

Gemma said sisters must "use hope as a lens through which we reflect on religious life and the future," because with hope, "barriers are considered challenges, not roadblocks."

The way to hope, she said, is through prayer.

"Prayer is both an avenue to, and a reflective lens on, hope," Gemma said. "As leaders of congregations, do we — can we — invite all our sisters to make 'minister of prayer' more than a title for those no longer in active service? Prayer can stop wars. Praying can overcome evil. Prayer is an act of hope that love is alive and at work in the universe."

Gemma had framed her address around the family road trips she experienced as a child, noting how even when the view is not clear, hope drives us forward.

"My friends, our windshield is polished and the road beckons," she said. "Let us not fear to hope, because Jesus the Christ is behind the wheel."

This story appears in the **LCWR 2023** feature series. [View the full series.](#)