

Embracing the challenges of religious life

I could write a book about the difficulties and challenges I've encountered as a twenty-first-century young religious. Ever since I had my first Profession, I've discovered that life is far more difficult than I anticipated.

Almost everyone nowadays has access to a cell phone or other form of technology. I have different information on my phone, and I've heard it all: "The young ones these days are always on their phones." Well, I'm guilty, and I'm not ashamed to admit it. I'm currently living with Sisters of different ages and cultures/ethnicity. My second language is English, and it's easy for me to get left out of some conversations. What may interest me may not interest our Sisters and vice versa. I've used social media to come up with various topics and news from other countries that some of our sisters may not be aware of. Whether they believe me or not, I found ways to communicate with them.

During Lent 2022, I've decided to read books instead of spending hours on my phone at night. Tonga is where I grew up. Reading wasn't our cup of tea, but it helped me get through some tough times in my life. Surprisingly, without my phone, I could read for hours and forget I was upset about something. There are times when I'm full of complaints, impatience and disappointment. I'd walk silently to the chapel and pour my heart out to Jesus. It doesn't always work, but it brings so many good things to mind. In light of one of our sisters having severe arthritis and six hip replacements who still finds time to iron my habits when I'm too busy at work. I am constantly amazed. Yet here I am complaining about life rather than being grateful for my community and those who have supported me.

Although we can feel miserable at times, we should not dwell too much on it. As religious, we can find ways to embrace all the challenges that we face on the journey and that helps me.

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