

Sister Mary Johnson

This was a conference of momentous import. It showcased the commitment, energy and passion for research on religious life and its mission to the Church and world. The conference highlighted the potential of a global network of sister researchers and their collaborators. Finally, it truly enfolded the concept of a global sisterhood. So the conference gave great hope.

There were also challenges presented that require ongoing reflection and discussion. One challenge is to confront biases and stereotypical thinking, and false dichotomies that have formed us and that may obfuscate the truth and movement in the researching of religious life. Some of these are North/South, apostolic/contemplative, growth/decline, community/ministry, prayer/action. A clarification of terms is also needed when discussing certain religious words, like charism, in particular. Reflection on issues like these will lead us to deeper meaning and more effective research design, data collection and analysis, and hopefully, the enhancement of religious life and its mission to the world.