

## 23rd Plenary Assembly of the UISG on 5-9 May 2025 in Rome



From 5 to 9 May 2025, our general secretary, Sr. Marjolein, together with our president, Fr. Janis, and a member of our Executive Committee, Sr. Angela, participated in the Plenary Assembly of the UISG (International Union of Superiors General of Women Religious). It was also the date of the 60th anniversary of the UISG. The meeting took place in parallel with the conclave of Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel.

This UISG meeting is held every three years. This time there was a maximum number of female (and a few male) participants. Normally there are around 800, but this time there were just under 1,000 of us. There were speeches and translations in 14 languages, including Korean and Indonesian. The theme of the meeting was: “Consecrated life: a hope that transforms”.

ENG	1	KOR	A
FRA	2	JAP	B
ESP	3	VIET	C
ITA	4	ARAB	D
PORT	5	POL	E
DEUTCH	6		
INDON	7		

In the past, many of the sisters present were white, but now all other skin colours predominated, and it was striking that the average age of general superiors worldwide has clearly fallen.

We sat at tables according to the language we had indicated, with 8 to 10 people. Unfortunately, the large number of attendees meant that we would have preferred to have walkie-talkies to be able to hear the people on the other side of our own table. Nevertheless, the exchanges were very rich.

After the introductory lecture by Sr. Mariola Lopez, with the same title as the entire meeting, experiences and thoughts were expressed in the now familiar and much appreciated manner of synodality. Everyone had a chance to speak and there was no discussion, only talking and listening.



On the second day, we listened to the new prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Sr. Simona Brambilla. She spoke on the topic: “How does consecrated life represent transforming hope?”. In vivid language, she showed that we do not necessarily have to be strong, but we do have to be present!

On the third day, we heard three testimonies from crisis areas under the theme: “Religious women: bearers of hope in demanding situations”. These lectures were very impressive.

The next theme was: “Religious women, hope in a synodal Church”; again, there were three testimonies.

On the fourth day, the sisters gathered in constellations according to country and language.

After the closing session, in which the president of the UISG bid farewell to the executive secretary, Sr. Pat Murray, and the “technical sister” Florence de la Villéon, we celebrated the Eucharist, as we did every day. And just as we had received communion, the cry rang out through the hall: ‘White smoke!’. We were able to meet our new Pope Leo XIV on the screens.



On the last day, we traditionally have an audience with the Pope. This time, it was a visit to the tomb of Pope Francis in the Basilica of Maria Maggiore, which we entered through the “Porta Santa”, followed by a Eucharistic celebration.

After that, everyone went their separate ways.

All in all, it was a wonderful gathering, sparkling with the joy of the encounters and hope.

See you in three years!

