

EDITORIAL

The Catholic Church celebrates two major worldwide historic events. First, the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality (2021-2024), held in different phases, including the two celebrative Sessions¹. Second, the Jubilee Year, which is celebrated from Dec.24, 2024 to January 6, 2026)², preceded by a Year (2024) devoted to “a great ‘symphony’ of prayer”³. The conclusion of the Synod of Bishops (in October 2024) does not end the synod process; rather, it constitutes only the beginning of a new, longer and more engaging phase of the journey, which is the phase of reception and implementation of the Synod.

According to Pope Francis’s “*Accompanying Note by the Holy Father Francis*”, while it is “*not strictly normative*”, the *final Document* of the Synod on Synodality constitutes a papal ordinary magisterium. The *Document* will require “different mediations”, that is, thoughtful interpretation and application over time. He emphasises that immediate action is also needed. Local churches are

¹<https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/assembly/synthesis/english/2023.10.28-ENG-Synthesis-Report.pdf>; https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale_traduzione-di-lavoro.pdf ; <https://www.synod.va/en/the-synodal-process.html> (Accessed 14 Nov.2024).

² Pope Francis, *Spes Non Confundit*, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of The Year 2025 (May 9, 2024), in:
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html.

³ *Letter Of the Holy Father Francis to Msgr. Rino Fisichella, President of The Pontifical Council for The Promotion of The New Evangelization, For the Jubilee 2025*, in:
<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2022/documents/20220211-fisichella-giubileo2025.html>.

urged to begin implementing measures aligned with the *Final Document's* recommendations. The *Final Document* did not discuss or exhaust every theme. Indeed, it entrusts specific themes to ten study groups, with more potentially being added to facilitate informed decisions on essential matters. Moreover, solutions need not be universal; instead, they should reflect the diverse cultural, pastoral, and regional realities of the global Church. The Pope has reiterated that not every doctrinal or moral debate requires magisterial intervention. Therefore, local churches and Institutes of Consecrated Life are encouraged to explore “more inculturated solutions” that respect traditions while addressing unique or new challenges. In truth, the *final Document* of the synod contains many actionable steps and theological insights. The local churches and institutes of Consecrated Life are directed to adopt the *final document's* insights actively, adapt them to their specific contexts, and take concrete actions to achieve tangible reform.

In brief, the synod process must pass from words (discussions) to deeds or actions. Therefore, the *final document* is not merely a roadmap: it is a call to transformation. As local communities embrace the Pope's recommendations on the *final document* of the synod, the Church is invited to live out its mission with renewed unity, inculturation, adaptability and commitment to the Gospel. Local churches and church groupings are now called upon to implement, in their different contexts, the authoritative indications contained in the Document. The journey is complex; however, it promises to shape a more inclusive, participatory, and mission-

driven Church for generations to come⁴. The Synod is anticipated to have a long-lasting impact on the local churches and on Consecrated life for many years to come. For the desired synodality to happen -- that is, for the synodal Church to be a family in communion, participation and mission --, the local Churches and particularly consecrated persons, will play a vital and ongoing role.

As we enter into the implementation phase of the Synod, divine providence wants the entire Church to begin it, as it is proper to do, with the celebration of the Jubilee, a Holy Year which includes the celebration of the *Jubilee of Consecrated Life* (October 8th-12th, 2025).

The following paragraphs offer a glimpse of Pope Francis' *Spes Non Confundit*, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025, and then introduce the studies in this volume. Following an ancient tradition, the Pope proclaims Jubilee, ordinarily every twenty-five years. Hope is the central message of the 2025 Jubilee. Hope is inscribed in the heart of every person. Everyone knows what it means to hope. Hope is the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Still, uncertainty about the future sometimes leads to conflicting feelings. These feelings range from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Frequently, we encounter people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could bring them happiness. "For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be

⁴ Cfr. "Nota di accompagnamento del Santo Padre Francesco",
in: https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ITA---Documento-finale.pdf, pp. 5-6.

renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope"⁵. We hear St. Paul's message of hope: "The Gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead, a message of hope that fulfils the ancient promises, leads to glory and, grounded in love, does not disappoint"⁶.

Hope is born of love and is based on the love of the crucified Jesus, who reconciles with himself and who wants to be reconciled with others. The Holy Spirit illumines all believers with the light of hope. He continually sustains and invigorates our lives. Christian hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God's love (Cf. Rom 8:35.37-39). For this reason, hope perseveres in the midst of trials, since it is "founded on faith and nurtured by charity, it enables us to press forward in life"⁷. However, with St. Paul, we know that life has its joys and sorrows, that love is tested amid trials, and that hope can falter in the face of suffering. Nonetheless, while acknowledging that "we boast in our sufferings", St. Paul leads us to recognise that trials and tribulations mark the lives of those who preach the Gospel amid incomprehension and persecution (cf. *Rom* 5:3-4; *2 Cor* 6:3-10). However, it is precisely in these situations that we glimpse a light beyond the darkness, when we realise that evangelisation is sustained by the power of the crucified and risen Christ, and in this way, we learn to practise the virtue of patience, which is closely linked to hope. These experiences, marked by the interplay of hope and patience, show that Christian life is "a journey calling for moments of greater intensity to encourage and sustain hope as the

⁵ *Spes Non Confundit*, 1.

⁶ *Spes Non Confundit*, 2.

⁷ *Spes Non Confundit*, 3.

constant companion that guides our steps towards the goal of our encounter with the Lord Jesus”⁸.

For the Jubilee, we are called to keep in mind a Word of hope, undertake a journey of hope, discover signs of hope, welcome his appeals for hope, and be aware that Christian life is anchored in hope⁹. With the slogan “Pilgrims of hope on the way of peace”, the Jubilee calls on Consecrated men and women to reconciliation, conversion and sacramental penance, as well as to solidarity, justice and joy in God's service¹⁰. The Jubilee invites everyone, especially Christians, to promote holiness of life, strengthen faith and encourage works of mercy and solidarity and a fraternal communion within the Church and society.

The Churches in Africa and the institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, hear this call. They welcome it as a pressing invitation to be witnesses of hope – a Hope that does not deceive or disappoint (Rom 5:5) -- and builders of peace within their communities, in the societies and in the relationship with and care of creation¹¹. We cannot overemphasize the importance, scope and

⁸ *Spes Non Confundit*,5

⁹ Cf. *Spes Non Confundit*.

¹⁰ Cf. <https://www.vitaconsacrata.va/en/eventi-e-notizie/jubilee-2025/jubilee-2025-updates.html>

¹¹ <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/11977/catholic-church-in-malawi-to-launch-jubilee-year-on-solemnity-of-the-epiphany-2025> ; <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/12933/churchs-2025-jubilee-year-key-focus-of-ghana-catholic-bishops-annual-plenary-assembly-deliberations> ; <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-07/african-faith-leaders-join-pleas-for-jubilee-debt-forgiveness.html>; <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/africa/news/2024-05/cote-d-ivoire-consecrated-persons-begin-preparations-for-the-ju.html>; <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/12895/ahead-of-churchs-2025-jubilee-nigerias-consecrated-need-to-review-charisms-in-light-of-todays-realities-official>.

implications of becoming pilgrims of hope on the path of peace, especially in regions marked by poor economic and health conditions, wars and social conflicts, political instability or suffer the agony of debt crisis.

Pope Francis calls on everyone to discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us. “We need to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence. The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God’s saving presence, ought to become signs of hope.”¹². There are several categories of persons and situations where tangible signs of hope should be present during the Jubilee Year, and expressed in practical ways and touching the lives of people in the Church and in society¹³. The signs of hope should manifest themselves in these spheres: Peace in the world, enthusiasm for human life and a readiness to share or transmit it; persons who experience hardships of any kind; prisoners, the sick at home or in hospital, as well as all those in particularly difficult situations who experience their own weaknesses and limitations, especially those affected by illnesses or disabilities; the young people; migrants, exiles, displaced persons and refugees; the elderly, including grandparents; the poor, who often lack the essentials of life. Therefore, Pope Francis makes fervent appeals for hope¹⁴. He addressed appeals particularly to:

- *The rich*: Since the goods of the earth are not destined for a privileged few, but for everyone, the request is that wealthy

¹² *Spes Non Confundit*,7.

¹³ *Spes Non Confundit*,7-15.

¹⁴ *Spes Non Confundit*, 16-17.

people must be generous and help their brothers and sisters in need, especially those who lack water and food, for “hunger is a scandal, an open wound on the body of our humanity, and it summons all of us to a serious examination of conscience.”

- *The more affluent nations*: these should acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to *forgive the debts* of countries that will never be able to repay them. The Pope refers to the exceptionally “serious” nature of this matter today because of the existence of “a new form of injustice” which is the “true ‘ecological debt’” between the global North and South. Regarding the *forgiveness of debt*, the issues at stake debt here are high, especially for African countries facing an unprecedented debt emergency. Fr. Giulio Albanese, of the Vatican Secretariat of State, pointed out that “in the face of this scenario, the turbulence on the disadvantaged countries, primarily those in Africa, is such that they are already those who are paying the consequences more than others. We are talking about economies with high rates of informality and, therefore, low tax revenues, high dependence on foreign countries for essential goods and, therefore, high exposure to international price fluctuations, the need to borrow in dollars or euros with the consequent diversion of a large part of export revenues to debt service payments”¹⁵. Governments and financial institutions - both national and international - are called upon

¹⁵ Giulio Albanese, “La bolla del debito”, in: <https://www.osservatoreromano.va/it/news/2024-03/quo-073/la-bolla-del-debito.html> ; cf. Id., “Lotta alla povertà e prosperità per tutti”, in: <https://www.osservatoreromano.va/it/news/2023-11/quo-270/lotta-alla-poverta-e-prosperita-per-tutti.html> .

to suspend the payment of debt and even to carry out its conversion, in some cases even provide for its partial or total cancellation, demanding in exchange a precise commitment from the debtor country. Various faith-based organisations joined in the appeal for the forgiveness of debt on the occasion of the Jubilee Year 2025¹⁶.

- *All Christians, East and West, for unity*: the appeal is to commemorate together the 1700th anniversary of the celebration of the first great Ecumenical Council, that of Nicaea, and to take a decisive step forward towards unity around a common date for Easter.

Hope, faith and charity are the “theological virtues” that, in their inseparable unity, express the heart of the Christian life (cf. 1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:3). The virtue of hope gives inward direction and purpose to the life of believers. Hence, St. Paul encourages us to “rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer” (Rom 12:12). We need to “abound in hope” (cf. Rom 15:13), “so that we may bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts; that our faith may be joyful and our charity enthusiastic; and that each of us may be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the Spirit of Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope.”¹⁷

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the heart of our faith and the basis of our hope (Cf. 1 Cor 15:3-5). The martyrs provide the most

¹⁶ <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-07/african-faith-leaders-join-pleas-for-jubilee-debt-forgiveness.html>.

¹⁷ *Spes Non Confundit*, 18.

convincing testimony to this hope. They were steadfast in their faith in Christ and, as a result, renounced earthly life itself rather than betray the Lord Jesus. Martyrs are confessors of the life without end. The Church therefore calls us to “treasure their testimony, in order to confirm our hope and allow it to bear good fruit”¹⁸.

The Holy Father speaks also of judgement – which is one of what the Christian Eschatology traditionally calls “The Four Last Things”, namely, Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell. The judgement concerns the salvation which we hope for and which Jesus has won for us through his death and resurrection. It is intended to bring us to a definitive encounter with the Lord. The evil we have done cannot remain hidden; it needs to be purified in order to enable this definitive encounter with God’s love. Hence, it is necessary to offer prayers for all those who died on this earthly journey as an expression of our solidarity that is effective in virtue of the communion of saints and of the shared bond that makes us one in Christ.

The Jubilee *indulgence*, thanks to the power of prayer, is intended especially for those who have died, so that they may obtain full mercy. In fact, “the indulgence is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God’s mercy”. The sacrament of Reconciliation assures us that God wipes away our sins: “It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion... The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy... He does not treat us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our faults. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so strong is his love for

¹⁸ *Spes Non Confundit*, 20.

those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins” (*Ps* 103:3-4.8.10-12)¹⁹. However, every sin “leaves its mark”. Sin has consequences, both outwardly and inwardly, inasmuch as “every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death, in the state called Purgatory”²⁰. In our humanity, weak and attracted by evil, certain residual effects of sin remain. These are removed by the indulgence, always by the grace of Christ.

In the Lord Jesus’s prayer, we say: “*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us*”. This experience of full *forgiveness* must “open our hearts and minds to the need to forgive others in turn. Forgiveness does not change the past; it cannot change what happened in the past, yet it can allow us to change the future and to live different lives, free of anger, animosity and vindictiveness. Forgiveness makes possible a brighter future, which enables us to look at the past with different eyes, now more serene, albeit still bearing the trace of past tears.”²¹

Hope finds its supreme witness in the Mother of God: In her, we see that “hope is not naive optimism but a gift of grace amid the realities of life.”²²

Turning its attention, then, on Jubilee, The *Catholic Voyage* (TCV-Africa) decided to reflect on a theme “*around the jubilee of Consecrated life,*” highlighting the desire of the Conference of Major Superiors of Nigeria. The Jubilee Year calls on Consecrated

¹⁹ *Spes Non Confundit*, 22-23.

²⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 1472.

²¹ *Spes Non Confundit*, 23.

²² *Spes Non Confundit*, 24.

persons as faith-filled pilgrims to undertake the journey of hope, promote holiness of life and, therefore, encourage peace through reconciliation, solidarity, works of charity, mercy and justice, joy and celebration. The general theme of this volume is *"Pilgrims of hope on the way to peace: Consecrated life as a journey of reconciliation, mission and celebration"*. Without claiming to address all issues related to this theme exhaustively, much less to the Jubilee, the authors undertake a careful study of some important topics and invite readers to reflect further on them.

In a word, the Jubilee is the year of reconciliation, conversion and sacramental penance and consequently, of solidarity, hope, justice, and commitment to the service of God in joy and peace with one's brothers and sisters. It is called a "Holy Year" because it begins, takes place and ends with solemn, sacred rites, but especially because it is intended to promote the holiness of life. In fact, Jubilee was established to consolidate faith, foster works of charity and fraternal communion with the Church and society, and call and stimulate believers to a more sincere and consistent promotion of their faith in Christ.²³ These are some of the issues that deeply and directly involve consecrated persons. Jubilee, therefore, is particularly relevant and significant to Consecrated Life.

Olisaemeka Okwara opens the volume with a study titled *"Hope Founded on Justice: A Critical Reflection On 'Spes Non Confundit', Bull of Indiction of The Ordinary Jubilee of The Year 2025."* The author notes that, in the perspective of *Spes non Confundit*, hope is

²³ Letter of Joao Braz Cardinal de Aviz, Prefect of Dicastery of Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to the Presidents of the Conferences of Major Superiors, 29/6/2023, in: <https://www.vitaconsacrata.va/content/dam/vitaconsacrata/giubileo-2025/Iubilaeum-2025---En---Conferences-Of-Major-Superiors.pdf>

active, not passive, for it challenges the believer to live out the faith which is believed. Rooted in Vatican II's theological hermeneutics of *signs of the times* and a view of human existential issues as *locus* of faith and its praxis, Pope Francis discusses hope in its different facets as human and religious value that could also be resourceful in the challenging ethical, economic, religious, and socio-political issues of our times. Okwara's paper addresses the guiding question: Why is hope relevant for the ordinary Jubilee 2025, and how do the Pope's views offer a sure pathway of hope for our times? In her view, the Pope's mandate on hope offers insight to human society by way of its understanding of hope as rooted in ardent faith, solidarity and justice.

The centrality of hope, as the theme of the Jubilee, leads to the basic question: What is "Jubilee"? Margaret Fagbamigbe examines this question from its different dimensions in her study titled: "*The Jubilee: Its Spiritual, Ecclesial, and Social Significance in the Life of the Church*". This paper examines the topic from a theological perspective. Her reflection presents Jubilee and Holy Year from the Old Testament in the pre-exilic and post-exilic epochs; illustrates the mode of operation of the Holy Year; highlights the essence of the previous Jubilee Years; demonstrates the Ecclesial, Spiritual, and social significances of 2025 Jubilee Year; enumerates the fruits of the Jubilee and, then, draws some conclusions. The Jubilee Year 2025 is seen as symbol of hope for all peoples, permeating great expectations. We plant the seeds of hope in another person's life, she notes, when we have a genuine encounter with others when individuals embark on personal inward pilgrimage for transformation and conversion, and by going on external pilgrimage to encounter God in holy places of worship and in one another by

offering good deeds to alleviate sufferings of others and by showing love and offering happiness to others. These good actions we take upon ourselves in joyful hope as we expect to receive happiness in eternity by the power of Christ.

Eugenia Ijeoma Ejiogu's paper, *"Hope Amid Despair: Pathways to Resilience and Renewal"*, explores the journey from despair to hope. She examines the psychological, emotional and social effects of despair and the transformative power of hope. Beginning with a definition of despair and its manifestations, it outlines its detrimental effects on individuals and communities. The article introduces the concept of hope and its importance as a remedy for despair and provides strategies for cultivating it on a personal and collective level. The main enemies of hope include cynicism, fear and nihilism. The author offers insights into how to combat these forces. Resilience is needed as a crucial element in overcoming despair, and the article presents inspiring case studies of individuals and communities who have successfully navigated this journey. It argues that education, health care and community development have an important role to play in fostering a culture of hope and resilience. In addition, the author emphasises the power of collective action, as demonstrated by successful movements driven by hope. It, therefore, advocates a commitment to hope as a guiding principle for building a more compassionate, resilient and just society.

What does the Jubilee Year 2025 have to do with consecrated life? What are the relevance and implications of the Jubilee for Consecrated persons? Ikechukwu Kanu addresses this question in his study titled *"Consecrated Persons and The Jubilee: Embracing Hope, Conversion and Reconciliation"*. He writes in the context of the past four years that constituted difficult moments for humanity

longing for peace and hope. The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019 led to the tragedy of death and further made clear the uncertainty and fleetingness of existence. Christians and people of other faiths endured hardships and limitations. This period generated feelings of grief, doubt, fear and disorientation amidst new interrogations. Then, there are the wars between Ukraine and Russia, and between Israel and Palestine, alongside other conflicts around the world. In declaring the year 2025 the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis calls on and expects humanity to move away from a season of tragedy to a season of hope. In this context, Kanu's article examines the Jubilee Year 2025 by focusing on the implications of the Jubilee Year for Consecrated Persons. He argues that the 2025 Jubilee Year can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust, and a sense of universal fraternity as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that is so urgently desired by the world. In this quest for renewal and rebirth, the consecrated life has a vital role to play in the Church and in society, as it seeks a deeper understanding and appreciation of its vocation, way of life and mission.

The Consecrated life is a gift to the church and the world. It maintains its uniqueness and intrinsic values throughout the history of the Church and in all societies. Though countercultural, consecrated life contributes to the cultures around the world, particularly African culture. The contribution of Judemary Amgbeye draws attention to "*The teaching of the consecrated life in the major seminaries in the African context: its needs, challenges and prospects.*" Questions are asked: Is there a synergy between the consecrated life and African culture? Can the consecrated life be taught in the African context? Is the major diocesan seminary an appropriate place to teach consecrated life? What are the needs,

challenges and prospects for teaching consecrated life in major seminaries in the African context? These are not just mind-boggling questions, Amgbeye suggests, but also *status questionis* that need to be developed within the academic system and curriculum framework, especially in the major seminaries. Moreover, considering the richness of Consecrated life, it is asked whether the major seminaries are platforms through which the importance and richness embedded in consecrated life in the African context “are preserved and consecrated persons formed as pilgrims of hope on the path to peace”? Although many works have been written on consecrated Life as a unique form of life, the author’s paper focuses on teaching this form of life in major seminaries in the African context, an important topic that is less often addressed in the literature on Consecrated Life. The future relationship and collaboration in mission between the diocesan clergy and consecrated persons depends on what they had learnt in their seminary days and the vision and perception they have about each other. Therefore, this article seeks to establish and underscore the need to teach consecrated life in the major seminaries in the African context and the challenges and prospects involved.

Any reflection on the formation, mission, and ministry of priests and consecrated persons presupposes, of course, that there are persons who are called upon and respond to fulfil the activities. Ikechukwu Kanu and Michael Pilani examine the theme of vocations in the study titled “*Priestly and Religious Vocations in the Light of Genesis (2:5-9): Insights and Actions for The Jubilee Year*”. This explores the historical, literary, and theological implications of this biblical text, particularly in relation to the understanding of vocations, and the interpretation of contemporary vocations crisis.

The article is distinguished by its understanding and interpretation of the contemporary experience of religious vocation in the light of the Book of Genesis, arguing that this passage of Genesis offers a rich, multifaceted view of religious vocation. This study shows how the creation narrative in Genesis 2:5-9 emphasises stewardship and divine-human partnership as fundamental to different understandings. These insights are then applied to contemporary religious life, offering recommendations for reimagining priestly and religious vocations in the light of modern challenges.

Daniel Chukwuemeka Ugwu, MDM, writes on "The practice of the works of mercy as a sign of hope and gratitude". The article explores the transformative power of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The works of mercy are selfless acts rooted in compassion and empathy that bring hope and gratitude to a world filled with darkness and despair. Their practice has biblical foundations and references. The works of mercy are not only a religious matter, for they also have a profound social dimension and implications. Through the practice of the works of mercy, individuals are able to demonstrate the love of God and neighbour in a significant way. This practice leads to the promotion of a sense of community life, genuine compassion and unwavering love for all. As the article shows, the works of mercy have a powerful impact on both the giver and the receiver, fostering empathy, breaking down barriers of isolation and individualism, and transforming lives for a better and more harmonious society. By practising these acts of selflessness, citizens and Christians can become beacons of hope and gratitude without limitations, thus making a positive impact on the world. Therefore, the author emphasises the importance of putting into practice the

works of mercy to become givers of hope and gratitude to a world in need.

In addition, the volume draws readers' attention to the vital and (re-)current theme of the *common good*. In fact, in a recent message to participants at the meeting, “Common Good: Theory and Practice”, Pope Francis recalled three important points about this topic: first, it’s one of the cornerstones of the social teachings of the Church. Second, “The quest for the common good and justice are central and indispensable aspects of any defence of every human life, especially the most fragile and defenceless. Third, “The common good is first and foremost a practice, made up of fraternal welcome and a common search for truth and justice.” In the pursuit of the common good, we need, both in society and in the Church, the Pope implored, to listen to female voices, and “we need the genuine contributions of all the world's cultures, allowing them to express their needs and resources.”²⁴ Efeturi Ojakaminor addresses precisely the topic of the common good and the need to serve it in a paper entitled “*Serving the Common Good of Society: Reflections for the Socio-Political Transformation of Nigeria*”. The paper discusses the meaning and implications of the common good, Christian participation in the realisation of the common good, and the implementation and challenges of the Church's social teaching in Nigeria. “The nation needs re-fixing or transformation, and this must start with a return to the idea of the common good.” The author suggests some ways out of the quagmire in which the nation finds itself today. The Church

²⁴ Pope Francis, “Message of The Holy Father to Participants at the Meeting “Common Good: Theory and Practice” (12 November 2024), in: <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2024/documents/20241112-messaggio-bene-comune.html>.

believes that with her social teachings, she has something to offer in the attempt to fashion out a more humane and just society for the benefit of God's children. This conviction calls for a recommitment on the part of both the Church's hierarchy and committed Catholics.

Finally, since we are called to embark on a journey of hope, to discover signs of hope, to welcome the Church's appeals for hope, and to be aware that Christian life is anchored in hope, let us pray and work so that through our witness hope may spread to all those who anxiously seek it. With this aim in mind and as a contribution to the reflection and celebration of the current Jubilee, this volume proposes these studies. So, may the way we live our lives say to everyone, our neighbour, in so many words: "Hope in the Lord! Hold firm, take heart and hope in the Lord!" (Ps 27:14)²⁵.

Enjoy reading.

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²⁵ *Spes Non Confundit*, 25.