Blog
Social Justice



The Sisters of Humility of Mary will sponsor three billboards like the one in this photo from March 8-14, 2025, in Pennsylvania, hoping that those who see it will reflect on the words of the Gospel according to St. Matthew: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." (GSR screenshot/Courtesy of Sisters of Humility)



by Rhina Guidos

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A group of sisters is sponsoring three billboards in Pennsylvania, hoping that those who see it will reflect on the words of the Gospel according to St. Matthew: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me."

Close to the Sisters of the Humility of Mary's motherhouse in Pennsylvania, the billboards are running in the Youngstown, Ohio area from mid-February to mid-March, to coincide with Catholic Sisters Week March 8-14.

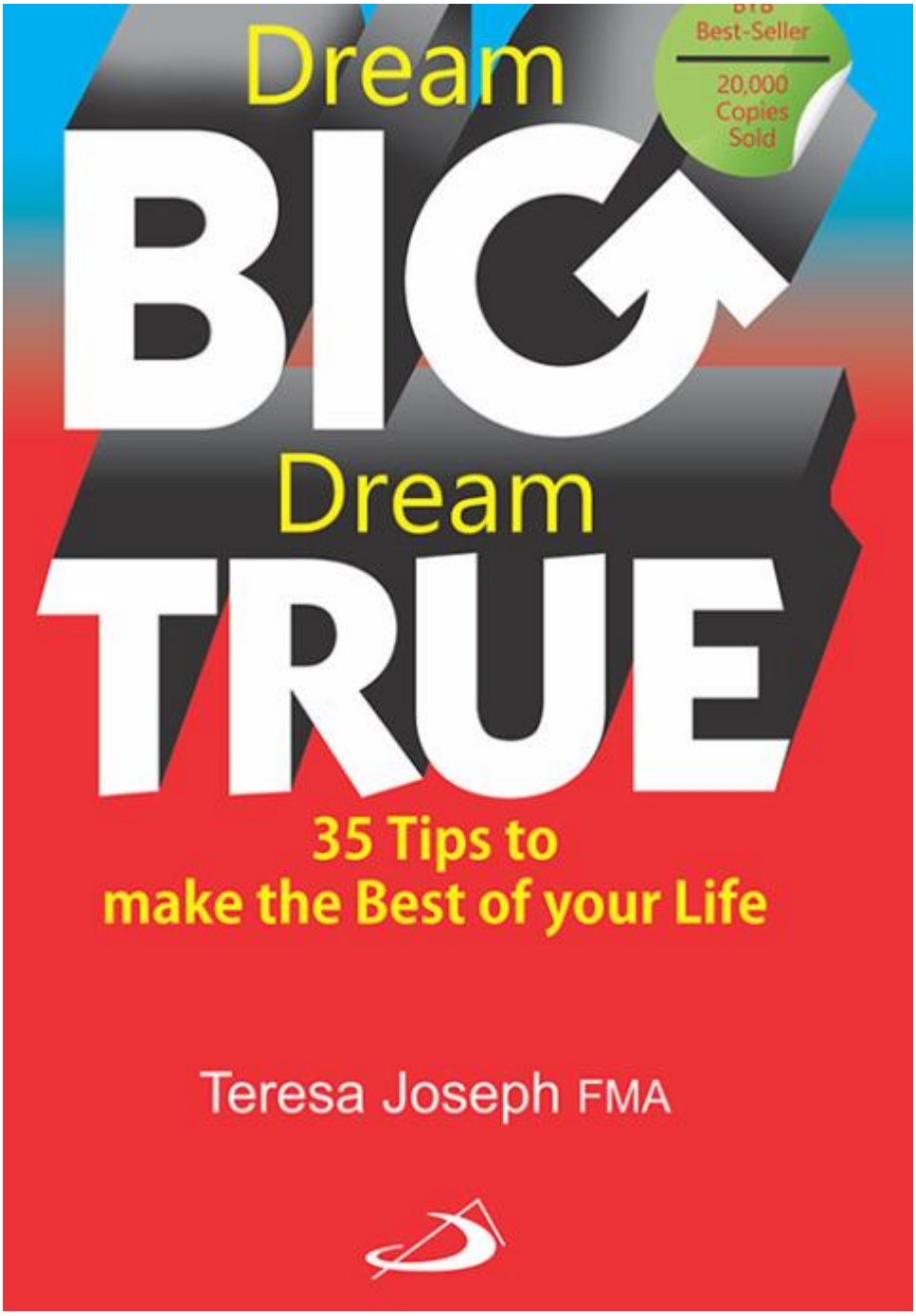
Sr. Carol Anne Smith, the community's pastoral leader, said in a press release that the congregation had "made the decision to take this public action in light of the current crises in our nation, specifically the inhumane treatment of immigrants, refugees, and others."

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As a religious community that came to the United States as immigrants in 1864 from France, they said they wanted to spotlight the words of Matthew that they had benefited from as they arrived in a new land. The early struggles of sisters, they said, "were eased by the welcome they received from their neighbors when they settled on the property in western Pennsylvania."

It is a contrast with the treatment many immigrants and would-be refugees are receiving today, they said, as paths to citizenship or legal entry dry up.

"These actions are in direct opposition to the Gospel," as well as the congregation's mission and values, Smith added.



Cover of Sr. Teresa Joseph's book

Salesian sister's book wins prize

A Salesian sister's writings on self-confidence, optimism, trust and forgiveness garnered a Golden Book 2025 Award for "impactful self-help motivational book."

Sr. Teresa Joseph, of the community of Salesian Sisters Province of Mumbai, won for Dream Big! Dream True! 35 Tips to Make the Best of Your Life, encouraging positivity, and received the award at a Jan. 31 ceremony in Mumbai.

Though the book was published in 2004, it has been translated into several languages in India.

Sisters speak out against cuts to USAID

Adrian Dominican Sisters say they are "deeply distressed" over cuts to the U.S. Agency for International Development, known as USAID, a top funder of Catholic Relief Services and other humanitarian work worldwide.

"Our hearts ache for all the good public servants and their partners in the humanitarian aid sector who have dedicated their lives to helping others and are now facing unjustifiable job losses," the sisters said in Feb. 10 press release. "We are anguished by the impact of the freezing of funds that the American people through lawful acts of Congress have designated for ending famines, halting the spread of HIV, providing disaster relief, and offering other urgently needed humanitarian aid."

The sisters urged members of Congress to do something to reinstate the funding. The dismantling of the agency "is having a devastating impact on the entire humanitarian aid sector — with frightening life-or-death implications for people in dire need around the world, especially women and children," the press release said.

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Network hosts webinar on safety net programs

Network, the Catholic social justice lobby, will host Feb. 27 a webinar from 7-8 p.m. Eastern time to talk about possible threats to social safety net programs such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Assistance Program, known as SNAP.

The webinar "Moved to Action" seeks to inform participants about how to "mitigate" possible changes.

"Thankfully, there have been encouraging moments for our democracy, like when the administration rescinded its freeze on federal grants due to tremendous pushback from individuals and organizations nationwide," said Laura Peralta-Schulte, Network's senior director of public policy and government relations in a press release. "It's an important reminder for Spirit-filled justice-seekers: When we advocate, we protect health care and food for families."

In a Feb. 11 statement, Joan F. Neal, Network's interim executive director, spoke against recent actions by the administration of President Donald Trump, who has allowed billionaire friend Elon Musk to dismantle various federal government programs and departments, even as courts have interfered and questioned the legality of those actions. She also questioned his right to take such actions since Musk is not an elected official.

"From attempts to defund Medicaid, SNAP, Meals on Wheels and other vital programs that working families and vulnerable people depend on every day, to dehumanizing attacks on immigrants at schools, churches and hospitals, to firing personnel at USAID and shutting it down, we are a nation under siege by the unchecked power of the richest man on the planet and an Administration that is more concerned with punishing its enemies than lowering the price of eggs and gas for ordinary people," Neal said.

"These actions should give us all pause and motivate all of us, no matter our religion, political party, or station in life, to oppose this Administration's attempts to dismantle our democracy."

Neal said ordinary people can organize, as they have in the past, to take "action against this direct attack on our democracy" and urged Americans to call members of Congress and hold them accountable.

To RSVP for the webinar, click here.

This story has been updated to correct the location of the billboards.