Voices of Sisters
Horizons
Religious Life



Sisters and affiliates of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in the Lesotho Province gather for a penance and reconciliation service on April 14, 2025, at St. Rose in Peka, Leribe, in preparation for upcoming changes. (Sr. Eugenia Thauru)



by Sr. Lydia Lerato Rankoti

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

December 12, 2025

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Tony Robbins once said, "Your life changes the moment you make a new, congruent and committed decision." His words echo through the progressive change the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary are embracing in our model of governance. That truth holds for every major life decision, from the sacred vows of religious life to the commitment of marriage. It is normal to feel anxious or experience "cold feet." Stepping outside our comfort zones, while rewarding, is rarely easy.

I remember the excitement of finishing high school in November 2019, convinced my days of disciplined learning were over. I had no idea the real lessons were about to begin. In 2020, I felt a strong call to religious life. Despite initial reservations from my family, who felt I was too young, their eventual support allowed me to follow this path. A mix of nervousness and excitement washed over me as I prepared to fulfill this lifelong dream. Inspired by Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life*, I sensed this was God's purpose unfolding for me. It was a wild and humbling realization.

Workshops had given me some foundation, but nothing truly prepared me for the profound shift of entering religious life. It meant leaving behind family, familiar habits and youthful fantasies. I often think of the disciples who left everything to follow Jesus. In Matthew 19, Jesus reassures them that those who surrender much for God's sake will receive even more in return. That promise continues to sustain me as I navigate change with my congregation.

> In Matthew 19, Jesus reassures them that those who surrender much for God's sake will receive even more in return. That promise continues to sustain me as I navigate change with my congregation.

Tweet this

Today, our congregation is undergoing its own deep transformation through a progressive change model of governance, guided by the coordinating committee. This transition offers promise, but it also brings its own anxieties. We are stepping into the unknown and opening our doors wider and stepping further out of our

collective comfort zones. We are witnessing and participating for the first time in changes in our congregation's history.

As we prepare for the new structure to begin in 2026, my congregation has extended mandates in several provinces, including Lesotho, Africa. Affinity groups have been formed to guide key elements such as our charism, proposing an integrated Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary charism education program and making new recommendations. Serving in the charism affinity group has given me invaluable insight into these significant shifts.

A central part of our preparation has been the Thresholds of Transformation program — a profound, multidisciplinary process created by Monica Brown, Donna Fyffe and Hilary Musgrave. Rooted in prayer, ritual, reflection and communal dialogue, it provides an intentional pathway for personal, communal and systemic transformation.

Advertisement

Through 10 rich gatherings, the program offered insights that led to healing, renewed motivation and deep spiritual growth. It strengthened our relationship with God and allowed sincere, nonjudgmental sharing among sisters across provinces. It was a gift that united us with "one heart and one soul." Thresholds of Transformation helped us shift our mindsets, challenge unhelpful habits and reshape aspects of ourselves that were hindering communal life. It improved my interactions with others and deepened my appreciation of creation, drawing me back to Pope Francis' "*Laudato Si*', on Care for Our Common Home." My group even taught in local churches about care for our common home.

While every gathering carried its own wisdom, the exploration of vulnerability touched me the most deeply. It moved me to tears, and invited me to a level of introspection I needed but had not expected.



From left: Srs. Ana Maria Vilca, Yenny Chipana, Yurita Son, with Carol Haggings slightly behind, followed by Lourdes Quintana Cortavitarte, Lydia Lerato Rankoti, Berlina Mokhokhoba and Sophia Park pose at the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore May 28, 2025, in Rome. (Courtesy of Sophia Park)

The insights I gained through Thresholds of Transformation stayed with me when I later participated in Hope 2025 in Rome, where I saw those same principles alive in global conversations about ministry, community and renewal. The gathering affirmed that our congregation's commitment to progressive change is part of a broader movement within the church — a pursuit of new ways to live our mission with authenticity and courage. The insights gained at the gathering will serve me well as our governance continues to evolve.

Religious life in the 21st century faces challenges very different from those of the past, when congregations were large and resources abundant. The world is in constant change, and we must keep growing with it. Often we are too quick to notice the flaws in others while remaining blind to our own. I wholeheartedly encourage

other congregations to consider the Thresholds of Transformation program. It is an essential tool for nourishing each member and strengthening the life of the institute.

As we prepared for our general chapter in 2025, the insights gained from Thresholds of Transformation gave us courage, clarity and renewed purpose. By embracing vulnerability, deepening our connections and reenvisioning our collective soul, we can navigate change with unwavering trust in God's work among us.

How lucky I am to have experienced a program that so profoundly transformed my perspective and strengthened our community! Thresholds of Transformation continues to guide our steps with clarity and hope.