News
Arts and Media

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by Dan Stockman

View Author Profile
dstockman@ncronline.org

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A Nun's Life, the ministry that for nearly 20 years has worked to tell the world about religious vocations through technology, is now a part of Global Sisters Report.

The two entities have partnered for years, with GSR publishing A Nun's Life columns and sharing its podcasts. But in December, the National Catholic Reporter Publishing Co. acquired A Nun's Life's trademark and assets, such as its archive of podcasts and its website. GSR is a project of NCR.



Sr. Maxine Kollasch of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Courtesy of Maxine Kollasch)

"This is an exciting new step forward for Global Sisters Report and A Nuns Life Ministry," said Joe Ferullo, publisher and chief executive officer of the National Catholic Reporter Publishing Co. "It brings together two well-established media outlets that focus on Catholic sisters and promises to be a dynamic outlet for GSR while retaining the established brand and valuable archives of A Nun's Life Ministry."

A Nun's Life Ministry was started in 2006 by Julie Vieira and Maxine Kollasch, both Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe, Michigan, with the mission of helping people discover their vocation, whatever that vocation might be.

Kollasch said A Nun's Life was created for the digital age, where things like platforms change quickly, and being present means evolving to whatever is new. That was a big change from the world of Catholic sisters who built institutions that lasted decades or even centuries.



Sr. Julie Vieira of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Courtesy of Julie Vieira)

"It was in the DNA of A Nun's Life to try new things," she said, which is what led them to start a podcast in 2009, years before podcasts became widely popular.

"We knew in the digital world you don't build things that last for generations, you build and change and adjust and reinvent," Vieira said.

Kollasch said that despite being so different, sisters were willing to take the ride.

"We relied on religious to be up for the adventure. They would say, 'We don't know what a podcast is, but let's do this,' " Kollasch said. "Sisters were willing to try things."

Over the years, A Nun's Life has continued to evolve. Vieira left the ministry in 2018 and is now director of her congregation's Margaret Brennan Institute. Kollasch stepped down as executive director in 2021 and is now the IHMs' president.



From left, Benedictine Sr. Mary Luke Jones, Immaculate Heart of Mary Sr. Maxine Kollasch, Benedictine Sr. Heather Jean Foltz, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Sr. Julie Vieira record a podcast for A Nun's Life Ministry at the Our Lady of Grace Benedictine Monastery on a Motherhouse Road Trip in 2014. (Dan Stockman)

Sr. Réjane Cytacki, the current executive director and a member of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, will remain in the ministry for several months to help with the transition.

Cytacki said some of A Nun's Life's most creative ventures, including the Motherhouse Road Trips and Cycling With Sisters, were killed by the coronavirus pandemic, but the heart and soul of the ministry never changed.

"I love doing the podcasts. It's one sister at a time, talking about her call and her ministry, and that one person's story is a small part of what religious life is all about," Cytacki said. "The essence of this ministry is storytelling."

That makes it a perfect fit with GSR, those involved have said, since GSR's mission is to report on and give voice to women religious. The podcasts will be another way to do that.



Sr. Réjane Cytacki, current executive director of A Nun's Life and a member of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth (Courtesy of Réjane Cytacki)

Initially, Global Sisters Report will draw upon archived materials produced by A Nun's Life, said Gail DeGeorge, editor emerita of GSR. But with additional funding, GSR plans to tap its global network of sisters to produce new podcasts.

"It will always maintain the theme and the core of religious life, but the opportunity of melding it with the stories GSR does is really exciting," DeGeorge said. "Combining the global reach of GSR with the experience of A Nun's Life Ministry's podcasts will be a powerful witness to the important role that Catholic sisters have in the church, their communities and the world."

DeGeorge said the hope is the podcast will further GSR's reach in places of the world where the oral tradition is still strong, such as Africa.

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"This gives us a recognized brand and name, the infrastructure, and we can continue to grow it from there," she said. "I think there's a wealth of potential."

GSR Editor Soli Salgado noted the long relationship that the organizations have had.

"For several years, GSR has enjoyed collaborating with A Nun's Life Ministry by regularly sharing their episodes. This is, in many ways, a natural next step," Salgado said. "Even more than that, it's an absolute honor for us to officially host their archives while mapping out new pathways for this iconic podcast. This new addition only furthers our mission of broadcasting the work and lives of Catholic sisters, and in the most exciting way."