Blog



Religious sisters gather for the Mass on the eighth day of the "novendiali," nine days of mourning for Pope Francis, in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican May 3, 2025. The Mass had a special focus on consecrated men and women. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

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Pope Leo XIV has appointed Mother Chiara Cazzuola, superior general of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, as a member of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Expressing gratitude for her appointment, Cazzuola said, "I hope to be worthy of the mission entrusted to me by the Church. … and I thank you for the trust placed in me."

Cazzuola was named provincial councilor for formation after the unification of the Provinces of Emilia, Liguria and Tuscany. She became provincial in 2007, then visiting councilor during General Chapter XXII (2008), and later vicar general (2014). She was elected as mother general October 5, 2021.

Thailand honors Catholic sister for anti-trafficking ministry

The Thai government has honored a Catholic sister for her ministry in protecting women and children against human trafficking.

Sr. Marie-Agnes Suwanna Buasap, the coordinator of Talitha Kum Thailand, was conferred the "Outstanding Person Award for the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking" on June 5 by Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

Buasap is a member of the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres.

The June 5 award ceremony — Thailand's National Anti-Human Trafficking Day — recognized Buasap's efforts in curbing the human trafficking of marginalized women and children.

Since 2018, Buasap's ministry has focused on youths. Buasap works in the northern border areas of Thailand.

She has established a program called "Talitha Kum Kids," training more than 3,000 teachers, and strengthened the leadership of the Talitha Kum Youth Ambassadors to promote peer-led awareness, according to a report by Radio Veritas Asia. (Talitha Kum, a project of the International Union of Superiors General, is an international, sister-led network of networks devoted to combatting human trafficking.)

Buasap has also focused on promoting the dignity and rights of vulnerable women and girls, as well as affirming their empowerment. She has done this by leading capacity-building workshops and implementing a chili cultivation economic empowerment program.

In the June 5 ceremony, the Thai ministry also honored faith-based and secular groups working to combat human trafficking. One was Stella Maris, the seafarers' ministry of Chanthaburi Diocese, in eastern central Thailand, a suffragan diocese of the Archdiocese of Bangkok.

Stella Maris helps and rescues trafficked fishermen and seafarers by working with local authorities and marine networks.

In recent years, Thailand has drawn attention and criticism for its failure to stop trafficking routed through the country's lucrative textile industry, seafood sectors and the sex trade.

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Sisters among Catholic Extension Society's award nominees

The Chicago-based Catholic Extension Society has announced 41 nominees for its annual Lumen Christi Award, the organization's highest honor.

Six of the nominees are Catholic sisters with various ministries in the United States.

The Lumen Christi honor — Latin for "Light of Christ" — is presented to people "who radiate and reveal the light of Christ present in the communities where they serve," according to a June 23 announcement.

Bishops nominate people and institutions from their dioceses.

"Each nominee radiates the Light of Christ in unique ways, and collectively their stories showcase the beautiful mission of the Church in action every day throughout our nation," Fr. Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension Society, said in the announcement.

All 41 nominees will receive $1,500 to support their ministries. Those selected as finalists, to be announced later this summer, will each receive $15,000. From this group of finalists, the Lumen Christi Award honoree will be named in the fall, and will receive $100,000. Half that amount will go to their nominating diocese and the remaining $50,000 to advance the honoree's ministry.

The six sisters nominated are:

- Sr. Stella Mary Okogie of the Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina. She is originally from Nigeria and is a member of the Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel. She serves mothers and children at St. Clare's Home in both Greenville, South Carolina, and in Charleston.
- Sr. Teresa Frawley of the Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyoming. A Sister of St. Francis, the Irish-born sister's ministry is on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, home to the Shoshone and Arapaho people.
- Sr. Petra Palau Oviendo of the Diocese of Dodge City, Kansas. A sister of the Mexico-based Missionaries of the Charity of Mary Immaculate, Oviendo serves Hispanic communities in western Kansas.
- Sr. Pat Cataldi of the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky. Cataldi, a member of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, is a medical doctor and surgeon. Her ministry is based in eastern Kentucky, serving under-served communities.
- Sr. Maria Rosario Coronado of the Mexican-based E.E.P. sisters, works in the Diocese of San Bernardino, California. Her focus is prison ministry.
- Sr. Anne Francion, working in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Her ministry focuses on at-risk mothers in the Ozarks. She is a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Catholic Extension Society's mission is working "in solidarity with people to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities among the poor in the poorest regions of America."

Good Shepherd center decries upsurge in anti-Semitism

The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd has issued a strong condemnation of what it calls an alarming rise in anti-Semitism in the United States.

In a June 18 statement of "solidarity and condemnation," Fran Eskin-Royer, the center's executive director, said her group is uniting "with people of good will in profound concern and denunciation of the alarming rise in anti-Semitism and recent violent attacks targeting Jewish individuals and communities within the United States."

In affirming the "inherent dignity and worth of every person," she said that anti-Semitism "in all its forms — from hateful rhetoric and vandalism to acts of violence reported recently — offends that dignity."

Hailing the efforts of "people of faith and goodwill," she called upon "community leaders, elected officials and all individuals to condemn anti-Semitism and all forms of hatred and actively promote a community/society of respect, belonging, and justice."

"Anti-Semitism undermines legitimate efforts toward building partnerships that lead to peace; it thwarts the principles of justice and fuels hatred. We are committed to replacing that hatred with love," Eskin-Royer said.

"We explicitly reject anti-Semitism and any ideology that promotes prejudice, discrimination, or violence against any individual or group of people. Anti-Semitism is linked to other forms of hate and bigotry, and we are committed to actively opposing all forms of hatred."

The statement follows recent incidents that included the June 1 firebombing attack on a peaceful crowd in Boulder, Colorado, demonstrating for the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas and the May 21 shooting deaths of two employees of the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C.

In her statement, Eskin-Royer said it is important "to increase solidarity with our Jewish neighbors and friends, affirming their right to live in safety and security, free from fear and intimidation."

She said it is also important to work toward a society in which all individuals, regardless of their faith, lack of faith, race or ethnic background, "are treated with

compassion, understanding and respect."

The National Advocacy Center is an education and advocacy group promoting social justice "for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people," and reflects the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.