Columns
Spirituality



A monument to university students who died in the 2018 protests against Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega's government is seen at the Polytechnic University of Nicaragua in Managua. In early February 2022, the National Assembly of Nicaragua ordered the revocation of the legal status of five universities, including a Catholic university, along with various Catholic educational and charitable projects. (CNS/Reuters/Oswaldo Rivas)



Flying in V Formation

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Editor's note: *Global Sisters Report's new series, Hope Amid Turmoil: Sisters in Conflict Areas, offers a look at the lives and ministries of women religious serving in dangerous places worldwide. The news stories, columns and Q&As in this series will include sisters in Ukraine, Nigeria, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua and more throughout 2023.*

The birth of a baby is an event that brings much hope and anticipation. When a baby takes his or her first breath during childbirth, we hear a loud cry and see the impulse and breath of life transform everything. A baby's first cry is the point at which the childbirth process transitions from before to after.



In my country, we have a profound desire to breathe without pain. The words "it hurts to breathe" are the words of a teenager who fought to live after he was fatally shot while offering water to protesting students.

After considering these first two scenarios, a new story about the birth of Jesus emerges in our world. We must remember that he spent his childhood in an era marked by violence, imprisonment, and exile. His childhood was not too different from what we experience today.

In the fragile and rubble-filled manger of the Nicaraguan situation, Jesus is born with the strength to demonstrate once again that goodness, love and peace are signs that burst forth like a light in the midst of darkness.

Jesus is born in the deep longings of people who have lost all fear and have the courage to stand up to — and speak out against — the unjust structures that keep them down.

There are so many signs of new life! Every day, we see Jesus being born anew in the eyes and hearts of so many ordinary men and women who get up every day to live their lives, follow their dreams, and try to make sure everyone can live with dignity.

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We behold with tenderness as Jesus is born among a people struggling to hold on to hope that soon, very soon, their liberation will come. Rooted in the faith that the God of Jesus does not abandon us, we continue to keep our eyes fixed on him, hopeful that this new land will rise again (Isaiah 43:19.)

Jesus is still being born in each of our brothers and sisters, even though they are wrongfully imprisoned. They continue to dream of freedom, collectively raising their voices from behind bars.

Jesus continues to be born in each person who resists and refuses to accept a life of darkness. He is still born as the Word incarnate, even if this Word is sometimes crushed by those who resent its light, and boast about reciting and quoting it but forget that it must be practiced.

Jesus continues to be born in the thousands and thousands of people who risk crossing borders every day to sustain the lives of those who stay behind — their families, friends, and neighbors. Jesus is also born in those who stay behind, supporting and protecting human values, the richness of cultural heritage, and the right to remain in the land where they were born.

We actively await the new sun that will shine with justice and the new life whose light will not be extinguished, and that new birth will bring with it the child called *Freedom*.

This story appears in the **Hope Amid Turmoil: Sisters in Conflict Areas** feature series. View the full series.