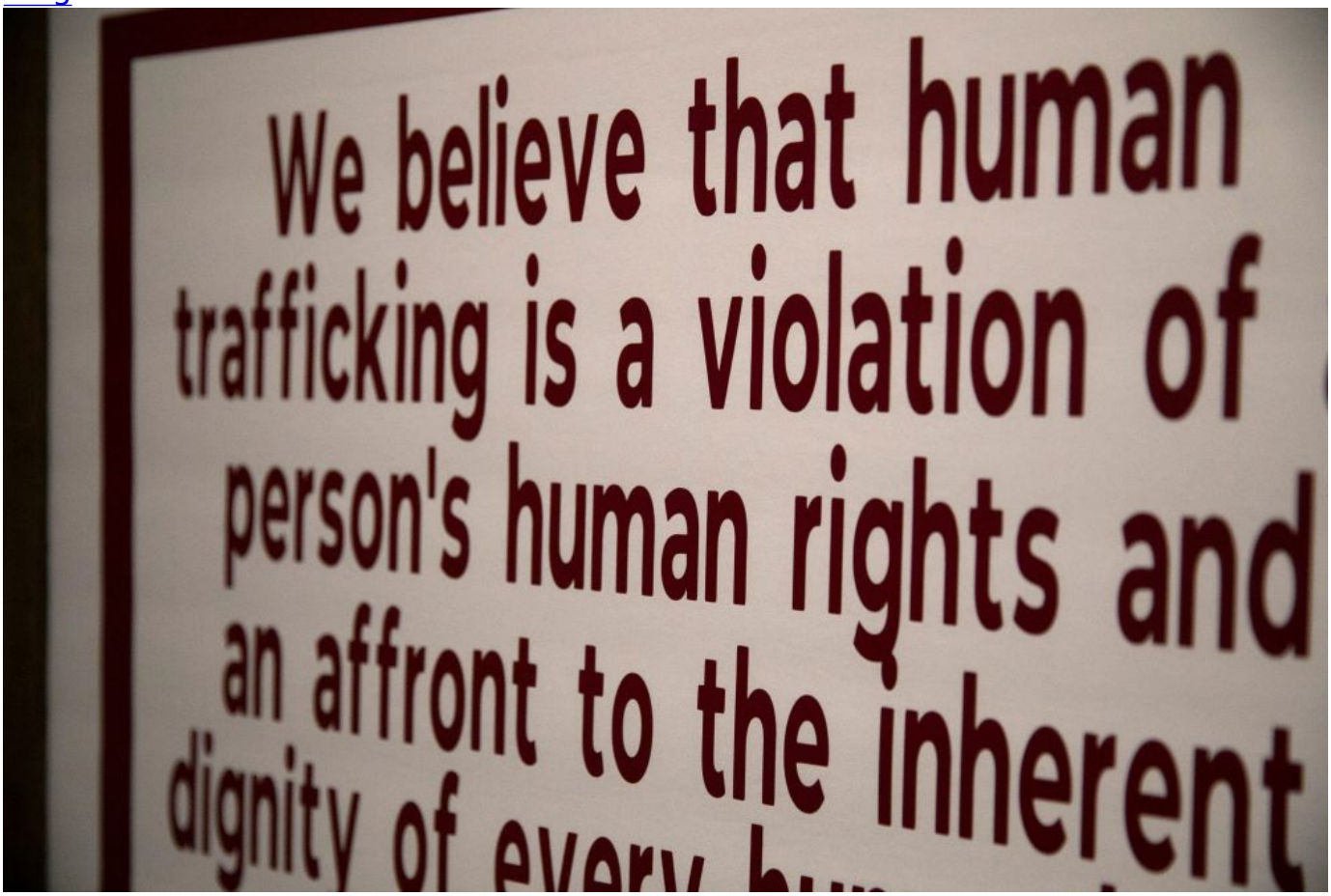
Blog



A sign about human trafficking is seen at the Motel X interactive exhibit at the National Underground Freedom Center in Cincinnati Jan. 10, 2020. (OSV News/The Enquirer via Reuters/Liz Dufour)



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



Catholic sisters will finally get some of the recognition they deserve for their worldwide efforts to stop human trafficking.

Arise, an anti-slavery organization based in London, is partnering with the International Union of Superiors General and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to sponsor the first-ever Sisters Anti-Trafficking Awards. The Hilton Foundation funds Global Sisters Report.

Laureates will be chosen for three areas: The Common Good Award for courage and creativity in addressing exploitation, the Servant Leadership Award for excellence in network building, and the Human Dignity Award for lifetime achievement in addressing exploitation. Each of the three laureates will receive £20,000 (about $26,000) to pledge to a development program of their choosing.

Officials say sisters help rescue victims, lobby government protection agencies, and coordinate significant international awareness-raising efforts, but there has never been adequate recognition of this work. There are more Catholic sisters working against trafficking than there are total employees of any of the largest anti-exploitation organizations, officials say, noting that Talitha Kum, the sisters' international network against human trafficking, has more than 6,000 members.

Organizers hope the awards will raise the profile of the contribution of Catholic sisters against human trafficking, help share knowledge and foster further collaborative anti-trafficking efforts between congregations and across the anti-trafficking sector, and broaden and deepen the protection of communities vulnerable to trafficking.

Nominations for this year's awards closed in June; the awards ceremony will be held in London Oct. 31.



Sr. Patricia Hayden, Sisters of Charity president (left), and Jeff Ginter, president of the Western Wildlife Corridor Board of Trustees, sign the official paperwork to transfer 73 acres of property from the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati to the Western Wildlife Corridor, Inc. (Photo courtesy of the Sisters of Charity)

Charity sisters donate land to wildlife preserve

The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati has given 73 acres of the Bender Mountain Nature Preserve to the Western Wildlife Corridor, a Cincinnati-based nonprofit nature conservancy land trust. It is the single largest gift the organization has received in its history.

"The Sisters of Charity are delighted that Western Wildlife Corridor has accepted this gift and agreed to ensure that this special property will remain undeveloped and available for people and wildlife to enjoy into the future," said Sr. Joanne Burrows,

who has been working with the organization throughout the process and is on the congregation's leadership team.

The land is located west of the Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse property and overlooks the Ohio River.

Burrows said Western Wildlife Corridor's generosity in protecting the land "ensures that a valuable wildlife throughway from the Mill Creek to the Indiana border remains unimpeded" and that the sisters' gift of the land "flows from the Sisters of Charity mission to care for all creation and reflects our ongoing commitment to live into the challenges articulated by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*'. Western Wildlife Corridor has been a wonderful neighbor and we are confident that they will love and protect the land as we have."

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The Sisters of Charity have been walking with the nonprofit Western Wildlife Corridor since the 1990s. Its mission is to protect, restore and preserve natural habitat, and provide education to foster connections with nature; with this land donation it manages nearly 400 acres of nature preserves, mainly forested hillsides, in the Ohio River Valley. Bender Mountain Nature Preserve is the biggest nature preserve Western Wildlife Corridor manages, and with this donation, the Bender preserve now exceeds more than 140 acres of protected habitat.

"We are so very grateful to the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. Their remarkable stewardship of this property extends back to the mid-19th century," says Jeff Ginter, president of the corridor's board of trustees. "Now well into the 21st century, we can say with confidence that this beautiful, undeveloped land will remain permanently protected. The mission statement of the Sisters of Charity includes the lovely phrase 'to care for all creation.' Permanently protecting this property certainly honors that and is an incredible legacy."



Sr. Nadia Coppa, president of the women's International Union of Superiors General, speaks to reporters at the presentation of the working document for the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican press office June 20. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

Sr. Coppa named to Vatican commission

Sr. Nadia Coppa, president of the International Union for Superiors General, has been named to the Vatican's Commission of the New Martyrs.

Established by Pope Francis ahead of the 2025 Jubilee, the Commission of the New Martyrs-Witnesses of the Faith will create a list of those martyred for their faith.

"Martyrs in the Church are witnesses of the hope that comes from faith in Christ and incites to true charity. Hope keeps alive the deep conviction that good is stronger than evil, because God in Christ conquered sin and death," Francis wrote in the letter establishing the commission. "The commission will continue the search, already begun on the occasion of the Great Jubilee of 2000, to identify the witnesses of the faith in this first quarter of the century and to continue in the future."

Coppa, a member of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, said in a written statement issued by UISG that she was surprised by the appointment.

"For a moment I even thought I had been confused with someone else," she said. "Then, on carefully re-reading about my appointment and the related news, I was overwhelmed with deep joy and gratitude."

The 10-member commission also includes the president of the men's Union of Superiors General.

"Martyrs are witnesses of hope and in this historical time, more than in others, we need to rekindle hope. Hope is the little virtue, but also the one which supports and encourages our journey, because it gives us the certainty of good defeating evil," Coppa said in the UISG statement. "Collecting the testimonies of the sisters and brothers, of all Christian denominations, who have given their lives to the extreme means preserving and safeguarding the precious treasure of their shed blood, that makes our church fruitful. Martyrdom is the climax of the path of Christian charity."

She said recognizing Christian martyrs can bring together a divided world.

"Nowadays, the phenomenon of persecution has taken on so many different forms, and the memory of martyrs can unite us, because the blood that had been shed for our faith makes us one body," the statement says. "Through the shared memory of martyrs, we can help each other overcome confessional barriers, acknowledging each other's value and walking together as brothers and sisters."