Columns
Social Justice



A panel highlights the work of Catholic sisters during the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March 2025. (Courtesy of Beth Blissman)



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The world is paying attention, sisters!

During the month of March, I found myself in the heart of something extraordinary: the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The energy in New York City was electric. Everywhere I turned, women from every corner of the world gathered to share ideas and solutions to the most pressing challenges today. And right there, at the center of it all, were sisters.

From discussions on human trafficking and homelessness, to conversations about education, health care, and economic justice, sisters weren't just present — we were leading. Our presence was unmistakable. I saw sisters stepping up to microphones, challenging outdated systems, and offering real solutions. I heard stories of communities transformed, children given futures, and women reclaiming their dignity. This wasn't just talk; it was action.

During the opening session, as United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the women in the room, his words struck me: "In the face of immense obstacles, you strive to make our societies more just, more fair, more representative — and as a result, more resilient and more prosperous for everyone."

Yes! Day in and day out, sisters have their finger on the pulse of global issues of inequities.

Throughout the week, in every room, and at every train stop and coffee shop, sisters and women leaders from around the world exchanged ideas and strategies to combat human trafficking, homelessness and inequities. Voices rose in excitement, heads nodded as root causes were named and viable solutions identified.

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Joy rippled everywhere. I was so jazzed up that by the second evening when I was to meet with high school students from Texas, Iowa and Ohio, I knew my energy could match their youthful exuberance.

Who was I kidding? After only two days, the young women were as excited as I was. Every session they attended spoke to their concerns — and offered possible

solutions for their world.

I was there to share stories of sisters' work in the world — to share that more than a force for good, we are a force that cannot be ignored. We step into the hardest places, side by side, with those the world too often ignores. I shared why the world needs the sisters' leadership, wisdom and ability to solve problems from the inside out.

These young women were inspired and eager to be part of something bigger than themselves. They learned about real, measurable change led by women of faith and action. They vibrated with a sense of purpose, knowing that they, too, could shape a better world.

At the end of the evening, the students were so jazzed they celebrated in the night lights and life of Manhattan, while I went out like a light.

My experience at the U.N. reinforced something I have always believed: The movement we have built together is strong, alive and growing. Our impact will only deepen with continued connection, collaboration and support.

Onward!