Voices of Sisters
Horizons
Religious Life



Jeanine Habarugira, Solange Bulangalire, Maite Fernández and Loredana Boniotti take part in the Jubilee of Young People in Tor Vergata, Rome, during the afternoon vigil with Pope Leo XIV, together with more than 1 million young people from around the world in August 2025. (Loredana Boniotti)



by Sr. Maite Fernández

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I lived the Jubilee as a pilgrim of hope among more than a million young people gathered at Tor Vergata in Rome, accompanied by three other junior sisters from Argentina, Italy, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This experience revealed to me the Jubilee as a time of extraordinary grace, a moment that deepened my awareness of how close the Lord truly is. As a result, it invited me to nurture fraternity and closeness even with brothers and sisters who, despite the geographic distance, remain family to us beyond all else.

In my consecrated life, this way of living carries a special power. Diversity is woven into my daily reality. One of the signs of the kingdom is discovering ourselves as sisters in the richness of our differences.

Since Pope Francis called us to journey through this Holy Year with a special emphasis on hope, I felt a deep longing in my heart to live it as a real opportunity that would shape my life, my choices and my path. God knows what I need and stirs it within me. For that reason, I embraced this call with trust and conviction that the Lord works all things well.

> This Jubilee Year brought me into contact with the heart of Jesus' message: to live love. How? By being attentive to my neighbor, becoming a builder of peace, a person committed to justice, and a sister capable of supporting others.
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Srs. Loredana Boniotti, Maite Fernández, Solange Bulangalire and Jeanine Habarugira, of the Sisters of St. Dorothy of Cemmo, enter through the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome during the Jubilee of Young People in August 2025. (Loredana Boniotti)

When I decide to follow the voice of Jesus, I never know exactly where it will lead me. I only know that, in following, I become more authentic, freer and more open to his transforming love.

The challenges of consecrated life today constantly prompt me to reconsider the meaning of my commitment. For some time now, the "inter" dimension — intergenerational, intercultural, international, intercongregational — has taken a central place in my institute. I strive to live this consciously because I know it is the right path. My formation and decisions revolve around it, and for this, I am deeply grateful.

The Jubilee allowed me to experience this reality in a concrete way. Living it firsthand gave it a special flavor. The fact that four junior sisters from diverse nationalities and cultures participated together enriched this time of grace in an invaluable way. One can study interculturality extensively, but I am convinced that it is truly learned only by living it. This means opening oneself fully and allowing the uniqueness of the other to pass through us — respecting and listening to ways of seeing reality that differ from our own, but hold equal value.

The magical experience of the Jubilee inspired me to rediscover my vocation and deepen my charism as a Dorothean Sister of Cemmo. It strengthened my sense of belonging and my desire to give my life authentically.

During the Jubilee, Pope Leo XIV urged us to live life with Jesus, to aspire to great things with a focus on holiness, and above all, to deepen the friendship with Christ as the source of faith. He spoke of a friendship born from "mending the nets," just as the first apostles did — the fishermen whom the Lord found and called (Matthew 4:21-22).

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Mending the nets also serves as a powerful image for my relationships. It invites me to live them as a net that is built, repaired and renewed, as bonds of love and unity that are free and dynamic. These nets, Leo said, must foster encounter, open space for the other and help us step beyond ourselves. They must be capable of healing what is broken and offering a remedy to loneliness. They are sustained by the triune God — a community of love — who from diversity teaches me the essence of communion I am called to live and bear witness to.

This focus on hope grounds the vocation that, as I look back, has been present since the beginning of my call. No matter the stage I am going through, I am always invited to return to that vital encounter with the Lord of life — the one who looked deeply into my heart and allowed me to experience his fullest grace. With him, I can face obstacles, collaborate with the kingdom, and grow in generosity, expanding my vision beyond my own individuality.

This Jubilee Year brought me, without a doubt, into contact with the heart of Jesus' message: to live love. How? By being attentive to my neighbor, becoming a builder of peace, a person committed to justice, and a sister capable of supporting others.

Living hope is not about waiting passively for something to happen. It is about acting like the apostles Jesus sent, filled with the Holy Spirit. I hold onto this message: I am called to be a channel and an instrument so that "something" happens, offering all that I am in service to the common good. I cannot forget the logic of the Gospel — being like the small mustard seed, and the yeast that can transform from within.

This column was originally published in Spanish on Jan. 9, 2026.



Jeanine Habarugira, Loredana Boniotti, Maite Fernández and Solange Bulangalire, together with a group of young people from the parish of Lumezzane in the Diocese of Brescia, Italy, take part in the Jubilee of Young People as they enter through the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome in August 2025. (Courtesy of Loredana Boniotti)

This story appears in the **2025 Holy Year** feature series. View the full series.