



People hold placards reading, "Vote for care. Not euthanasia," during a demonstration in Paris Feb. 16, 2026, as France debates a bill to legalize "assisted dying." (OSV News/Reuters/Benoit Tessier)



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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

Catholic institutions in France are preparing for a final vote in the National Assembly that could establish a right to die. The vote was scheduled to take place July 15.

Among the institutions affected are the Little Sisters of the Poor, whose charism is caring for the elderly poor and have 27 nursing homes in France. The international congregation also has dozens more nursing homes around the world, including 19 in the United States.

The law, according to OSV News, has a conscience clause for healthcare providers, but does not have one for pharmacists or for healthcare facilities, which would be forced to allow euthanasia to be performed on their premises.

This is not the first time the Little Sisters of the Poor have been at the center of a controversial issue: In a case that went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 2020, they were part of a lawsuit seeking exemptions to the Affordable Care Act's requirement that employer health plans provide contraceptive coverage. In April, they sued the New York state seeking exemption from the state's law on LGBTQ+ residents in long-term care facilities.

French bishops have been urging the faithful to pray and launched a novena over the proposal.

In March, Sr. Agnés, a doctor and member of the Little Sisters of the Poor, spoke to the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in Geneva, Switzerland, about the proposed law and its two-year prison sentences and 30,000 euro (USD\$34,000) fine for those who refuse euthanasia or try to convince someone not to resort to it.

"Madam Rapporteur, we want to continue to welcome, care for, and accompany life to its natural end with gentleness and compassion," she said, according to the

European Centre for Law & Justice. "We want to relieve suffering, including that which causes people to ask to die, but our hands will not kill, even if we are condemned for it."

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Talitha Kum names new North American representative

Anti-human trafficking organization Talitha Kum has a new North American representative.

Sisters of Notre Dame Sr. Gina Marie Blunck has been named to the post, following the three-year term of Sr. IsaBelle Couillard of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, better known as the Grey Sisters.

Blunck is on the board of directors for the Alliance to End Human Trafficking and is the executive director of the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters. She called the appointment an honor and profound responsibility. (The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation is a major funder of Global Sisters Report.)

"It invites me to listen deeply — to the voices of those affected by human trafficking and to the wisdom of the many individuals and networks already committed to this mission," Blunck said in the announcement. "I see this role not as speaking for others, but as strengthening connections and amplifying collective efforts rooted in dignity and justice."

She said the position is about bringing meaningful change.

"I come with a commitment to service, trusting in the power of collective action to uphold human dignity and bring about transformation," Blunck said in the announcement. "Guided by the spirit of Talitha Kum — 'arise' — I am reminded that transformation is always possible, and that together we can work toward a future marked by justice and freedom for all."

Network launches voter engagement campaign

Network Catholic social justice lobby, along with nearly 50 multifaith and secular partners, has launched a nonpartisan voter engagement and education campaign called "See. Love. Vote."

The campaign aims to "connect communities with the tools they need to be informed and energized voters in the 2026 midterm elections" in the U.S.

The campaign kicked off July 9 with a virtual launch party that included Sr. Carol Zinn, executive director of the Leadership Conference for Women Religious, as well as a United Methodist bishop and a Muslim Public Affairs Council vice president.

In addition to a host of resources from information sheets in English and Spanish to stickers and banners, the [See. Love. Vote website](#) has links to register to vote or to make sure you are registered.

The campaign is inspired by the "See, Judge, Act" framework of Catholic social teaching.