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Sr. Mary Jo Sobieck, in an image shared on social media by the Chicago White Sox, takes aim before throwing the ceremonial first pitch at the White Sox game Aug. 11. (Courtesy of the Chicago White Sox)



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Editor's note: Global Sisters Report's Monday Starter is a feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.

Monday Starter



It seems that Catholic sisters throwing out the ceremonial first pitch at Major League Baseball games is becoming a trend.

On June 14, [Sr. Kaitlin Trokan](#), of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (commonly known as the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco) threw out the first pitch at a Milwaukee Brewers game, followed by School Sisters of Notre Dame [Sr. Debra Sciano](#) at the same park three days later.

Now, there's Springfield Dominican Sr. Mary Jo Sobieck, who did the first-pitch honors at the Chicago White Sox game Aug. 11.

And if Sobieck had a little extra flair on the mound — after crossing herself, she bounced the ball off her bicep and then proceeded to throw a heater toward the plate — it may be because she's done this at least twice before.

The first time was at a White Sox game in 2018, with a performance that was so popular she was [nominated for an ESPY](#) award for "Best Viral Sports Moment." That pitch — a perfect curve ball — also led to her likeness on a bobblehead figure, a limited-edition [baseball trading card](#) and the honor of throwing out the first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals game in 2019.

And most recently, the White Sox game versus the Cincinnati Reds. Alas, Sobeck's pitch this time was overshadowed: It was [Pope Hat Night](#), where all 40,000 fans in the sell-out crowd got a hat shaped like a bishop's mitre adorned with the White Sox logo.

Still, the event led to an appearance on NBC Sports' [Dan Patrick show](#), where Sobeck said the huge, boisterous crowd "felt like a big church revival."

The Sox had a 4-0 lead in the game, but blew it and ended up losing to the Reds 5-4. "What happened?" she was asked.

"Well, I left the stadium," Sobeck responded. "I left early just to avoid the crowds and the traffic and all that."

Italian mayor's fight with nuns over beach space goes international

The mayor of the Italian coastal resort of Spotorno made international headlines in August after announcing plans to strip the Suore di Carità di Santa Maria (Sisters of Charity of St. Mary) of a concession they have along a 50-meter stretch of coastal land that helps fund local charity programs, including the sisters' summer camp and a school. The sisters rent umbrellas and other equipment to beachgoers along the public beach and use the money from the rentals to fund their ministry. The mayor says the sisters must enter a public auction to keep the concession. They have operated the rentals for about 80 years.

The New York Times, which covered the fight in an Aug. 19 [article](#), said locals are upset about the goings-on.

"Some Spotorno residents are unhappy about it, saying that the nuns had supported the community for many years. Italian news outlets have picked up the story, several of them using variations on '[Holy War](#)' in their headlines," the Times story said. Publications in Ireland and England also covered the story.

Laws that once protected charities such as the sisters' have expired and new rules seek to put the concessions up for public auction, meaning the sisters can still participate in the auction to keep the concession, but there are no guarantees.

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Australian documentary spotlights Sisters of Charity of New York's 'Holy Trouble'

The Australian Broadcasting Network unveiled in mid-August a documentary featuring the Sisters of Charity of New York, their social justice ministry, their decision to decline new vocations and allow the congregation to come to a close, and their public repudiation of U.S. President Donald Trump's attacks on migrants.

"Did you hear the good news? Holy Trouble has gone global in a new documentary from Australia!" announced the sisters' Facebook [page](#) Aug. 18, touting the documentary "[Holy Trouble: The New York nuns taking on President Trump](#)."

"It was inspiring to watch," wrote a viewer on the social media platform.

The film shows the congregation's president talking about the U.S. president.

"Horrendous. Dictatorial. Cruel. Only wanting power and money. It's all against the Gospel as far as I am concerned. I have the biggest problem with the Christians and people of other faiths in Congress who are not standing up to what they should know is the right thing because of fear," Sr. Donna Dodge, the congregation's president, said in the documentary.

The title is a nod to what the sisters call their "holy trouble," meaning their participation in protests, their public demonstrations against government policies they feel go against the Gospel. That includes the treatment of migrants, treatment of Black Americans during the Civil Rights Movement, and their participation in anti-war demonstrations during the Vietnam War.

Former Daughters of Charity hospital gets new mission as a place of art and healing

A long-shuttered hospital founded in 1856 by the Daughters of Charity in Los Angeles is being used this summer to host a temporary pop-up art exhibition

featuring the work of 70 artists.

"Hospital of Emotions," inside what used to be a real hospital administered by the sisters, features art where "each emotion becomes its own hospital department: From joy and love to fear, anger, hope, sadness, gratitude and resilience," says a [website](#) about the temporary exhibit.

The event is part of a new lease on life the sisters' old hospital is getting as it embarks on a new [mission](#) as a centralized health campus to serve the poor and those with mental illness. The hospital closed in 2020 because of economic issues that eventually ended in bankruptcy. A private developer is seeking to use it to alleviate some of the housing and health woes suffered by the poor in Los Angeles.

The new St. Vincent's Behavioral Health Campus plans to provide housing along with treatment for addiction as well as mental health disorders on a stretch of Los Angeles known for its crisis of homelessness.

The \$300 million project on a 7.7-acre campus received major funding from the state of California as well as private donors. It will keep the original infrastructure as a centralized hub that will ultimately offer more than 800 beds.

"I know that people need this kind of care, in order to heal, and in order to be ready for permanent housing. We get people off the street, just putting them in an apartment is not going to solve the issue," said Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass during a recent [visit](#) to the facility. "We have to address why their lives fall apart in the first place, prepare them to lead independent lives in permanent housing."

Though some 200 beds have been made available this summer, work on the campus will continue next year into 2028.