Blog



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by Dan Stockman

View Author Profile
dstockman@ncronline.org

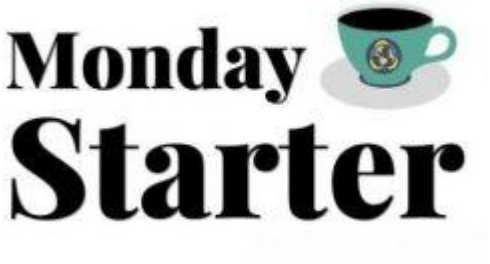
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Editor's note: *Global Sisters Report's Monday Starter is a feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise*

have missed.



As human beings, we need fun to survive. And the more serious your work, the more stressful the society, the more it is needed.

In fact, Diann Neu says fun is a saving grace.

Each month, Neu, along with other WATER staff, creates a feminist liturgy. These liturgies honor wise women, celebrate holidays or raise a feminist justice issue; July's ritual is "The Saving Grace of Fun."

WATER, co-founded by Neu and Mary Hunt, is a nonprofit educational center that focuses on feminist work in religion. WATER stands for Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual.

If work never seems to stop or you're exhausted from all the justice issues in the world, the free, online event will explore fun as an integral part of salvation and a human right. "The Saving Grace of Fun" begins at 7:30 p.m. Eastern time on July 23.



Colombian women board a repatriation flight to their country, in Harlingen, Texas, Feb. 28. (OSV News/Reuters/Veronica Gabriela Cardenas)

CLINIC praises new deportation protection policies

Just a few weeks ago, officials at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network were criticizing the Biden administration's new restrictions for asylum seekers. Now, they're praising new policies offering protection from deportation and pathways to legal status for spouses and stepchildren of U.S. citizens, as well as new opportunities for those under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy, known as "Dreamers."

"These policies are a breath of fresh air and a dose of hope for many of our immigrant brothers and sisters," said Anna Gallagher, CLINIC executive director, in a statement. "Catholic social teaching supports policies that promote family unity, recognizing family as society's primary building block. ... These actions align with the values of our faith and will provide welcome relief to immigrant families."

The new policies are estimated to impact about 500,000 eligible adults who are undocumented and married to U.S. citizens, CLINIC said, as well as about 50,000 children.

Non-citizen spouses and children are already eligible to apply for permanent residence, but must first leave the United States to do so. The new policy removes that requirement, keeping families together. A White House fact sheet on the policies says those who are eligible have lived in the United States an average of 23 years.

The policy changes for those under DACA will allow those who have a college degree and a job offer to get a work visa faster. DACA provides legal protections for those who were brought to the United States without documentation but were children at the time.

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Sisters' farm manager announces goal to donate 10,000 pounds of food

Supporters of the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice in Indiana, a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, got a unique look back from someone who has been connected to the land there since he was born, as well as a look toward an ambitious future.

The keynote speaker for this year’s donor appreciation dinner on June 8 was John-Michael Elmore, the center's farm manager. White Violet is an organic farm and educational center focused on God's care for creation. It has a herd of alpacas (you can even "adopt" one of them), a flock of chickens, orchards, bee hives, a nature trail and a farm store, and offers workshops, cooking classes and tours.

Elmore's connection to the land goes way back: His parents worked in the English as a Second Language program at the sisters' St. Mary-of-the-Woods College and lived in the campus guest house when he was born. He worked for the sisters on and off for seven years, starting as an intern in 2014, then became garden manager in 2014.

"We like to remind each other around here that we're all connected. We're a community of employees, women religious, students, interns, donors, customers,

neighborhoods, towns, farms, forests and so much more. All interconnected. All reliant on each other. A bond. A sacred bond," Elmore told donors. "So, knowing this, cultivating sacred ground can mean so much more."

But there is also the future: Elmore announced an ambitious goal for this year — donating 10,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce to local food banks, a dramatic increase from last year's 4,000 pounds donated. Fresh, perishable food is difficult to find in food banks.

The farm is one of the few in the area that accepts safety-net program benefits such as SNAP and WIC, making fresh produce available to even more people. The farm uses sustainable practices such as minimal tillage and innovative irrigation systems, and collaborates with Catholic Charities to divert tens of thousands of pounds of spoiled food from landfills into the farm's composting system.

"We don't just farm, we act as an extension of the legacy of education that is at the core of the Sisters of Providence," Elmore said.



Washington Cardinal Wilton Gregory processes to the altar for the opening Mass for the 13th National Black Catholic Congress that he celebrated July 21, 2023, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. (OSV

News/Archdiocese of Washington/Jaclyn Lippelmann)

Living Ancestors project looking for African Catholic sisters

Watawa Wa Taa, a project to help African women religious revitalize their way of life, is looking for veteran African Catholic sisters for its Living Ancestors project.

The project asks sisters with 30 or more years in religious life to write an essay about their experience, an effort to highlight and celebrate the contributions of African sisters.

Watawa Wa Taa is a Kiswahili phrase that loosely translates as "consecrated women of light," and the group wants to ensure African women religious never doubt they are valuable and powerful.

To take part in Living Ancestors or for more information, contact project coordinator Precious Blood Sr. Damiana Kasoo at coordinator.watawa@hekima.ac.ke or director.watawa@heima.ac.ke.