Blog
Religious Life



Left: U.S. President Donald Trump speaks with reporters outside the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, April 13, 2026 (OSV News/Reuters/Jonathan Ernst). Right: Pope Leo XIV waves as he attends a Meeting for Peace at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Bamenda, Cameroon, April 16, 2026 (OSV News/Reuters/Guglielmo Mangiapane).



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The Leadership Conference of Women Religious, representing about two-thirds of the nearly 35,000 Catholic sisters in the United States, was among the multitudes speaking out about President Donald Trump's attacks on Pope Leo XIV.

In an April 12 social media post, Trump disparaged Leo for his many calls for peace as the U.S. and Israel conduct a war against Iran. The post called the first pope born in the United States "terrible on foreign policy." Trump declared that he is "not a big fan" of the pontiff, that Leo was only elected pope because of Trump, and that "Leo should get his act together."

The next day, LCWR said the group stands with Leo as he speaks with moral authority for the world.

"At a time when such witness is often met with resistance or opposition, we are deeply inspired by his courage in proclaiming the dignity of every human life and the enduring values of the Gospel," the sister leaders said in the statement. "Pope Leo's willingness to speak publicly, even when it is difficult, reflects a steadfast commitment to truth and to the care of those who are most vulnerable."

They noted that the head of the Catholic Church, like its women religious, has a mission much more important than politics or policy.

"As women religious, we remain committed to defending life in all its fullness and to advancing a vision of human dignity that embraces the poor, the marginalized, and those most at risk," they wrote. "We are grateful for the leadership of Pope Leo that challenges all of us to live more deeply into these Gospel values."

Related: LCWR leaders meet with Pope Leo, discuss 'painful' treatment of people in the US

They said their recent private audience with Leo on March 26 made them even more certain of their position.

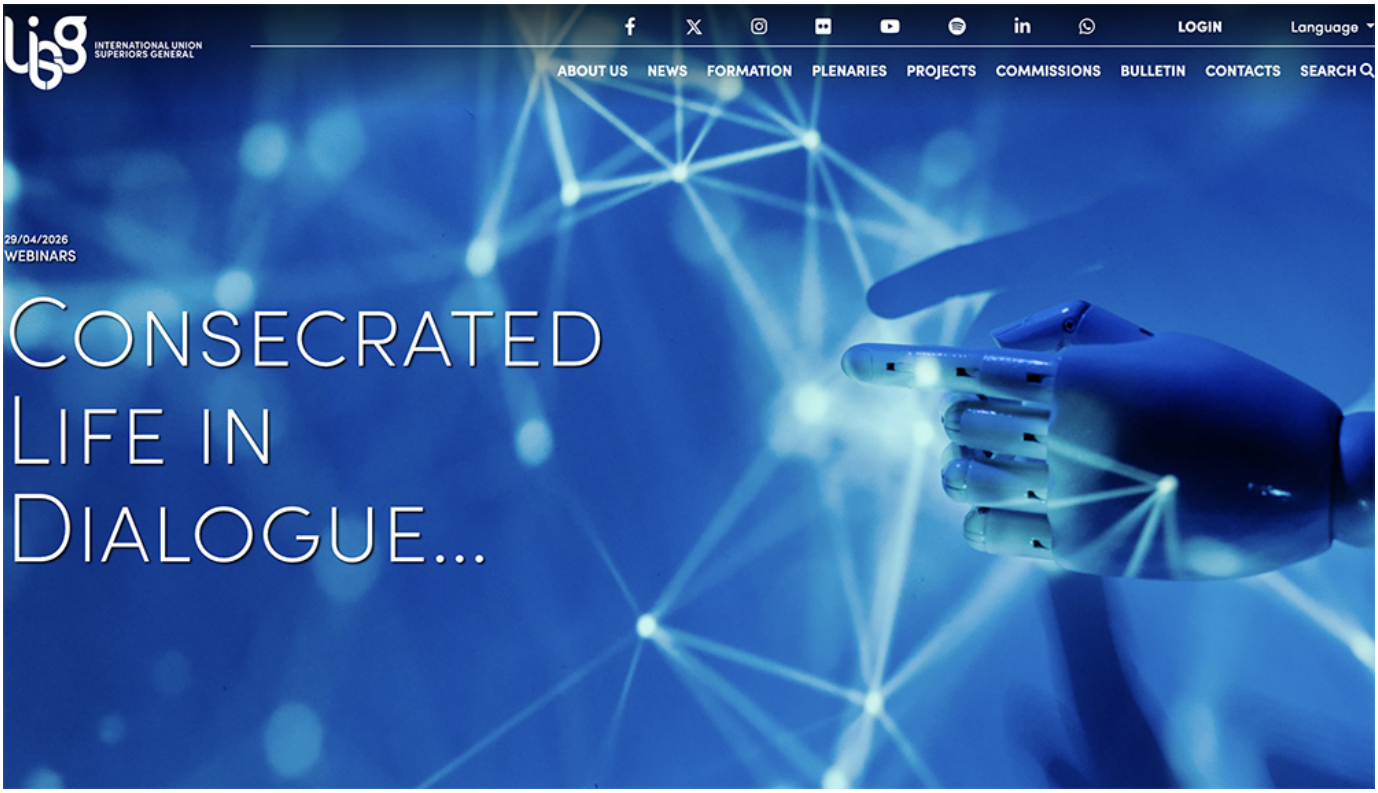
"That encounter deepened our appreciation for his pastoral leadership and strengthens our resolve to stand in solidarity with his efforts," the statement says. "We continue to hold Pope Leo in prayer and to walk forward together in faith, committed to building a more just and loving world."

Workshop on spiritual implications of AI

Artificial intelligence can seem like an entire new world of pitfalls and frightening possibilities. But could it also be something else?

A webinar organized by Multimedia International in collaboration with the International Union of Superiors General and the Union of Superiors General will explore the spiritual, ethical, and pastoral implications of AI, reflecting on how it influences our relationship with God, with others, and with creation.

Organizers say the program will invite participants to develop an authentic digital presence that prioritizes communion over performance. Instead of a threat, AI can be seen through the light of the Gospel as a space to inhabit with responsibility, discernment and hope.



A promotion for the webinar on artificial intelligence is seen on the website for the International Union of Superiors General. (GSR screenshot)

The webinar is 2:30-4:30 p.m. Rome time (8:30-10:30 a.m. Eastern U.S. time) on April 29 and is open to all. You can register here.

UISG program on discerning leadership

The International Union of Superiors General is also a partner in a program to develop senior leaders capable of discernment, reform and renewal in a synodal church. The series takes place in Rome and is for senior leaders such as superiors, general councils, bishops and vicars, and lay leaders.

Key topics of the series include personal and spiritual formation, communal discernment, personality styles and interculturality, and communication and conflict resolution.

The program consists of two residential modules: The English session's modules are June 1-5 and Oct. 19-23; the Italian modules are July 6-10 and Nov. 16-20; and the Spanish modules are June 1-5 and Oct. 19-23. A second English session has modules June 15-19 and Nov. 2-6. More information, as well as the application, are available here.

Dominican immersion experience

If you think you may be called to religious life as a Dominican sister, you can experience the life on a trial basis this summer.

Four Dominican congregations are sponsoring a national service immersion experience, hosted by the Springfield Dominican Sisters at their Sacred Heart Convent in Springfield, Illinois.

The event runs June 16-20, and will have participants staying just steps from where Abraham Lincoln raised his family. The Adrian Dominicans, Sinsinawa Dominicans and the Dominican Sisters of Peace are the other sponsors.

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Applications are being accepted through June 1; up to 15 women will be selected for the program, which any single Catholic woman aged 20-45 can apply for.

Participants will experience the rhythms of apostolic religious life, including community life, prayer, active service, and theological reflection. There is a $50 fee, but scholarships will be available for those who need them.

Network lobby calls for end to funding Iran war

Network Catholic social justice lobby is calling on Congress to put human needs before spending on war.

Congress is beginning discussions on the federal budget and responding on the budget proposed by President Donald Trump, which Network says slashes funding for health care, food programs, housing supports, and child care while proposing $1.5 trillion in total defense spending — a 75% increase over this year's $850 billion defense budget. It also calls for $350 billion for the war in Iran, the group says, plus increased spending to militarize immigration enforcement.

"A budget is a moral document that demonstrates our nation's priorities," Network's executive director, Laurie Carafone, said in a statement. "Our call to Congress is clear: no more money for the Iran war; no more money to separate our families."

Carafone noted that the Trump administration has already devastated food and health care programs for millions of people, now it is proposing even more cuts to fund the military.

"True security comes from investment in priorities that bring life, peace, and justice," she said. "Americans who are struggling to provide for their families want solutions that prioritize the wellbeing of our communities, not funding to escalate war, terrorize communities and tear families apart."