, Argentina, to write about the families who knew Jorge Bergoglio long before he became Pope Francis. The ensuing three-part series earned Soli a Catholic Press Award.

As part of Global Sisters Report staff since 2016, Soli has reported on the social justice ministries of Catholic sisters along the U.S.-Mexico border and in the Caribbean and Latin America. Her reporting on Talitha Kum, the international umbrella network of sisters against human trafficking, included meeting Pope Francis in 2019 during the organization's 10th anniversary. In addition to reporting on migration from the United States and other national stories, Soli has written about the Nuns and Nones movement since its inception, which she says is one of her favorite topics.

"I'll miss reporting and getting to witness firsthand the sisters' ministries, especially since they'd show me parts of the world that I'd never see otherwise," Soli said. "But getting to work with freelancers all over the world will be an exciting education of its own. I'm honored to join the team in this new way and help plan creative coverage going forward."



Sr. Helga Leija cantors April 15 during Good Friday liturgy at St. Scholastica Chapel in Mount St. Scholastica Monastery in Atchison, Kansas. (Courtesy of the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica/Julie Ferraro)

Sister Helga grew up in Brownsville, Texas, speaking two languages and living between two cultures. She holds a degree in translation studies from the University of Texas at Brownsville and a master's degree in religious studies from the University of the Incarnate Word.

She entered religious life after she graduated from college in 2004. Her ministry experience took her to diverse classrooms as a preschool, elementary and high school teacher in bilingual and dual-language classrooms. She also taught briefly in Kenya.

During this missionary time, she began to discern the call of God to move into a more contemplative setting. God led her from an apostolic community to a monastic one, and she is now in transition to the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica.

She has volunteered for U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking and more recently began volunteering for Translators without Borders. She also has extensive experience interpreting for congregations during chapters and reunions and translating canonical documents such as constitutions.

She enjoys art journaling, watercolors, and cooking Mexican food. She has a Spanish podcast on Spotify and Apple Podcasts, "Orando los Salmos desde el Monasterio" ("Praying the Psalms from the Monastery"), where she prays individual psalms in a contemplative way, especially meant to provide a reflective listening experience for people who are blind.

Her previous work for Global Sisters Report includes being part of a panel to assess automated translation systems and working as an interpreter and translator on a Q&A with Sr. Ianire Angulo Ordorika, a professor of theology at Loyola University Andalusia in Granada, Spain. She was also part of the GSR team at the Leadership Conference of Women Religious assembly in August.

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Global Sisters Report launched in April 2014 and has since grown to an award-winning publication for its coverage of Catholic sisters, their ministries and religious life around the world with an estimated average of 100,000 readers monthly. In addition to news, information, stories and columns, GSR has introduced a classroom edition, an enhanced resources section and a special page that shows how sisters' ministries help fulfill the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

GSR also recently introduced "Women of Faith: Honoring Catholic Sisters Killed in Service in Africa," a memorial page that will expand to include other regions of the world. More about Global Sisters Report can be found here.

Please join us in welcoming Soli and Sister Helga to their new roles. Your prayers and help are appreciated as we embark on this ambitious and exciting expansion of Global Sisters Report's mission.