News
Religious Life



Representing about 590,000 sisters from around the world, the International Union of Superiors General was born in the spirit of the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council. At UISG's 2025 plenary in May, sisters engaged in synodal conversations as an homage and continuation of both Vatican II and Francis' papacy. (GSR photo/Soli Salgado)



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The International Union of Superiors General, or UISG, is capping its 60th anniversary year with the release of a new documentary highlighting UISG's work and with an announcement that the anniversary has prompted a letter of praise from Pope Leo XIV.

The new 23-minute documentary, which is available on UISG's YouTube channel, is titled "Consecrated Life, a Hope That Transforms," and features footage of the work of sisters globally as well as interviews with past and present UISG leaders.

The documentary, UISG said in a Dec.16 statement, "highlights the commitment of religious women in geographical and existential peripheries. It shows their presence alongside migrants and refugees, their fight against human trafficking, their defense of human dignity and their commitment to the protection of creation."

Such work earned UISG a letter of praise and commendation from Pope Leo XIV.

In a Nov. 26 letter to Sr. Oonah O'Shea, a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Lady of Sion and the current UISG president, the pontiff praised UISG for its "commitment to cooperation and your willingness to stand at the frontiers of mission," which are "a powerful testimony to the Gospel."

"I join you in gratitude for the many ways the UISG has carried out this mission with fidelity and courage, " the pope said.

"Over these six decades, the Union has offered a vital forum in which Superiors from six continents can foster dialogue among women religious, share the richness of their charisms and discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church and the world."

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The pope said the fact that the 60th anniversary "coincides with the Jubilee Year of Hope is a particular grace."

In imparting an apostolic blessing, Leo said, "May this sacred time renew in each of you the call to be pilgrims and missionary disciples of hope — women who, rooted in consecration and guided by the Spirit, help to awaken trust, heal wounds and accompany God's people with compassion and joyful perseverance."

In a statement, O'Shea said: "Sixty years ago, the UISG was founded to unite, listen and build communion. Today we celebrate a history that is constantly evolving, looking towards the future and open to new horizons."

Sr. Roxanne Schares, the newly appointed UISG executive secretary and a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, said the anniversary year is also a time for discernment in the face of contemporary changes.

"Congregations are facing new and complex challenges. Our mission is to accompany them, strengthen networks, promote collaboration, and support processes of discernment that bring hope," she said.

The UISG statement noted that UISG has "accompanied women's congregations engaged in apostolic mission through formation programs, international projects and important global justice initiatives. It continues to promote interculturality, support forms of participatory governance and create essential spaces for dialogue between congregations, the Church and civil society."

UISG was founded on Dec. 8, 1965, the last day of the Second Vatican Council. It represents about 590,000 sisters from around the world. It held its triennial general assembly May 5-9 in Rome and released a six-year plan, "Moving into the Future 2025-2031" that, among other things, reimagines religious life in the face of shifting global demographics.

The documentary "Consecrated Life, a Hope That Transforms" highlights the work of the International Union of Superiors General for its 60th anniversary. (YouTube/UISGRome)