Blog



Israeli military vehicles move out of the Gaza Strip, as seen from southern Israel Jan. 15, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. (OSV News/Reuters/Amir Cohen)



by Dan Stockman

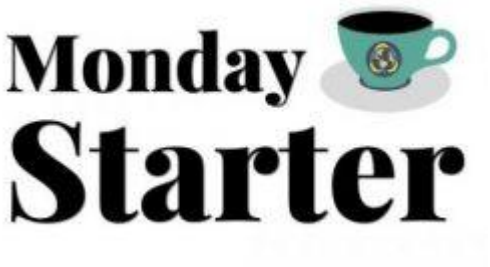
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***Editor's note**: Global Sisters Report's Monday Starter is a feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.*



The Loretto Community has joined the ever-growing chorus of voices calling for peace in the Middle East.

"Loretto grieves the deaths in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank," the community wrote in a Jan. 11 statement. "Tens of thousands of people have been killed, mostly women and children. All their homes in Gaza are gone. The survivors in Gaza are starving."

The issues are difficult, the sisters said, peace can be found and they are calling on the U.S. government to:

- Halt arms shipments to Israel;
- Continue diplomatic efforts of support for regional peacebuilding;
- Initiate an airlift of food and water and medical supplies to Gaza;
- Insist that Israel halt its military attacks on Gaza;
- Insist on the release of all the hostages from Hamas.

"The sorrow is immeasurable," they wrote, and "steps must be taken now."

Sisters of Bon Secours celebrate 200 years

The Sisters of Bon Secours will be celebrating a milestone anniversary on Jan. 24: 200 years of ministry since its founding in France. The congregation includes the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA, based in Marriottsville, Maryland, who began their work here in 1881.



Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski, the U.S. head of the Sisters of Bon Secours, is pictured in an undated photo. (CNS/Courtesy of Sisters of Bon Secours)

First known for providing health care to patients in their homes, the sisters now minister in parishes, hospitals, hospices, health clinics, retreat centers and home health and community programs around the globe and have health care facilities in the United States, Ireland and Peru.

"We know that our mission of compassion, healing and liberation is needed as much in our world today as it has ever been," said Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski in a press release. "Impelled by the Holy Spirit and renewed by the fire of our original call, we are moving toward the future with renewed energy and hope."

The congregation was formed in the wake of the French Revolution, and the original 12 sisters soon left their cloister for a ministry that was new for the Catholic Church: health care.

"Decades of nursing the sick, dying and poor have given us firsthand knowledge about the social determinants of health, and we have worked to address them by engaging in activities to aid the economically poor, promote social justice, work on issues such as decreasing gun violence and recognizing water as a human right," said Sr. Elaine Davia, area leader of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA. "We will continue to build on the rich tradition of those very strong women who founded our congregation while evolving to meet today's needs."



An image of St. Josephine Bakhita, a former Sudanese slave who became a nun, hangs from the facade of St. Peter's Basilica Oct. 1, 2000. (OSV News/Reuters/Paolo Cocco)

10th observance of prayer and awareness against human trafficking

On Feb. 8, religious sisters around the world will observe both the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita and the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking.

This year is the 10th observance of the day of prayer and awareness. Last year's theme, Journeying in Dignity, was chosen by an international group of young people involved in the fight against trafficking. This year's theme builds on that, adding "Listen, Dream, Act" to the phrase to make it a call to action.

The observance, under the auspices of the International Union of Superiors General, aims to:

- Pray together as brothers and sisters of all ages, cultures and faiths to end human trafficking and other forms of exploitation;
- Raise awareness about human trafficking at all levels — local churches, traditions, and communities;
- Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the day with partners and people of goodwill;
- Close the year dedicated to young people (2023-2024).

Advertisement

Hudson River sisters protect 179 acres through conservation easement

The Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt have permanently protected 179 acres of forest, farmland and streams in the towns of Goshen and Chester, about 40 miles up the Hudson River from New York City.

The Chronicle newspaper reported that the property includes 100 acres of mature, mixed deciduous forest, along with 52 acres of agricultural land comprising mostly state-designated "soils of statewide importance." The acreage features a creek and frontage along the Heritage Trail; the Blauvelt Dominicans will eventually allow public access to a portion of their property from the recreational trail.

The land will be protected through a conservation easement the sisters donated to the Orange County Land Trust.

"This beloved property has been a source of spirituality, kinship, leisure, and sustenance to (the sisters), so we know this conservation easement means a lot to them," said land trust executive director Jim Delaune, according to The Chronicle.

"We, the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, have dialogued internally since 2008 on how to assure to keep some portion of our land in its natural state or close to its natural state for the public good," Sr. Ellenrita Purcaro, who is on the congregation's leadership team, said in the article. "Using our Land Ethic as a guide throughout the process, we affirmed that the Earth is our home and each one of us has the responsibility to preserve the web of life. We restated our belief that the beauty of the Earth sustains and refreshes the human spirit. Thank you to all who contributed to bringing this dream to reality."