

# Reconciliation for Social Cohesion among Religious Women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

Religious women are faced with conflictual situations which sometimes result in broken relationships and the disintegration of communities that should be restored for social cohesion. The study sought how reconciliation promotes social cohesion among religious women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya, for a successful transition from unresolved conflicts to social connectedness. The study was guided by the following objective: The use of reconciliation for social cohesion among the religious women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi. The study was anchored on John Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory and Emile Durkheim Social Integration Theory. The study adopted a mixed method approach and a convergent parallel research design. The study targeted 194 religious women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish. The census method was used to obtain a sample of 194 religious' women of which 165 participated in the quantitative study and 10 responded to the interview. Questionnaires were used to collect data for the quantitative study, while interview guide was used to collect data for the qualitative study. The data for the quantitative study was analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and was presented in tables while thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data for the qualitative study. There was a significant moderate positive correlation between the two variables, reconciliation and social cohesion, which imply that reconciliation when adopted will help to promote social cohesion among religious women. The study concluded that conflicts remain prevalent among religious women and reconciliation when adopted by religious women can promote social cohesion through social connectedness, the promotion of common good and the respect for human dignity. The study recommends that every religious community should have reconciliation and social cohesion as part of their formation programme.

**Keywords:** Reconciliation, Social Cohesion, Religious women

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

All around our society, humanity is faced with too many conflicts. Religious women are part and parcel of society, what happens in the larger society influences religious life too, since religious women do not live in isolation (Ngundo, 2021). Religious women are faced with conflictual situations which sometimes result in broken relationships and the disintegration of communities that should be restored for social cohesion. Conflicts frequently arise when two opposing opinions, views, or beliefs cannot coexist peacefully without engaging in a conversation of reconciliation. Due to the diverse experiences, expectations, and interests that people bring to the table when they engage, conflict becomes inevitable and a phenomenon that must be dealt with on a daily basis (Mbaro, 2010).

Howard (2022), in Global Sisters Report, acknowledged the fact that there is no doubt that conflicts have arisen at different times throughout the history of religious women. According to her, conflicts must have resulted from concerns over how to move forward in the face of change or how to best meet contemporary needs. Communal discernment and individual discernment do not always align, much as today.

Undoubtedly, many religious women have grown dissatisfied or disillusioned; some have even made the decision to quit. The story of religious women surely includes broken relationships as well.

From a biblical perspective, reconciliation pertains to all the relationships that concerns us: our relationship with God, self, neighbour and, with nature (Schreiter, 2015). In order to experience complete peace, our relationship in these four dimensions must be perfect. After the fall in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), God's redeeming work of reconciliation restored humanity to its intimate relationship with the Creator. In the words of Schreiter (2015), reconciliation is not just the healing of memories and the reception of forgiveness, but also the transformation of the social institutions that led to, encouraged, and sustained conflict in the first place.

Nordstrom (2013) defines "Reconciliation as a process of repairing broken relationships". He opines that the approaches that are used in reconciliation process include truth-seeking, dialogue, acknowledgement, various forms of justice, reparations, memorialization, and trauma healing. The process of reconciliation involves individuals and groups in society, and members of society and the state. Any reconciliation process must be inclusive. To put it in another way, reconciliation impacts everyone, and not just those who have been affected (Nordstrom, 2013). Restoring a society's broken relationship requires a holistic approach, one in which all those affected are given the opportunity to express their fears, sufferings, and hopes. In a divided world, as we have it today, the message of reconciliation is a prophetic call to all and sundry to restore broken relationships in order to achieve social cohesion. A reconciliation that is all encompassing and holistic, with God, self, others and nature. Reconciliation has been used, and is still being used in promoting social cohesion.

For instance, according to Stewart (2016), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 2008, to document the history of the Canadian Residential School System and its long-term consequences. Survivors were able to speak about their experiences at the TRC. The Report spans multiple volumes and declares the Residential School System a cultural genocide. The TRC delivered its final report on Canada's residential school system for Aboriginal children in December 2015. The Report, titled "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future", provides 94 recommendations for moving forward and maintaining the reconciliation process in Canada.

The Australia Report (2021), shows how effective the Australian reconciliation journey has been so far. The Report improves on the initial State of Reconciliation in Australia Report, which was published in 2016. In the 2016 Report, the five dimensions of reconciliation, historical acceptance, racial relations, equality and equity, institutional integrity, and unity, were for the first time highlighted. The 2021 Report acknowledged the fact that support for reconciliation is on the increase. According to the Report's evidence, Australia's reconciliation effort is at a turning point, and the country needs to move from a "safe to brave" position on matters involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Actions such as speaking the truth and proactively confronting issues of injustice, systemic discrimination, and occasions where the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are denied or disregarded are to be employed (Australia Report, 2021).

For Moosa (2022), restoring broken relationship is a contested concept, especially in the post-apartheid context of South Africa. Because of the country's history of exploitation and segregation, the country's various ethnic groups have struggled to participate as equal members of the national and political community. Reconciliation contributes to further engender sentiments of overcoming the obstacles of a shared and violent history in democratic South Africa, with its progressive emphasis on equal opportunity and legal equality. According to the South Africa Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) for 2021, South Africans associate the term reconciliation with a variety of meanings, the most popular of which are forgiveness and peace.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), with its emphasis on public truth-telling and the grant of amnesty to perpetrators, is likely to have shaped South Africans' conception of reconciliation, (Moosa, 2022). The SARB also revealed that the majority of South Africans have not directly experienced reconciliation and that there is widespread popular support in South Africa for further reconciliation. There is a feeling that all South Africans, regardless of their apartheid status, share responsibility for reconciliation and that they each have an important role to play in the process. Additionally, it was discovered that despite the fact that the term "reconciliation" is controversial and subject to various meanings, there is strong public support for more activities aimed at promoting reconciliation that ought to be driven by a citizen-led approach.

In Rwanda, as stated by Kabwete (2021), "The genocide against the Tutsi raised huge challenges about post-genocide reconciliation". Testimony of previous atrocities was one of the most common tactics used in Rwanda to foster reconciliation. One of the first tasks of the Rwandan alternative dispute resolution, known as Gacaca, was a nationwide gathering of testimonies from genocide witnesses. The testimony of perpetrators and survivors led to their reconciliation through the collection of information about what happened during the genocide. The testimonies brought about healing, and their social engagement became enhanced. Asking for forgiveness was a form of therapy for the perpetrators, and for survivors who had the courage to forgive, experienced healing. Payment of compensation, was discovered to play a critical role in obtaining forgiveness from victims and assisting former adversaries in forming intimate and long-term relationships in the pursuit of reconciliation. Both the convicted and victims gained trust and confidence after compensation was paid. Additionally, it was revealed that poorly paid compensation, or compensation that was not paid at all, posed challenges to the reconciliation process, (Rudasingwa, 2021).

Rutagambwa (2021), examined how religious organizations in post-Genocide Rwanda viewed the process of national unity and reconciliation, as well as how they contributed to its implementation. He found out that religious organizations worked alongside government institutions to promote unity and reconciliation, as well as to reconstruct Rwanda following the 1994 Genocide, which shattered every social fabric. Religious organizations encountered challenges, such as passive resistance to unity and reconciliation programs.

In Ethiopia, Yohannes & Gebresenbet (2021), asserts that, Ethiopia is going through a difficult political transition that has brought to light the urgent need for reconciliation. The Ethiopian Reconciliation Commission (ERC), was founded to address historical injustices, human rights violations, and recurrent conflicts in Ethiopia. The ERC is a promising tool for ending a long history of violence, injustices, and grievances while also pursuing healing and lasting peace. Efforts have been made over the last few years to define and consolidate the ERC's institutional and legal frameworks, as well as to implement some crucial activities. However, the ERC has yet to begin implementing substantive reconciliation activities relevant to the broader mandate of reconciliation. These include activities such as taking statements and organizing public hearings, identifying the root causes of and resolving conflicts, and organizing reconciliation events (Yohannes & Gebresenbet, 2021).

Erhagbe (2012), is of the view that, it is crucial for Nigerians to perceive themselves as citizens of one united, indivisible nation where "while tribes and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand" in order for the country to be stable and for national unity and reconciliation to be achieved. True national reconciliation in Nigeria will be greatly increased by the rule of justice, equity, fairness, and respect for the law and the rights of all citizens. Nigerians have largely demonstrated their capacity for accommodation and coexistence; what is therefore needed is a deliberate pursuit of the pertinent policies and programs that will strengthen the ties of unity in the country and help to bring down the barriers to reconciliation frequently created by ethnicity.

Nordstrom (2013), asserts that "Kenya has an unprecedented opportunity to promote reconciliation and

national cohesion, and that it is necessary to remember that a country can neither reconcile nor develop unless the population in full is included in a comprehensive reconciliation process”. It is crucial to foster knowledge of the various roles and experiences of men and women in conflict in order to better the design of reconciliation programs and ensure that the interests of the entire population are met in the process. The possibility of reconciliation being successful and lasting is increased by incorporating a gender perspective at every stage (Nordstrom, 2013). Despite Kenya’s success in reforming and strengthening its democracy, the gender dimensions of reconciliation and healing are given insufficient attention. Kenyans have shown that they are dedicated to progress and building a stable and prosperous nation. The progress, however, will begin to decline and even collapse if it does not benefit all members of society at all levels.

AI Qurtuby (2014), wrote an article on “religious women for peace and reconciliation in contemporary Indonesia”. In the conflict-ridden Moluccas (Maluku) islands of eastern Indonesia, the article discusses religious women’s role in fostering reconciliation and peace. Tens of thousands of people were killed and injured during the more than three years of violent clashes between Christians and Muslims that started in 1999. Religious women collaborated to close gaps, diffuse tension, foster trust, and bring together parties who were at odds in response to this brutality. They continue to work toward reconciliation and peace despite threats from extremist groups.

Sometimes, the role which women play in the promotion of reconciliation and peace on a local, national, and international level, goes unacknowledged despite the fact that women have long held positions as peacemakers both formally and informally (Ouellet, 2013). Women naturally have good nurturing skills, which help them resolve conflicts at all levels (Milimu, 2022). Despite the fact that they are frequently the silent victims of conflict, women remain the driving force behind global efforts to promote reconciliation and peace (Chandler, 2016). Women’s role in the promotion of reconciliation can never be overemphasized, however, on the subject of religious women in conflicts and reconciliation, there is limited scholarly literature. Religious women scarcely document conflicts and reconciliation processes among themselves and even when they do, it is carefully kept within the confines of the community.

It is evident that reconciliation has been used by different countries to restore broken relationships as well as promote social cohesion as we have already seen. However, there has been limited academic research on the use of reconciliation in promoting social cohesion among religious women. Religious women have taken part in reconciliation by reconciling those in conflict but rarely do they document reconciliation processes amongst themselves.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Fraternal life in community binds all religious women into a special family in Christ, this relationship, founded on compassion, is meant to serve as an illustration of how Christ has reconciled the world (as stated in Canon 602). Fraternal life is crucial to the spiritual development of religious women, both for their continual renewal and the accomplishment of their mission on earth (John Paul II, 1996). However, in reality, sometimes, communities are places where conflicts due to the lack of access to essential commodities, ethnic affinities, tribal sentiments, individualism, unhealthy competitions, miscommunication, unresolved personal issues, imposition of task without dialogue, to mention but a few, is the order of the day (Otieno, 2021).

It is assumed that religious women are “super humans” who are devoid of conflicts. Lived experience which is evident from discussions with religious women from different communities and nationalities, however, disapproves this assumption. Atieno (2021), in Global Sisters Report, affirms the fact that “Conflict is a part of religious life, it is how religious women resolve it that matters”. Since conflict is inevitable and a phenomenon that lives with human beings regardless of their status and positions in life, religious women are not immune to conflicts, as they are not “super humans” but people chosen from the society. It is

apparent, therefore, that this study focused at examining how reconciliation promotes social cohesion among religious women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Research Objective**

The study examined the use of reconciliation for social cohesion among religious women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on John Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory and Emile Durkheim Social Integration Theory. John Lederach advocates the use of multiple lenses in conflict reconciliation. He recommended that three lenses should be used in dealing with conflict in order to see the bigger picture. He believes that using only one lens blurs the other realities but do not remove them. The Social Integration Theory reflects the existence of social cohesion. Increased social integration will enable religious women to feel more connected to their community while reducing conflicts and improving their health and well-being.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Mixed method research approach was adopted in this study in which reconciliation and social cohesion was examined. Creswell (2013) claims that a mixed method is a research strategy that involves researchers gathering, analyzing, and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study to address their research concerns. Convergent parallel mixed methods design was used for the study. In a single phase, two independent strands of data are gathered, analyzed, and the outcomes of the two strands are combined, according to Creswell & Clark (2018). The choice of mixed method approach was to ensure a comprehensive and detailed observation and analyses as to how reconciliation can enhance social cohesion among the religious women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya.

The target population of this study was 194 religious women attending religious activities at Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. Census method was used to get the sample size of the study. Questionnaires were administered to 180 religious women who were comprised of temporary and perpetually professed religious women for the quantitative strand of the study. A response rate of 165 questionnaires were returned completed and usable for the study. Among the 14 community superiors who were expected to take part in the qualitative study, 10 were available for the interview.

The data for the quantitative study was collected through questionnaires and was analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages and frequency) and the findings were presented in tables. The data for the qualitative study was analyzed using thematic content analysis. The data was collected through interview guide, transcribed, coded and grouped based on the themes in accordance with the objective of the study.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The results as presented in this study showed how the use of reconciliation promotes social cohesion among religious women within the Regina Caeli Catholic Parish, Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Prevalence of Conflict**

In the attempt to assess the understanding of the participants regarding reconciliation, the study sought to know if there were conflicts among the religious women. Table 1 presents the findings regarding conflict.

**Table 1 Prevalence of Conflict**

	Stronglydisagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	StronglyAgree	Total
1. Conflicts are common in my community	6(3.6%)	22(13.3%)	11(6.7%)	30(18.2%)	96(58.2%)	100
2. There are many causes of conflicts in my community	7(4.2%)	24(14.5%)	21(12.7%)	81(49.1%)	32(19.4%)	100

The findings indicated that 28(16.9%) of the participants ‘strongly disagreed’ and ‘disagreed’ that conflicts exist among religious women, 11(6.7%) were undecided whether or not conflict exist among religious women while 126(76.4%) ‘strongly agreed’ and ‘agreed’ that conflict exist among religious women. The majority of the participants agreed that conflict exist among religious women, this was also affirmed by all the respondents to the interview of the qualitative study. This affirmation substantiated the fact that religious women are not superhumans who are devoid of conflicts, conflicts is inevitable and it lives among human beings regardless of who they are.

**Causes of Conflict**

From Item 2 in Table 1, the findings showed that 31(18.7%) of the participants ‘strongly disagreed’ and ‘disagreed’ that there are many causes of conflict, 21(12.7%) were undecided while most of the participants 113(68.5%) ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’ that there are many causes of conflicts among religious women. This was substantiated by the qualitative study where respondents highlighted the different causes of conflicts. These are presented in the following themes:

1. Misunderstanding
2. Miscommunication
3. Selfishness and Self-Centeredness
4. Different Personality
5. Different Cultural Backgrounds
6. Unmet Expectations
7. Unresolved Personal Issues
8. Comparison among sisters
9. Disobedience
10. Imposition of task without dialogue.

Although, there are no known studies about conflicts among religious women, it is a fact that conflict can occur in any community of people irrespective of the type of community (McIntyre, 2019). It is not surprising, therefore, to find conflicts among religious women. The causes of conflicts among religious women are also not different from what causes conflicts in other communities or in the society as religious women are people chosen from the society. For instance, Thought Hub (2016) highlighted fours causes of conflict, namely, a lack of common understanding, poor communication skills, unclear or unfair expectations, power plays, and manipulations. These are similar to the findings in this study.

**Table 2 Reconciliation if Adopted can help to Restore Broken Relationships**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Reconciliation if adopted can help to restore broken relationships and bring about social cohesion	3(1.8%)	1(.6%)	3(1.8%)	35(21.2%)	123(74.5%)	100

The study further sought to know the participants' take on reconciliation, when adopted, if it has the potential to restore broken relationships for social cohesion. It is indicated on Table 2 that 4(2.4%) of the participants 'strongly disagreed' and 'disagreed', 3(1.8%) were undecided and 158(95.7%) of the participants affirmed that when reconciliation is adopted that it will help to restore broken relationships as well as bring about social cohesion. In line with this, the respondents substantiated this view when asked if they will recommend the use of reconciliation for the promotion of social cohesion among religious women, the following views were expressed:

According to Respondent 3 (interview, 17/4/2023)

I will definitely recommend the use of reconciliation because it is very important. We are called to witness as religious women and we cannot live our lives as witnesses without been reconciled with one another.

Respondent 4 (interview, 17/4/2023) stated that,

I will highly recommend the use of reconciliation and other means that can promote social cohesion because that is what we need to give religious vocation meaning, people will see that we are Christians by our love. We must be women of faith, mercy, women who can forgive because where there is unity there is the Holy Spirit, and where there is disunity the devil is in control. Reconciliation is very good for religious women and not just religious women but for humanity in order to promote the kingdom of God here on earth

For Respondent 6 (interview, 22/4/2023)

I will highly recommend reconciliation for the promotion of social cohesion among religious women because without it there will be no authentic community of religious women. Whether we like it or not there must be conflict in the community and reconciliation is the only way out.

Respondent 7 (interview, 22/4/2023) said:

Yes. I would recommend the use of reconciliation as a tool for promoting social cohesion among religious women because it is very important. We will always offend each other but if we learn to embrace reconciliation, the kingdom of God will dwell in our midst.

### **The Outcome of Reconciliation when Adopted by Religious Women**

Respondents for the qualitative aspect of the study highlighted some outcomes of reconciliation once adopted by religious women. The outcomes are presented in the following themes.

1. A true way of living peacefully
2. Cordial relationships are restored
3. Renewal
4. Community returns to Normal
5. Restoration of Peace and Harmony
6. Better Understanding
7. Strong Bond

As already expressed by some respondents, reconciliation when adopted by religious women will bring about valuable outcomes that will enhance the promotion of social cohesion among religious women.

### **Ways in which Reconciliation can Promote Social Cohesion among Religious Women**

Respondents on the qualitative strand of the study were asked to identify ways in which reconciliation can

promote social cohesion among religious women, and their responses are presented in the following themes.

1. Sense of Belonging
2. Freedom of Expression
3. Acceptance
4. Freedom of Mind and Spirit
5. More Joy and Happiness
6. True Dialogue
7. Community Prayer
8. Common Project
9. Deep Community Bond
10. Mutual Understanding
11. Holistic Development

Apart from the ways in which reconciliation can promote social cohesion among religious women highlighted by the respondents, the following components were addressed in responding to the question, social connectedness, common good and respect for human dignity.

**Table 3**

**Ways of Promoting Social Cohesion**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1. Reconciliation promotes social connectedness through restoring broken relationships	2(1.2%)		1(.6%)	64(38.8%)98	-59.40%	
2. Reconciliation promotes common good	2(1.2%)			66(40.0%)	97(58.8%)	
3. Reconciliation promotes respect for human dignity	1(.6%)		1(.6%)	57(34.5%)	106(64.2%)	

**Reconciliation Promotes Social Connectedness through Restoring Broken Relationships**

The study sought to know if reconciliation promotes social connectedness through the restoration of broken relationships. Table 3 item 1, shows that 2(1.2%) of the participants ‘strongly disagreed’, 1(.6%) were undecided and 162(98.2%) of the participants ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’ that reconciliation promotes social connectedness through the restoration of broken relationships. To further expatiate on this, the respondents of the qualitative strand of the study has the following to say:

Respondent 1 (interview, 1/4/2023) expressed that “there is no place without conflict, but once there is conflict and the opportunity to reconcile, bonds are strengthened and there exist more joy and happiness”.

Respondent 2 (interview, 14/4/2023) expressed the view that:

When there is conflict, there is disconnection in communication, and people become withdrawn. Reconciliation bring about social connectedness. Our religious calling invites us to live in unity and socialize as social beings.



Respondent 3 ( interview, 17/4/2023) “when you don’t have hatred towards any member in your community, then there will be free sharing, sisters wanting to travel together and wanting to connect with each other”.

For Respondent 4 (interview, 17/4/2023)

When there is reconciliation there is that sense of unity, blooming, growth, and sense of identity. When religious women are at peace with each other they can do common programs together. When there is harmonious connection among religious women they are able to share their joys and challenges.

Respondent 9 (interview, 24/4/2023) stated that, “I am totally disconnected with others when I have issues with them, but once I reconcile with them I become connected with them again”.

### **Reconciliation Promotes Common Good**

The study sought to know if reconciliation promotes common good. As shown on Table 3 item 2, 2(1.2%) of the participants ‘strongly disagreed’ that reconciliation promotes common good while 163(98.8%) of the participants attest to the fact that reconciliation promotes common good. To further support this findings, some respondents have the following views:

Respondent 3 (Interview, 17/4/2023) states that,

Reconciliation is key to promoting common good once we have forgiven each other. If some members of the community are in conflict, it affects the entire community, and if those in conflict are able to reconcile it brings peace to the entire community. It is for the common good of all that people are reconciled.

Respondent 4 (Interview, 17/4/2023) opined that “when members are reconciled there is high tendency of respecting common good, and everyone is accountable to the community”. Respondent 5 (Interview, 22/4/2023) says that

Reconciliation promotes common good by bringing individuals together by way of cohesiveness, individuals are able to build authentic relationships with one another, and it helps them to be less judgmental. It takes away biasness, prejudice and builds mutual relationships among members.

Respondent 10 (Interview, 24/4/2023) is of the view that

Reconciliation really promotes common good. For example, if there is peace in the community we are able to share together, ease our sorrows, avoid negative competition and are able to appreciate each other.

### **Reconciliation Promotes Respect for Human Dignity**

The study sought to know if reconciliation promotes respect for human dignity. As Indicated on Table 3 item 3, 1(.6%) of the participants ‘strongly disagreed’ and 1(.6%) were undecided whether or not reconciliation promotes respect for human dignity while 163(98.8%) of the participants affirmed that reconciliation promotes respect for human dignity. To support this view, some respondents on the qualitative strand of the study expressed the following views: Respondent 1 (Interview, 1/4/2023) has this to say, “I tell you sister, everyone deserves respect and desires it at the same time. Once one feels respected, there is readiness to accept, apologize and reconcile”.

Respondent 2 (Interview, 14/4/2023) states that,

Human dignity is something we should all respect. If I look at my sister from the point of being a human

being with dignity, I will appreciate reconciliation. Sometimes when there is conflict in the community, sisters tend to call each other the worst names. When one is called a dog or monkey, it lowers the sister's dignity as a human being. To enhance reconciliation each sister's dignity must be respected bearing in mind that we are all created in the image and likeness of God.

Respondent 3 (Interview, 17/4/2023) expressed that:

If I respect my sister, I will not ignore her when there is conflict, I will avoid carrying grudge. When I respect the dignity of my sister, it will automatically call me to reconcile with her whenever there is conflict

Respondent 4 (Interview, 17/4/2023) is of the opinion that “when we respect the dignity of each other we therefore see ourselves as people with common destiny, this will help us to see the need to reconcile”.

Respondent 5 (interview, 22/4/2023) says that,

When I respect the dignity of the other person it will enhance the process of reconciliation, members will see themselves as important, as people with values. When I attack the dignity of others it makes them feel less valuable and when they feel less valuable then I hurt them more. Not respecting their dignity will magnify the issues.

The findings imply that reconciliation when adopted by religious women will help to bring about social cohesion. In a world where conflicts is inevitable, reconciliation and social cohesion is mostly needed and highly recommended. In our world today, humanity as a whole is in dire need of sustainable and authentic reconciliation and social cohesion in furthering the kingdom of God here on earth, failure to achieve this will make the world to become more chaotic and toxic to live in. It is therefore the responsibility of everyone to work at achieving reconciliation and social cohesion.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The study revealed that conflict is prevalent among religious women and that there are many causes of these conflicts. The study affirmed that reconciliation if adopted by religious women can help to restore broken relationships for social cohesion. The study further revealed that reconciliation can enhance social cohesion among religious women through social connectedness, the promotion of common good and the respect for human dignity.

As revealed in the study, a good number of the participants affirm the fact that conflicts exist among religious women. All the respondents to the interview of the qualitative aspect of the study agreed that conflict is inevitable among human beings regardless of who they are and religious women are not exempted. On the causes of conflicts, the participants agreed that there are many causes of conflict among religious women. To substantiate this finding, the respondents to the interview went further to highlight some of the causes of conflict among religious women, which include but not limited to, misunderstanding, miscommunication, selfishness/self-centeredness, personality differences, different cultural backgrounds, unmet expectations, unresolved personal issues and imposition of task without dialogue. The study has helped to established that conflicts is prevalent among religious women even though there are no known studies on conflicts among religious women.

The study highlighted some outcomes of reconciliation when adopted by religious women. They include, a true way of living peacefully, restoration of cordial relationships, renewal, community returning to normal, the restoration of peace and harmony, better understanding and strong bond between and among religious women.

The study further looked at how reconciliation can promote social cohesion among religious women through social connectedness, the promotion of common good and the respect for human dignity. The participants expressed that conflicts are inevitable, but when religious women are able to embrace the opportunity to reconcile, bonds are again strengthened. The study revealed that reconciliation promotes common good, that when some religious women are in conflicts it affects the entire community, but when those involved in the conflict are able to reconcile, peace is again restored to the entire community. Reconciliation is for the common good of all. When religious women are reconciled, they are able to share together, ease their sorrows, avoid unhealthy competitions and are able to appreciate each other. Reconciliation according to the findings promotes respect for human dignity. Everyone deserves respect and desires it at all times. When people feel respected, they will be ready to accept their faults, apologize and reconcile.

## CONCLUSION

The findings imply that reconciliation when adopted by religious women will help to bring about social cohesion. In a world where conflicts are inevitable, reconciliation for social cohesion is mostly needed and highly recommended. When reconciliation is adopted by religious women it will help to promote social cohesion among them through social connectedness, the promotion of common good and the respect for human dignity.

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