Blog
Religious Life



This undated photo shows Mercy Sr. Sheila Carney, who was honored Jan. 31, 2026, in Washington for her leadership, her formation of future generations, and lifelong commitment to dialogue. The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities honored Carney, who has been a Mercy sister for 58 years. (Courtesy of Carlow University)



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The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities honored Mercy Sr. Sheila Carney Jan. 31 in Washington for her leadership, her formation of future generations, and lifelong commitment to dialogue.

"Sister Sheila Carney's leadership reflects deep reverence for the Catholic intellectual tradition, a commitment to justice and inclusion, and an extraordinary ability to empower others to live mission authentically in every facet of campus life," the committee said in its citation about Carney, who has been a Mercy sister for 58 years.

Carney is special assistant to the president for Mercy Heritage & Service at Carlow University in Pittsburgh founded by Sisters of Mercy in 1929. She is described as an author, speaker, retreat director, as well as an avid reader, knitter and singer, in her spare time. At Carlow, she founded a food pantry that benefited the university as well as the nearby community, and established a group that brought together Sisters of Mercy, university community members, and neighbors to foster understanding, said a press release from Carlow University. She has studied in Rome and Pennsylvania and taught seminary and college classes.

"She has been instrumental in advancing Mercy identity, deepening mission integration, and expanding community-engaged initiatives across campus," the press release said.

Women religious organizations pray against ICE, violence during enforcement operations

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious as well as Network, the sister-founded Catholic social justice lobby, took part in "Praying With Our Feet," a Jan. 29 event in Washington urging Congress to stop funding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, known as ICE, following two killings of U.S. citizens in Minnesota. The event brought together faith leaders from around the country who are seeking to be heard by Congress.

LCWR had earlier issued a statement about the rising violence taking place during immigration enforcement.

"At this moment in history, when fear is normalized, violence is amplified, and democratic life is under strain in the United States and across the world, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) raises a clear and unwavering moral voice: violence is not the Gospel response," the organization said in a Jan. 27 post on Instagram.

The organization said it unequivocally denounces violence in any form and called on individuals and communities "especially those entrusted with leadership in local, state, and federal government" to choose methods "that uphold human rights, protect democratic processes, and honor the dignity of life at every stage."

LCWR's executive director Carol Zinn spoke during the Washington event and said that "when we begin that journey from I to we, then we will be faithful to the light of our faith and our democracy."

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CELAM secretary general thanks consecrated life for their witness in difficult times

In a YouTube message to mark the celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life Feb. 2, Auxiliary Bishop Lizardo Estrada Herrera, secretary general of the Latin American bishops' council, known as CELAM, lauded consecrated women and men who have long sacrificed and died "for the people of God," much like Jesus.

"The charisms of religious men and women, their vitality and witness are a light in the midst of the city, signs of hope for today and for the future because of their ability to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ in realities that cry out for life, healing the wounds of so many brothers and sisters, especially the most vulnerable, caring for and defending our common home, and giving their lives to the poorest to the very end," said Estrada, of Cuzco, Peru.

He thanked consecrated life for being witnesses of faith and vehicles of mercy and harmony while using the word of God.



A Capuchin Poor Clare sister touches a frozen holy water font at the Veronica Giuliani Monastery in Wilmington, Delaware, Jan. 30, 2026. (Courtesy of Capuchin Poor Clare Sr. Lety Gomez)

Fund to help sisters heat monasteries in Spain raises more than 100,000 euros

Cloistered sisters in Spain thanked donors who contributed to a fund to help them keep the heat on in cold monasteries this winter, after Fundación DeClausura

launched a campaign in late 2025 to help religious communities pay their heating bills.

DeClausura said it helped 80 monasteries of male and female orders in Spain stay warm thanks to donors, gathering more than 100,000 euros, and will keep accepting donations until Jan. 31.

Monasteries in Spain aren't the only ones dealing with a rough winter this year. In Wilmington, Delaware, Capuchin Poor Clares at the Veronica Giuliani Monastery got a surprise when they tried to dip their fingers into the holy water font in late January.

Sr. Lety Gomez posted a photo on Facebook of one of the sisters touching the frozen holy water. The sisters say they are well but the community has been taking part in Mass on a warmer floor until the weather gets better.