Blog
Social Justice



Global Sisters Report will host an online health care forum on mental wellness for sisters July 1. (GSR screenshot)



by Chris Herlinger

View Author Profile
cherlinger@ncronline.org

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Global Sisters Report will host an online health care forum on mental wellness for sisters July 1.

The 2.5-hour forum, part of GSR's Witness & Grace Conversation series, will address issues such as stress, burnout, depression, anxiety, trauma and abuse that are not often spoken in the "sister world" but can be very real aspects of religious life and ministry.

The program, which will include small group discussions, is designed to help break the stigma around mental wellness for sisters; inform participants about new networks of sister counselors; and provide resources for sisters and their communities and congregations.

Presenters for the forum will be Sr. Sally John and Sr. Editrudis J. Kajuna, both with extensive experience in psychiatry and psychology, respectively, as well as having organized mental health services and networks for sisters. GSR editor emerita, Gail DeGeorge, will be the moderator.

The link to register is here.

The forum will be held in English but Spanish translation will be available. The Spanish page is here.

Advertisement

Congregation commits $2 million to Franciscan Action Network

A Franciscan congregation has made a $2 million commitment to the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) that will support "a collective Franciscan voice" on public policy issues such as environmental justice, immigration and peacebuilding.

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration's generosity is being called a landmark and transformative gift that "significantly expands FAN's capacity to build an intergenerational movement to respond to the moral imperatives of our time and strengthen the Franciscans' long-standing witness to gospel nonviolence," according to a June 10 announcement.

"We are giving this gift because the movement FAN is building reflects our commitment to justice, peace, and integral ecology. We believe the movement will help to accomplish our community's goals," Sr. Sue Ernster, the congregation's president, said in the announcement.

"In Franciscan Action Network, we see a partner grounded in our deepest values and doing exciting grassroots work with young and older adults."

The Washington, D.C.-based network, founded in 2007, is building an intergenerational movement that it says speaks "with a unified Franciscan voice" on pressing public policy issues.

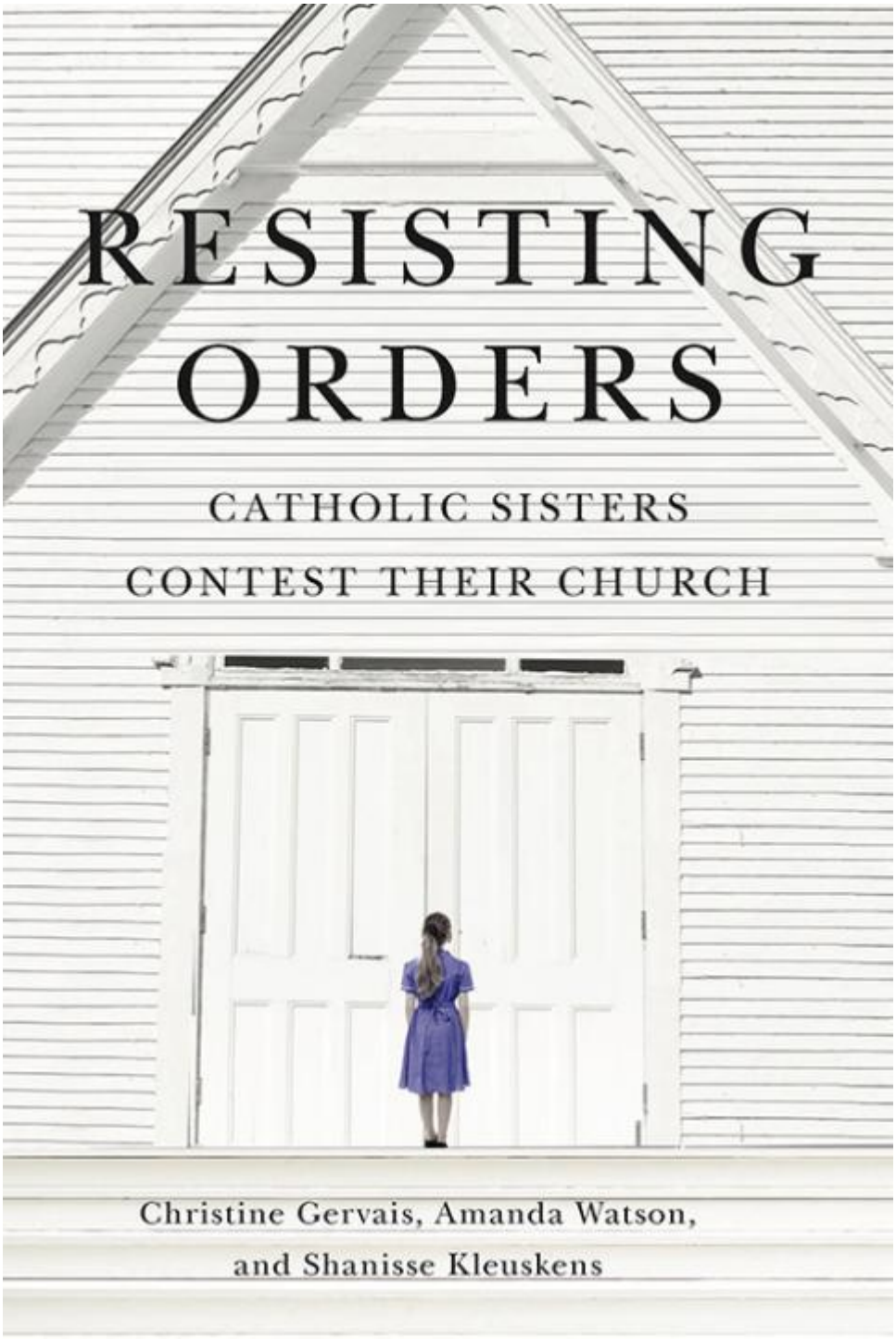
Franciscan Action Network is a faith-based nonprofit organization that "informs, connects and mobilizes a diverse network of Franciscan communities and lay allies across the United States," the announcement said. In its advocacy work, the network has long promoted faithful civic engagement grounded in Franciscan values and Catholic social teaching.

The congregational gift will enable Franciscan Action Network to expand its grassroots groups, called Franciscan Justice Circles, as well as its annual Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference.

"We are humbled and energized by the trust that the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration have placed in our mission," said Michele Dunne, Franciscan Action Network's executive director.

"We are deeply grateful for this new partnership," she said. "It will help us meet the demands from our growing network, which includes vowed and professed Franciscans as well as Franciscan-hearted people, all seeking to take loving action in the world rooted in gospel values and Franciscan spirituality."

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration are based in La Crosse, Wisconsin.



Cover of "Resisting Orders: Catholic Sisters Contest Their Church" published by McGill-Queen's University Press

New book on Canadian sisters 'contesting' the church

A new book chronicles the experiences of 32 Canadian sisters and former sisters who confronted injustices within the Canadian Catholic Church.

Resisting Orders: Catholic Sisters Contest Their Church is co-authored by Canadian writers Christine Gervais, Amanda Watson and Shanisse Kleuskens and is published by McGill-Queen's University Press.

In the announcement, the publisher said that Catholic sisters "are rarely portrayed as activists, let alone as agents of radical change within one of the world's most hierarchical institutions." But, the announcement said, the new book "upends this assumption by sharing the previously hidden life stories of sisters who risked everything to confront injustice from within the heart of the Canadian Catholic church."

Based on interviews with the sisters and former sisters, the book explores the life experiences of women who entered religious life between 1937 and 1985 and who challenged church teaching on women's ordination, LGBTQ rights and reproductive rights, as well as clerical abuse "long before these issues entered the public spotlight."

"*Resisting Orders* invites readers to view Catholic sisters as complex thinkers and activists through a feminist lens," the announcement said. "It focuses on the sisters' intellectual strategies for challenging the church's hierarchies while maintaining their faith. These women do not simply endure contradiction; they resist it with moral clarity and spiritual resolve. They've each found a way to make space for doubt, dissent, and reinvention within a rigid institution."

Gervais, an associate professor of criminology at the University of Ottawa, told GSR that when she participated in various community-based social justice initiatives two decades ago, she was intrigued to meet sisters involved in such work.

That eventually led to conducting interviews with women religious in the province of Ontario in Canada and guaranteeing them anonymity. A feminist lens, Gervais said, led "to compelling articulations of how systemic and profoundly painful their own and other's experiences of patriarchal control and the corresponding gendered harms within the Roman Catholic Church have been."

"It also did not go unnoticed how extremely important it was for them, as women religious, to have an opportunity to be heard and to express their concerns and

critiques regarding patriarchal church doctrine and exclusionary practice."

Watson is an assistant professor of sociology at Simon Fraser University, and Kleuskens is a civil servant residing in Ottawa.

US sisters plan June 24 Capitol Hill event on budget worries

Catholic sisters from two dozen congregations in the United States plan to gather June 24 on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., for public prayer and a news conference to protest what organizers say are unfair cuts to the federal budget that will impact families, children, the elderly and disabled.

The public action — called Sisters Speak Out: A Prayer and Public Witness for Immigrants and a Just Economy — will feature several prominent sisters as speakers, including Mercy Sr. Mary Haddad, president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, and Missionaries of Christ Jesus Sr. Norma Pimentel, the executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.

The event will be held at 10 a.m ET across from the Russell Senate Office Building. It is expected that sisters will be joined by representatives of various social justice and faith groups.

Among other things, the sisters and supporters plan to pray the rosary as they walk to several spots on the U.S. Capitol grounds.

**This story has been corrected with the accurate title of Michele Dunn.*