Voices of Sisters
Social Justice



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Editor's note: *Ursuline Sr. Michele Morek, Global Sisters Report's sister liaison since 2017, is retiring. Sister Michele wove a strong sense of community among our far-flung network of sister and associate columnists. Her joy, enthusiasm and creativity can never be replaced, but we are excited to have Benedictine Sr. Helga Leija continue in that role to expand GSR's reach among the "global sisterhood."*

Some time ago, a former nun approached me, asking me to accompany her to the diocesan pastoral center. She wanted to print a paid ad in the diocesan magazine, as she was looking for a small house to run a home for the elderly and destitute. She got an aggressive response from the editor, who said, "You have to have permission from the bishop."

Recently, I sent an article for publication in the annual edition, but I got a similar response from the editor.

I checked the diocesan magazines of the last two to three years, and was shocked to see so few women writers there. The writing was dominated by the male perspective.

It was 2017 when I sent my first column to the Global Sisters Report project of the National Catholic Reporter, and I got a wonderful response from the female column editor, Ursuline Sr. Michele Morek.

After my column "An integrated, peaceful world" was posted, I got some comments from some priest readers here in India, that my English was not good, and that there were grammatical mistakes.

I argued back, saying, "The editors at Global Sisters Report are excellent. They sent my column back and forth until it was fine-tuned for final approval by the copy desk."

Even then, the priests tried to discourage me from writing for GSR.

It was my inner voice that prompted me to continue writing for GSR, knowing that the editors there are not editing just the syllables but also ensuring that the uniqueness of our voices is heard.

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Every being, including the environment, is a victim of various crises triggered by abuse of power, money, conscience and every sort of violence. These are deep times calling for deep voices — perhaps feminine voices — to be raised.

Those days, I heard readings about Mother Mary: "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart" (Luke 2:19) and "His mother stored up all these things in her heart" (Luke 2:51). And I found my heavy heart responding with a deep sigh, saying to myself, "It is high time to stop the nonsense of keeping everything in the heart. No more secrecy: Voice out things hurting your heart and heal yourself."

Now, whenever I hear this quoted — "A cry is heard in Ramah — deep anguish and bitter weeping. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted — for her children are gone" (Jeremiah 31:15) — I think today's Rachels are represented by consecrated women religious and their associates or oblates, who are voicing the lamentation and weeping of women, the poor and the environmental crisis everywhere.

There is great lamentation all over the world, calling for the voices of daughters to rise up and cry out. You have nothing to lose but the chains of rules and regulations. Your voices are divinely ordained and prophetically consecrated. Do not allow anyone to cripple or snub your voices; your voices will bring salvific judgment to this unjust world.



Ursuline Sr. Michele Morek (GSR photo)

The voices of the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council for dialogue, ecumenism and collegiality are calling for conversion and reform through the synodal pillars:

communion, participation and mission. Today, the synod is asking every baptized person to raise their voice. Let the voice of women be heard through preaching the Gospel — a practice that has been male-dominated from Adam and Eve's time.

Global Sisters Report column editor Sr. Michele Morek not only edited the syllables of the columns, but she diligently tried to preserve the authentic voices of consecrated women religious, painstakingly fine-tuning their contributions to the integral cosmic liberation.

Thus was built a prophetically dynamic online community of sisters, giving voice to another church and another world, where "all are one" is possible.

As Joan Chittister said: "The moment a woman comes home to herself, the moment she knows that she has become a person of influence, an artist of her life, a sculptor of her universe, a person with rights and responsibilities who is respected and recognized, the resurrection of the world begins."

Global Sisters Report has brought the rapid evolution of a network of acquaintances and voices, through sisters writing from all over the world. History has witnessed that in every era there were prophets who appeared "wonky" and perhaps weird to the people of their time. They were imperfect, but they gave perfect vision of the future — giving a timeless message in a timely way to the world.

It may be that GSR voices are not perfect, but they are timely, calling for disarmament, using the powerful weapon of their prophetic voices to liberate every being in captivity.

Maya Angelou wrote: "Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning."

Thank you, Global Sisters Report and Michele, for helping us give voice to our words. The strength of our collective voices is great, and when millions of voices are raised simultaneously, the change is inevitable.

Related: Sr. Helga Leija named column editor following retirement of Sr. Michele Morek

I doubt if Michele has rejected any column, but definitely has encouraged every writer to go through editing several times if necessary — because she knew everyone's voice matters. She encouraged the sisters to write from their hearts, knowing that the heart and voice are intimately connected.

Global Sisters Report has expanded the definition of prophetism and widened the boundaries of our vision for tomorrow. All over the world a critical transition is happening. The writing of the sisters has broadened the church vision of the triple dialogue with cultures, religions and the poor. They are leading the church to true dialogue. Through their columns and ministries, the sisters are spreading the Spirit and Word.

Dialogue is taking place. The world hears the cry of the poor from every corner of the globe through sisters' writing in GSR.

Global Sisters Report has seeded the leadership of women writers with new global vision, bringing the light of each soul to the darkness all over the world. It has attracted wisdom stories from around the world — stories that have provided an astonishing wellspring of optimism, courage and inspiration for worldwide readers — evangelizing on the cosmic oneness of all.