Blog



A voter carries a ballot to a polling place in Phoenix as Arizona's Democratic and Republican parties held primary elections on March 19. (OSV News/Reuters/Caitlin O'Hara)



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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.*



Like it or not, it is election season.

It's easy to complain about it, whatever your political leanings, and it's sometimes difficult to know where candidates really stand on issues. But it's even more difficult to choose candidates with Catholic social teaching in mind, especially with a two-party system in which neither party fits neatly into that box.

That's why Network, the Catholic social justice lobby, is offering a four-part election training series online. The series, "Informed, Engaged, and Committed," explores what it means to be a Catholic, multi-issue voter, how to engage people in challenging conversations about important issues, and show how you can take effective action.

Network officials say this series is just the first round of workshops in their 2024 election campaign, "Vote OUR Future: Everyone Thrives. No Exceptions!"

The workshops are free, but you have to register. Each session has more than one time slot to choose from, and you can choose a different time for each of the four sessions. Session One, for example, is at 7 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Tuesday, April 9, and 11 a.m. Eastern on Saturday, April 13. Sessions Two through Four have three time slots available; the last one is May 4.

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Podcast highlights Sisters of the Holy Cross

A student at St. Mary's College has created a podcast about the Sisters of the Holy Cross, who started the Catholic women's college in Notre Dame, Indiana, and have their motherhouse on its campus.

Tess Hayes created and hosts "The Stories of Our Sisters: A Living History," which is available on Spotify.

There are four episodes so far, plus a short welcome, and Hayes clearly loves and admires the women she talks to.

The sisters are funny and not afraid to raise their voices when something isn't right, she says in the introduction. "Really, this is a show with a bunch of my friends, and I want you to meet my friends."

Though the podcast is about Sisters of the Holy Cross specifically, it sounds as if it will be relevant to anyone interested in Catholic sisters in general. Hayes also wants to ensure that students at St. Mary's recognize the sisters' accomplishments.

"Not only is this podcast about them, it's about you, me, and anyone with a connection to St. Mary's," Hayes says. "We are the continuation of the legacy these women are a part of, and in order to continue their legacy, we must engage and listen to them."

A GSR staffer — who admits it may be because she's a St. Mary's alum — says just the introduction moved her to tears.



Dominican Sister of Peace Alvina Miller turned 106 on Feb. 17. (Courtesy of the Dominican Sisters of Peace)

Happy birthday, senior sisters!

It’s no secret that sisters seem to be blessed with longevity, but some are setting a new standard.

Sr. Alvina Miller turned 106 on Feb. 17. The Dominican Sister of Peace celebrated with a meal reminiscent of what her mother of German descent made her as a little girl: short ribs, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut and chocolate pudding.

The sisters at the motherhouse in Great Bend, Kansas, say Miller is one of the best students in their tai chi class.

Meanwhile, Sr. Evelyn Hurley turned 109 on March 7. She's a Sister of Charity of Nazareth, and finally retired from teaching at age 80. She drove until she was 99

and will celebrate her 90th jubilee as a sister this month.

I met Hurley in 2018 — back when she was a mere 103 — and she was definitely spunky and still today she is known for her memory. She got birthday cards from students she taught decades ago and can still recall where they sat in her classroom .

But even Hurley isn't the oldest: The oldest sister in the United States is believed to be Sr. Francis Dominici Piscatella of the Amityville Dominicans. Piscatella will turn 111 on April 20.

Piscatella had been the second-oldest nun in the country, but Sr. Vincent DePaul Hutton, a Dominican Sister of Peace, died in 2022 at age 111.

As for Miller, Hurley and Piscatella, here's hoping for many more birthdays to come.



Mohamed Santigie Bangura, 45, shows off the scars of the injuries he sustained during the 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone. Since the end of the civil war, religious sisters have been helping survivors and perpetrators deal with trauma and bringing them together to forgive each other and reconcile. (GSR photo/Doreen

Ajiambo)

GSR longlisted for global award

In its nearly 10 years of existence, Global Sisters Report has won many national awards. Now, it could be the winner of a global award, as well.

A story by Doreen Ajiambo, GSR's Africa/Middle East correspondent, has been longlisted in the One World Media Awards.

Ajiambo's 2023 story, "Sisters foster healing for survivors and perpetrators of Sierra Leone's civil war," was part of GSR's yearlong series, Hope Amid Turmoil: Sisters in Conflict Areas.

The story highlights both survivors and perpetrators who have benefited from religious sisters and other organizations fostering healing and reconciliation in Sierra Leone since the 11-year-long civil war was officially declared over in 2002.

Ajiambo's story was one of 540 entries from 117 countries vying for the award, and is among 10 publications included in the longlist print category, including international publications such as The Guardian, Reuters and The Economist. The finalists will be named May 8.

The longlisted entries are available to view on One World Media's website. The awards ceremony will take place June 19 at Curzon Soho, London, and will be livestreamed.