News

Arts and Media



Brazilian Sister Marizele Isabel Cassiano Rego is seen in an undated photograph. Two Brazilian nuns have gone viral worldwide after a May 28, 2025, video showed them beatboxing and dancing hip hop on Catholic TV — drawing comparisons to a real-life "Sister Act." (OSV News/courtesy Copiosa Redenção)



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A video of Brazilian nuns beatboxing and dancing hip-hop, a scene taken from a local TV show and defined by celebrities like Whoopi Goldberg as "a real life 'Sister Act,'" went viral on May 28, with millions of views all over the world.

Sisters Marizele Isabel Cassiano Rego, 46, and Marisa de Paula Neves, 41, were taking part May 20 in a TV show of the Catholic network Pai Eterno (Eternal Father), in Goiás state, in order to talk about a vocational encounter the two were attending in the region.

As they mentioned their artistic ways of reaching the youth, they presented a song they wrote about God's calling. Sister Marizele sang it and Sister Marisa began to dance — the whole act had a noticeable hip-hop nature. That's when Sister Marizele began beatboxing.

The short clip went viral on social media and was reproduced by international news agencies on May 28. Actress Viola Davis shared it on her Instagram account, mentioning Sister Mary Clarence, Whoopi Goldberg's character in the 1992 movie "Sister Act."

On ABC's "The View," Goldberg commented on the clip, saying that "anytime you can praise the Lord with some music and you're doing your thing, I think it's a good sign."

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Sister Marizele and Sister Marisa are members of the Brazilian congregation of the Sisters of the Copious Redemption, created in 1989 by Redemptorist Father Wilton Lopes in the city of Ponta Grossa, Paraná state, where both of the sisters live today. Their mission is to work especially on the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

Father Lopes received a revelation in 1991, after which it was decided that every day each sister will pray for drug or alcohol addicts in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

"I've learned how to sing with my family. My grandfather was a player of Caipira guitar," Sister Marizele told OSV News, mentioning a 10-string guitar developed in the colonial era in São Paulo state — traditionally used for playing rhythms from the countryside.

At home, she and her sisters would promote karaoke nights, something that further developed her abilities. Since her teens, she has been experimenting with mouth sounds as well.

"I've never had the opportunity to formally learn beatboxing, but somehow I managed to develop my own way of doing it. Experts told me it's pretty fine," said Sister Marizele.

As a young participant of Catholic charismatic renewal groups, she began singing at church before joining the congregation, which happened 21 years ago.

"In order to evangelize drug addicts, we would resort to beatboxing, dance, music, theater. We need to be rather creative," described Sister Marizele, who has lived for nine years in therapeutic communities.

Sister Marisa, in a convent for the last 14 years, told OSV News she has always liked to dance. Coming from a small city in Paraná state, she first learned to dance the traditional rhythms of the region, also connected to the Caipira culture and U.S. country music.

"But afterwards I joined the city's dance group and took classes in ballet and street dance," she explained.



Brazilian Sister Marisa de Paula Neves is seen in an undated photograph. Two Brazilian nuns have gone viral worldwide after a May 28 video showed them beatboxing and dancing hip hop on Catholic TV — drawing comparisons to a real-life “Sister Act." (OSV News/courtesy Copiosa Redenção)

As a nun, she worked with children and teens in a cultural center where she learned tap dancing and break dance.

"As they saw me learning how to dance those rhythms, they would be encouraged to join the classes too," Sister Marisa explained.

The impact of such artistic activities in the sisters' missionary work has been noticeable, they said. They both have been focusing on vocational initiatives and realized how the arts can break down barriers and bring the youth close to them.

"People usually think nuns are rigid, even grumpy women. When they see us singing and dancing, when they get to know us better, they realize we're not," Sister Marizele said.

The same thing happens in different parishes and church groups, added Sister Marisa. Some of them promote contemplation, while others are more vivacious. People can be attracted by different styles.

"Our church is diverse. That is her beauty," she said.

With its intense use of music and its particular spirituality, the Catholic charismatic renewal, to which both sisters are connected, is viewed by many analysts in Brazil as a way to halt the continuous erosion of Catholicism in the country.

Traditionally a Catholic nation, only 50% of Brazil's population today is Catholic, while evangelicals make up 25% of the population. Scholars predict that by 2032, Brazil may become a predominantly evangelical country.

The charismatic renewal way may be productive drawing people back to the Catholic Church, indeed. According to Sister Marizele, since their video went viral, more and more people have been looking for them.

"Boys and girls who we meet in different locations have been asking us about our work and our congregation, including boys interested in beatboxing," she said with a smile.