



Leaders of the secretariat of the Synod of Bishops are pictured at the Vatican during an online meeting with presidents and general secretaries of national and regional bishops' conferences June 15, 2021. From left: Xaviere Missionary Sister Nathalie Becquart, synod undersecretary; Cardinal Mario Grech, synod secretary; and Bishop Luis Marín de San Martín, synod undersecretary. Sr. Marie Kolbe Zamora of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity has been appointed as an official for the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops, beginning Sept. 1 at the Vatican. (CNS/courtesy Synod of Bishops)



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Editor's note: Global Sisters Report's [Monday Starter](#) is a weekly feature from GSR staff writers that rounds up news from or about women religious that you may otherwise have missed.



In an effort to encourage wider participation in the October 2023 [Synod of Bishops](#), the Ibero-American Group of Theology invites all religious life on the continent to participate in the [II International Seminar of Theology](#), held virtually Sept. 7-10.

The seminar will offer theological, ecclesiological and pastoral insights on the meaning and practice of synodality in collaboration with the formation processes and frameworks of both the next Synod of Bishops and the church in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The event is organized by the National Institute for Pastoral Training of the Venezuelan Episcopal Conference, the theology faculty of the Andrés Bello Catholic University in Venezuela, and the ecclesiastical faculty of the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry and is sponsored by the Latin American Episcopal Council ([CELAM](#)) and the Latin American Confederation of Religious ([CLAR](#)).

Featured guests will include Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general of the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, and the two undersecretaries, [Sr. Nathalie Becquart](#) of the Xavière Sisters and Bishop Luis Marín de San Martín. Also present will be Bishop José Luis Azuaje Ayala, president of the Venezuelan Episcopal

Conference; Cardinal Baltazar Porras Cardozo, apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Caracas, Venezuela; Archbishop Héctor Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, president of CELAM; and Sr. Gloria Liliana Franco Echeverri of the Company of Mary Our Lady, president of CLAR.

The event will also be broadcast live through the Boston College Continuing Education [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) channels.

Franciscan sister appointed to General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops

Sr. Marie Kolbe Zamora of the [Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity](#) has been appointed as an official for the General Secretariat for the Synod of Bishops, beginning Sept. 1 at the Vatican. She will work with Grech, Marín de San Martín, Becquart and others ahead of synod assemblies.

"It is a profound honor to have been invited by Cardinal Grech to serve the Holy Father's labor for the Church in and through the Synod of Bishops," Zamora said in a press release. "I look forward to learning the work of the General Secretariat and to contributing in any way possible to a deepened sense of ecclesial communion."

Originally from Texas, Zamora earned a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 2015. She made her final vows in 1999 and — other than while studying in Rome from 2004 to 2011 — has been teaching theology at the high school and college levels since 1994.

Oral histories of Sisters of Charity Federation compiled in online exhibit

From the spoken word to the computer screen: The legacy of the [Sisters of Charity Federation](#) has been organized into an interactive [digital archive](#).

A "collaborative, international, and inter-congregational project," the new oral history exhibit, [Charity Speaks](#), is intended to promote the oral history of Catholic sisters in the Vincentian-Setonian tradition through a public database, said Casey Bowser, archivist for the [Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill](#) in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, in a press release.



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Charity Speaks



Charity Speaks is an online exhibit composed of the Sisters of Charity Federation Archives' oral history and written history collections.

Selected by the archivists of the Sisters of Charity Federation, in consultation with congregational leadership, these Sisters' stories represent the breadth and depth of the legacy that are waiting to be uncovered in women religious archives. Women religious have lived deep, spiritual, fulfilling, and historic lives. The stories contained within these records encompass more than just religious life; they provide a unique window into womanhood, Catholic family life, 20th century social and political issues, regional and institutional histories, and much more.

Explore the galleries to the left to learn more about how the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton have made a difference all over the world.

Charity Speaks, the new oral history exhibit in the Sisters of Charity Federation's digital archive (GSR screenshot)

"These sisters' stories represent the breadth and depth of the legacy that is waiting to be uncovered in women religious archives," she said. "Women religious have lived deep, spiritual, fulfilling, and historic lives. The stories contained within these records encompass more than just religious life; they provide a unique window into womanhood, Catholic family life, 20th century social and political issues, regional and institutional histories, and much more."

More digital material will be added to the exhibit as it becomes available.

[Sisters' archivists are collecting COVID-19 history as it happens](#)

Sister shares faith journey throughout her COVID-19 illness

In the July 28 [episode](#) of Hearts Afire Podcast, the podcast of the [Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt](#), New York, Sr. Bridget Mary Troy reflected on her experience with COVID-19 and the importance of her faith throughout her battle.

Troy was diagnosed with the virus Dec. 16, 2020, and missed Christmas and New Year's celebrations while in quarantine. In that time, she said, she experienced "a flash of lightning through my head. I could hardly walk." Overwhelmed with fatigue, she doubted she'd ever be able to drive again.

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Troy credited her faith for guiding her to recovery along with the accompaniment and medical expertise of her fellow sisters.

"We know our faith so well," she said. "God is very close to me. He carried me through the whole thing, even though I wasn't aware; he was there the whole time ... God carries us through everything. My faith kept me strong in itself. I didn't even have to call upon my faith. The faith was there in me and kept me strong."

To those battling with the virus or other sickness, Troy offered a piece of advice: "Never lose faith in God because we know that he will answer our prayers."