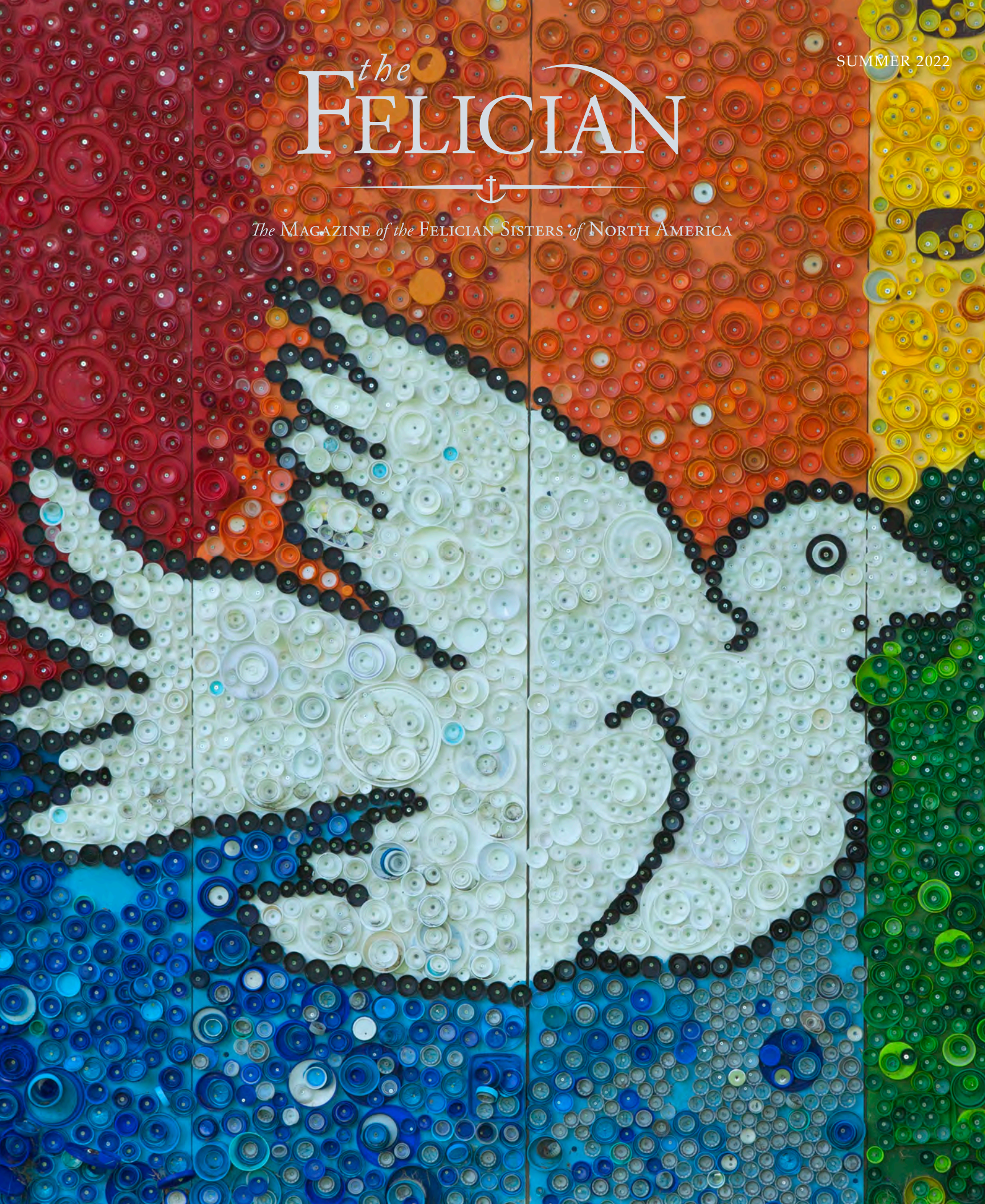


SUMMER 2022

the FELICIAN



The MAGAZINE of the FELICIAN SISTERS of NORTH AMERICA





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PUBLISHER

Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki, CSSF
Provincial Minister
Our Lady of Hope Province

OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT

Marcia M. Wallander
Chief Mission Advancement Officer
Theresa Doerfler
Mission Communication Manager
Caroline Martien
Donor Relations Manager
Susan McConnell
Creative Design Manager
Naima Sundiata
Digital Communication Coordinator
Robin Monza
Development Associate

CONTRIBUTORS

Adam Bean
Sr. Mary Jacqueline Keefe
Sr. Mary Jean Sliwinski
Sr. Mary Julie Weckworth
Cyla Danz Alcantara Marx
Sr. Maryann Agnes Mueller
Maureen Schiavo

PHOTOGRAPHY

Rick Armstrong
Elliott Cramer
Angela Gzowski
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OUR MISSION

As Felician Sisters we are called by God to cooperate with Christ in the spiritual renewal of the world.

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OUR LADY OF HOPE PROVINCE

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, WI. 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.


Pioneers of social services, the Felician Sisters founded and continue to 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."

 WATCH & SHARE



Living in Community

Buffalo Sabres fan Sr. Mary Joanne Suranni joined more than a dozen other Felician Sisters in a new video, *Living in Community*, to share their passion and open up about communal life: what it means to them, what they do for fun, how they support one another, and why it is essential for Felician Sisters in living their mission.

 Find *Living in Community* on our YouTube channel or get the link at [FelicianSistersNA.org/Vocation](https://www.FelicianSistersNA.org/Vocation).

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Send letters to the editor, correspondence, or change of address to:
FelicianMagazine@FelicianSisters.org
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The Felician
Felician Sisters of North America
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Inside

SUMMER 2022

30

Features

LEADERS & FOUNDERS

- 13** One Woman Opened a Door
Blessed Angela's compassionate act begat a series of leaders
- 14** Trailblazing Care
Farewell to a rogue visionary
- 15** Listening to a Distant Drum
A sister serving with open ears and heart
- 17** Managing Ministries
Sisters that see ahead, and oversee
- 18** Living Our Mission
Bringing Felician values alive (boosts morale!)
- 19** Running Toward Suffering
Easing pain at the border



26



28

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- 20** Vigilance in Wartime
Human traffickers at Ukraine's border

SISTERS IN MINISTRY

- 21** Healing Those Who Hurt
Counseling with the help of prayer
- 22** Guiding Presence
Q&A with SIM lab instructor

RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

- 24** Leading the Way
Felicians respond to the Synod and *Laudato Si'*

FELICIAN SISTERS WORLDWIDE

- 26** Caring for Neighbors
Felician Sisters in Poland and Ukraine

HAITI

- 28** Responding to the Need: Safe Homes
Earthquake fund rebuilds Haitian homes

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- 30** What is *Laudato Si'* and Why Should We Care?
Sisters explain the Pope's call isn't just about trash



15

In Every Issue

- 2 Letter from the Provincial Minister
- 3 Letters to the Sisters
- 4 Around the Province
- 32 Jubilarians
- 34 What to Watch



Cover

The students of Enfield Montessori School in Connecticut created the peace dove from plastic lids, saving them from polluting the earth while broadcasting a timely and appropriate message of love and peace.





Dear Friends,

As I was reading over the draft of this current issue of Felician Magazine, I paused on the title of one of the articles, “One Woman Opened a Door. . .” Yes, I mused, one woman — Mother Mary Angela Truszkowska — opened wide a door to unimagined possibilities when she missioned five sisters to go to the United States in 1874. That open door has had a huge domino effect!

Today our sisters continue to open doors throughout the United States, Canada, including the Northwest Territories, and Haiti. They are opening doors for the poor, the disenfranchised, the alienated, the forgotten, the desperate. One way to read this issue of Felician Magazine is to see it as an amazing set of stories about efforts to open doors in both new and familiar places for those who have experienced doors shutting in their faces, those whose lives have come up against a brick wall.

But we have not opened these doors on our own. Rather, we have been able to open doors for so many people because we have collaborated with countless generous and creative people. This collaboration takes place in parishes, dioceses, schools and universities, hospitals and health care centers, social service enterprises, retreat centers, missions, border crossings, and sometimes even chance encounters in graced moments. We are grateful for our partners in ministry and we are also grateful for those who support us financially so that we can continue to open doors for those longing for a new life, new possibilities, new freedom to thrive as human persons of dignity and worth.

This year our efforts to open doors has directed our gaze back across the Atlantic Ocean to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and our own Felician Sisters in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia. With the help of so many very generous donors, we have been able to offer financial assistance to our sisters in Poland who have opened their doors to Ukrainian refugees. Their efforts have been part of the larger effort to open the doors of free and democratic societies to those fleeing the horrors of war in Ukraine. These life-saving efforts are part of the larger human story of neighbor reaching out to neighbor.

This essential and critical work of opening doors and walking with our fellow travelers can only succeed when our efforts are inspired by God’s Spirit of love and compassion.

May the Spirit that inspired Blessed Mary Angela inspire us with the courage to open doors and to embrace the new and the unknown. And may each one of us open our hearts to stranger and friend alike as we seek to embody God’s compassionate love in our broken, but beautiful world.

Peace and all good things!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki, CSSF
Provincial Minister, Felician Sisters of North America
Our Lady of Hope Province

Dear Felician Sisters...



Doubly Blessed Family

We just received your newsletter and when I saw it's Catholic Sisters Week, I had to write about the awesome Felician Sisters in our family. Our aunt, Sr. Modesta Piwowar, and our cousin, Sr. Janet Adamczyk, are two of the hardest working ladies we know!!! They love Jesus and our families unconditionally! Both taught us that knowing and loving Jesus will get you through any situation life throws at you. Their hearts are big and they do whatever it takes to help anyone they can. They care deeply for family, and spiritually they keep us going with continued prayers! They love to visit and spend time with us when they can since both are so busy! They are fun too! We play cards, have baseball games, go fishing and eat lots of good Polish food. We are "Doubly Blessed" to call them our own sisters and family!

Joe and Susan Burch

Welcoming

I was in 1st grade when my family came to the U.S. (1958.) I spoke only Polish. Sr. Martina was wonderful in explaining to me in Polish what we were doing in class. Before I knew it, I was speaking English and Sister no longer had to translate. I will never forget our first Christmas in the U.S. Sister gave me all the Christmas decorations that were in the classroom. How happy I was to take them home to my mother! We used them for many years and remembered Sister whenever we hung the ornaments she gave us on our tree. Thank you Sr. Martina!

Daniel and Jadwiga Domino

Joyful Sr. Judy

In 2013, responding to a job posting for a Felician Sponsored Ministry position motivated me to learn more about the Felician Sisters. When visiting the province house, Sr. Mary Christopher Moore graciously welcomed me and exuded commitment, love and selfless service. When we arrived at Sr. Judith Marie Blizzard's office, Sr. Judy, surrounded by piles of work on her desk, quickly looked up and welcomed me with a smile full of heartfelt joy. Sr. Judy did not resent the interruption, although she was clearly busy. I remember thinking, here is that Felician joy I read about and it reassured me. To this day, I still see Sr. Judy sharing that joy and I have since experienced joy from many other sisters, staff and volunteers connected to this ministry.

Nancy Lawry

Help through Hard Times

Back in 1968, the Felician Sisters helped my family. My husband and I had separated and the sisters of the Immaculate Heart Orphanage in Cheektowaga, NY, took in our 5 children. Only my two girls were old enough to stay there, the three boys were too young. My sister-in-law, Sr. Immaculata, was principal of the school so my girls felt at ease there. The children were well taken care of. I thank God and the sisters for their wonderful care of my girls. The children were there a few months. God bless you and I will remember you in my prayers.

Mrs. Billie J. Schlau



Dear Sister in Spirit

I must have been 8 or 9 on my first visit to the mother house in Plymouth, MI, with my mother (Irene O'berski) and the sisters at St. Mary's in Parisville where I was a student. My mother was a dedicated volunteer driver and we made the trip many times over the years. As an impressionable child, I was awed by the convent, its solemnity and the austere lifestyle, but lacked a spiritual calling. Today, soon to be 86, I continue to admire the devotion to service exercised by the sisters practicing the Franciscan way. I was born and raised in a Polish household with Polish as my first language. Polish was still taught when I started school, but I will always be grateful for the sisters' insistence on proper English as well.

Mary Glass

To Sisters at Madonna University

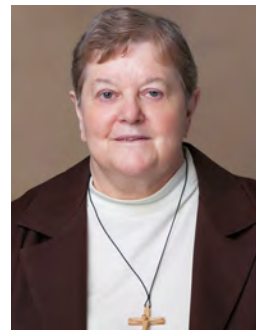


It has always been a pleasure and blessing for me to work with the Felician Sisters at Madonna University. I am always inspired by the sisters' warm smiles, creativity and the sisters' spirit of strong faith, joyful disposition, and dedication to their study and their work.

Yu-Jo Grace Philson

Buffalo BMA Prayer Line Sister

Sr. Cynthia Kilian is a dear friend, teacher, prayer partner, encourager to me. Walks the walk and talks the talk. For years we have remained close friends. Great listener, strong believer in power of prayer. A can-do woman of faith and action



Marlene A. Smith

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS, MEMORIES & PICTURES to: FelicianMagazine@FelicianSisters.org or via mail to: *The Felician*, Felician Sisters of North America, Office of Mission Advancement, 871 Mercer Road, Beaver Falls, PA 15010-6815.

Felician Sisters and Ministries

CARING FOR OUR PLANET AND EACH OTHER

At the end of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* encyclical letter, he adds a prayer for our earth, saying, "You embrace with your tenderness all that exists." It seems simple as we read it. But the reality of embracing can be much harder to truly live out in practice, much like the phrase "Love thy Neighbor" has become difficult to put into practice even for entire countries.

This reality makes these stories of love and care for others across our province even more inspiring and awesome in every way. We witness sisters, associates and employees, confronted with adversity and challenges but who make a choice every day to joyfully put on the full armor of God, from the shoes of peace to the shield of faith, and look beyond what's in front of them, to how things could be through hard work and God's grace. They are Felician — completely open-minded, open-armed, and open-hearted.



News from Felician Mission: Haiti

"Our container arrived in December and waited for us to unpack and distribute many long-awaited and much-needed items for the church, clinic and our people. It was a long week of full days of work, but it was well worth it."

— Sr. Marilyn M Minter



Overdose Prevention at St. Felix Centre

St. Felix Centre in Toronto, ON, Canada, continues to lead the way in responding to the needs of people experiencing homelessness through their newest program: the first respite site in Toronto with an Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) for guests staying at their 69 Fraser location.

The OPS model allows St. Felix Centre to respond to drug-related emergencies more efficiently while reducing stigma and safety issues that disproportionately affect the homeless community. In addition to improving the health of people suffering from addiction, the OPS space will reduce the amount of improperly disposed-of materials in neighborhoods and the number of emergency calls and hospital visits.

In 2021, the City of Toronto's Street Needs Assessment reported that **42% of homeless people surveyed had a substance use issue**, and Public Health Ontario data shows **emergency room visits related to opioid use increased by 61% from 2017 to 2020** in Ontario, and **over 2,400 people died from opioid-related causes** in 2020.

Statistics show that when people visit OPS sites, they are more likely to access other resources such as safe supply programs, detoxification programs, counseling, and other health care services. These opportunities can lead people to much better circumstances.

Learn more at stfelixcentre.org.

Visit, Pray and Learn about Catholic Sisters

Fifty-two weeks a year, women religious stand with the poor and immigrants, teach children, fight injustice, heal the sick, share spirituality, empower women, defend the planet, promote peace, create community, and offer hope. During Catholic Sisters Week, we shine the spotlight on our sisters.

The week in March was filled with online opportunities to pray, to learn about how sisters live and webinars about protecting our common home — earth. A special video and brochure were created to share information about what it means to live in community. The week was a success and celebrated by hundreds of attendees who submitted stories, prayed with the sisters and attended online events.

Videos and webinars are available at FelicianSistersNA.org/CSW and on our YouTube channel.



As part of the week, stories about sisters were submitted by former students, families and friends that are featured in *"Dear Felician Sisters"* on page 3. Read more online at FelicianSistersNA.org/Letters and share stories about sisters who made an impact on your life at FelicianSistersNA.org/Share-Your-Story.



Year of the Tiger

PHOTO BY
Sr. Dong Hong
Marie Zhang

Sisters at **Immaculate Conception Convent in Spotswood, NJ**, celebrated the Chinese Lunar New Year – and Sister Dong Hong Marie Zhang’s birthday — among tigers and red and gold decorations. In Chinese culture, red symbolizes happiness and gold prosperity, two wonderful qualities to begin the new year. While enjoying specially-prepared Chinese cuisine, Sr. Dong Hong, Liaison for Chinese Catholics in the Newark Archdiocese, taught her sisters about interesting cultural traditions and the differences between contemporary life in big cities and the rural Chinese experience. Growing up in northern China, Sr. Dong Hong’s devout Catholic family faced religious persecution.

Interfaith Dialogue

In today's world, many do not attempt to understand another's perspective. Whether it's politics, COVID mandates, or gender issues, strongly-held beliefs can create a divide between people. That's what makes the mission of the Center for Catholic Studies and Interfaith Dialogue so timely and important.

Sr. Nancy Marie Jamroz, Ph.D. is the codirector of the Center at Madonna University in Livonia, MI. "We feel we have a special mission as Franciscans to reach across people of other faiths to build bridges of understanding and acceptance."

The Center's concept began over 20 years ago when Madonna University's fifth president, Sr. Mary Franciline Van de Vyver, wished to establish a chair for human dignity at the university, though it wasn't until several years after her passing that her vision bore fruit.

Sr. Nancy served as provincial councilor for the first leadership team of Our Lady of Hope Province from 2009 to 2015. "It certainly was treading a new path but women on the council were willing to explore places unknown and do what we were asked to do; look at the signs of the times. Though interfaith dialogue is a trend now, at the time the center was established, it was unexplored territory."

Madonna University's location within Metro Detroit is the perfect place for interfaith dialogue. Detroit has one of the highest populations of Arab Americans in the country, and a gurdwara, a Sikhi place of worship, is just down the road from the campus.



© "St. Francis and the Sultan, Br. Robert Lentz, OFM."

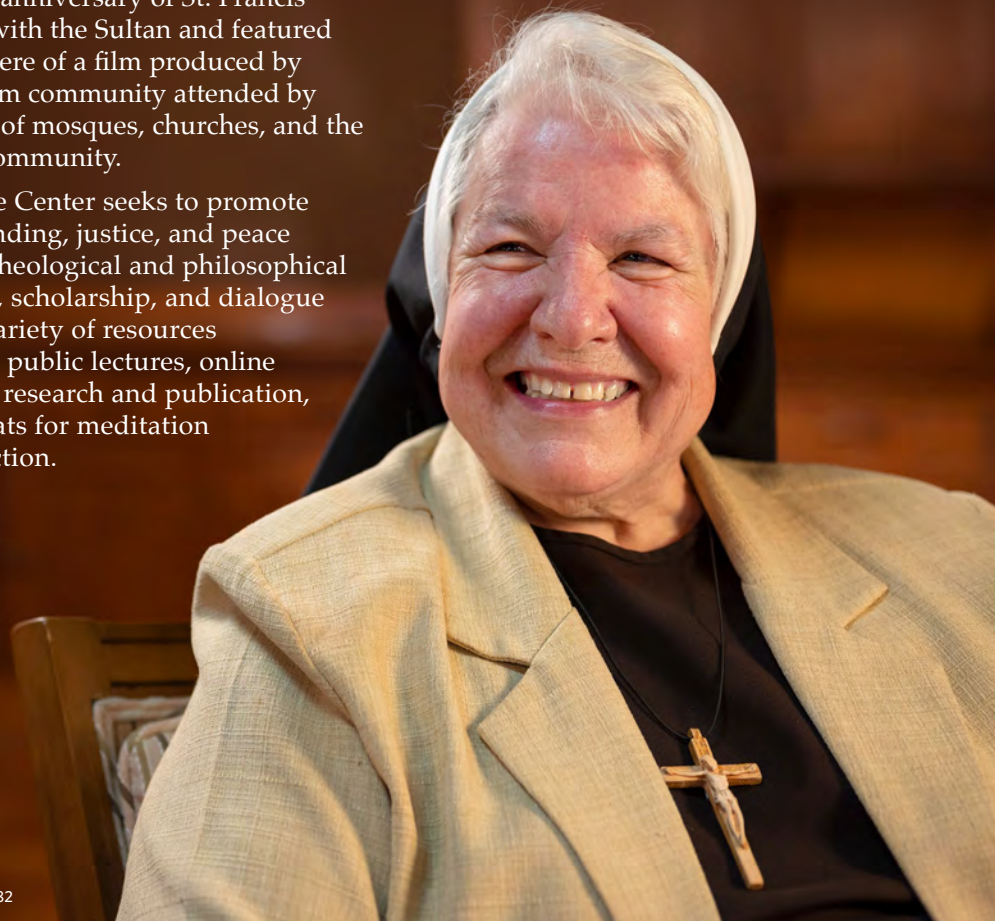
The roots of interfaith dialogue run deep in the Franciscan tradition when St. Francis reached out to the Sultan of Egypt during the Crusades, resulting in both men sharing respect for one another and their differing faiths. The first event the Center held fell on the 800th anniversary of St. Francis meeting with the Sultan and featured the premiere of a film produced by the Muslim community attended by members of mosques, churches, and the general community.

Today, the Center seeks to promote understanding, justice, and peace through theological and philosophical reflection, scholarship, and dialogue using a variety of resources including public lectures, online presence, research and publication, and retreats for meditation and reflection.

Sr. Nancy is encouraged by the newly forged relationships among people who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet. "It's important for us to continue to build these relationships," Sr. Nancy said, "not just related to faith but also about human trafficking. Being on the border with Canada, Detroit is one of the number one places in the U.S. for trafficking."

The Center's mission brings to life the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* that urges, "Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve, and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians."

Learn more about the center at madonna.edu/ccsid.



"St. Francis and the Sultan" courtesy of Trinity Stores, www.trinitystores.com, 800.699.4482



Podcast Promotes Finding Joy in Retreats and Music

“People are looking for a place to get away for some alone time with God,” explained Sr. Mary Bernadette Kapfer, program director for the **Maryville Retreat Center in Holly, MI.** “They’re searching for a deeper happiness amidst their everyday struggles.”

Sr. Bernadette was recently featured on the Franciscan Dave podcast, along with Brother Al Mascia, a professional musician, singer/songwriter, and Franciscan friar. She discussed the reasons people choose to go on a retreat, including finding peace, forming and cultivating their personal relationship with God, deepening prayer life or cultivating more spirituality in their everyday living.

Brother Al talked about his journey to become a Franciscan friar through the spirit of joy and happiness exuded by one of his early teachers, described the joy music brings to the human heart, and how we too can find joy in the midst of all the world’s ills.

Not long after the podcast, Sr. Bernadette and the Maryville Retreat Center hosted the premier of Brother Al’s new one-man musical production, *More Love than Skill: A Saint and His Fiddle*, focused on the life and lessons to be learned from **Blessed Solanus Casey.**

Maryville Retreat Center continues to offer speakers and a variety of programming meant to help people find much needed hope, peace and this season — compassion. The 200-acre tranquil park-like setting offers visitors the ability to focus on their relationship with God and nature. Most programs include prepared meals by live-in chef, Sr. Rita Marie Vondra.

Find a program that fits your needs and schedule. Register at MaryvilleRetreatCenter.org.

Listen to Franciscan Dave’s *Finding God Through Music and Retreats* podcast at FranciscanDave.buzzsprout.com

Felician Associates – Join Us

The Felician Associates is a program open to women and men who are called to participate in the spirit and mission of the Felician Sisters. If you are being called to

- + live a life of joy, simplicity, and service to God,
- + minister to the marginalized,
- + join the sisters for prayer experiences, and
- + attend retreats and community celebrations,

the Associate program may be where you need to be. The journey begins with a year of discernment and formation under the guidance of a sister. Once accepted, Associates sign a relationship covenant, and renew it every year.

Have you been called to share the spirit of the Felician Sisters? Learn more at FelcianSistersNA.org/Associates.



Jericho House — “An Oasis of Peace”

Retreat goes at **Jericho House in Ontario, Canada**, praised the venue after attending a *Laudato Si'* retreat on April 29 through May 1, themed “Cry of the Earth” — the encyclical’s first goal.

Jericho House’s beautiful property enabled retreatants to walk, contemplate, and experience the natural labyrinth and connect with thousands of species of plant and animal life while they focused on the retreat topics: indigenous issues, loss of diversity, renewable energy, fossil fuel reduction, naturalization, regenerative agriculture and waterways and ocean protection.

Participants were given opportunities for information sharing, skill development, strategies for effective public policy advocacy, personal and group reflection and community building as they explored the ecological crisis and its challenges.

Learn more at JerichoHouse.org.



Volunteering Returns!

Felician Volunteers in Mission has returned with a 10-month immersion experience at Deo Gratias Ministries Detroit. Through a ministry of presence, sisters at Deo Gratias help find solutions to make the community a safe and happy place where everyone is welcomed.

The pilot program will engage compassionate young adults who believe in the fundamental dignity of each person to work alongside sisters providing social services for those facing significant economic and social challenges.

Learn about upcoming opportunities at FelicianSistersNA.org/VIM.

Innovation Center — *Looking Beyond the Charted*

The Franciscan value of Transformation — the process that encourages an open mind and heart — is at the core of an exciting new center for Felician University students.

Felician University’s Lenke Family Center for Innovation (CFI) in Rutherford, NJ, was created to provide students a space to collaborate with entrepreneurs and industry experts and offer real-world, real-time opportunities for market advancements. Acknowledging the role faith and providential guidance play in human inspiration, a blessing ceremony was held to anoint the center for prosperity.

Felician Chaplain, Father Thomas Ruekert, SDB, prayed, “We ask you to send your Holy Spirit upon this Center,

fill the students, the staff, and all involved with your wisdom and blessings. May the work they do be transformative, innovative, and invigorating.”

The Center, an arm of the School of Business and Information Sciences and Center for Innovation and Professional Studies, will be a think tank that



evaluates, synthesizes, and influences innovative market advancements. Speaking at the Blessing, CFI’s Executive Director, Professor Joseph Lizza, CPA, CGMA, MBA, said, “**Innovation in its simplest form is change, change for the better.** Whether this be a single change in a product, in a process, or even in a mindset, innovation is looking beyond the charted to the uncharted, to have the courage to try, the fortitude to persevere, and the resilience to use failure as the lesson learned.”

Sr. M. Aquinas Szott, said, “This is something that Felician University is all about. We are hoping to enable and empower all of our students to become leaders wherever life and the world takes them.”

Wolf Joins Leadership

Felician Services in Chicago, IL, welcomed Jill Wiles Wolf who joined Hopebound Ministries as Executive Director in September. Her two decades of work within the non-profit world include Habitat for Humanity, Illinois CPA Society, Kellogg School of Management and Outreach Community Ministries. A graduate from the University of Chicago with a Master's Degree in Social Service Administration, Wolf realized her skill set lay firmly in the behind-the-scenes tasks that support direct service.



Lauded for Neighborhood Beautification

Over the years, **Felician Center in Kingstree, SC**, has received many awards from The Williamsburg Home Town Chamber at the annual banquet celebrating the accomplishments and successes of county businesses, organizations and individuals. They've been named *Organization of the Year*, *Citizen of the Year*, and the *Humanitarian of the Year* — twice! This year was no exception as Kingstree Mayor Darren Tisdale spoke about the 30th anniversary of the Felician Sisters serving Williamsburg County, and called out the Neighborhood Forum.

The year-long project utilized a \$50,000 Sacred Heart Charitable Fund grant from the Sisters of St. Francis, Denver, Colorado. While Felician Center already provides many critical resources, including a food pantry and health care services, they decided to use this grant for something to promote the dignity of their neighbors.

The **Felician Center Neighborhood Forum project improved the self-image and standard of living for community members and supported local businesses** by using them for materials and labor needed to accomplish the work. Improvements included repairing unsafe exterior steps, railings, and handicap ramps; installing new exterior front doors and providing weather stripping kits; distribution of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors; trimming overgrown trees and shrubs; and beautifying the neighborhood with new plants and flowers.

Mayor Tisdale presented Sr. Mary Carol Piskor, Sr. Mary Susanne Dziedzic and Sr. Mary Johnna Ciezobka with the Kingstree Township Award in recognition of the improvements made by the Felician Center Neighborhood Forum project. The sisters received the only standing ovation of the night!



Felician Sisters of North America had a calming, spiritual and creative presence in the "St. Jerome Bookshop" at NCYC (National Catholic Youth Conference) in November 2021. The conference, held in Indianapolis, IN is hosted by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and was attended over three days by 11,000 youth, many of whom said they hung out in the sisters' space because of its peaceful vibe as they created art, read, chatted and prayed with our sisters.





Two Sisters Provide 97 Years of Catholic Education

and Leave an Indelible Mark on St. Thomas Aquinas

New Jersey hearts are heavy as **St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Edison, NJ**, bids farewell to two Felician Sisters and guiding spirits who have worked at the school almost since its founding in 1969. Sr. Donna Marie Trukowski and Sr. Cynthia Marie Babyak will both step down from their duties on June 30.

Sr. Donna arrived first, in 1970, to teach math at the co-ed college preparatory school. When Sr. Cynthia was hired as a math teacher in 1977 (she also taught religion and chemistry), Sr. Donna was her department chair. “I was petrified of her at first,” says Sr. Cynthia. “She really knew math. It oozed out of her. It took me a while to gain my footing, but I got there.”

“It also quickly became clear to me what a wonderful, supportive person Sr. Donna was, so that put me at ease. **Despite being very different personalities — I’m artsy, she’s mathy — we became friends almost immediately, and we’ve stayed friends ever since.**”

Both sisters would eventually move into leadership positions at the high school. During her time as principal, Sr. Donna oversaw a 12-year capital expansion that added new classrooms, a video studio, two computer labs, a second gym, a weight room, cafeteria server space and several academic facilities. She also celebrated the school’s 50th anniversary in 2019.

Sr. Donna shared that it’s the day to day that she will miss most. “The school community — **the students I have taught, the families I have served, and the faculty members and clergy I have worked with — has been a big part of my life and a big part of my religious vocation for a long time,**” she says. “I’ve been grateful to them each day for the joy they brought me.”



In 1981, the school lost its chaplain, at which point Sr. Donna, who was principal by then, went to Sr. Cynthia about replacing the chaplain but in a different role. “She asked me if I wanted to be the new campus minister,” remembers Sr. Cynthia. “I wasn’t sure what that meant but I said yes, and we figured it out and made it work.”

Sr. Donna’s influence at the school has also been profound. Diocese of Metuchen Bishop James F. Checchio said, “Sr. Donna has been a great source of strength for the school community and a constant source of the light of Christ for the many students under her care, and their families.” The St. Thomas Aquinas High School mission statement states the values needed to face the challenges of tomorrow’s world, and Sr. Donna has given generations of students that very thing.

Sr. Cynthia has spent her career offering joy, support, and spiritual guidance as well as she can, but that’s gone both ways. “I did the best I could, but I got far more in return. **Too many times to count, these young men and women filled my heart with love. I prayed with them and learned with them.**”

“Early on I was called to pray with the football players on game day,” she said. “Those young men showed their vulnerability to me. They offered themselves up to God. Those were very special moments. It wasn’t just them going out on the field and playing, it was more than that.”

Both Sisters know that the school will be just fine without them. “My hope and prayer as the high school heads into the next 50 years,” says Sr. Donna, “is that future generations of students can continue to find a home at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, rooted in faith, and dedicated to knowledge.”

Asked what she’s looking forward to, Sr. Cynthia doesn’t hesitate. “It’ll be good to not hear bells ringing so much every day. Morning alarm bells, change-of-class bells. I won’t miss those. It will be nice to not always have to be somewhere. That will give me a chance to just be. I will be open to whatever God puts in front of me.”

Any other plans? “Sr. Donna and I were joking recently about doing a podcast to help people fulfill their spiritual needs. So many people need that. Maybe a podcast is the way to do it.”

Then and now: Sr. Cynthia Marie Babyak and Sr. Donna Marie Trukowski (left) in earlier years. More recently (above) Sr. Donna is at the left.





ICHS Alumnae Engage Students

Young women had the opportunity to interact with **Immaculate Conception High School (ICHS)** alumnae during Women's History Month in Lodi, NJ. Jacqueline Zegler '17, graduated magna cum laude from the University of Maryland with a degree in Broadcast Journalism, a concentration in Film Studies and a citation from the Honors College. During her time at UMD, she further cultivated her passion for politics and storytelling as a producer for Capital News Service's biweekly news program — including CNS-TV's award-winning Election Night 2020 broadcast. Now a creative assistant for the Democratic Governors Association, Jacqueline participated in an ICHS event celebrating Women's History Month.

Women's Empowerment Panel: A Unique Conversation with Inspiring Women Leaders was hosted by the Rho Kappa National Honor Society. Of the six accomplished women sitting on the panel, four are ICHS graduates; Jacqueline Zegler '17; Katelyn DeGennaro '06, Nursing; Patty Hirsh '89, Accounting Manager and Realtor; and Dylan Elias '15, Founder and Owner of Plated by D LLC. The panel also included Roseann Caruana, NYC Department of Transportation Staten Island Borough Commissioner, and Felician University Dean for the School of Education, Dr. Stephanie McGowan.

The event inspired the young women of ICHS to have confidence in the direction God is calling them and reinforced that they each have a unique gift to share with the world.

In addition to this panel, ICHS also recognizes women through their *Women of Distinction* program acknowledging alumnae who have carried on the Felician Core Values and the spirit of the Felician-Franciscan tradition by making a difference in the lives of others through their profession, career, or volunteer work.

For the list of Outstanding Women of Distinction from 1998 to present, visit ichslodi.org/advancement/people-of-distinction/women-of-distinction.

Making History in Chicago

Sr. Mary Beth Bromer, Director of Religious Education at **St. Turibius Parish, Chicago, IL**, and President of the parish's St. Vincent De Paul Society, was named by State Representative Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar one of 22 EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN IN THE 22ND DISTRICT during Women's History Month.

Rep. Guerrero-Cuellar's office said there were so many great candidates but Sr. Mary Beth stood out because of her involvement, dedication, commitment and collaborative efforts, especially through social media to make the public aware of the food pantry and other services.

In her acceptance, Sr. Mary Beth said "The inspiration for my service comes from Blessed Mary Angela, the foundress of our Congregation, who encouraged us with these words: **'Do whatever needs to be done . . . and serve with a joyful heart!'**"





From Bread to Bounty in 30 Years

The simple act of handing out a loaf of day-old bread from the trunk of one sister's car has evolved to feeding over 1,000 people each week! **St. Felix Pantry in Rio Rancho, NM**, founded by the late Sr. Mary Genevieve Ryskiewicz in 1992, continues three decades later with Sr. Mary Angela Parkins (pictured below left) at the helm working to ensure the dream to feed the hungry and poor, and to restore their dignity and hope is realized daily.

Learn about the impact of their work through Ramon, a guest whose life was transformed, by searching *St. Felix Pantry Ramon* on our YouTube channel.



Love Boat Cruise

To dispel the winter doldrums, the staff and individuals of **McGuire Memorial in New Brighton, PA**, went on a week-long "Love Boat Cruise" in February. The residents began their trip dancing to the music of a steel drum band, and staff and individuals from all the McGuire Memorial sites could join in through a virtual broadcast. The group "traveled" to many "ports" including the Bahamas, Jamaica, Greece, Belize, Aruba, Mexico, Costa Rica and Brazil. At each "port," the tourists had their passports stamped, and hosts shared information about their country and examples of its music, art, costumes and customs. Each day tourists had an opportunity to visit the Tiki Bar for a snack of their choice and had fun with beach props and a photo booth. The cruise provided a warm, colorful, fun break from the gray and cold winter.



Taking a Swing at Pediatric Cancer

During home doubleheaders at **Felician University in Rutherford, NJ**, the Golden Falcons baseball and softball teams held awareness events in the fight against pediatric cancer. Donations collected at the events were turned over to the Go4TheGoal Foundation, a New Jersey-based non-profit dedicated to improving the lives of children battling cancer. "We are truly grateful for the support and efforts of the Felician baseball and softball teams," said Karen Flint, Director of Athletics at the Go4TheGoal Foundation. "Our deepest thanks go out to the student-athletes and coaches from both programs to show New Jersey kids with cancer that they don't have to fight alone."



One Woman Opened a Door to many women opening doors

As Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska did nearly 170 years ago, today's Felician Sisters seek out those in need, patiently listen and follow divine inspiration to serve in bold and inventive ways. Whether looking beyond the status quo and demanding the best for elderly patients, listening to a people with different ways of expressing love for God to serve their needs, partnering with lay community to continue Blessed Angela's directive, disseminating Felician core values to share joy in daily life, or running to help — no matter how personally painful it will be, these women have in common an unbreakable bond in following their foundress.

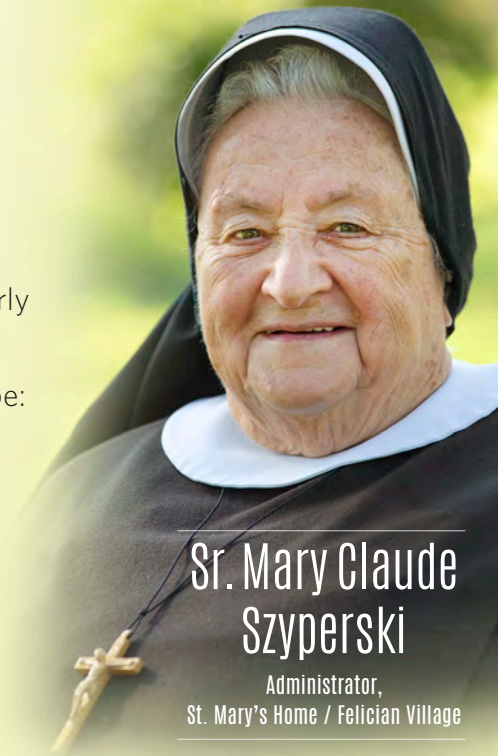


Trailblazing Care

Some people, when they pass, seem utterly unreplaceable. Like the world isn't the same with them gone. You know the type: big hearts, big ideas, big personalities, born leaders. Sr. Mary Claude Szyperski was one of those people. The long-time healthcare administrator and eldercare pioneer died this past December at Mother of Good Counsel Convent in Chicago at 89.

Born Helen Josephine in 1932, in Chicago, Sr. Claude was the youngest of five. After graduating from Good Counsel High School, she worked at Prudential Insurance until she was 28. Then, she responded to God's call, entered the sisterhood, and two years later began her lifelong ministry to the aged at what would become St. Mary's Home in Manitowoc, WI.

By 1968, Sr. Claude became administrator at St. Mary's, a position she held for 34 years. St. Mary's nickname "Home with a Heart" was coined by Sr. Claude — and she was that heart. Every First Friday, she laid red roses before the Sacred Heart statue in the chapel and sang, *O Jezu Słodki*, a tribute to the Sacred Heart.



Sr. Mary Claude Szyperski
Administrator,
St. Mary's Home / Felician Village

First and foremost a Felician Sister and servant of God, Sr. Claude was many other things in her purpose-driven life.

"People talk about 'patient-centered care' in hospitals and retirement homes now, but Sr. Claude was thinking that way in the 1970s soon after she took over the Administrator job at St. Mary's," says Sr. Noel Marie Gabriel, director of clinical health services for the Felician Sisters of North America. Sr. Noel worked in ministry with Sr. Claude for nearly three decades.



"She transformed the place from an institution into a home,"

says Sr. Noel. "She put in carpeting, constantly improved the décor, added a bowling alley, swimming pool, even a golf course! But the change she brought was more important than those things," she says. "Sr. Claude didn't see our residents as people who were dying and who just

needed a place to do that. She made it clear to each resident, 'you matter, you are important, you have much to contribute, and you are very much still living.'"

She would urge residents to dress up and look nice for dinner. We even had a wine cellar! The residents loved that. St. Mary's was way ahead of its time in the way our residents were treated." Every improvement she made at St. Mary's was on behalf of the residents. "She would do anything for them," says Sr. Noel. "Their well-being guided each action she took and she did not skimp."

Every Christmas, the staff would create a living nativity scene in the auditorium. This was rural Wisconsin, so there were plenty of farm animals.

As Sr. Noel recalls, one year they had wise men scheduled to arrive with camels, but they used llamas instead. Problem was, the wise men and "camels" weren't to appear until near the end of the show, so someone had to keep the animals occupied til then.

"Fortunately we had this huge elevator, because Sr. Claude always wanted residents who needed wheelchairs to be able to come down for meals," says Sr. Noel. "So that night we put the llamas in the elevator til it was their time to enter the auditorium. They rode up and down on that thing for quite a while. Oh boy did they get some looks that night, I worried we were going to give some people heart attacks!"

While she went big in her efforts to make life fulfilling for residents, she also had a big and non-judgemental heart. Midway through her time as head of St. Mary's, there was news on the radio that an elderly man had just completed a long prison sentence in Wisconsin and needed lodging, as he had no family or anyone to take him in.

"Sr. Claude invited him to live at St. Mary's," recalls Sr. Noel. "Willy was his name. Ol' Willy had no teeth, loved snuff, and soon after he got there, threw his mattress out the window. But at Sr. Claude's insistence, we let Willy be Willy, and eventually he settled in," says Sr. Noel. "He had a home with us for the rest of his life."

A woman of such presence who saw beyond the status quo in health care, got things done and touched so many lives cannot go unmissed. 🌿



Listening to a Distant Drum

Sr. Mary Celeste Goulet

Pastoral Leader/
Director of Child Development Centre.LOFC

Sr. Mary Celeste Goulet's early years in Guelph, Ontario, Canada were notable for two things: her inability to speak until age 10 due to a respiratory illness, and her love of children. Both of these unique qualities foreshadowed the plan God had for her.

"I would take all my sister's dolls and put them in my brother's carriage and walk up and down the street. I told my mom I wanted to have 500 children when I grew up! She laughed and said I had better grow up to be a sister then," Sr. Celeste recalled.

Sr. Celeste had an aunt who happened to be a Catholic sister. When she sent her a Valentine's Day card featuring Donald

Duck that said, "I want to fly away with you," Aunt Bertha's reply to her niece was, "No, you have to stay on earth and take my place." As Sr. Celeste grew and discerned the religious life was her path, she chose the Felicians because it was the only nearby order that had an orphanage. Children were the joy of her heart and would become her life's work.

In 1973, during a 30-day retreat, Sr. Celeste received a clear



message from the Holy Spirit. "During the very last meditation on the last day of the retreat, God said, 'I want you to work with the native people of Canada.' It was so clear, it stayed in my mind," she remembered. "My director told me to keep praying about it, that if it was meant to be, through prayer I would know."

Just a few years later, Sr. Celeste was on her way to Tulita, a remote area 125 miles south of the Arctic Circle, to work with the Dene First Nations indigenous people of Canada's Northwest Territories. "I was super shy, and it turned out to be a gift from God. I listened more than I talked. People would tell me their problems and we would pray together, so I got to know them fast."

With a background in early childhood education, she knew her service would involve working with the Dene children. She went to each family's home and explained the difference between daycare and preschool, asking the people which they preferred. Their choice of the preschool gave Sr. Celeste time to do parish work in the morning and teach the children in the afternoon. Tulita was the first small community to have a preschool and served as the model for surrounding towns.

(continued)



LEADERS & FOUNDERS

The first school had a “honey bucket” for the toilet and an oil stove. “I had to start the fire every morning so it would be warm by the time the children came.”

Sr. Celeste’s curriculum includes the basic things one would expect, but in a land where cultural heritage is celebrated and children are important for a family’s survival, she incorporated many other elements. Students learn the North Slavey language and traditions from local teachers and elders. Field trips teach children how to find animal tracks, walk in show-shoes, and snare and cook a rabbit. She even created illustrated books of Dene cultural stories that are used in schools throughout the Sahtu region, collaborating with elders and local translators, as well as young illustrators.

by the Dene people whose sacred land, Great Bear Rock, had burned. In gratitude for her solidarity, the community voted to rename the child development center after her, and accepted Sr. Celeste as an elder.

“You are respected in a different way when you’re an elder,” she explained. “All the young people shook my hand; they were proud of me and what I represented in the community. I could see this in their eyes.”

Because the one priest serving the entire Sahtu region is only able to come to Tulita three or four times a year, Sr. Celeste doffs her preschool teacher hat to don many others. She presides over baptisms, first communions, weddings, and funerals and leads communion service on Sundays. She brings communion to

The community also “feeds the fire” which Sr. Celeste explained is like incense to God. “When they set up camp they throw a match in the water, asking God to bless the hunt and give them luck. They respect the land and animals, thanking God and the animals for their gift.”

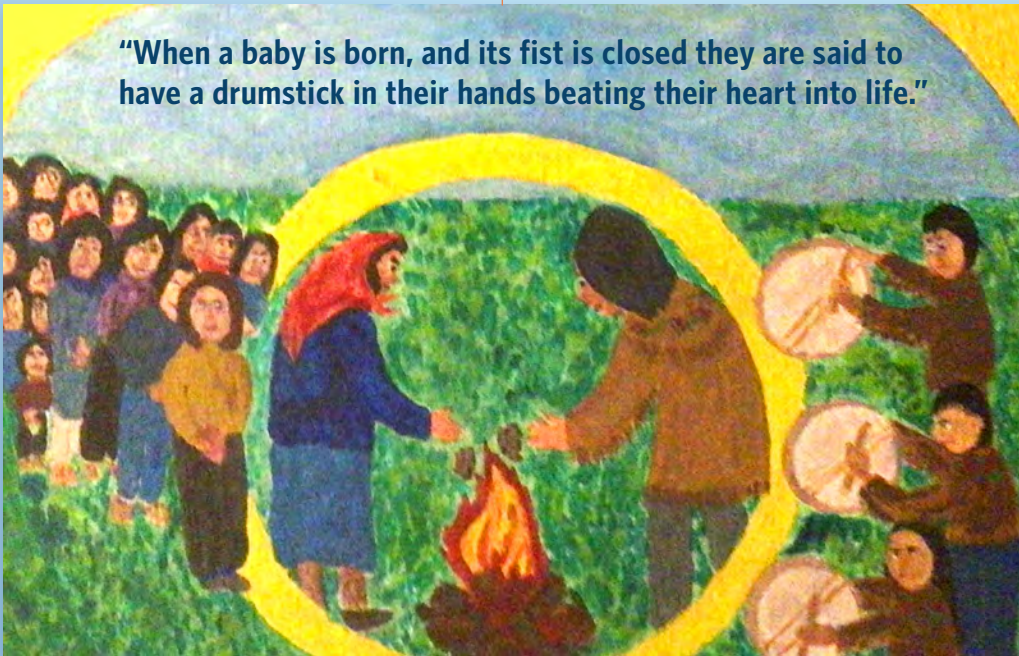
As if preschool director, stand-in priest, and elder isn’t enough to keep her busy, Sr. Celeste has initiated many programs over the years in response to her community’s needs, including adult literacy classes, support for victims of drug and alcohol abuse, counseling, job coaching, and drop-in centers for the supervision and care of at-risk populations of the community. She is also a refuge for women and children whose domestic lives are unstable.

It’s no surprise Sr. Celeste has won numerous awards for excellence in child care and education, improving the lives of women, their families and communities, and for missionary work. The one she recalls as the happiest, and saddest, is the 2016 St. Joseph Award for Outstanding Missionary Work given to a person who has demonstrated dedication to missions and has greatly influenced people. Her younger brother died the day before she received the award. “He was so excited for me and had always been supportive. He came to Tulita to visit me, and though he is very quiet, when he went back home they said he couldn’t stop talking about it.”

Spending the first 10 years of her life listening instead of talking prepared Sr. Celeste for the role she was destined to fill. The hundreds of children she has educated in her four decades in Tulita manifest the desire of a young girl’s heart to have 500 children. And each time she takes communion to homebound elders, she carries her late Aunt Bertha’s rosary with her.

“The Ministry of Presence is not to give people what you think they need, but to truly be with them and walk beside them.” ✨

“When a baby is born, and its fist is closed they are said to have a drumstick in their hands beating their heart into life.”



Though the community valued the work Sr. Celeste was doing for the children, being accepted by the Dene people didn’t happen overnight. It took well over 10 years and a natural disaster.

In 1995, extreme heat and dry conditions caused a forest fire that threatened the town. To escape the blaze, everyone had to be flown to another town. After the fire was contained, and all went back to Tulita to assess the damage, Sr. Celeste cancelled her scheduled summer vacation to the Felician convent in Ontario to stand

the homebound and leads prayer at the beginning of Dene ceremonies.

Drumming is a significant and symbolic component of Dene heritage. “Playing drums is their prayer,” Sr. Celeste explained. “When a baby is born, and its fist is closed they are said to have a drumstick in their hands beating their heart into life. Funerals begin with a drum song, calling the angels to come meet them to take them to heaven.”

Photo of sacred Bear Rock by Angela Gzowski

Managing Ministries

Within the past year, Felician Services welcomed two new leaders who bring experience, enthusiasm, and new perspectives for the next chapter of Felician sponsored ministries. Sr. Mary GERALYN Mroczkowski assumed the role of CEO in January, and Sr. Jeremy Marie Midura began as the Executive Vice President of Mission Integration in June of last year.



Sr. Mary GERALYN
Mroczkowski

CEO, Felician Services

As CEO of Felician Services, Sr. GERALYN is responsible for home office staff in Chicago, the senior ministry advisors, and over 30 Felician-sponsored ministries across North America, and for ensuring all ministries remain true to the Felician vision, charism, and mission. "Our mission is the spiritual renewal of the world; that doesn't just mean being sure that people are going to church, but how they affect the world by their faith, whatever their faith may be," Sr. GERALYN affirmed.

The pandemic has created challenges for the ministries but has also provided opportunities for ministry staff to live Felician core values. "If I had to have a proud moment, it would be our healthcare ministries impacted daily by COVID, and how they are navigating through the pandemic. Their focus is always on the residents and patients."

Sr. GERALYN is enthusiastic about possible new avenues for Felician Ministries, explaining that a few years ago, then provincial minister Sr. Christopher challenged them to look beyond current ministries and see unmet needs. After adding St. Anne's Family Services of Los Angeles, CA last year, they are exploring other ministries for women and children, and emphasized the Felician core value of respect for human dignity.

"Our ministries address people where they're at. We're not there to win prizes. We're not there to do the job and go home. We are there to be involved in people's lives. That's what Angela did and that's what we continue to do in our current Felician history."

When Felician Sisters founded our ministries, there were many of us and it was the sisters who filled the roles in a ministry from CEO to maintenance. We are at a different point in our history and most of these roles now are carried out by our lay partners. It is the world of Vatican II, and we understand that the charism of Blessed Mary Angela isn't kept alive just through the Felician Sisters, but also through our colleagues in ministry. Their love of the Felician story and their dedication to the mission is our assurance that the charism will remain alive.

Sr. Jeremy came to her new role as Executive Vice President of Mission Integration after many years as a science teacher and then a pastoral associate. She is convinced that this role is where she is supposed to be at this point in her life. It meant relocating to Chicago, Illinois from Buffalo and Western New York where she spent her entire life.

Sr. Jeremy's connection with others in the community also supports her effectiveness in her role, saying that much of the direction she shares

(continued)

Sr. Mary Jeremy
Midura

Executive Vice President
of Mission Integration,
Felician Services



LEADERS & FOUNDERS

with mission leaders in the ministries comes from the sisters. “Sr. Mary Jean Sliwinski is leading the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform Committee. I serve on this committee and take that to our mission leaders to see what’s already happening in our ministries, and how we are going to implement new goals there.” Living with a foot in both worlds, Sr. Jeremy is striving to be the link to ensure what the sisters are focused on gets communicated to the ministries.

Asked about what the future holds for Felician Ministries, Sr. GERALYN spoke with confidence. “We will be around. We will be part of the landscape for many years to come, but not alone. We will be part of the landscape with our lay partners. They will help continue the ministry of Blessed Angela even if a Felician sister is not present.” ✨

Living Our Mission

Sr. Julie Weckwerth

Director of Mission Services, Our Lady of Hope Province



Sr. Julie meets with the convent's Mission Committee to plan specifics for their monthly programming.

When Sr. Mary Julie Weckwerth began working to develop a program to raise awareness of the Felician mission and core values among the 450 staff members in the central convents in the province, she didn't fully realize the impact it could have on both the employees and on the sisters who live the mission every day.

The Mission Services program was launched in 2015 in collaboration with former provincial minister Sr. Mary Christopher Moore and the seven-member council. The Mission Leaders from each region understood the truly core value Respect for Human Dignity was really the heart of the values behavioral process and began to discuss how that value, as well as the others, could be demonstrated in employees' everyday work relationships and environment.

“We had a number of sessions that examined what values-based behaviors look like,” Sr. Julie said. The basic question was, “How do I relate to my coworkers and how do I make the core values come alive in my relationships with them and the sisters?”

Developing the program had its challenges, especially in terms of finding the time to work with employees specifically on values-based behaviors. A blend of awareness-raising activities and educational components was created to truly engage our people. Throughout

the year, the Mission Services program highlights different core values through varying activities and events.

In February, for example, *Have a Heart for Mission Days* focuses on compassion using valentine notecards, listing the names of sick friends and relatives, then placed at the feet of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the St. Felix Chapel, and by wearing vibrant Mission-themed stickers, along with valentine placemats from the employees in the dining rooms. This year's activities culminated in a blessing service where a member of the maintenance department, Minister Clark Hall, gave a moving reflection on “The Face of Compassion at 3800 Peterson Avenue.”

The St. Nick Event in December highlights Solidarity with People in Need. Employees are invited to bring canned or boxed goods. Often 12 boxes of food items are collected for the Port Ministries' Food Truck that serves eight under-served neighborhoods in Chicago. Employees and sisters also purchase or knit scarves, mittens and caps for a Giving Tree, often collecting 8 boxes full.

“Mission Services isn’t about sitting around a table discussing,” Sr. Julie said. “It’s about making the core values come alive in our outreach actions.”

These events have enabled employees to better live by the Felician core values, and the sisters have benefited as well. “They are better able to understand the meaning of the core values, and how they work in our daily lives. For example, we sometimes use core value note cards, one for each of the core values: respect for human dignity, compassion, transformation, solidarity with the people in need, and justice and peace. We distributed a few cards to the sisters and asked them to watch in their encounters with employees where they see these actions and behaviors come alive.”

When the sisters see these actions happening, they write a thank you note on the card and give it to the employee. Mission Awareness Assistant Sr. Mary Katherine Fax relayed to Sr. Julie, “The employees really seem to appreciate these. One employee received nine cards! She made xeroxed copies of what the sisters had written and mailed them to her family members because she was so happy to be recognized in this way.” The core value cards component of the Mission Services program establishes a deeper relationship between the employees and sisters.

One unexpected thing that has happened is that Mission Services has created a greater sense of loyalty among employees. “Their jobs have more meaning to them, there’s a greater sense of community.

Therefore they’re more likely to be motivated to stay with us longer. There’s a deeper sense that we’re all in this together.”

The program has also created a greater understanding and sense of empathy between staff and sisters. “The sisters have a better sense now that employees have families, needs and multiple concerns, and vice versa,” Sr. Julie explained. “Employees see the sisters in a different light also. There’s even more respect, compassion and gratitude for the sisters who have joined them in collections like our Soup and Bread Meal together and social outreach.”

Prayer is another part of the Mission Services process. Sr. Julie sometimes has a chance to meet new employees during orientation and often learns about their own prayer experience and backgrounds. “So many of our employees say they appreciate working in an environment where their prayer background is appreciated and respected.”


During *Have a Heart for Mission Days*, a blessing of the hands is a key ritual for employees because of the important services that those hands will provide in the coming year. “It’s beautiful to see, that openness to prayer and the commingling of the religions. I am so moved by the silence, the singing and the spirit of our employees as we meet to pray in our small side chapel or sometimes even in the main foyer of our building. One of our often-repeated hymns is, “This Is Holy Ground.” Each of these places becomes holy because of the quality of

the faith life of the people gathered there. There’s much unity evidenced regardless of various religious traditions of our staff members. I am just so amazed and moved by that,” Sr. Julie remarked. It’s wonderful.” ✨



FELICIAN SISTERS
OF NORTH AMERICA

So, you’ve
thought about
life as a sister.
What now?



We would
♥ to talk!

Contact Sr. Judy Blizzard
734-718-0632
Vocation@FelicianSisters.org
FelicianSistersNA.org/Vocation

Running Toward Suffering

Sr. Maria Louise Edwards
CO-VICE PRESIDENT, ÁGUILAS DEL DESIERTO

When Sr. Maria Louise Edwards first heard of *Águilas del Desierto*, she was seeking the truth with her own eyes about who is really dying at the border, and why. She put on her hiking shoes and joined the small organization in one of their searches for the bodies of those lost crossing the U.S. southern border. What she discovered compelled her to help more and lead to an ongoing relationship with *Águilas*. Today, Sr. Maria Louise is Co-Vice President of *Águilas*.

In her new leadership role she has taken a broader view of how to make the biggest impact. Drawing on her Franciscan spirituality, relationships and partnerships are key.

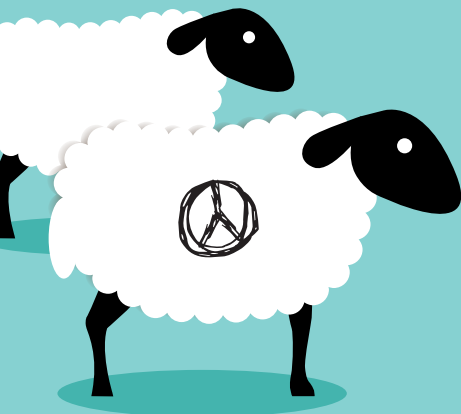
Read *Franciscans at the Border* by Daniel Imwalle for St. Anthony Messenger at FranciscanMedia.org/st-anthony-messenger/june-july-2022/Franciscans-at-the-Border



Vigilance in Wartime

**Sr. Maryann
Agnes Mueller**

Justice, Peace & Integrity
of Creation Coordinator



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres perfectly described the mindset of human traffickers when he tweeted this in March: “For traffickers, Ukraine is not a tragedy, it’s an opportunity” And no surprise, when Russia invaded, traffickers saw their chance to prey on vulnerable women and children fleeing the conflict.

Sr. Maryann Agnes Mueller, social justice coordinator of Our Lady of Hope Province and editor of the *Stop Trafficking!* newsletter, accelerated her efforts to expose the criminal networks that are preying on the refugees.

“The Ukraine conflict created a perfect storm for human trafficking, and things were especially bad early in the conflict,” says Sr. Maryann Agnes. “Trafficking is far more widespread worldwide than most people realize, but it always surges when there are large displacements of refugees from wars, famine or natural disasters.”

“What is unusual about the Ukrainian refugees is that 90 percent of them are women and children,” she says. “So they are more vulnerable. The men stayed to fight. And because of the conflict, there was a breakdown of government oversight and the social safety net. This allowed traffickers to move into the chaos under cover of war.”

In recent weeks, as the Ukrainian government has regained some of its footing, and as the UN, EU and other groups including the Felician Sisters have stepped in to help establish legitimate refugee support networks, the trafficking situation has improved somewhat.

But in no way has it disappeared. “The situation with war orphans and with babies born to surrogate mothers remains tragic,” says Sr. Maryann Agnes. “What has

happened with surrogate mothers is that in many cases, the parents who were using surrogates to have their children have either died or fled the country. Or the mother-to-be had to flee, and the father who stayed behind is unable to care for the baby.”

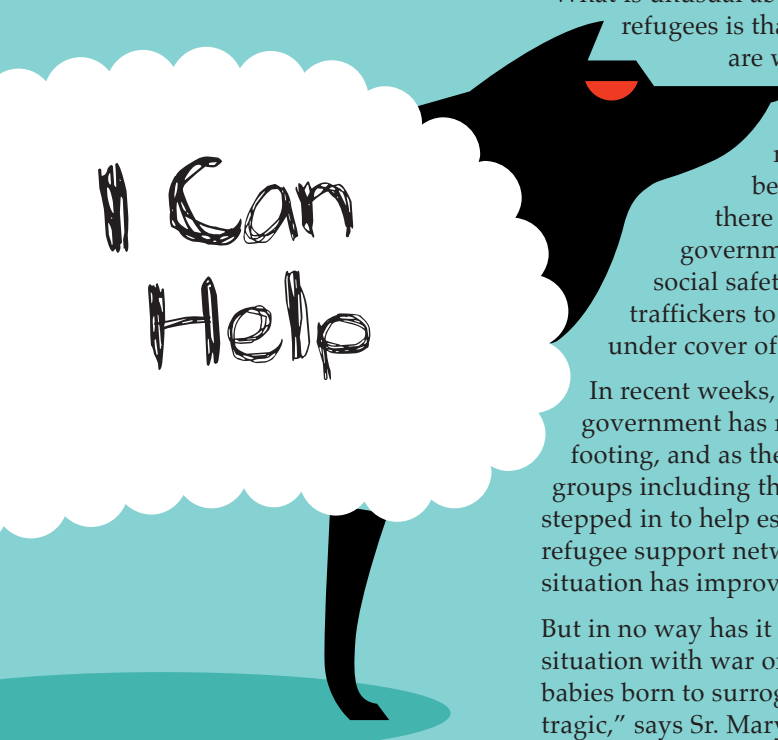
“Orphans and surrogate babies are being targeted by traffickers,” she says. “It’s one of the aspects of this conflict that the sisters and I are focusing on, and it’s something we all need to be aware of. This is still happening.”

According to Sr. Maryann, there isn’t a typical setup that traffickers use. Some act as independent contractors; others are part of formal criminal networks. One scenario that occurred early on, before legitimate refugee transport networks were put in place, was for traffickers to wait at the border with offers of free lodging, or rides to such-and-such country.

Imagine that you have been traveling on foot for days, you and your children are hungry and tired, you’re feeling desperate, and you really want to believe this friendly person wants to help you. It is easy to understand how people fall prey to these offers.

In response, Sr. Maryann says various organizations started circulating flyers at the border warning of the dangers. “Tip sheets get handed out in print or are sent out via social media saying, ‘Don’t hand your passport over to anyone. Don’t give out your personal information. Be aware of overly generous offers.’”

“Making people more aware of these scams, that’s what I can do to help,” she says. “Vulnerable people need to know this is happening, and they need to stay wary and vigilant even when a part of them is desperate for the help. People naturally want to trust someone who is offering safe passage or a safe haven, but that could be a big mistake.” 🌸



Stay informed about human trafficking, what the sisters are doing, and sign up to receive the *Stop Trafficking!* newsletter at SistersAgainstTrafficking.org

Sisters in MINISTRY

Meet two sisters
whose ministries
promote healing.

Both rely on
prayer
to help make
their work
possible.

*...and we have liturgy together
at least once a week to pray
for our clients."*

Healing Those Who Hurt

Sr. Ann Marie Jablonicky

Counselor/Therapist/Diocesan CC for Church Ministers

We are all part of a family. It may be small or large, biological or adopted, or even represented by our friends or coworkers. Every family has its ups and downs, but in the end, they are always there for each other. Sr. Ann Marie Jablonicky's formation into the Felician sisterhood 57 years ago began within her own family.

For nearly 40 years, Sr. Anne Marie has ministered at the Diocesan Counseling Center for Church Ministers in Buffalo, NY, as a psychologist, counselor and therapist to the faith community of Western New York. When we see the good works of sisters, brothers, priests, deacons, and lay church ministers, it's easy to forget that they are individuals who face challenges in their personal and ministerial lives. Sr. Anne Marie's role is a special one, catering to the unique needs of people, often "wounded healers," who have devoted their lives to serving others. She is able to understand and connect to their circumstances in a way the secular population cannot.

Sr. Anne Marie emphasized the importance of self-care and healing for the religious community if they are to carry out the work they are called to do. "If we're not emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually healthy, we're not in good shape for our ministry."

She also sits on the Independent Review Board of the Diocese of Buffalo tasked to assess allegations of child or vulnerable adult sexual abuse and advise the Bishop of Buffalo. "They're some of my most difficult days. We

Continued

■ SISTERS IN MINISTRY

are called to help victims of abuse as well as call the Church to accountability while protecting the rights of all involved.”

Serving in a counseling ministry can be draining, and Sr. Anne Marie finds comfort and support in her spiritual family of colleagues that includes another sister and a priest. “We sit and discuss issues, pray about them. We converted a large space into a chapel and have liturgy together at least once a week to pray for our clients.”

While all of her clients are adults, Sr. Anne Marie sees an extension of Blessed Angela’s work with children.

“These are adults who were hurt as children. Some of them have baggage from their families. A good part of my vocation has been helping adults navigate all their pains and sorrows from their early years. I also work with religious communities who are all facing the significant challenges of constant change.”

Sr. Anne Marie’s formal education including graduate degrees in clinical psychology, school psychology, counseling, and psychological testing, gave her the professional knowledge needed to perform her counseling work, but her rich and loving family life including aunts, uncles and cousins built the foundation for her calling.

“While this ministry is often difficult, I believe I am fulfilling my personal mission and the mission of the Felician order. I’ve been so blessed with the people I’ve been able to share community life with, work with and the people I’m serving.” 🌸



Guiding Presence

Sr. Patricia Kennedy, RN, MSN

Lab Instructor/Nursing Resource & Simulation Center, Felician University

Across North America and around the world, Felician Sisters serve where they are needed. To the casual observer, or even the trained eye, those service endeavors often look like full-time jobs — and many are.

So you have to ask, how do these busy sisters have time for demanding jobs and their 24/7 ministries?

It’s a question we explored with Sr. Mary Patricia Kennedy RN, MSN, a trained nurse and instructor at the Barbara J. Toscano Nursing Resource and Simulation Center at Felician University’s Rutherford campus in New Jersey.

Sr. Patricia teaches students four times a week about all aspects of nursing, including medication management, dressing wounds, taking vitals, and doing health assessments. She also helps students assist in births, as there’s an obstetrics section in the simulation center with a manikin mother who “gives birth” to one of two baby manikins that blink and make cooing sounds.

Clearly, Sr. Patricia has a full plate. Does she ever struggle to balance the demands of her ministry as a nurse with being a sister?

“I actually don’t see it like that at all,” she says. “I don’t separate my life as a nurse from my life as a Felician Sister. I’m the same person doing both. Actually, it’s one endeavor, in the service of God. Nursing and being a Felician Sister are completely blended for me.”

these blessings; they tell me it's comforting to them.



Left to right: lab instructors Melissa Kuczik and Lisa Boccassini, Sr. Patricia Kennedy and a senior nursing student, Steven Guerra.

Following are highlights from Felician Magazine's interview with Sr. Patricia earlier this spring.

FM: What happened first for you, the Felician sisterhood or nursing?

SR. PATRICIA: I got my nursing degree before becoming a sister. I graduated with an RN in 1984, and entered the Felician community in 1986.

FM: What is your nursing specialty?

SR. PATRICIA: At first it was surgical. I loved it. There was so much to do every minute. It was intense and very interesting for me. The patients really needed help, and it made me feel good to help them feel better.

At a certain point, though, after I became a sister, I realized what I really loved about nursing was teaching it. I wanted to show people how to do it rather than doing it. And I've been teaching ever since. I've been a nursing instructor for 23 years.

FM: Tell us more about the simulation center in the nursing school at Felician.

SR. PATRICIA: It's an amazing place. It's so much like the real thing, so the nursing students get a great experience before going out to a hospital or medical practice.

The patient manikins are really something, they're so lifelike. You plug them in, and they are literally wired for sound. We have two manikin babies in the center — an 11-pounder and also an adorable 1-pound "preemie" the students named Faith Rose. We also have a middle aged adult named "Sim Man." Each of these manikins has a pulse, you can take their blood pressure, they breathe and blink, and they make sounds. The babies coo and grunt!

We have different specialty areas within the simulation center, and use workstations on wheels that we call "WOWs." There's also a computer lab classroom where the students take a lot of their exams.

FM: What's your role in the simulation center?

SR. PATRICIA: I sometimes do formal instruction where I show individuals or small groups how to do things like dress a wound, or do health assessments. Everything a nurse needs to know how to do, really. But I also walk around assisting students when they're doing hands-on training. They call me "Eagle Eye." I watch closely, and offer suggestions to help them build their skills.

FM: Do you bring Christian teachings and spirituality to your instruction?

SR. PATRICIA: I do. For example, when there's time and the occasion is right, I sometimes pray with the students. I always ask their permission first. As you can imagine, I'm pretty popular in the computer lab during exam time!

I'll do specific prayers, like St. Patrick's Irish blessing. That's the one that starts with "May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back" and so on. Or I will pick appropriate verses from scripture.

The students seem to like when I offer these blessings; they tell me it's comforting to them. Sometimes they tell me, "Sister, it's your voice." I always make sure to keep things light-hearted. When they're taking a test or doing a practical in the simulation center, they can get a little anxious, and I think the prayers help especially at those times.

FM: Do you also pray with your co-workers?

SR. PATRICIA: Yes. Often I bless them, then they bless me. I believe this really helped when COVID was at its worst. Those were hard times, anxious times. Prayer helped us stay calm and helped keep us positive that with God's guidance, we would all be fine.

FM: It sounds like a really nice working and learning environment.

SR. PATRICIA: It is. Some of the instructors work at other locations as well. They say that coming to our simulation center feels like an oasis for them. Our students are very serious about their training, and my co-workers are totally invested in what they do, but the simulation center never seems like a stressful place.

I love my teaching job, the women I work with, and my students. Everyone is so loving and caring.

FM: You're probably not going to take any credit for that, but it's pretty clear you help set the tone there.

SR. PATRICIA: Well, you'd have to ask my co-workers and the students about that. When I'm off for a while or away from work for a few days, people do sometimes say it's different when I'm not there.

I don't know what that means exactly but I hope I bring a positive, calming spirit to the task, as a complement to my nursing skills and knowledge.

But I'm sure I get more from the students and my co-workers than they do from me. It's work, but it doesn't feel like work. I love the place. I feel blessed when I'm there. 🌸

Leading the Way

By S Judith M Kubicki
Provincial Minister, Our Lady of Hope Province

Pope Francis has introduced two ground-breaking initiatives that invite every member of the Church to participate. I am happy to report that the Felician Sisters of North America are on board supporting and participating in both efforts.

The first is the call by Pope Francis that all Catholics participate in pre-synod activities in preparation for the meeting of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in Fall 2023.

The second is the creation of the Laudato Si' Action Platform in response to the Holy Father's encyclical of 2014, Laudato Si'.

SYNOD

The word “synod” or “synodality” may be unfamiliar to many. Nevertheless, its meaning immediately touches the heart. “Synod” can be defined as “journeying together.”

Pope Francis is inviting the entire People of God to be open to transformation. Each of us is being asked to listen more closely to the Holy Spirit by listening attentively to the words and experiences of our sisters and brothers.

Pope Francis envisions the role of the bishops to be the voice of their local congregations. In order to enable this to happen, the bishops are being asked to engage their local communities and consult on every level. Some dioceses in the United States and Canada have shown greater leadership in taking up this important task than others. Sisters and laity alike were encouraged to participate in any and all of the opportunities their local churches provide. If no opportunities are available on the diocesan or parish level, groups may gather for dialogue and send their responses directly to Rome.

Pope Francis has explained that “a synodal church is a church that listens.” In other words, **the process of learning to listen more deeply is actually one of the goals of the synod.** This focus on listening emerges from the three touchstones of the synod: communion, participation, and mission. Communion results from the efforts to listen and dialogue with each other. Actively listening and speaking requires our participation. Once we have engaged with each other and experienced and grown in the love of God, we are called to share that love of God with all people (mission).

In a very real way, this description of the synodal process was a dream of the Second Vatican Council. And it was women religious who, soon after the Council and to this day, have embraced the process of dialogue and deep listening as their very way of being in community. For this reason, women religious are uniquely positioned to contribute to the universal Church’s efforts and the call of Pope Francis to become, on every level of church life, a synodal church that listens.

Women religious are invited to embrace the following five actions:

1. **to seek the lost or hurting in the trenches;**
2. **to promote greater participation both within the Church and with those outside the church;**
3. **to embrace shared goals;**
4. **to create avenues for change;**
5. **to communicate effectively with bishops.**

Each of these actions holds the promise of renewed life for the Church. It is an opportunity that we should not allow to slip through our fingers.

LAUDATO SI’

The other important event, prompted by Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, is the inauguration of the Laudato Si’ Action Platform. The Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has articulated an action plan that is meant to inspire and equip the Church to implement the values and principles of Pope Francis’ encyclical. Each religious congregation is invited to discern a response to the Laudato Si’ Action Plan (LSAP) in light of its own charism.

The Felician Sisters of North America have responded enthusiastically to this invitation. All sisters, associates, and sponsored ministries have received reflection materials. Feedback from these reflections will be used to develop our Felician commitment statement. More than twenty sisters from Our Lady of Hope Province have joined the LSAP Committee. Their task is to survey the province to assess projects already underway that embody the values and principles of *Laudato Si’*. Within the coming year, we will make a formal statement of commitment to LSAP. When this is done, we will have one year to develop and submit a plan to the Dicastery. We will need to assess our plan annually and reset our goals as needed.

The seven goals of LSAP are the following:

1. **response to the cry of the earth;**
2. **response to the cry of the poor;**
3. **ecological economics;**
4. **adoption of sustainable lifestyles;**
5. **ecological education;**
6. **ecological spirituality;**
7. **community engagement and participatory action.**

Those who know the Felician Sisters of North America will immediately recognize that because of our Felician Charism and Franciscan roots, we are well positioned by our past and current values, actions and policies to embrace the goals of LSAP and to provide leadership in moving this action plan forward. It is our sincere hope that our sisters, associates, and sponsored ministries — as well as all people of good will — will join us in this most important work of ensuring the flourishing of Mother Earth, of all people, and of all living creatures. This was the graced impulse of St. Francis when he composed the “Canticle of the Sun” (“*Laudato Si’*”) and this moment is our graced opportunity to respond with a heartfelt “Yes” once again! ✨



FELICIAN SISTERS WORLDWIDE: UKRAINE & POLAND

Caring for Our Neighbors

This article is the first in a new series featuring Felician Sisters from around the world.

In the spirit of Blessed Mary Angela, our Felician Sisters in Ukraine and Poland have stepped up to address the needs of the thousands of Ukrainian refugees who are desperately seeking asylum. We speak for Felician Sisters everywhere when we say we are in awe of, and humbled by, the courageous work our sisters in Poland are doing for the Ukrainian people.

Sr. Mary Amadeus Paclawska, Provincial Minister in Poland, has sent us semi-regular updates since the Russian invasion began on February 24th. (She is located nearly 250 miles away from Foundress Blessed Mary Angela's birthplace in Kalisz.)

According to Sr. Amadeus, the Felician Sisters are supporting the Ukrainian people from two main congregations inside Ukraine, and from three provinces in Poland, one near the Ukraine border.

Felician Sisters are providing much of the support in Poland, near the Ukraine border. In the provincial house, a few miles from Ukraine, they prepare 200 to 400 sandwiches a day. These are given directly to families arriving from Ukraine.

Sr. Amadeus has been updating the Felician Sisters in North America and recently shared:

Our Ukraine congregations have sisters on standby night and day. They are watching and listening for sirens that alert Ukrainian people of danger. When the sirens sound, the sisters go down to the shelter in the basement. Nighttime is most difficult, but the sisters say they have become accustomed to the sirens. We know this must be difficult.

Sisters also have to watch out for strangers, saboteurs and suspicious people. As we learned from Sr. Mary Ann Agnes (page 20), the conflict has created a perfect storm for human trafficking.

To help Ukrainian defense efforts, the sisters, parishioners and parents of children from our kindergarten sew large masking nets to cover the Ukrainian tanks and trucks to hide them from the enemy.

The sisters also help refugees at a nearby children's center by setting up mattresses and preparing meals for families in the kindergarten rooms.



Felician Sisters in Poland gathered supplies for Ukrainian refugees. Many women, children and babies are arriving in Poland by the thousands.

At the border, the sisters provide spiritual consolation. Those who know Ukrainian offer much-needed translation help. They care for the children, many of whom do not have their parents with them. Sisters also distribute the gifts they bring from their home congregations, and many donate rosaries and medallions to the fighting soldiers.

The Sisters are helping to maintain two essential networks — one going into Ukraine and one going out of Ukraine. The one going in mostly includes supplies and other humanitarian aid, but also the gifts the sisters have made or collected.

The outgoing network supports the refugees, and it's a daunting task. According to the United Nations, since April, 14 million Ukrainian people have fled their homes: 6 million to other countries; 8 million displaced within Ukraine.

Most refugees come to the Polish border area and only stay for one to two days before moving on to longer-term safe havens in other parts of Poland or other countries. The Sisters help these onward refugees by providing travel logistics, organizing further transport, buying bus and train tickets, and offering refugees food, clothing, and supplies to take with them.

From February 25 through April 26, the sisters in the Provincial House in Poland took in 280 refugees, including 124 children. They have also housed around 30 volunteers and benefactors who have come to help from many countries in Europe and elsewhere. Sisters and volunteers concentrate their services at the border, the main railway station and at other reception points.

“Sr. Agnes Maria Trojnar from Our Lady of Hope Province in the USA was in Poland this spring and joined us to help,” says Sr. Amadeus. “She helped at the railway station and also assisted us in the preparation of humanitarian aid for distribution inside Ukraine. For this we express our great gratitude.”

Sr. Amadeus is grateful to donors, Felician Sisters and related ministries around the world. “We thank you for your prayers and communion with us, for your openness and generosity in this time of great need, for your financial support, and for your good works in support of the people of Ukraine.”

“Let us join in prayer for peace in Ukraine and in the world.” 🌸

In less than a month, Ukraine has become the second-largest country of origin for the global refugee population. As of April 25, 2022, more than 6 million Ukrainians have fled the country, with more than 3 million taking shelter in Poland.

May our prayers storm heaven and our good works promote a world where every person and every nation work together for the common good of all.

Read the entire statement on the Ukraine crisis at [FelicianSistersNA.org](https://www.FelicianSistersNA.org)

TO THE MANY DONORS who have contributed to support the efforts of our sisters in Poland — we are so grateful. As we receive funds, we have arrangements with our Polish Provincial Houses to distribute funds via wire transfer. 100% of the funds collected for the crisis are sent to, and only used to support the needs of Ukrainian refugees. If the war ended today, the needs of the refugees will continue for years to come. If you would like to support the sisters working with Ukrainian refugees, give at [FelicianSistersNA.org/Ukraine](https://www.FelicianSistersNA.org/Ukraine).



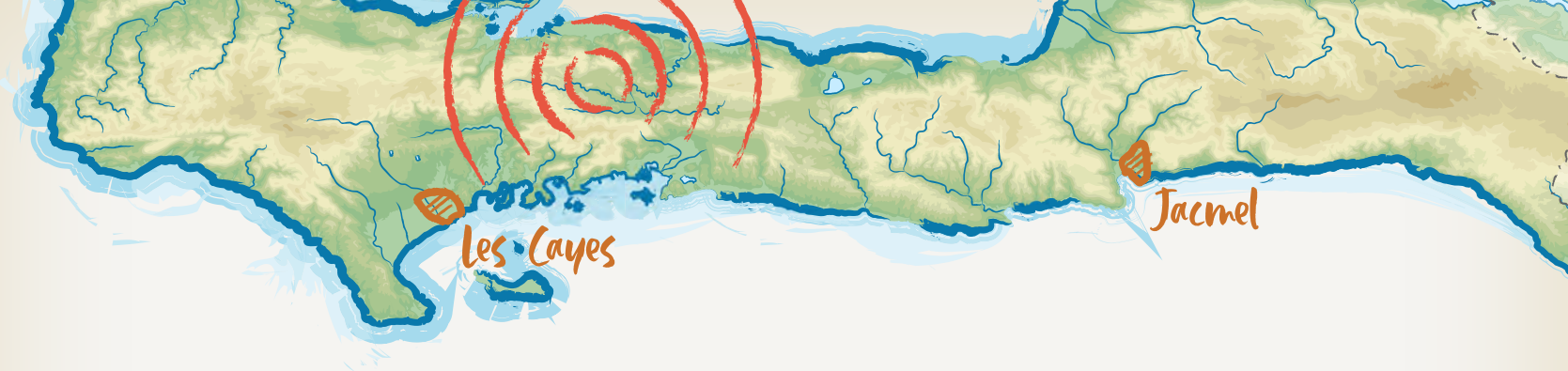


Responding to the Need: Safe Homes

The four dynamic sisters who run *Felician Mission: Haiti* are committed to finding creative solutions that lift their community members out of hardship and put them on the path of self-sufficiency. It is not a one-and-done approach, but a committed, long-term investment in the Haitian people.

“Our ministry in Haiti is about empowering the people,” Sr. Mary Inga Borko explained. “We focus all of our activities in that direction. We are not just relief for a moment; but earthquakes and hurricanes happen, and we want to respond and do whatever we are able to do.”

If you would like to help *Felician Mission: Haiti* support the people of Haiti, visit FelicianSistersNA.org/Haiti. Follow the sisters' blog to see your support in action at FelicianSistersHaiti.com.



Unfortunately, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake happened on August 14, 2021. Numbers told the grim story. **Over 2,200 dead and 12,200 injured. Nearly 140,000 buildings damaged or destroyed. More than 38,000 people were displaced from their homes.**

"I knew right away when it happened; I was standing and almost fell," Sr. Inga recalled. "Jacmel was just shaken, though, nothing happened to us or our people other than being in panic and running and everyone meeting in the streets."

Even though the epicenter was 100 miles to the northwest of the mission, after the 2010 catastrophe fear and trauma grip everyone in Haiti whenever there is an earthquake. "It's still very present with us, even now."

Immediately after the earthquake hit, the sisters received a call from Caritas Haiti, an organization based in Port-au-Prince providing emergency humanitarian aid, community development, and other support throughout Haiti, asking for their help. Les Cayes, Haiti's third largest city, was the hardest hit and experienced severe destruction.

"We collected whatever we had to send to Les Cayes," Sr. Inga said. "Sheets and blankets are important because people have to sleep outside after an earthquake. They are too afraid to sleep inside the damaged houses because when there are aftershocks the house can collapse while they sleep."

The next day, they received another call for help from long-time mission family member Tcheri who is attending medical school in Port-au-Prince. Tcheri came to the mission as a teenager in the *Pay it Forward* program, helping tutor younger students. He taught himself English while translating for volunteers and guests at the mission. Tcheri and his medical school classmates were heading to Les Cayes to treat earthquake victims.

"We told him to call us when he got there; he called three days later saying the people needed bandages and pain medications. There was also a great need for clean water."

The sisters again quickly gathered medical supplies, buckets and water filters, but another reality of life in Haiti halted the delivery.

"People were so desperate and hungry they attacked cars on the road, so we had to postpone the delivery until later. We were able to send money, and Tcheri was able to buy medical supplies in Les Cayes."

Before long, many concerned people familiar with *Felician Mission: Haiti* heard what was going on and



began donating to help with the relief efforts. Nearly \$30,000 was collected. "We thought, what can we do with this money that will bear fruit in the lives of people?"

The sisters got in touch with Eglise Sacré-Coeur — Sacred Heart Parish — in Les Cayes and worked with them to identify families whose houses were destroyed.



"When I looked at the pictures, I remember thinking those houses needed help even before the earthquake. They were where the poorest people live."

The most critical issue for most families is a good roof. "Rains are so heavy here, when you don't have a good roof, you have water inside every day. People in Jacmel often come to ask for a tarp or something to put on their roof, because water is destroying everything they have."

The families were asked to share what work was needed to be done, and all responded with minimal requests to simply repair what had been damaged. "In every case, we gave more than they asked of us."

As of April, 12 families received funds to rebuild walls, roofs, and other parts of their houses that were destroyed. We will continue helping more families as they rebuild their homes and lives. 🌱

WHAT IS LAUDATO SI' AND WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Sr. Mary Jean Sliwinski
Provincial Sustainability Coordinator

Sr. Mary Jaqueline Keefe
Co-Director and Facilitator, Jericho House

Remember the old TV commercial by the brokerage firm EF Hutton? One person would ask: *"What does your broker say?"* Another would answer: *"Well, my broker's EF Hutton, and EF Hutton says..."* Everyone leaned in to listen.

In real life, maybe the only person whose statements command EF Hutton-level attention is the pope. That is exactly what happened when Pope Francis released his encyclical letter *"Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home"* on May 24, 2015. It laments the reality of creation degradation and climate change, and calls on all people to take action.

The profound influence of Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* continues to reverberate seven years later. In fact, it may be gaining steam as the theories in Francis's encyclical turn into real-world, Earth-changing practice — including a host of initiatives the Felician Sisters of North America are already implementing and considering.

“Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si’* was nothing short of a worldwide call to Catholics and the rest of humanity to stop destroying our planet,” says Sr. Mary Jean Sliwinski, Provincial Sustainability Coordinator.

“But it’s even more than that,” she says. “In his encyclical, Francis asks us to look at nature, and our relationship to it in a new way. He says we should not look at our world in a top-down manner, with humans at the top. Rather, we are *with* nature, we are *part* of nature, not separate from it or in domination of it.”

Fast forward to last year, when the teachings of *Laudato Si’* leapt forward into the realm of practice in November with the release of the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform (LSAP). On that day, the Vatican Dicastery of Promoting Integral Human Development launched the LSAP as a seven-year journey inviting the communities of the world to embrace total sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology. In broad terms, integral ecology means the interconnectedness between humans and their environment.

In January, Provincial Minister Sr. Judith Marie Kubicki led the effort on behalf of the Felician Sisters of North America.

“The needs of the poor and of our common home cry out for a response,” she wrote. “Therefore, the Felician Sisters of North America, in cooperation with Felician Associates and Felician Services, are making a commitment to the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform.”

Why we care

“We care about nature and the poor because we are Felician Franciscan Sisters,” said environmental advocate Sr. Jacquie Keefe. “St. Francis, St. Claire, and our foundress Blessed Mary Angela all exhibited prophetic leadership. They pioneered new possibilities in response to the needs of their time. We follow in their footsteps.”

“Like them, we’re trying to read the signs, and to go where there is the greatest need,” says Sr. Jacquie. “The divine wisdom of *Laudato Si’* shows us the way.”

“Also, St. Francis and St. Claire show us how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature and justice for the poor. Pope Francis makes this same connection repeatedly in *Laudato Si’*.”

Adds Sr. Jean: “Pope Francis makes it clear what the stakes are, and therefore why we



need to care and to act. He says we must respond to the cry of the Earth and of the poor. He says we are at a crisis point; we are turning the world into a pile of filth.”

“The thing people need to know about *Laudato Si’*,” she says, “is it’s not a political document or even a policy document. It’s a moral document — though in fact the science in it is excellent. It adds a moral voice to the conversation about climate change, degradation of the Earth, and the outsized effect that is having on the poor.”

What happens if we don’t care?

Sadly, the evidence for this scenario is already all around us, so we don’t need to imagine what not caring looks like.

Sr. Jean points to an organization called UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as the leading authority on the Earth’s health. It comprises nearly 200 of the world’s top scientists who study peer-reviewed articles on climate change. They then make recommendations to political leaders on what actions to take.

Sr. Jean says “Their recent report from February, 2022, clearly stated that we are

moving quickly toward the point of no return.”

That point of no return — which includes wide-ranging and increasingly common effects such as water pollution (often from single-use plastics), drought, wildfires, and species extinctions — threatens the poor most of all and leads to a related truth:

those who are most affected by the Earth’s degradation are the poor, the very people who have had the least to do with causing that degradation.

What can we do, starting today?

With something as big and all-encompassing as climate change, it’s important to try and stay positive and not get discouraged or paralyzed.

“The fact is, big industry and big agriculture make up a big piece of the carbon emission crisis,” says Sr. Jean. “So they also bear the biggest responsibility for taking action to clean up our world.”

“But we can each do our part. Even small things can have an amazing ripple effect. You never know who you may inspire or whose behavior you may change. And that’s the whole key: behavior change. Collective behavior change often starts with the actions of one person.”

A good first step? Start simple, advises Sr. Jean. Maybe make one change a day, then try to maintain that change for a week. That may mean not buying drinks that come in plastic bottles. Or try taking public transportation every day for a week. Attach a basket on your bike to do light shopping.

Sr. Jean likes to emphasize the 3 Rs of the environment: reduce, reuse, and recycle. But she always adds a fourth: Refuse!

“By that I mean saying no to some of the stuff we all tend to accumulate,” she explains. “We don’t need to be such a huge consumer society. We don’t always need the latest and greatest gadgets that soon end up in landfill or the ocean from a trash barge.”

She adds: “Can you mend something instead of throwing it out? Can you sell a gently used item or donate it rather than tossing it? You have so many options for passing things on that are easy to do and better for the environment.” 🌸

 **Find this discussion titled *TrashTalk* on our YouTube channel.**

Jubilarians

Celebrating in Catholic Tradition

The Catholic tradition of the Jubilee can be traced to Old Testament scripture, and even to the beginning of creation. God created the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. Through Moses, God told the Israelites to sow, prune, and gather the crops of the earth for six years and give the land a year of rest in the seventh. And after seven cycles of seven-year periods — seven being the perfect number of completeness in Hebrew — the 50th year was declared the Year of Jubilee, a time of reflection and gratitude for God’s endless mercy, and an opportunity for us to demonstrate that same divine forgiveness in our daily lives.

Beginning in 1300 with Pope Boniface VIII, the church has marked Jubilee Years as times of repentance and renewed hope. Most recently, Pope Francis declared the Jubilee of Mercy in 2016, saying, “It is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and to touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.”

In addition to these church-wide observances, each individual committed to religious life celebrates her own Jubilee to mark milestone years of service to God’s work on earth. For a Jubilarian, it is a time of reflection on the sacred personal bond she has with our Lord, and her continued devotion to live out His plan for her life.

Be it 50 years, 75, or even more, our Felician Jubilarians look back to the person or event that inspired them to enter the religious life, and the mark they have made on the world during their years of service. They renew their vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, standing as a living role model for younger sisters looking toward their future, and encouraging them to stay the difficult course of invariably placing others’ needs above your own comfort.

The special women who celebrate their Jubilee Year in 2022 have seen many things. Their hearts were broken by wars, from Korea and Vietnam to Iraq and now Ukraine.

They’ve cared for people suffering from viruses — polio, AIDS, and COVID —and actively supported the Civil Rights Movement

Our Lady of Hope Province Sisters Celebrating the Anniversary of their Vows in 2022

knowing the spirit of God lives in all people. They watched the erection and razing of the Berlin Wall, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and President Kennedy, and the attempt on Pope John Paul II's life. They prayed for those starving in Ethiopia, those killed in the 9-11 terror attacks, and the countless people devastated by earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes throughout the world.

A Felician Sister's life, modeled after St. Francis, is one of interconnectedness. The title of Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* which means "Praise be to you" is taken from his namesake's Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon. In the encyclical, the pope says of St. Francis, "He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace."

It would not be an unfair comparison to use those words to describe our Felician Jubilarians. They are interconnected with their communities, our miraculous earth, and each precious individual their kindness touches. The sisters live and breathe in harmony with the people they serve, and drink from the same cup of suffering. In each of our Jubilarians we see a joyful spirit, a generous nature, and an open heart.

From daybreak to moonrise, decade upon decade, these women of faith persist in lives of compassion that embody the Biblical tradition of the Jubilee Year. They exhibit divine forgiveness and a boundless gratitude for God's strength, comfort, and grace in a turbulent world. Through their lives of service, the most vulnerable among us are able to see and touch the closeness of God. 🌸

80 Years

SM Andrea Mazur +
SM Florence Pelczynski
SM Henriella Kakol +
SM Irene Rajca
SM Lourdine Lachowski
S Paul Marie Pietroczyński
SM Ursula Dzienis

75 Years

SM Agatha Cebula
SM Anthonille Tyczkowski +
SM Charlotte Wszolek
SM Colette Michniewicz
SM Elrita Zoromski
SM Honoria Bartoszek
SM Joanne Baradziej
SM Maristella Nowakowski
SM Mercita Kula

70 Years

SM Adele Bandurski
SM Anita Benecki +
SM Antonia Popielarczyk
S Marie Barbara Szot
SM Elizabeth Bielamowicz
SM Immaculate Ballak
SM Laureann Alexandrowicz
S Marlene Marie Sliwka
SM Teresa Forma
SM Virginia Sztorc

60 Years

SM Angelica Smialowicz
SM Barbara Ann Kemmerer
SM Bernardine Mucha
SM Carlotta Mysza
SM Carolyn Ratkowski
S Donna Marie Trukowski
S Dorothy Mary Sajczuk
SM Elizabeth Mackowiak
SM Gerard Frederick
S Jacqueline Mary Kazanowski
S Lenore Marie Murawski
S Lisa Marie DiSabatino
S MaryAnne Olekszyk
SM Sharon Iacobucci

50 Years

S Nancy Marie Pieciewicz
S Paula Mary Palasz

Send Congratulations

Email your message to
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or mail to:
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Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Read about each of
the 2022 Jubilarians at
FelicianSistersNA.org/Jubilarians.



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Visit NCYC.us

Felician Haiti missionaries Sisters Inga, Marilyn, Izzy and Julitta invite you to celebrate 10 years of

Felician Mission: *Haiti*

Livonia, MI	Chicago, IL	Pomona, CA
Sun, Oct 30	Sun, Nov 6	Sun, Nov 13

Join us to learn about all you helped to accomplish, meet fellow supporters and taste Haitian food. Learn more at FelicianSistersHaiti.com.

Questions? Please contact Marcia Wallander, at mwallander@feliciansisters.org or 724-944-9814.

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Discern with us!

Oct 6-9, 2022
Detroit, Michigan

April 13-16, 2023
Chicago, Illinois

Summer 2023
Toronto, Canada

Contact Sr. Judy Blizzard at Vocation@FelicianSisters.org
Details and updates at FelicianSistersNA.org/Discern



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