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**Felician Sisters Serving on the Front Lines in Haiti**

**Addressing the devastation of earthquakes, tropical storms, COVID-19 and political unrest**

**JACMEL, HAITI – Aug. 19, 2021–**

The Felician Sisters at their mission in Jacmel, Haiti, were in their home on August 14 when a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit. Like everyone else, when they felt the quake, they ran quickly outside, and they continued to do so as aftershocks occurred throughout the day and into the night. Though the mission was spared from severe damage, 80 miles away the city of Les Cayes was devastated.

Still recovering from the major earthquake of 2010, grappling with violent political unrest and facing a global pandemic, the earthquake, aftershocks and arrival of tropical storm Grace have further complicated the desperate situation.

The sisters at *Felician Mission: Haiti* are actively involved in the humanitarian efforts to help their Haitian neighbors. Reports estimate that more than 30,000 people have no shelter as they enter hurricane season, a difficult time for Haiti even in the best conditions. Roads have been destroyed, making it difficult to get help to those who need it. Families are living in makeshift tents on dirt floors, dreading the mudslides and flooding that often accompany the storms.

The sisters have emptied their shelves of medications, surgical gloves, clothes, shoes, sheets and bandages to help meet the growing need for supplies. The mobile clinic is also ready to provide medical treatment when possible.

Those supplies will need to be replaced rapidly as the start of school approaches and the needs of those regularly served by the mission have only increased as well. However, trusting in divine providence, the sisters continue to give with the faith that God will provide.

Felician Sisters Marilyn Marie Minter, Mary Inga Borko, Mary Izajaszka Rojek and Mary Julitta Kurek continue to serve in these volatile conditions, facing the very real possibility of violence and kidnappings, which occur regularly and often target clergy and women religious. While they are not immune to the dangers, they are determined not to let fear keep them from service.

September 13 will mark the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Felician Mission: Haiti*, which began with the sisters feeding hungry children at their door. The mission now includes a mobile clinic, food

kitchen, computer lab, tutoring, mentoring, job training and catechesis. On the heels of opening a sewing school, they are in the process of constructing a bakery, which will provide both employment opportunities and a source of food.

Sisters Marilyn and Inga are available for interviews upon request, either in person or remotely. The Felician Sisters of North America also have a library of professional photography and video that are available for use upon request.

If you are interested in speaking to our sisters or another representative of *Felician Mission: Haiti*, please contact Marcia Wallander, chief mission advancement officer, at [mwallander@feliciansisters.org](mailto:mwallander@feliciansisters.org) or 724-944-9814 to make arrangements.

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*The Felician Sisters, formally known as the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Felix of Cantalice, is a congregation of women religious, inspired by the spiritual ideals of their Foundress Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska and Saints Francis of Assisi, Clare of Assisi and Felix of Cantalice. Founded in Poland in 1855, the first Felician Sisters arrived in North America in 1874 to minister to the immigrant and indigenous families of Polonia, Wisconsin. They established eight provinces across the United States and Canada. In 2009, they united the eight provinces into Our Lady of Hope Province, allowing for a more strategic use of resources and service to others.*

*Pioneers of social services, the Felician Sisters sponsor hospices, schools, childcare centers, hospitals, after-school programs, homeless shelters, food pantries, nursing homes, affordable housing communities and missions in Haiti and Canada. Constantly evolving to meet the needs of the time, they continue to follow God's will and Blessed Mary Angela's directive to "serve where you are needed."*

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