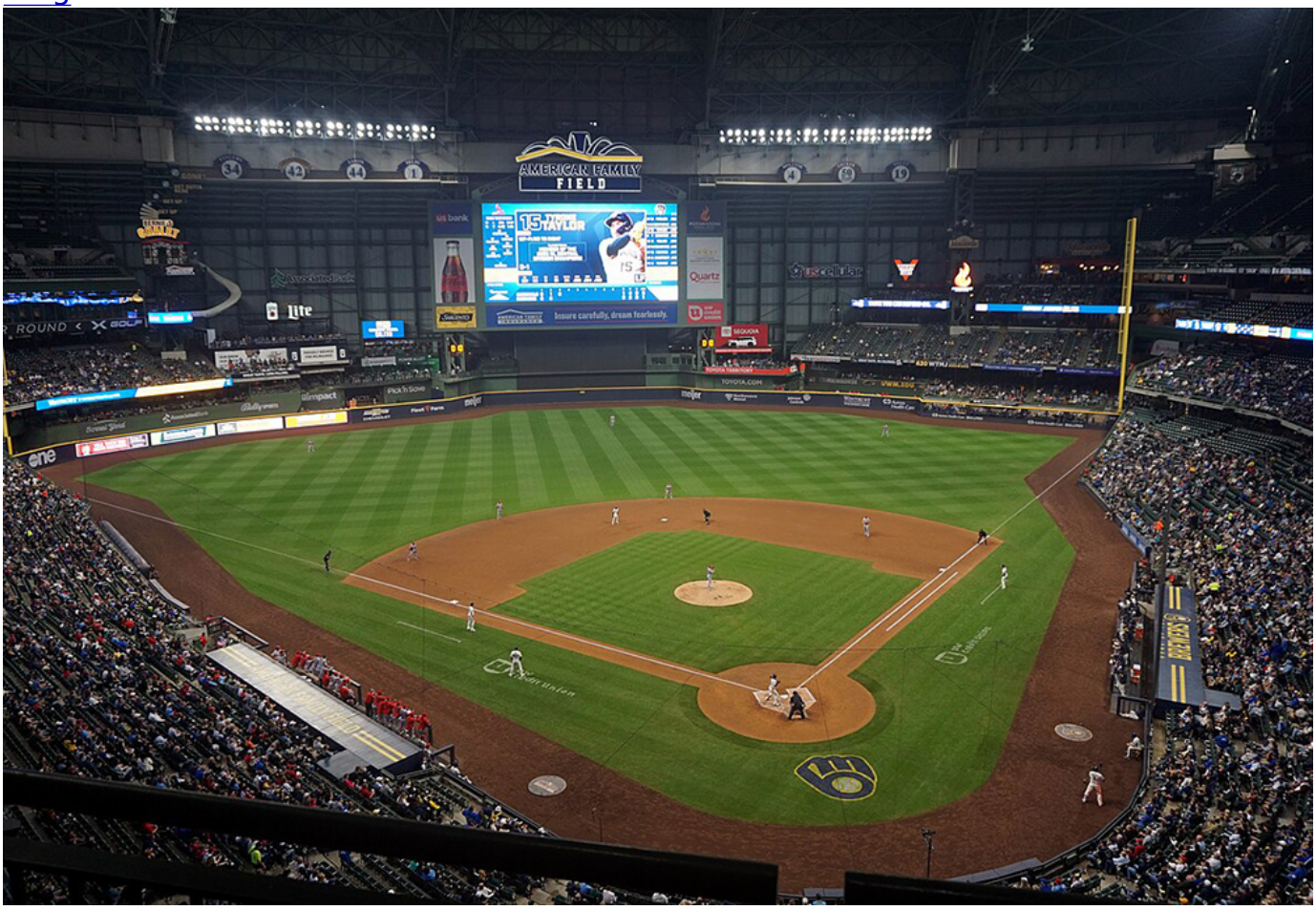
Blog



The Milwaukee Brewers play the St. Louis Cardinals at American Family Field in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Sept. 27, 2023. (Wikimedia Commons/Michael Barera, CC BY-SA 4.0)



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June 15, 2026
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Sr. Debra Sciano knows she'll never be a starting pitcher for her beloved Milwaukee Brewers baseball team.

But the president-elect of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious will be on the mound at American Family Field June 17, and she will, technically, be throwing a pitch. (The conference represents roughly 80% of Catholic sisters in the United States.)

Sciano, the provincial leader for the School Sisters of Notre Dame, was chosen by the Brewers to throw the ceremonial first pitch for their game against the Cleveland Guardians.

The rookie says she's nervous but excited for her Major League debut, and her religious community is very excited: They're planning a big outing to the game with tailgating beforehand. As of June 3, they already had 150 sisters and friends signed up to attend. The game begins at 6:40 p.m. Central Standard Time.



School Sisters of Notre Dame Sr. Debra Sciano, president-elect of LCWR. (GSR/Dan Stockman)

Sciano said the invitation came about because the Brewers front office saw the headlines when Sciano presented Pope Leo XIV a Chicago White Sox jersey. Leo is a native of the South Side of Chicago, and the jersey was personalized with "Leo" on

the back and the number "14." The gift was made in March during the LCWR leadership's annual trip to Rome to meet with Vatican officials.

While the White Sox and Brewers are not rivals — being in different leagues, they would only play each other on special occasions or in the World Series — their stadiums are less than 100 miles apart, and the Brewers couldn't let a Milwaukee nun be known for handing out a White Sox jersey. So come gametime Wednesday, Sciano will be wearing a personalized Brewers jersey and getting ready to (hopefully) throw a heater in the strike zone.

But there may also be a bit of Providence in all of this: Sciano and the other LCWR leaders met with Leo on March 26, which just happened to be opening day for the Brewers. And they just happened to be playing the White Sox. (In case you're wondering, the Brewers won that game 14-2 and went on to sweep the three-game series.)

Advertisement

Tensions in northeast India force nuns, clerics to flee homes

Violence in areas of the northeastern Indian state of Manipur has forced Catholic sisters and priests to flee their homes, after tensions escalated between two Christian tribal groups over a two-week-long hostage crisis.

In a May 28 report, the Union of Catholic Asian News, or UCAN, quoted a church leader about the religious leaving the area, and reported that two tribal groups, the Kuki and Naga, which are both predominately Christian, began fighting in April, leaving two Naga men dead, with subsequent violence leaving at least ten dead.

Tensions escalated May 26 after both groups refused to release those they had kidnapped from rival tribes two weeks earlier, UCAN reported.

"We are witnessing Kuki priests and nuns leaving areas dominated by the Nagas while Naga priests and nuns are doing the same in Kuki-controlled areas," the church leader, who declined to be identified, told UCAN.

He said it was "a sign of the deepening divide" between the two Christian-majority communities and warned that if not stopped urgently, indigenous Christian unity

would be "a thing of the past," UCAN reported.

Some church leaders say the Kuki–Naga divide has been orchestrated by the Hindu Meiteis, who have been at war with the predominantly Christian Kuki-Zo communities for the past three years, UCAN reported.

The Meiteis form 53% of Manipur's population of 3.2 million and control the administration of the state. Indigenous Christians make up 41% of Manipur's population.



Sr. Nathalie Becquart was awarded an honorary doctorate from Australian Catholic University. She was honored in a degree ceremony at the university's Rome campus on May 28, 2026. (Courtesy of Australian Catholic University)

Australian university bestows honorary doctorate on Becquart

Sr. Nathalie Becquart, a trailblazing figure who serves as undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops and is one of the most senior women in the Vatican, was recently

awarded an honorary doctorate from Australian Catholic University.

Becquart, a member of the Xavière Missionaries of Christ Jesus and who also serves on the Dicastery for Communication, was awarded her degree of Doctor of the University (Honoris Causa) at the university's Rome campus on May 28.

In announcing the degree June 1, the university said the honor recognizes the French sister's contributions to youth ministry and synodality, and "for her significant leadership in advancing women and the laity in the Church."

Becquart said she is dedicating the honorary degree to "all those who work for a Church that listens."

"I receive it on behalf of all those who work for a Church that listens, that walks together, that places the peripheries at the center," Becquart said in a statement.

Salesians mark UN Day Against Child Labor

Catholic sisters and humanitarian groups were among those who marked the United Nations' annual World Day Against Child Labor on June 12.

As noted by Salesian Missions, the U.S. development arm of the Salesians of Don Bosco, the global commemoration focuses attention on the continued problem of child labor and the need to eliminate it.

Children who leave school early are often engaged in work "that is hazardous and classified as the worst forms of child labor," Salesian Missions said in a June 12 statement which also noted the work of Salesian sisters in Gumbo, South Sudan.



A student leader addressing her classmates at the St. Vincent De Paul School, which is run by the Salesian sisters in Gumbo, South Sudan. (Courtesy of Salesian Missions)

In order to promote girls staying in school, a recent project funded there by Salesian Missions helped with the construction of new bathroom facilities for girls at the St. Vincent De Paul School, which is run by the Salesian sisters.

Concurrent with that construction were regular hygiene and gender equality awareness sessions attended by more than 1,100 students. Other efforts included education to both girls and boys on the need for gender equality.

Despite some progress in the area of preventing child labor, 138 million children remain in child labor worldwide, including nearly 54 million in hazardous work, the United Nations reported.